

Improve **Grade 3** your aural!

Paul Harris and John Lenehan

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Why is aural important?



You may wonder why you have to do aural at all. The answer is, that aural will really help you improve as a musician. And this may surprise you – it will help perhaps more than *any other* single musical skill.

Aural is all about understanding and processing music that you hear and see, in your head. By doing so, you will find that your own playing improves enormously. You will be able to play more expressively and stylistically, be more sensitive to quality and control of tone, your music reading will improve, you will be able to spot your own mistakes, be more sensitive to others when playing or singing in an ensemble, be more aware of intonation, improve your ability to memorise music and improve your ability to improvise and compose.

All the many elements of musical training are of course connected. So, when working through the activities in this book you will be connecting with many of them. You'll be listening, singing, clapping, playing your instrument, writing music down, improvising and composing – as well as developing that vital ability to do well at the aural tests in your grade exams!

Aural is not an occasional optional extra – just to be taken off a dusty shelf a few days (or even hours) before a music exam. It's something you can be developing and thinking about all the time. And as you go through the enjoyable and fun activities in these books you'll realise how important and useful having a good musical ear (being good at aural) really is.

How to use this book

When you have a few minutes to spare (perhaps at the beginning or end of a practice session), sit down with your instrument, by your CD player, and open this book. Choose a section and then work through the activities – you needn't do much each time. But whatever you do, do it carefully, repeating any activity if you feel it will help. In fact many of the activities will be fun to do again and again. And make sure that you come back to the book on a regular basis.

So, good luck and enjoy improving your aural skills!

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For U.S. readers:

Bar	= Measure
Upbeat	= Pick-up
Note	= Tone

Section 2 Pitch

On your instrument, play the first five notes of any major scale, then play the first five notes of the minor scale beginning on the same note. Choose a scale that is comfortably in your singing register.

Put a circle around the one note that is different:

1 2 3 4 5

Now sing the minor version to *lah*, then to numbers:

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

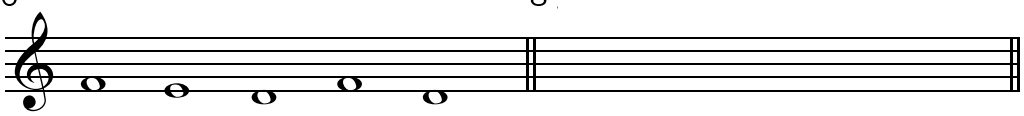
Now sing 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1

Now sing the following patterns using the first five notes of your chosen minor scale. Play the first note on the piano or on your instrument, then sing the pattern. Finally play it back to hear whether you were accurate.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 1 – 2 – 3 – 2 – 1 | 6 3 – 2 – 1 – 3 – 1 |
| 2 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 3 | 7 5 – 4 – 3 – 5 – 1 |
| 3 1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 3 | 8 5 – 4 – 3 – 5 – 4 |
| 4 1 – 3 – 5 – 3 – 1 | 9 5 – 4 – 3 – 5 – 3 |
| 5 3 – 2 – 1 – 3 – 2 | 10 1 – 3 – 4 – 2 – 1 |

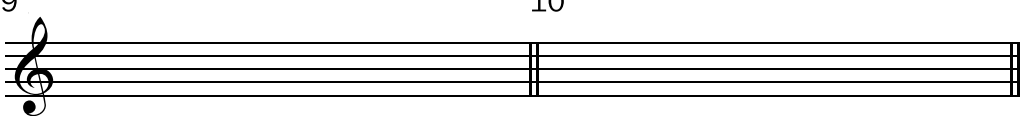
Here is example 6 from the activity above written out in D minor. Write out examples 8, 9 and 10 in the same way:

6



8

9



10

Now look at each phrase and hear it in your head. Then sing each phrase reading the music.

Section 3 Hearing changes

In Grade 3, exercises where you have to describe a rhythmic or melodic difference will now be in a major *or* minor key. The examples are also longer than in Grade 2.

listening activities

tracks
27-36

- 1** Listen to these examples and write down whether the change was rhythmic (R) or melodic (M).

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

tracks
37-46

- 2** These examples all have a melodic change. Write down whether the changed note was lower (L) or higher (H).

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

- 3** Now you'll hear six short phrases. Write down whether the change was rhythmic (R) or melodic (M), then whether the change was in the first (1st) or second (2nd) half of the piece, and then describe the change as best you can. The first one is done for you.

track
47

Change	Position	Description
<u>R</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>The first note was longer</u>

track
48

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

track
49

_____	_____	_____
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track
50

_____	_____	_____
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track
51

_____	_____	_____
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track
52

_____	_____	_____
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track
87

... with instruments

Listen to this track and then connect the boxes:

string quartet

played 1st

wind trio

played 2nd

brass quintet

played 3rd

percussion group

played 4th

... with tonality

Listen to the theme tune to one of your favourite television programmes.
Is it in a major or minor key?

track
88

... with texture

Some music may be played by a single instrument or voice (a solo); some by two instruments or voices (a duet); and some by three (a trio). Match the piece with the number of players:

solo

played 1st

duet

played 2nd

trio

played 3rd