

Improve your aural!

Grade 4

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!

Paul Harris and John Lenehan

For U.S. readers:

Bar = Measure

Note = Tone

Tone = Whole Step

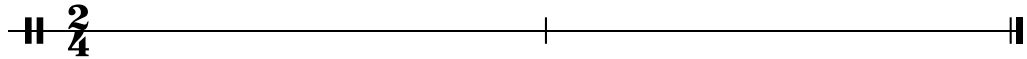
Section 1 Clapping rhythms

As part of Test C for Grade 4, you will have to clap or tap back a rhythm. Hearing, understanding and memorising rhythms is an important and useful skill. It will help you in learning new pieces, playing or singing in an ensemble and in your sight-reading.

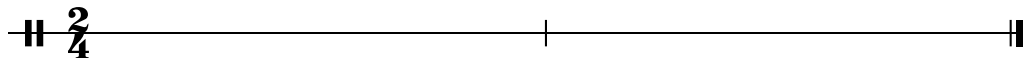
listening activities

- 1** On each of these four tracks you'll hear a short phrase played three times. After each one is played twice, clap it back. You'll hear it a third time – then stop the CD and write the rhythm down.

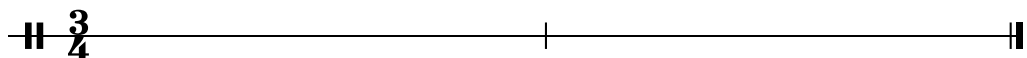
track
2



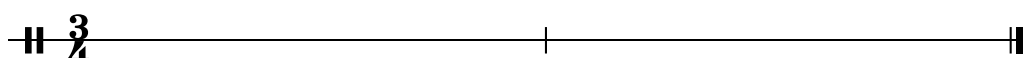
track
3



track
4



track
5



tracks
6-15

- 2** Here are ten more short phrases. Clap each one back after you've heard it played twice.

track
16

- 3** You will be asked whether the music is in 2, 3 or 4-time. Sometimes the difference between 2 and 4 is difficult to detect. In 2-time you are likely to hear more strong pulses than in 4-time. Music in 4-time is more inclined to have longer phrase lengths and fewer accents. On this track there are some examples of music by Beethoven in either 2 or 4-time. Write down the time of each example.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

track
17

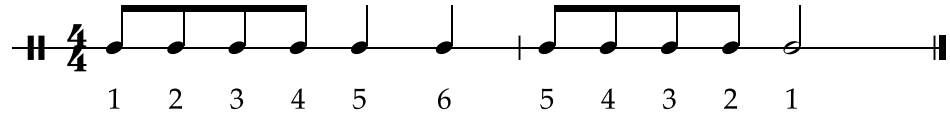
- 4** This track contains examples in either 2, 3 or 4-time. After you've heard each one, write down what time it is in.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

Section 2 Pitch

On your instrument, play the first six notes of any major scale.
Choose a scale that is comfortably in your singing register.

Now sing the notes as numbers, to the following rhythm:



listening activities

track
25

- 1 An interval is the distance between two notes. Listen to each of the two-note intervals on this track. You'll hear the interval and then a well-known tune that uses that interval either at, or very near the beginning. Connect the intervals to the tune.

major 2nd

While shepherds watched
their flocks by night

major 3rd

Twinkle, twinkle, little star

perfect 4th

The holly and the ivy

perfect 5th

Good King Wenceslas

major 6th

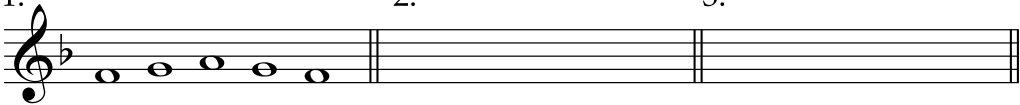
Away in a manger

Now write down the three previous exercises in the key of F major. The first is done for you.

1.

2.

3.



Then hear them in your head and finally, sing them from the notation.

Here are some more examples for you to sing:

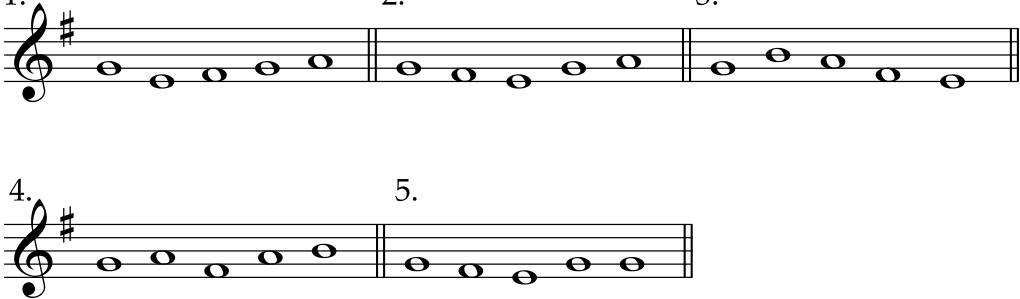
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Now sing the next six examples with the backing track, two beats to each note. The correct response is also given.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

