



FIDDLE

Improvising from the Beginning Jazz String Curriculum for 4th, 5th and 6th Grade String Orchestra Part 6: Ornamentation of Melody and Rhythm

by Cristina Seaborn

Learn how to improvise from the ground up, and build a strong foundation of rhythm, melody, harmony and form. In a series of articles on basic instruction you can give to your 4th, 5th and 6th grade beginning orchestra students, we will be learning how to play accompaniment parts while half the group practices improvisation all at once. This will be a safe place for you and your students to experiment for the first time with spontaneous composition. You will be able to model this for your students, one step at a time. This table of contents lists the series of lesson plans that will come out, one topic in each String Notes magazine article:

- Sound and Silence
- Melody and Chord Progression
- Long and Short Melodies
- Rhythm
- Groove
- Ornamentation of Melody and Rhythm
- Melody Notes outside of the Chord
- Preparing for Harmonic Change
- Chord Tones
- Guide Tone Lines
- Ornamentation of Guide Tone Lines
- Harmonic Progression

Ornamentation of Melody means to add or take away notes from the original melody. The original rhythm is instantly changed because adding or taking away notes changes the rhythm.

Ornamentation of Rhythm means to change only the rhythm, leaving the melodic notes the same. Some notes can be longer or shorter than the original, repeated,

and moved from their original place in the measure.

Ornamentation can be small in degree, or reaching the highest degree of variation from the original melody and rhythm, and the melody will still be recognizable.

Start off by memorizing the melody of *Over the Rainbow* in its original form exactly as written.

Common Ornamentation Techniques:

1. Passing Tones: Connect melody notes that are a third apart by adding the passing tone in between them.
2. Double Passing Tones: Connect melody notes that are a third, fourth, or fifth apart by adding two passing tones in between them.
3. Octave Leap: Try playing the note an

Over the Rainbow Harold Arlen, composer
Cristina Seaborn, arranger

vn, va
vc 8db

cb

D F#m G D G D A 1. D 2, 3. D

Some-where o-ver the rain-bow, way up high, There's a land that I heard of once in a lul-la-by.
Some-where o-ver the rain-bow, skies are blue, And the dreamsthat you dare to dream real-ly do come true. Some
Some-where o-ver the rain-bow, blue-birds fly, Birds fly o-ver the rain-bow. Why then, oh, why can't I? If

day I'll wish u-pon a star and wake up where the clouds are far be-hind me. Where trou-bles melt like lem-on drops a-

E A D.C. al Coda D G D

way a-bove thechim-neytops that's where you'll find me. hap-py lit-tle blue-birds fly be-yond the rain-bow, why, oh, why can't I?

octave higher or lower, and continue the next note of the melody in the same octave.

4. Neighbor tone: When the melody repeats the same note, add a neighboring tone in between.
5. Leap: Leap to a neighbor tone of the next melodic note.
6. Chromatic: Use the chromatic half step note when the melody is a major second.
7. Double Chromatic: Use the half step notes in a chromatic scale when the melody notes are a minor third apart.
8. Neighbor Tones: Before playing a note, play the neighbor note above or below the note. You can reverse the order and play the note below or above after the note.
9. Chord Tones: Use the chord tones relating to the melody note or the next

melody note.

Exercise #1: Rhythmic Ornamentation

Keeping the melody notes the same, experiment with lengthening the notes, repeating notes, and playing notes early or later than the original melody. Start with simple variations, and become more experimental each time you play through the melody. Play through the melody 5 to 6 times. Record your improvisation and critique what you have done.

Exercise #2: Melodic Ornamentation

Start simply by keeping the melody in the same rhythm, adding a few neighbor tones or passing tones. Each time you play through the melody, add to the complexity of your improvisation gradually. Start to delete some melody notes as an experiment. Your final fifth and sixth time through the

melody can include rhythmic and melodic ornamentation. Record your solo and self-critique.

Expert at fiddling and jazz improvisation, Cristina Seaborn holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in jazz violin performance from Berklee College of Music in Boston, and a Masters in Conducting for Orchestra from St. Cloud State University. She has produced an instructional video for fiddling through Mel Bay entitled Anyone Can Play Country Fiddle, CDs entitled Inside the Heart of a Musician, Seaborn Breeze, and Spirit Wind, and many arrangements for string orchestra of fiddle music, jazz, Celtic, Scandinavian, Cajun, and original. In symphonies, quartets, jazz ensembles, and folk/rock bands, her musical background includes influences in classical, jazz, Celtic, bluegrass and Texas swing fiddle. ♪