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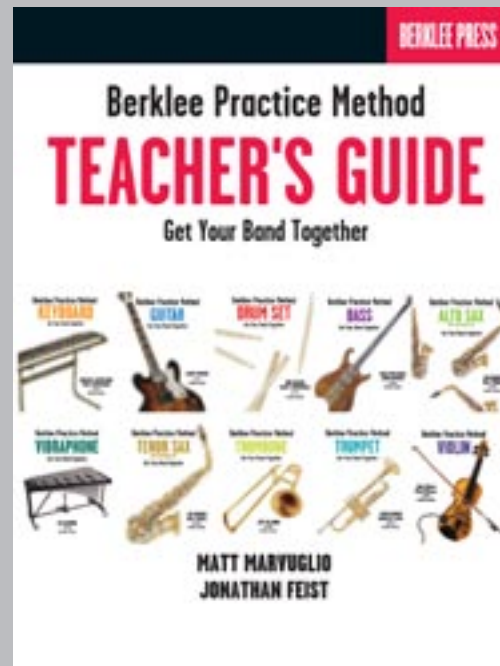
**Berklee Practice Method  
Teacher's Guide**

Matt Marvuglio and Jonathan Feist

Leading a Rock Band Program

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# Leading a Rock-Band Program

## ABOUT THIS METHOD

Thank you for choosing the *Berklee Practice Method*. This *Teacher's Guide* is designed to assist teachers and bandleaders guide a band through this method. Whether you are leading a school music program that trains many bands simultaneously, leading a band at a house of worship or other organization, or leading your own garage band, you will find extensive information here about how to help others work together to play many styles of music.

This teacher's guide serves as an index and overview to all the specific instrument volumes in the series. In addition to lists and short descriptions of topics covered by the other books, it includes extensive excerpts from different volumes of the series. Some of these excerpts are common to all books in the series, and others appear only in specific volumes, but may be applicable to particularly advanced students of other instruments. There is extensive supplementary information and many "teacher's tips" for how to provide musicians with additional insights into how these musical concepts and practice techniques might be developed and used in a broader context. For convenience, this guide refers to the musicians being led through the series as "students."

The *Berklee Practice Method* is designed for musicians who have a basic capability on their instrument, have basic reading skills, and want to develop their ability at playing music with others. Amateur musicians tend to reach a plateau in their private studies, where they are ready to expand the borders beyond their practice rooms and private teachers, and begin to play in bands. This series focuses on developing parts that complement each other to create an effective overall band sound.

At Berklee College of Music, we have found that instrumentalists' skill sets vary, depending on which instrument they play—even among players that can perform at approximately the same level. For example, guitarists tend to have a relatively easier time playing rhythms by ear, but may be uncomfortable reading traditional notation. Keyboardists tend to have a general knowledge of harmony, but may be unaccustomed to playing in ensembles. Violinists tend to be good readers, but may not have any experience improvising.

In order to have a well-rounded skill set for playing in a band, different instrumentalists will need to master different topics at different times, and at different levels of depth. Looking at this series from the teacher's perspective, you will see that topics are prioritized differently in the different volumes.

Some students may show an interest in topics not covered in their own instrument volume, but that are covered in the others. With this teacher's guide, you will be able to see materials related to each given chapter, throughout the series. The occasional drummer might have an interest in chords and inversions. The drum volume of this series does not discuss these topics, but the keyboard and vibraphone volumes do. This teacher's guide can then serve to help the teacher present supplementary materials, as needs arise. For this reason, teachers might consider having two complete sets of the method in their library. Keep one for your own reference, and the other to loan out to students who take an interest in topics beyond the scope of their instrument.

There are also occasional minor variations in terminology between instrument volumes. While this method standardizes whenever possible, it also respects these different instrument cultures, and allows for different common interpretations of the same musical concepts. You will see “lick” and “motive” used in all volumes, but some volumes will favor either of these terms over the other. Either is a short melodic idea. Saxophones prefer the term “lick;” keyboards prefer “motive.” All musicians should understand both terms, but we do allow for and respect what seem to be cultural preferences.

The lessons focus on developing the core skills needed to play in a band. The “Daily Practice Routines” present ideas for how these skills can be developed, as well as other topics helpful in building skills in interactive performing and in fulfilling their instruments’ roles.

To help musicians get the most out of this method, encourage them to play together. Scale exercises are helpful, but they should be practiced at home, in private, and not when other musicians are present. Use the accompanying CDs when you have to, but if you have a bass player and a keyboard player wood-shedding in the same room, then they should play the exercises together, and not use the CD. By doing so, they will learn timing, how to take cues from other musicians, and how to be independent within an ensemble context. There is no substitute for that. Any combination of instruments can practice together, and throughout the chapters, “backgrounds” are suggested, if you have two melodic instrument players who wish to practice together. One player can play the melody or improvise, and the other can play background lines. Then, they can switch parts.

This teacher’s guide does not contain all material in all volumes; to do so would have resulted in a 1,000+ page tome, fraught with much redundant material. Instead, it presents general summaries of the topics that are included in most books. Individual volumes will vary, to suit the needs of individual instruments, and as a teacher, you may periodically need to refer to the individual instrument volumes. You may also wish to play the solos from other volumes’ recordings to your students, so that they can hear other possibilities.

## STRUCTURE

The structure of this teacher’s guide is as follows.

1. Introduction, Lead Sheet, Summary. Chapters begin with a short introduction to the chapter’s musical style, and then a lead sheet of the tune to be studied. There is also a “summary” for each tune, showing the arrangement, chords, and scales at a glance. The individual instrument volumes place the lead sheet in the “Reading” lessons and the summary in the “Daily Practice Routines.”
2. Topics. After the lead sheet is a topical overview of what is happening in each volume. The overview begins by presenting common materials across all volumes, and then itemizes any material unique to each instrument volume.
3. Full Score. A complete score is given for each tune, including the complete parts for all instruments.
4. Common Material. This section presents lesson content that appears in all the instrument volumes, often preceded by a list of terms presented in the lessons. When there is no universal content for a lesson, the content included in this teacher’s guide is taken primarily from the melodic instrument volumes (saxophone, trumpet, etc.). Some additional content is provided when it can be easily transported to different instruments. For example, in lesson 2, the brass books have a unique section about backgrounds. Because any pitched instrument can play backgrounds, this material is also included in this guide, as it is easily adaptable to be supplementary material for most instruments.

The common-material sections end with highlights from the Daily Practice Routines. These provide ideas for helping students practice difficult material, particularly inventive practice techniques, and other information. It is only a small sampling of the practice materials included in the instrument volumes, so refer to these for additional practice ideas.

In each chapter of this series, there is a recurring lesson structure.

1. **Theory/Technique.** These lessons present theoretical or technical concepts used in the recorded versions of these tunes. They are different for each instrument. Generally, the materials in this teacher's guide are taken from the melodic instruments, which are generally similar for saxophones, trombone, trumpet, and violin. They are often suitable as supplementary material for other instrumentalists who occasionally play melody as a secondary role, such as keyboard, vibraphone, and bass. You may also use them if you have other instruments for which there is currently not a *Berklee Practice Method* available, such as English horn or flugelhorn.
2. **Learning the Groove.** These lessons help develop a rhythmic awareness of the styles presented, and the role of individual instruments in the groove. The approach is different for each instrument. For example, the keyboard and vibraphone volumes often present additional material to develop independence between hands. The bass volume goes farther in terms of internalizing subdivisions and hooking up with the bass drum.
3. **Improvisation.** These lessons present formal analysis of each tune, some ideas for where to draw notes to use in improvisation, and then "call-and-response" exercises for practicing improvisation within the framework of the tune. All instruments learn the same scales in each chapter. Some instruments practice these scales over a wide range. Keyboard and vibraphone go deeper into the study of harmony, further supported in their Daily Practice Routines sections.
4. **Reading.** A written score and a lead sheet are presented for each tune. Students should feel comfortable reading from either. Use the written scores for reference, but encourage students to develop their own interpretation for each tune, using the lead sheets.
5. **Daily Practice Routines.** This section performs many functions, and is designed to give a general overview of the kinds of tasks that students should practice every day. There are exercises to support every kind of lesson, as well as sample solos, and often additional technical or theoretical topics. Most exercises are to be practiced along with the recording, rather than with a metronome.

Students should learn to develop a well-rounded practice routine that includes elements of theory, rhythm training, improvisation, reading, and analysis. It is less important for them to do all exercises presented than it is for them to learn to develop a meaningful, multifaceted routine that supports all aspects of the music that they play. A sampling of the kinds of exercises to be considered are included in this guide. Many more are included within the different volumes.

Encourage your students to develop similar exercises of their own, and to practice areas that they wish to pursue. Creativity in practice keeps it interesting, and it is more productive and relevant to the music they will be making.

## THE ACCOMPANYING RECORDING

Some of the top players from the Berklee faculty perform on the series' CDs. Each CD features a combination of tracks demonstrating full performances of each tune, play-along tracks, selected excerpts, and exercises. It is an invaluable aspect to this approach to learning music, and it often plays the role of metronome.

Each volume has its own CD, featuring its own instrument. The CD accompanying this teacher's guide is a sampling of tracks from all the different instrument volumes. It will give you a chance to hear a variety of sounds and possibilities, such as the heavy hard rock distortion sound on the violin in "Sweet," the harmony of two melody instruments playing "Do It Now," or the cool solo trumpet playing the minor blues tune, "Leave Me Alone."

It is good practice for students to listen to a variety of instruments. In private lessons, you might mix up which CD goes with which volume, for the call/response exercises.

## DEVELOPING A BAND PROGRAM

Small music ensembles have many advantages over traditional larger ensembles. Equipment and facility costs are lower, when compared to the cost of marching band uniforms, stables of tubas and double basses, and dedicated rooms large enough to accommodate a hundred students. While sound equipment is helpful to small band performances, it is not essential. A few microphones and a mixing board will help you achieve better balanced performances, but students' own amps can work just fine as well.

There are many models for how to teach this kind of music. This series can be used for a large music program, where a faculty team trains many different bands simultaneously. It can be used by a single music teacher who is training one or more bands. It can also be used by bands where everyone has their own private teacher, and the band coordinates rehearsals on their own, with the leader using this book as a reference for additional ideas.

Here are two models for teaching bands in school music programs. The first is the kind of program that is easily implemented by the average school music teacher, who is likely to be busy with large ensemble programs, but wishes to bring other student musicians into the community of the school music program. It is based on independent study, and the teacher acts as a facilitator. The second model is how we do it at Berklee. These are opposite extremes, and there are many possibilities in between.

1. Independent Study. Students use their individual books to learn on their own. They practice their parts independently or with a private teacher. Then they meet regularly as a band to put the parts together and develop their own interpretations. The teacher acts as a facilitator and coach.
2. Berklee-Style Band Instruction. At Berklee College of Music, beginning-level rhythm-section ensemble classes are taught with a four-tiered system. All students in this program play one of four instruments: guitar, bass, drums, and keyboard.
  - a. Performance and Lecture. A faculty band of four musicians (bass, drums, guitar, and keyboard) performs the "tune of the week" to the students, who all gather together as a large group (usually sixteen to twenty students) to hear the lecture. The teachers take turns explaining what they were doing in their unique parts, and they discuss how their parts fit together and what they were trying to achieve together as a band.
  - b. Sections. Players of each instrument meet as a group to learn their parts. These are technical lessons, focused on performing specific tunes and performance practices.
  - c. Guided Rehearsals. Each band is coached by an instructor, as they work on their arrangement.
  - d. Independent Rehearsals. Each band meets together without a faculty member present, and works out the tunes on their own.

Twice a semester, the Berklee student bands perform for each other.

Note that with this teacher's guide, a single teacher can lead similar programs to Berklee's. Rather than performing live for the students, the teacher can play the recording, and then analyze it, discussing the tune's style and how the parts interconnect.

Most critical is that the teacher takes a step back from the role of being a traditional conductor. The goal of popular music styles is individual freedom of expression. The teacher should encourage students to be independent. Students should take turns being the "leader" on different tunes, counting them off, and developing unique arrangements. Encourage your students to create their own interpretations of each tune, and make this music their own.

Periodically, have your different student bands perform for each other. Have "battles of the bands," where several bands play. These can be dances, rather than concerts.

The tools in this method are easily adapted to many teaching styles and additional kinds of music. Once the students have completed all eight chapters, invite them to find or write their own tunes, and develop parts and practice routines in the style of this method.

Here are a few guidelines to help you begin your program.

## **Roles of Instruments**

There are five essential instrument roles in a band. Different instruments can perform any of these roles.

1. **Lead.** Either a solo instrument or a vocalist. This role can include playing the written melody and improvising. Instruments frequently take turns performing in this role, and sometimes several instruments may perform it together.
2. **Comping.** Chordal accompaniment may be performed by any keyboard, rhythm guitar, or other multiphonic instrument, such as vibraphone. Sections of monophonic instruments can also perform this function as a group, but generally only when there are full written arrangements.
3. **Bass.** The bass grounds the tune's harmonic framework. The bass line can be played by acoustic or electric bass, or by other instruments, such as keyboard or even tuba or baritone sax.
4. **Percussion.** Everyone in the band must feel the time, but the drum set or lead percussion player is the final arbiter. Generally, in most bands, this role is fulfilled by the drum set, sometimes with additional hand percussionists. In other styles, there may be a group of hand percussionists only.
5. **Backgrounds.** Background supporting melodic parts can be performed by any pitched instrument.

Each band generally has a leader, though this may change on different songs. It is the leader's role to set the starting tempo and to make arrangement decisions, such as who solos, and when. Have students take turns leading different tunes, and don't assume the role yourself, except in an advisory capacity, when necessary.

## **Setting Up**

Set up your band physically so that everyone can see each other. Bass and drums should have an easy sightline, as should comping instruments (keyboard, rhythm guitar, etc.). The drums should be centrally located.

A sound system will give your band a lot more control over their sound balance. Ideally, every instrument should be uniquely miked, and plugged into a single mixing board. Balance the volumes from the perspective of the center of the hall. One set of speakers lets the band hear themselves; another set of speakers is turned at the audience.

## **What Students Should Know**

Students will get the most out of this method if they have a basic capability on their instrument and basic music reading skills.

Specific requirements vary, depending on the instruments. Each instrument volume begins with a Basics section to review required topics.

### ***Bass***

Bassists should be able to read pitches and rhythms in bass clef. Tablature is provided for musicians who are less comfortable with traditional notation.

### ***Drum Set***

Drummers should be able to identify rhythmic notation. They should be able to play the basic rudiments. This series uses and recommends the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) standard of drum set notation.

### ***Guitar***

Guitarists should be able to read pitches and rhythms in treble clef. Tablature is provided for musicians who are less comfortable with traditional notation.

### ***Keyboards***

Keyboard players should be able to read pitches and rhythms in both treble and bass clef. They should be able to play several major scales and arpeggios.

### ***Saxophones***

Saxophone players should be able to read treble clef, including basic articulations. They should be able to play several major scales.

### ***Trombone***

Trombone players should be able to read bass clef, including basic articulations. They should be able to play several major scales.

### ***Trumpet***

Trumpet players should be able to read treble clef, including basic articulations. They should be able to play several major scales.

### ***Vibraphone***

Vibraphone players should be able to read treble clef. They should be able to play several major scales and arpeggios, and know the basic drum rudiments.

### ***Violin***

Violin players should be able to read treble clef, including basic articulations and bowings. They should be able to play several major scales.

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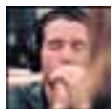
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