



Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Education



RTB | RWANDA
TVET BOARD

MPAPS301

PIANO AND SYNTHESIZER FUNDAMENTALS AND TECHNIQUES

Apply piano and synthesizer fundamentals and techniques

Competence



RQF Level: 3

Learning Hours

120

Credits: 12

Sector: Art and Crafts

Trade: Music and Performing Arts

Module Type: Elective

Curriculum: ARCPA3001- TVET Certificate 3 in Music

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Issue Date: January 2025

Purpose statement	This module equips students with essential brass performance skills for both individual and ensemble settings. Through focused instruction, students will develop the ability to produce a consistent and resonant tone, master proper hand positioning and standard fingerings, and execute fundamental articulation techniques to enhance musical phrasing and stylistic interpretation. At the end of this module students will be able to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application to advance foundational musicianship.					
Learning assumed to be in place	N/A					
Delivery modality	Training delivery	100%	Assessment		Total 100%	
	Theoretical content	30%	Formative assessment	30%	50%	
	Practical work:	30%		70%		70%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work and presentation 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual work 					
			Summative Assessment	50%		

Elements of Competency and Performance Criteria

Elements of competency	Performance criteria
1. Identify Piano and Synthesizer features	1.1. History and functions of the piano and synthesizer are appropriately identified according to historical context
	1.2. Instrument features are correctly identified in line with their technical specifications, functional capabilities
	1.3. The instrument is properly acclimatized based on environmental conditions
2. Apply basic playing techniques	2.1. Posture, hands position, fingering are clearly demonstrated based on ergonomic principles
	2.2. Basic scales types are performed based on correct fingering, consistent rhythm, and adherence to the proper tonal structure of each scale.
	2.3. Basic Chord types within every single key are perfectly formed according to correct theoretical principles.

	2.4 Basic chord progressions are correctly formed according to harmonic rules, proper voice leading, and accurate finger placement.
3. Interpret Musical Notation	3.1. music notation system is interpreted in accordance with prescribed lead sheet
	3.2 Basics of Music notation are well interpreted according to the music score
	3.2. Apply indicated piano and synthesizer expressions are performed according to the basic musical notation

Course content

Learning outcomes	<p>At the end of the module the learner will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Piano and Synthesizer features 2. Apply basic playing techniques 3. Interpret Musical Notation Accurately
Learning outcome 1: Identify Piano and Synthesizer features	Learning hours: 30 hrs
Indicative content	

- the piano and synthesizer identification
 - ✓ Instrument categories and classification
 - ✓ Instruments history
 -  Origins and roots of instrument
 -  Evolution of instrument in music industry
- **Instrument features**
 - ✓ Exploration of Instrument Features
 - ✓ Acoustic and Digital Piano Mechanisms
 - ✓ Synthesizer Sound Generation
 - ✓ Integration of Piano and Synthesizer
- **Instrument Acclimatization**
 - ✓ Safe and Security conditions
 - ✓ Power and Connectivity
 - ✓ Tuning and Calibration
 - ✓ Pre-Performance Preparation
 - ✓ Environmental Conditions

Resources required for the learning outcome	
Equipment, Materials, Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Music instruments ▪ Stands ▪ Internet ▪ Documentary videos ▪ Computer ▪ Books
Facilitation techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate music instrument classification ▪ Explanation of music instrument categories ▪ Identifying of instrument history ▪ Acclimatization of the instrument
Formative assessment methods /(CAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance evidence ▪ Written evidence

Learning outcome 2: Apply basic playing techniques	Learning hours: 50
Indicative content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate piano and synthesis ergonomic principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hand Position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Apply proper finger numbering for scales, chords, and arpeggios, using established piano fingering techniques (e.g., crossing thumb under during scale runs) ✓ Posture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Sit with a straight back, shoulders relaxed, and feet flat on the floor or on pedals if required. ✓ Fingering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ integration ● Basic scale are formed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Types of Scales 	

- ✚ Overview of major scales, natural minor scales, harmonic minor scales, and melodic minor scales, blues, pentatonic
- ✚ Introduction to modal scales (e.g., Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian) for expanded musical exploration.

- **Basic Chord types are formed**

- ✓ Major Chords
- ✚ Construction: Root, major third, perfect fifth
- ✓ Minor Chords
- ✓ Diminished Chords
- ✓ Augmented Chords
- ✓ Seventh Chords (Basic Introduction)
- ✓ Application and Practice

- **Basic chord progressions are performed**

- ✓ **Common Chord Progressions**

- ✚ **I-IV-V-I (Major Key)**: Foundational progression in Western music, creating a strong sense of resolution.
- ✚ **ii-V-I (Jazz Standard)**: Popular in jazz for smooth transitions and harmonic richness.
- ✚ **I-V-vi-IV (Pop Progression)**: Frequently used in contemporary music across genres.
- ✚ **vi-IV-I-V (Ballad Progression)**: Common in emotional and reflective pieces.

- ✓ **Cadences**

- ✚ Understanding cadences such as perfect (V-I), imperfect (I-V), plagal (IV-I), and deceptive (V-vi) for creating harmonic closure or tension.

- ✓ **Minor Key Progressions**

- ✚ Incorporating progressions like i-iv-V-i and i-VII-VI-V for a darker, emotional tone.
 - ✚ Using harmonic and melodic minor scales to enhance chord quality.
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✓ Key Signatures

✚ Understanding sharps and flats in different key signatures and how they influence scale construction.

✚ Practice identifying key signatures on both sheet music and the keyboard layout.

✓ Purpose and Application

✚ Selecting scales relevant to a piece of music, improvisation, or technical development.

✓ Coordination with Synthesizers

✚ Applying chosen scales to synthesizer practice, including sound patches that enhance their tonal qualities.

Resources required for the indicative content

Equipment, materials and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Music instruments▪ Music books▪ Song samples▪ Computer▪ CD/DVD players▪ Internet▪ Speakers▪ Videos▪ Drum key▪ Instruments stands
Facilitation techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Demonstration of instrument set up▪ Individual practices▪ Video tutorials on setting up instruments
Formative assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Performance evidence▪ Written evidence

Indicative content

- ✓ **Lead sheet is interpreted**
- ✓ Components of a Lead Sheet
- ✓ Melody Line
- ✓ Chord Symbols
- ✓ Structure and Form
- ✓ Chord Voicing and Interpretation
- ✓ Rhythmic Accompaniment
- ✓ Improvisation and Ornamentation

- ✓ **Basics of music score**

- ✓ Understanding Notation Elements
- ✓ Staff and Clefs
- ✓ Notes and Rests
- ✓ Key Signatures
- ✓ Time Signatures
- ✓ **Musical Symbols and Terminology**
- ✓ Identifying repeats, codas, fermatas, and other score-specific symbols.
- ✓ Familiarity with tempo markings (e.g., Allegro, Andante) and their impact
- ✓ **Score Navigation and Interpretation**
- ✓ Understanding the layout of multi-stave systems for piano or ensemble scores.
- ✓ Apply indicated piano and synthetizes expressions
- ✓ **Dynamic Range and Control**
- ✓ Understanding and executing dynamic markings (e.g., p, mf, f, cresc., dim.) to create contrast and mood in performance.
- ✓ **Articulations**
- ✓ Interpreting and performing articulations such as staccato, legato, marcato, and accents to add character and phrasing to the music.

- **Performer piano and synthetizes expressions**

- ✓ **Dynamic Markings**
- ✚ Executing dynamic changes (e.g., pianissimo, forte, crescendo, diminuendo) by adjusting velocity sensitivity and volume controls

✓ **Articulation Symbols**

✚ Interpreting staccato, legato, and marcato markings with appropriate synthesizer settings (e.g., adjusting envelope parameters for sharp or smooth sound).

✓ **Phrasing and Accents**

✚ Shaping phrases with modulation techniques like vibrato or tremolo to reflect musical intent.

Resources required for the indicative content

Equipment tools and materials

- Music instruments
- Music books
- Song samples
- Computer
- CD/DVD players
- Internet
- Speakers
- Videos
- Drum key
- Instruments stands

- Music sheet
- Pencils

Facilitation techniques

- Demonstration of Slash notation and chord chart
- Application of drum notation
- Demonstration of rhythmic notation
- Identification of guitar notation and tablature

Formative assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance evidence
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Integrated assessment

Integrated Situation

A local cultural center is hosting a piano and synthesizer showcase to highlight beginner pianists' skills and creativity. You have been invited to help learners prepare for their performances. The event will include solo and ensemble pieces, focusing on melody, harmony, rhythm, and basic synthesizer sound design.

Your task is to:

- Teach learners piano and synthesizer anatomy, correct posture, and hand positioning techniques.
- Guide them in playing basic scales, chords, arpeggios, and simple melodies.
- Help learners explore basic synthesizer functions, including sound selection and basic modifications.
- Collaborate with learners to create solo and ensemble pieces, ensuring musical accuracy and creative expression.
- Document the process with sheet music, chord charts, and sound design settings for their reference.

Resources

Tools

- Sheet music holders
- Tuning apps
- Cleaning kits (cloth, polish)
- Sustain pedals.

Equipment

- Acoustic pianos
- Digital pianos
- Synthesizers
- MIDI controllers
- Headphones
- Speakers
- Metronomes.

Materials/ Consumables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chord diagrams • Scale and arpeggio guides • Practice logs • Performance handouts • Pens • Notebooks. 	
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Assessable outcomes	Assessment criteria (Based on performance criteria)	Indicator	Observation		Marks allocation
			Yes	No	
Learning Outcome 1: Identify Piano and Synthesizer Features (30%)	1.1. Identify the piano and synthesizer types and history	Learner correctly explains instrument categories, origins, and evolution.			10
	1.2. Explain features of acoustic and digital pianos and synthesizers.	Exploration includes sound generation, mechanisms, and integration.			10
	1.3. Demonstrate proper acclimatization of instruments.	Learner follows safety, power, and environmental guidelines.			10
Learning Outcome 2: Apply Basic Playing Techniques (40%)	2.1. Exhibit proper ergonomic principles (posture and hand positioning).	Demonstrates correct body and hand positioning while playing.			10
	2.2. Play basic scales and	Major, minor, and other common scales and			10

	chords with accuracy.	chords are played fluently.			
	2.3. Perform basic chord progressions.	Common progressions (e.g., I-IV-V-I) are executed with rhythmic consistency.			10
	2.4. Integrate piano techniques with synthesizer features.	Selected scales and chords are applied to synthesizer practice.			10
Learning Outcome 3: Interpret Music Notation (30%)	3.1. Interpret lead sheets, including melody lines and chord symbols.	Learner accurately follows lead sheet components.			10
	3.2. Demonstrate understanding of musical score elements	Staff, clefs, dynamics, articulations, and tempo markings are applied correctly.			10
	3.3. Apply dynamic and articulation markings to piano and synthesizer	Performs with appropriate expressions and sound adjustments.			10
Total marks		100			
Percentage Weightage		100%			
Minimum Passing line % (Aggregate): 70%					

References

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