UNITED SYSTEM
FOR WINDS & PERCUSSION

A MIXED-LEVEL PROGRAM FOR GROUPS & INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Progression Timeline 2
About United System & About the Author 4

Lesson 1.1 (B♭ Major)

Lesson 1.1 -1.3 Focus Sheet 5
A - Longtones 6
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 8
C - Articulation 9
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 10
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 11

Lesson 1.2 (B♭ Major)

A - Longtones 12
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 14
C - Articulation 16
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 18
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 20

Lesson 1.3 (G Minor)

A - Longtones 22
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 24
C - Articulation 26
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 27
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 28

Lesson 2.1 (E♭ Major)

Lesson 2.1-2.3 Focus sheet 29
A - Longtones 30
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 31
C - Articulation 32
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 33
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 34

Lesson 2.2 (E♭ Major)

A - Longtones 36
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 38
C - Articulation 40
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 42
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 44

Lesson 2.3 (C Minor)

A - Longtones 46
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 48
C - Articulation 50
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 51
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 52

Lesson 3.1 (F Major)

Lesson 3.1 -3.3 Focus sheet 53
A - Longtones 54
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 55
C - Articulation 56
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 58
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 59

Lesson 3.2 (F Major)

A - Longtones 60
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 62
C - Articulation 64
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 66
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 68

Lesson 3.3 (D Minor)

A - Longtones 70
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 72
C - Articulation 74
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 75
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 76

Lesson 4.1 (C Major)

Lesson 4.1 -4.3 Focus Sheet 77
A - Longtones 78
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 80
C - Articulation 81
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 82
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 83

Lesson 4.2 (F Minor)

A - Longtones 84
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 86
C - Articulation 88
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 90
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 92

Lesson 4.3 (A♭ Minor)

A - Longtones 94
B - Scale/Technical Exercise 96
C - Articulation 98
D - Etude/Chamber Piece (Technical) 99
E - Etude/Chamber Piece (Lyrical) 100

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Level Progression Map

The ***United System for Winds and Percussion*** allows for maximum flexibility for both teacher and student while maintaining a progressive format. Students will work their way through, what are essentially, three different books: ***Bronze • Silver • Gold***. When utilized in group instruction, the levels work together in order to engage all students conceptually, while differentiating by ability level.

BRONZE

Grade 0.5 – 1.0

UNIT 1

Lesson	Meter	Key
1.1	4/4	B♭ Major
1.2	2/4	B♭ Major
1.3	3/4	G minor

Articulation Emphasis: Stacatto vs. Tenuto
Percussion: Single Stroke Rolls/Alternating Sticking

Rhythmic Patterns

Winds

Percussion

UNIT 2

Lesson	Meter	Key
2.1	4/4	E♭ Major
2.2	2/4	C minor
2.3	3/4	E♭ Major

Articulation Emphasis: Full value Dynamic Accents
Percussion: Open Double Stroke Rolls

Rhythmic Patterns

Winds

Percussion

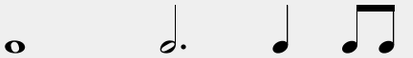
UNIT 3

Lesson	Meter	Key
3.1	4/4	F Major
3.2	2/4	F Major
3.3	3/4	D minor

Articulation Emphasis: Slur groupings
Percussion: Paradiddles

Rhythmic Patterns

Winds



Percussion

UNIT 4

Lesson	Meter	Key
4.1	4/4	C Major
4.2	2/4	F minor
4.3	3/4	A♭ Major

Articulation Emphasis: Advancing Slur groupings
Percussion: Flams

Rhythmic Patterns

Winds

Percussion

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Progression of Concept

Articulations, Rudiments & Rhythmic Patterns are introduced in these units at the ***Bronze*** level, but can show up again for review in ***Silver*** and ***Gold*** at any point. For example, in Lesson 1.1 Silver level, a Flam can be included as it would have been introduced for a given student in the Bronze level. In that sense, the "emphasized" concepts are progressive in nature from ***Bronze*** through ***Gold***.

SILVER **Grade 1.0 – 1.5**	**GOLD** **Grade 1.5 – 2.0+**	
Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	**UNIT 1**
Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	**UNIT 2**
Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	**UNIT 3**
Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	Rhythmic Patterns Winds Percussion	**UNIT 4**

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ABOUT UNITED SYSTEM FOR WINDS & PERCUSSION

While taking stock of my own public school instrumental music program, I recognized a need for two major things. For one, I needed a way to engage students of mixed instrumentation at varying ability levels in a united environment. While I was fortunate enough to have a pull-out group lesson program, the students were scheduled by available periods and not by instrument or ability level. I also needed a built-in, ready-to-go, plug-and-play system for reinforcing and revisiting fundamentals in a more progressive manner within a limited allotment of time. Essentially, I needed a "prescription" for infusing vital concepts related to intonation, rhythm reading, articulation, rudiments, scales, and key signature fluency in an efficient format on a consistent basis before moving on to solo or ensemble performance literature. After refining the format of each lesson, I realized that this concept could be applied to an ensemble setting or an individual lesson as well. The United System for Winds and Percussion was born from a need for greater flexibility and the realization that I, like so many instructors, would benefit from an easy-to-use tool to enhance student success.

This book has been carefully laid out to be progressive in nature as students advance through the Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. Each unit and lesson allows the instructor to focus the attention of groups that range in size from small to large. I have found that students gain extra motivation as they work to rise through the ranks. This system also encourages independence, much like chamber music might as players of the same instrument often find themselves sitting next to players of a different level and must be confident and self-supporting. I am thankful for the wonderful feedback and suggestions received from teachers around the country during the process of putting together this resource and I remain particularly grateful to my long-time colleague and friend, Carl Sabatino, for his invaluable contributions. Thanks also to Tyler Arcari, Larry Clark and everyone at Wingert-Jones Publications and Excelcia Music Publishing for believing in this project. I hope this book fills a void for many programs that face any number of variables when designing instructional time. It is also my intent that individual students find the framework consistent, constructive, and encouraging as they grow as musicians.

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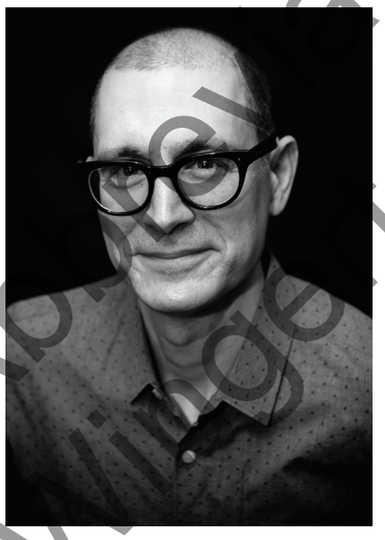
PETER SCIAINO



Peter Sciaino (b.1975) is a passionate music educator and composer of spirited band and orchestra music for all levels. He is currently published with Alfred Music, C.L. Barnhouse Company, C. Alan Publications, Carl Fischer Music, Excelcia Music Publishing, RWS Music Company and Wingert-Jones Publications in the United States and Hafabra Music in Europe. Additionally, Peter has had music selected to Bandworld Magazine's Top 100, J.W. Pepper's Editors' Choice and various state assessment lists.

Peter holds a BM from Syracuse University in Music Education and an MA from New York University in Music Composition. An instrumental music teacher at Whippany Park High School (NJ) for over 20 years, he directs both the concert band and jazz ensemble while co-directing the marching band and teaching AP Music Theory.

Peter writes and arranges music for marching bands, jazz ensembles, and chamber ensembles in addition to his work with symphonic groups. He also serves as a clinician and guest conductor and accepts commissions for original work.

His professional affiliations include ASCAP, NAfME, and NJMEA. Peter resides in New Jersey with his wife, Beth, and two children, Phoebe and David.

FOCUS GUIDE

Lessons 1.1 – 1.3

About these Exercises

The following exercises contained within United Lesson 1 focus on the key of Concert Bb Major and, alternatively, Concert G minor. Each of the lessons (1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) use the format detailed on the unit progression page while progressing not only in rigor, but through time signatures.

A - Long Tones

Throughout United, this exercise can act as a warm-up as well as an entryway towards a unified ensemble sound. For brass and woodwind players, a steady tone and blended sound is a great starting point! Once there is consistency in this area, these students can be directed to focus on intonation. Similarly, percussionists should use these exercises as a warm up while finding balance (in terms of dynamics) and control (in terms of sticking).

B - Scale/Technical Study

Exercise B of 1.1 is an approachable group scale for all levels. Bronze players are asked to play the first five notes of the Bb Major scale, Silver players are asked to play a full octave ascending scale, and Gold players are asked to play a full octave scale both ascending and descending with greater pace. Exercise B for both 1.2 and 1.3 are “technical exercises” as students become more comfortable playing within the given key. They have reasonable rhythmic demands so you should encourage ensemble unity in terms of tempo, balance and tone. Yes, percussionists also need to play with a good tone!

C - Articulation

Exercise C introduces the staccato vs. tenuto for Bronze and reinforces this concept at the Silver and Gold levels. Emphasizing that staccato notes have “space” while the tenuto notes are “full value” is a good starting point. Percussion demands for this study include more rests than the previous two as the parts develop towards the etudes that follow.

D & E - Technical & Lyrical Etudes

Tempi are provided for these studies as a general guideline. You can apply rehearsal concepts related to Chorales for all of the Exercise D examples while the Exercise E examples reflect a trio or chamber ensemble setting. Both etudes in 1.3 provide an excellent opportunity to review accidentals for the Silver and Gold students. Percussionists at all levels have unified rhythmic ideas throughout however Silver and Gold students are often asked to play more intricate interior rhythms and techniques. Having the Bronze, Silver or Gold play separately on occasion is a good way to differentiate their success.

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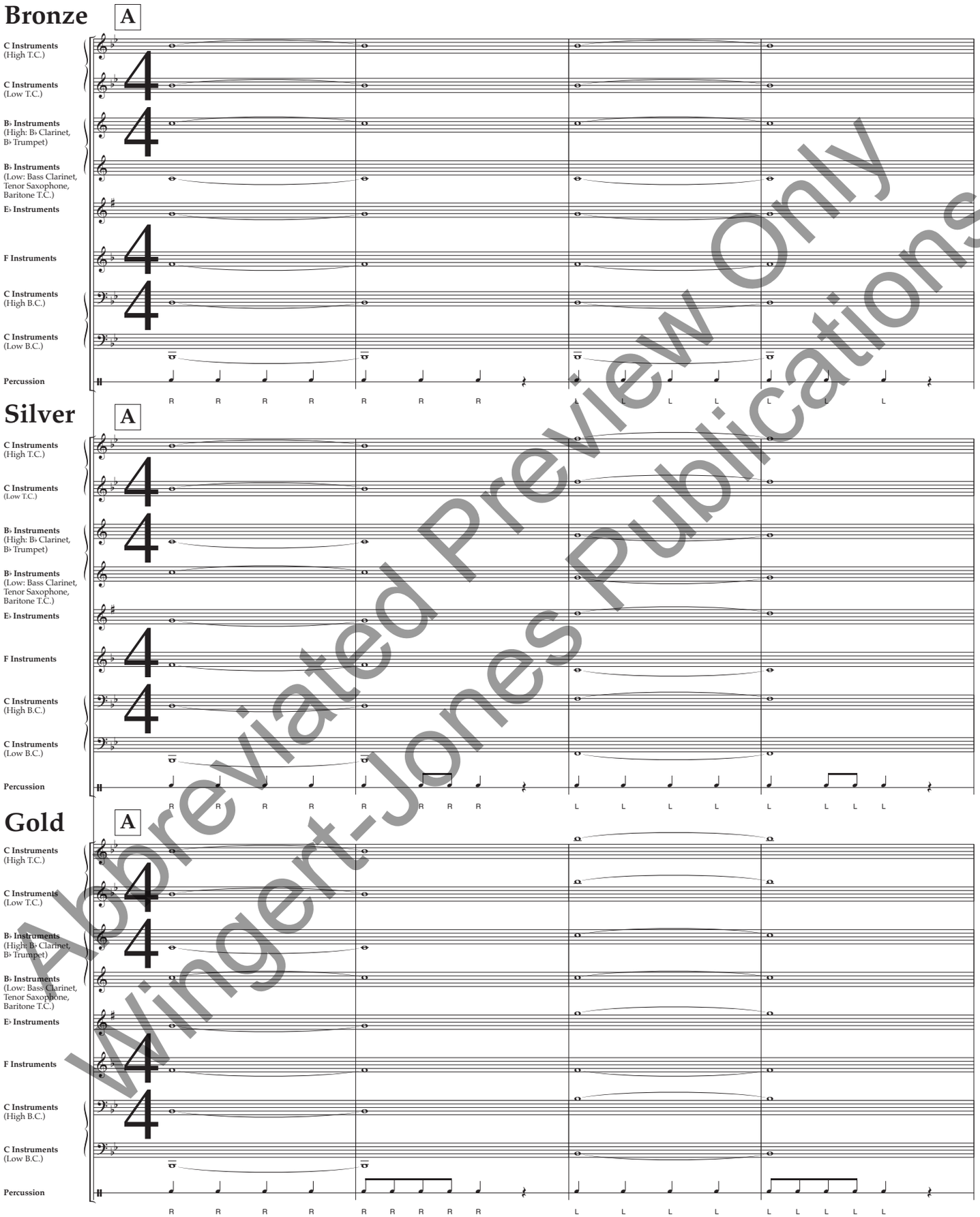
Bronze student page: 3
Silver student page: 16
Gold student page: 29

Lesson 1.1

A - Long Tones
(B♭ Major)

Bronze



Silver

Gold

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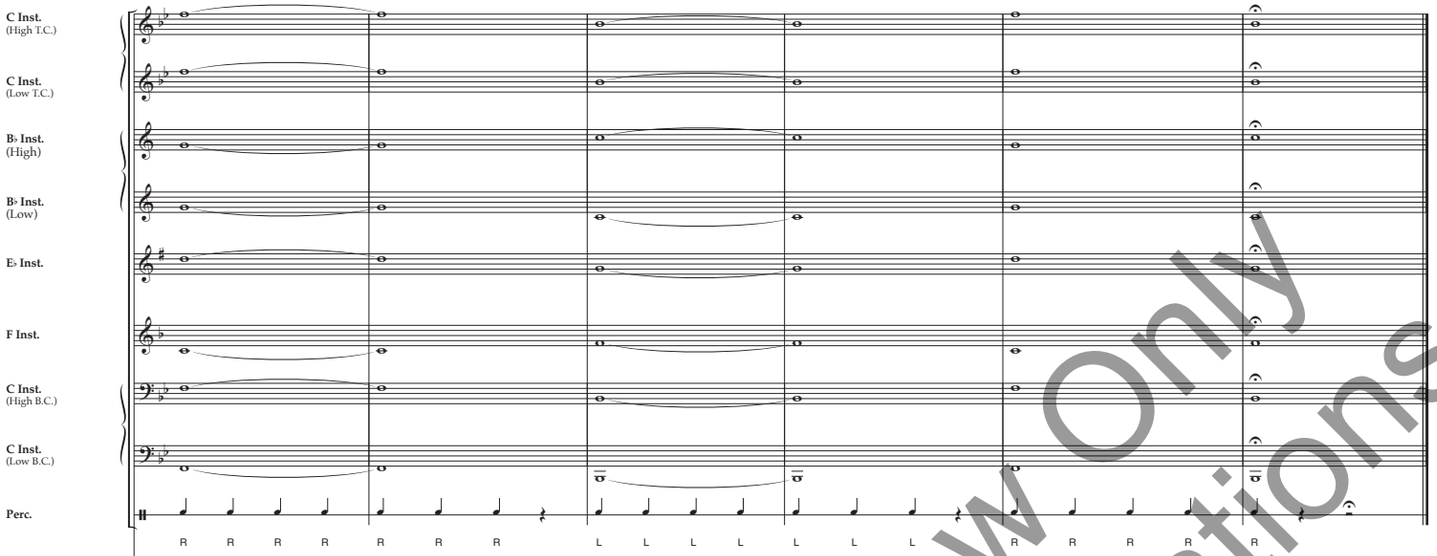
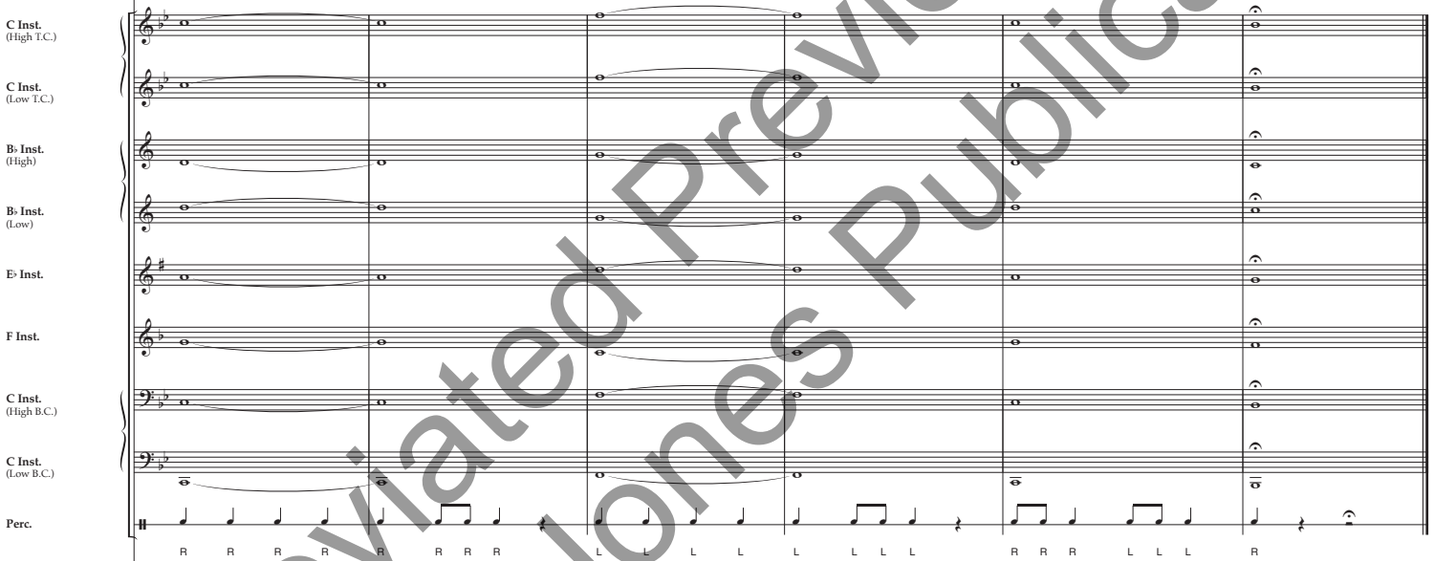
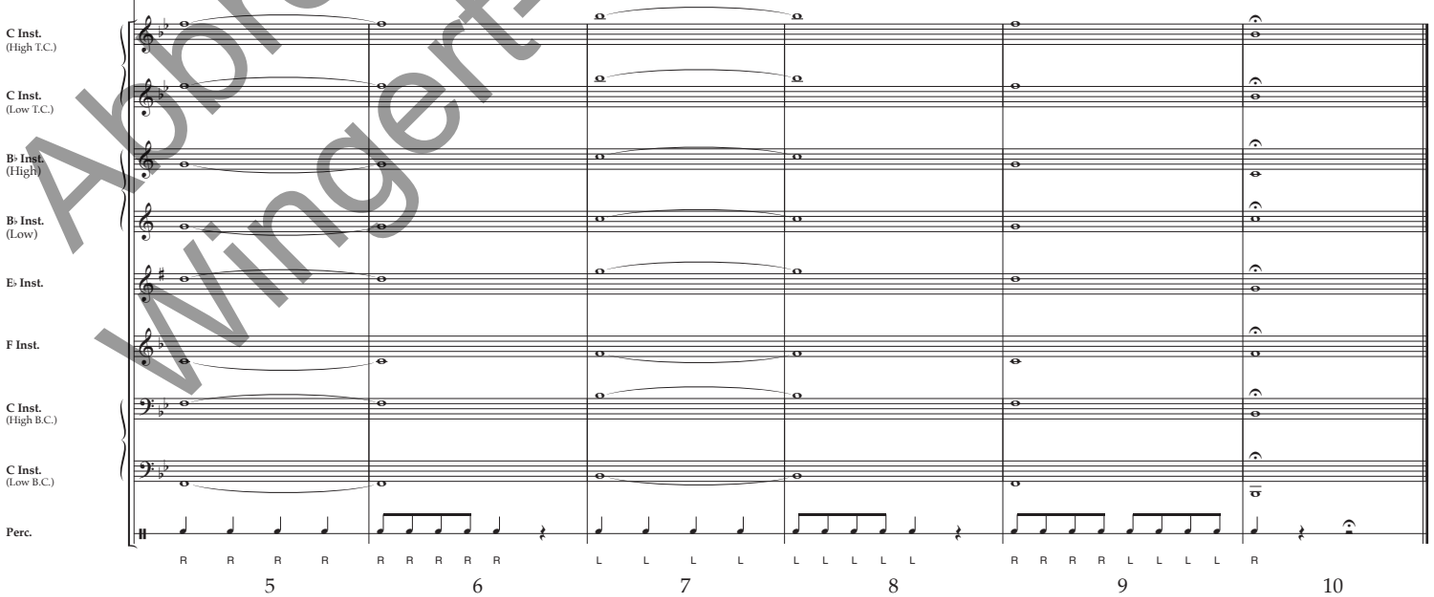
Bronze



Silver



Gold



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FOCUS GUIDE

Lessons 2.1 – 2.3

About these Exercises

The following exercises contained within United Lesson 2 focus on the key of Concert Eb Major and, alternatively, Concert C minor. Each of the lessons (2.1, 2.2 & 2.3) use the format detailed on the unit progression page while, again, progressing in rigor and through time signatures. Since rolls are emphasized in Percussion parts, make sure to review how to interpret tied notes with your Bronze students.

A - Long Tones

Your students should continue to focus on tone, blend and intonation. Typically, the Bronze players have the most reasonable "steps, skips and leaps,'" in terms of intervallic movement from note-to-note while Silver and Gold players will often be challenged to maintain their focus while encountering larger intervals between the long tones. The Percussion parts should be seen through the lens of preparing students to play rolls successfully. Bronze players start with buzz rolls while Silver and Gold players play open rolls as written.

B - Scale/Technical Study

Exercise B in 2.1 utilizes the same format as Exercise B in 1.1 but in the new key. In this Unit, the minor key lesson is now 2.2 and therefore written in 2/4 time providing further variation. Notice how 2.2 B more resembles a minor scale study than a technical exercise. The harmonic minor variation of the scale is also included and can be an opportunity for you to cover concepts related to music theory.

C - Articulation

Bronze students will build on the previous unit right away as full value accented notes are added to staccato and tenuto concepts. Exercise C in 2.1 requires a robust assortment of attacks at the Silver and Gold levels but are often organized by measure for rehearsal purposes. If a particular concept is not meeting standards try looping a given measure and then inserting it back into the full exercise.

D & E - Technical & Lyrical Etudes

Because Exercises D & E are meant to be the place where it all "comes together" it is important to remind your students that these are musical passages. The etudes in this unit demand considerable dynamic contrast and variation in articulation. One of my favorite things to cover is how accented notes are not always loud but are always emphasized. Try this idea while working on 2.2 D when a "mp" dynamic is applied to the full value accented notes.

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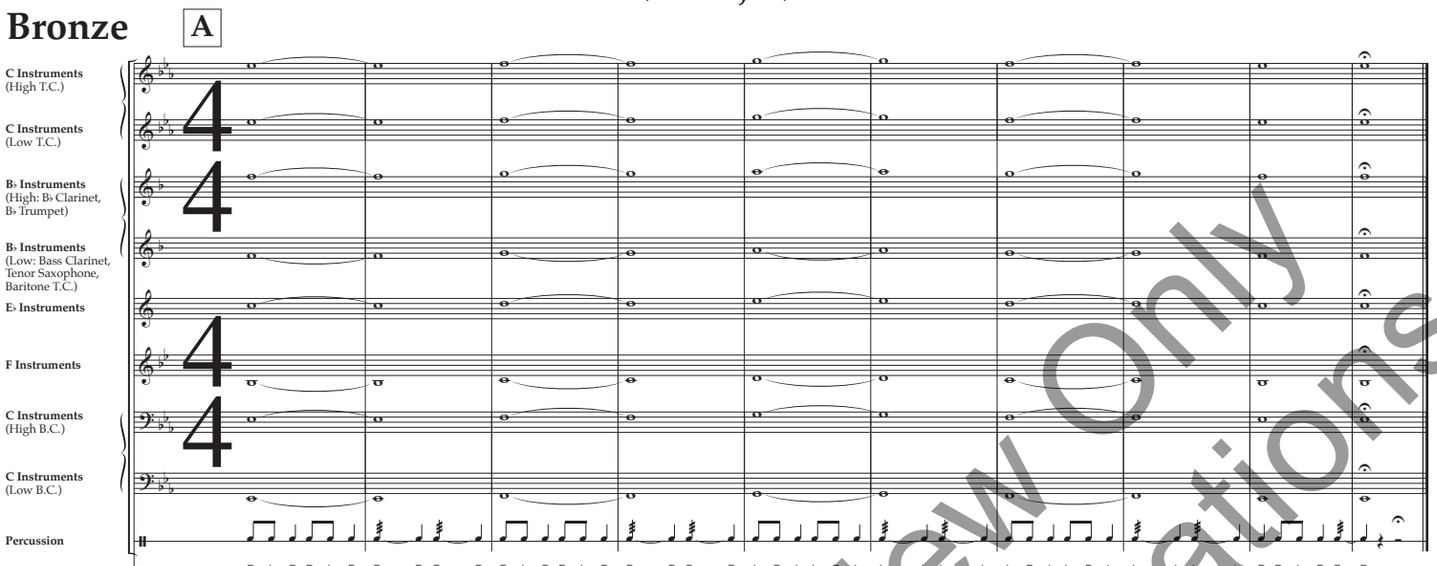
Bronze student page: 6
Silver student page: 19
Gold student page: 32

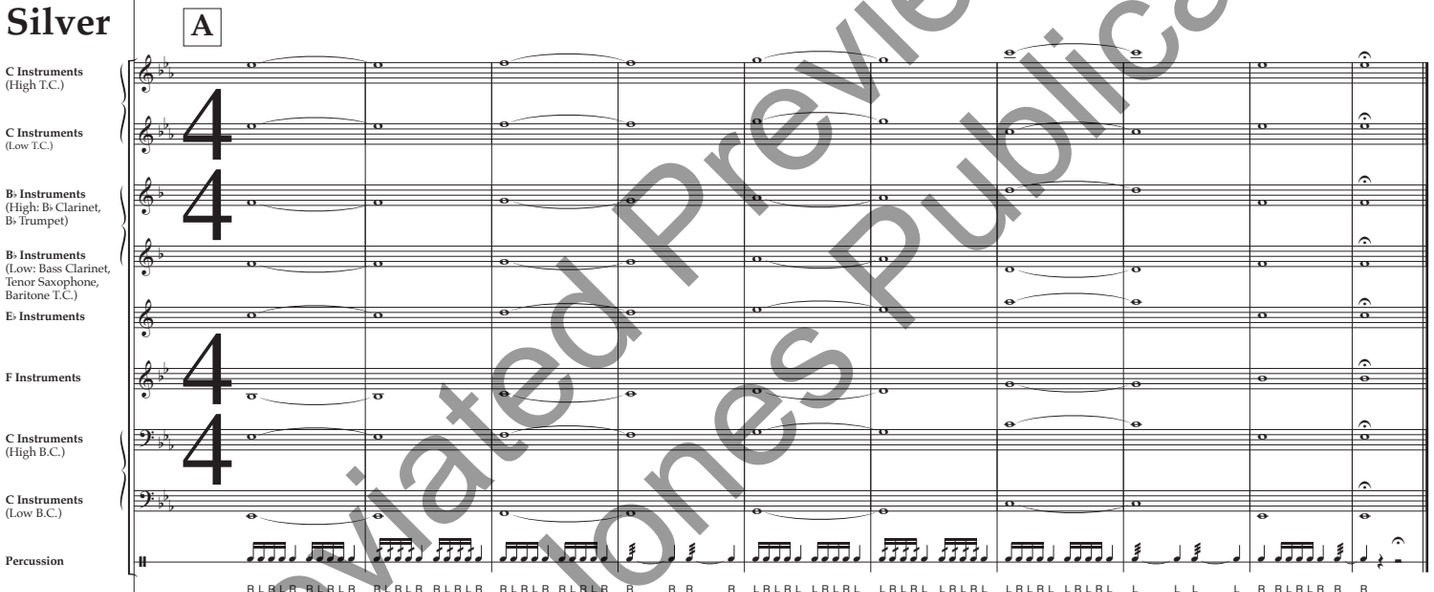
Lesson 2.1

A - Long Tones
(E♭ Major)

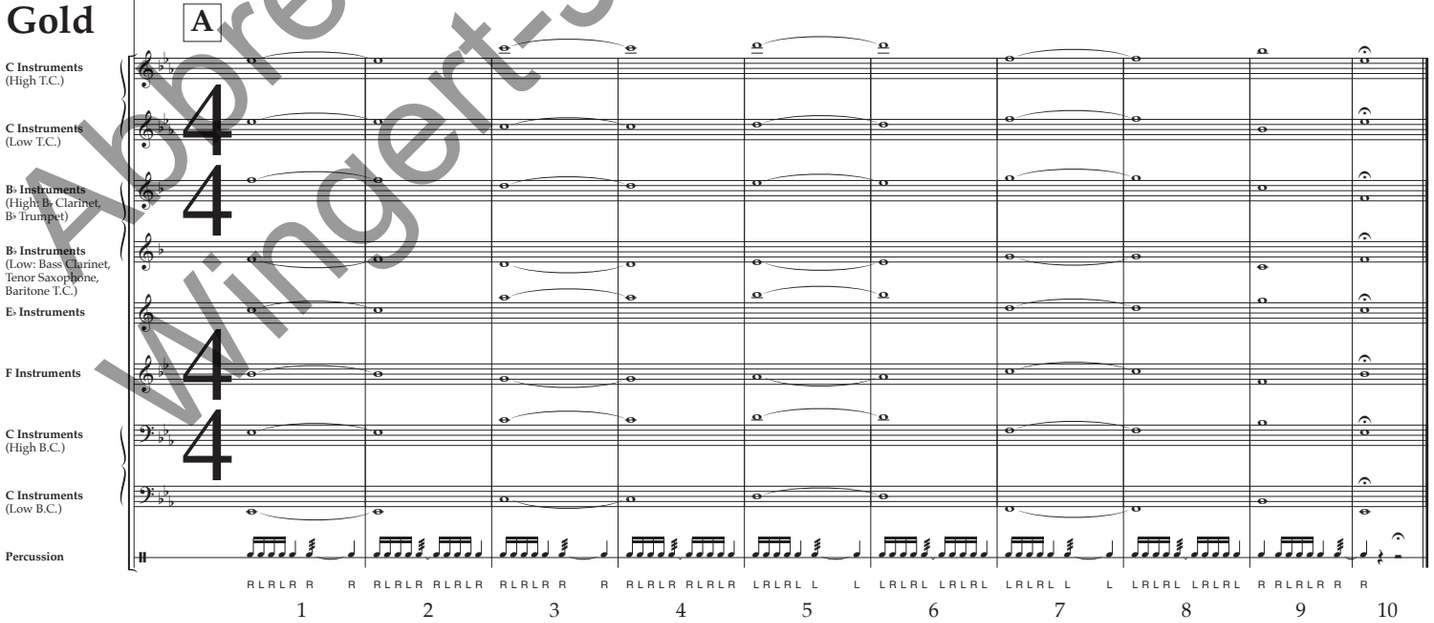
Bronze



Silver



Gold



Abbreviated Preview Only
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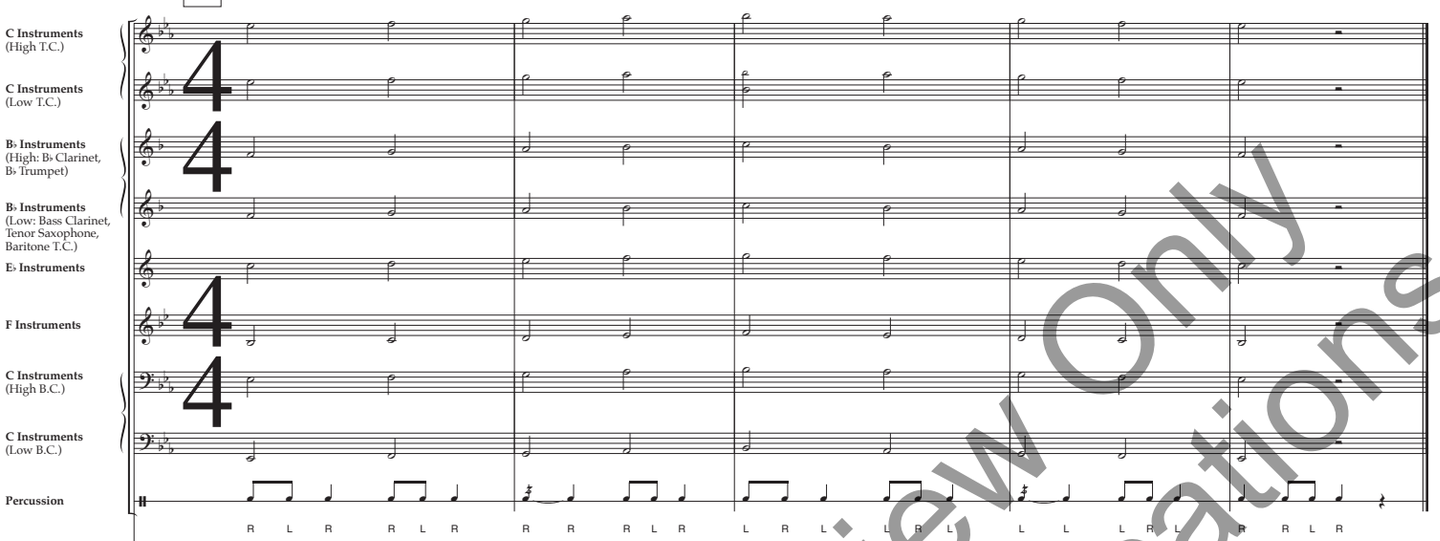
Bronze student page: 6
Silver student page: 19
Gold student page: 32

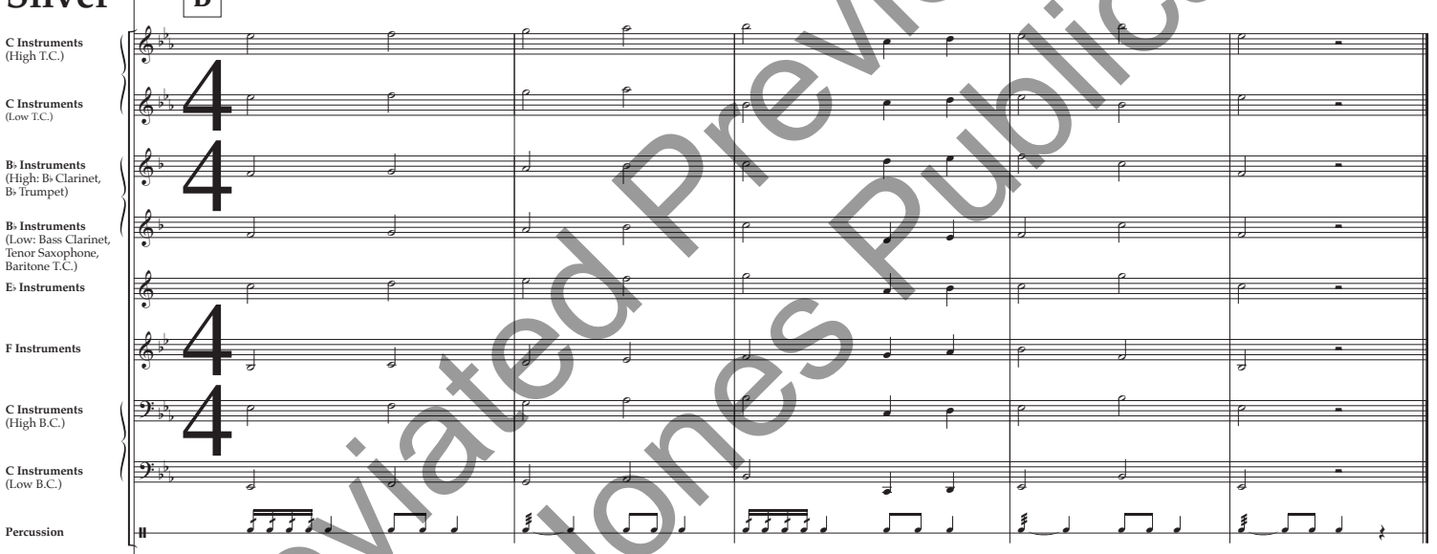
Lesson 2.1

B - Scale / Technical Exercise
(E♭ Major)

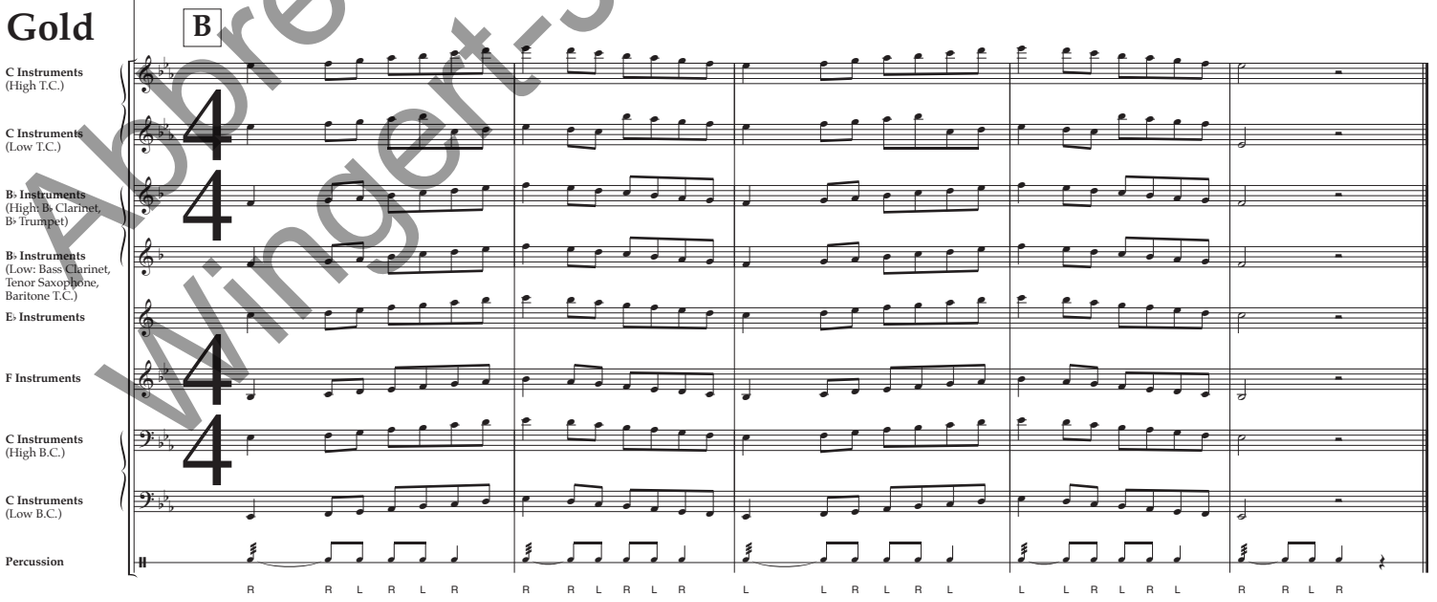
Bronze



Silver



Gold



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FOCUS GUIDE

Lessons 3.1 – 3.3

About these Exercises

The following exercises contained within United Lesson 3 focus on the key of Concert F Major and, alternatively, Concert D minor. Each of the lessons (3.1, 3.2 & 3.3) use the format detailed on the unit progression page while, again, progressing in rigor and through time signatures. Paradiddles are introduced at the Bronze level for percussionists and emphasized at the advancing levels.

A - Long Tones

Since the Long Tone exercises include harmony from time to time, it is a good idea to point out which level is responsible for the opening and closing tonic. For example in 3.1 A where the Silver students begin on concert F and the Bronze students end on concert F. Identifying the moving tonic of the chord can be an advancing concept to consider as you work through these studies to encourage listening and proper tuning concepts.

B - Scale/Technical Study

You will notice that Exercise B in 3.1 is similar to Exercise B in 1.1 but now in the key of D minor. The other main difference is that Bronze and Silver parts will emphasize slurring. I find that this can be a moment to remind students of the importance of air support as slurred passages tend to make deficiencies in this area very obvious. I find paradiddles to be an excellent avenue for reminding students to use appropriate stick heights and focus on greater control. Even when all levels are playing simultaneously this can still be easily identified and addressed. Also of note, 3.3 introduces double paradiddles for Bronze.

C - Articulation

As mentioned above, students may struggle with slurred phrases if air support is insufficient. If this is stressed with your Bronze players it can save you a lot of time down the road! Exercise C in 3.1 and 3.3 provide the best opportunity for this.

D & E - Technical & Lyrical Etudes

Specific stickings are usually not included in the Percussion parts for these etudes in order to encourage students to apply previously rehearsed concepts to the etudes. This independence will help their reading comprehension development. That said, there are exceptions in this unit so paradiddles aren't neglected! Percussionists on the Bronze level will also see double stroke rolls which can be substituted with buzz rolls if needed.

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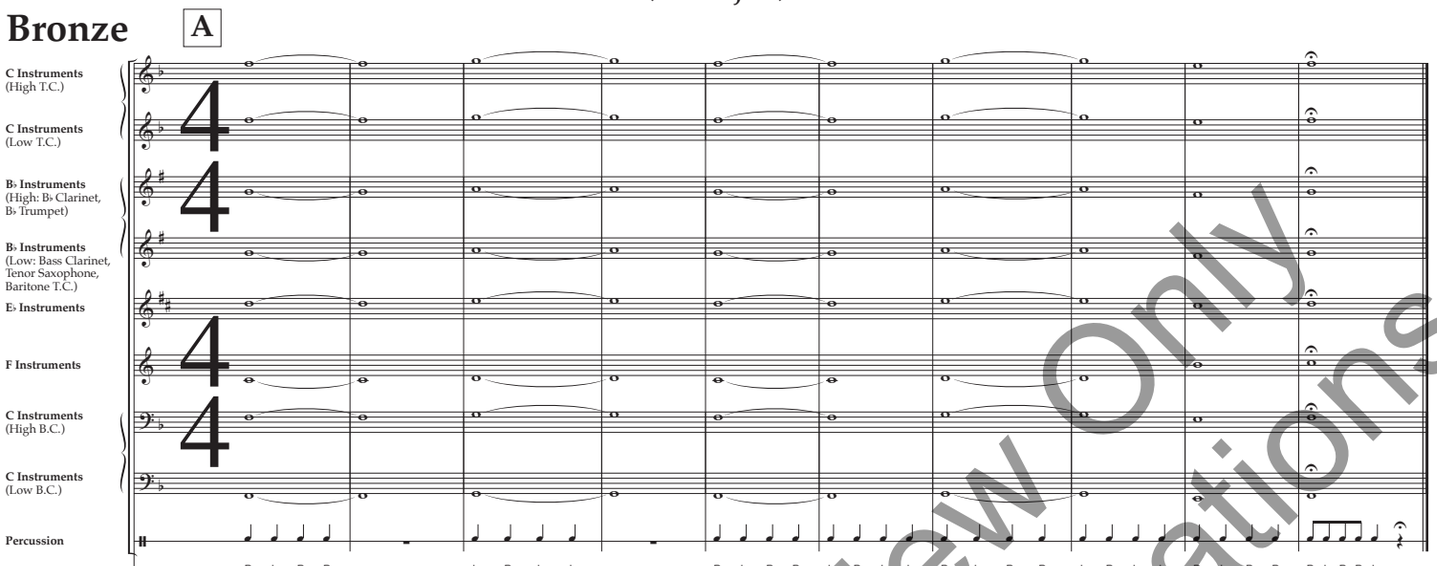
Bronze student page: 9
Silver student page: 22
Gold student page: 35

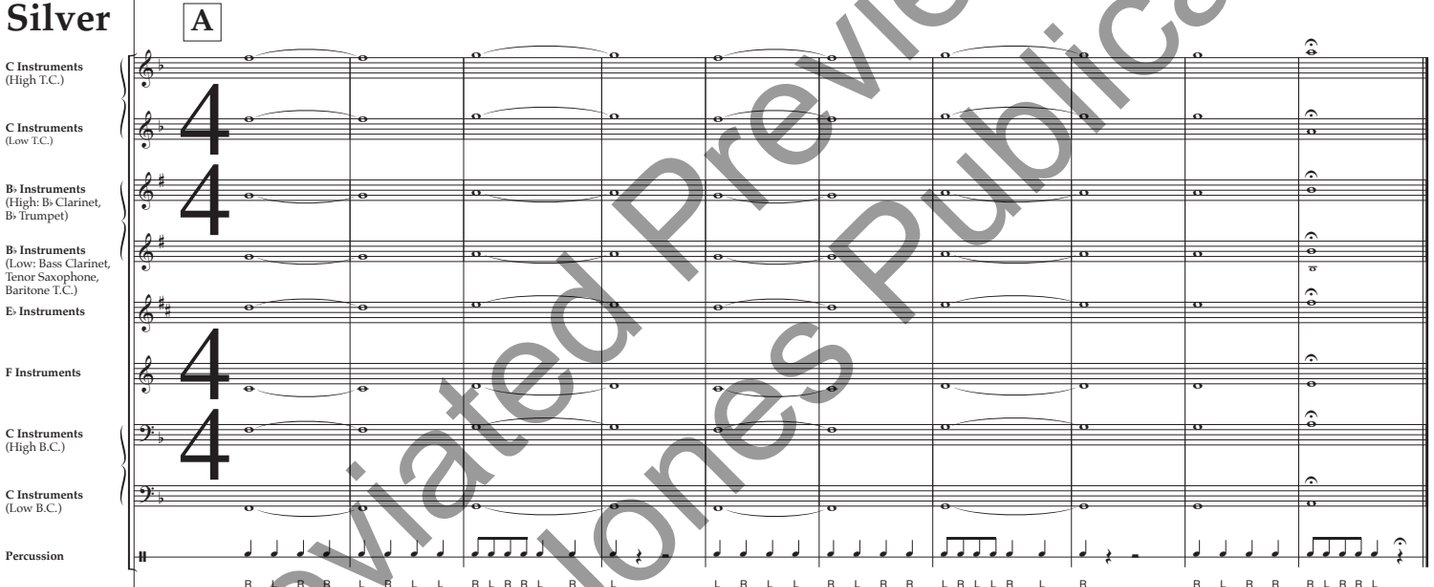
Lesson 3.1

A - Long Tones
(F Major)

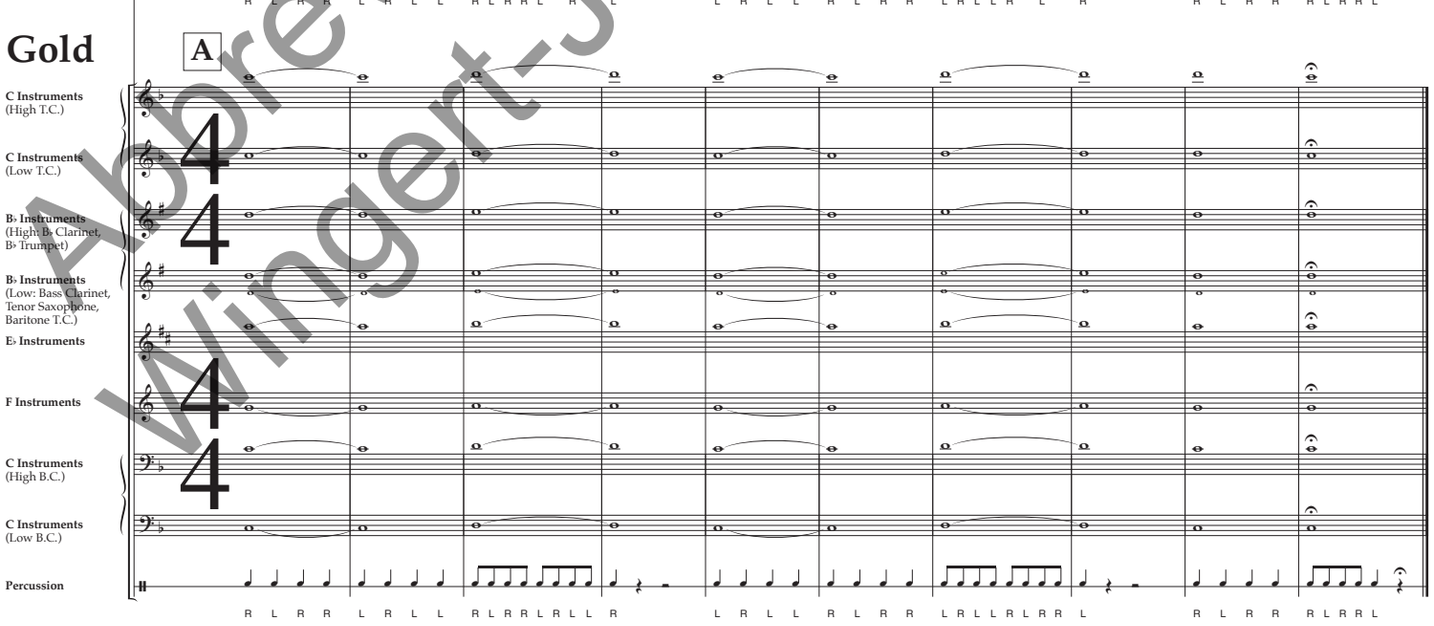
Bronze



Silver



Gold



Abbreviated Preview Only
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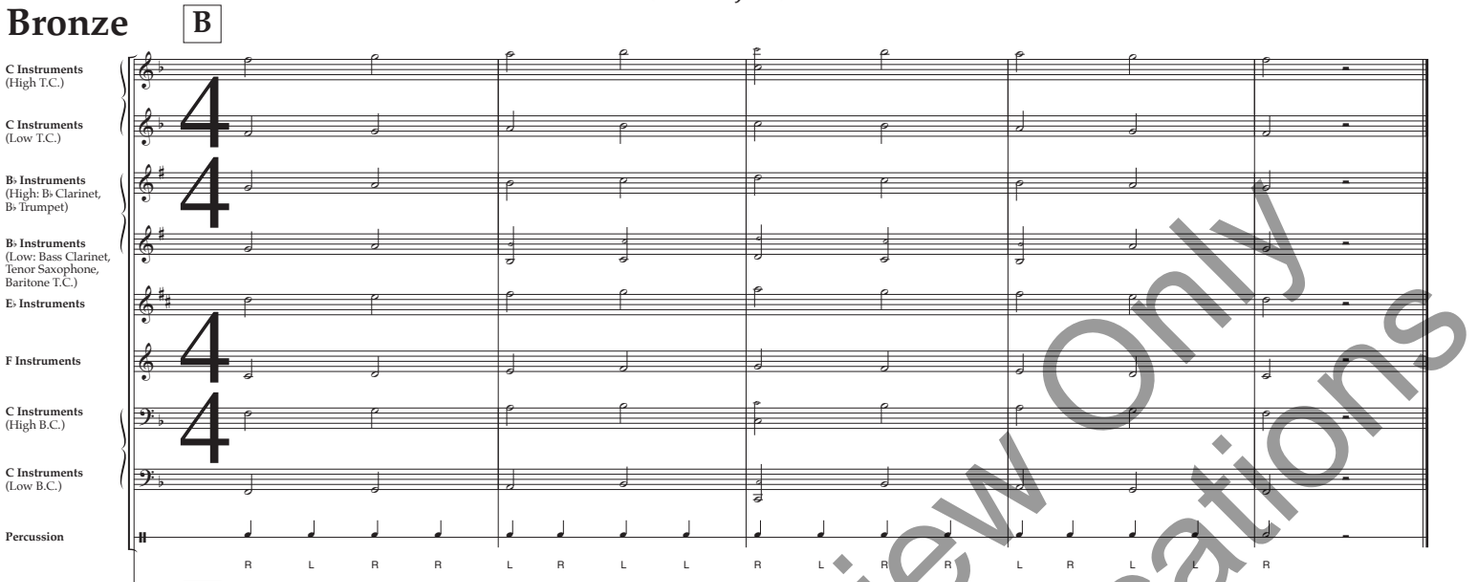
Bronze student page: 9
Silver student page: 22
Gold student page: 35

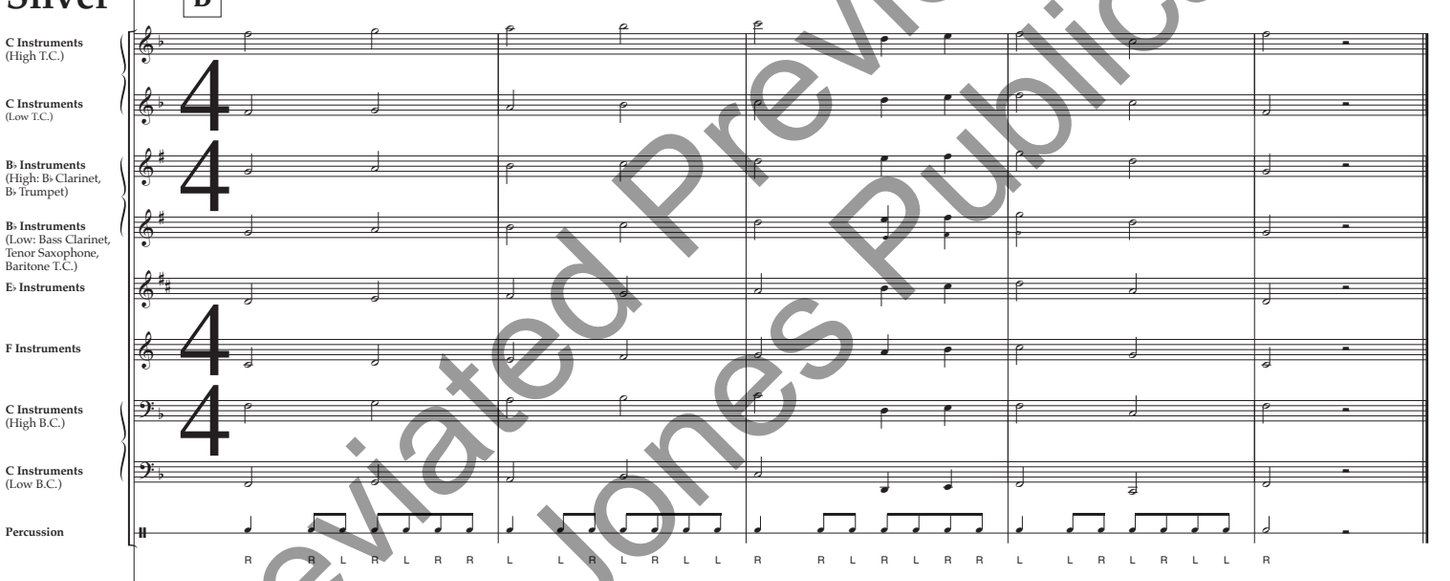
Lesson 3.1

B - Scale / Technical Exercise
(F Major)

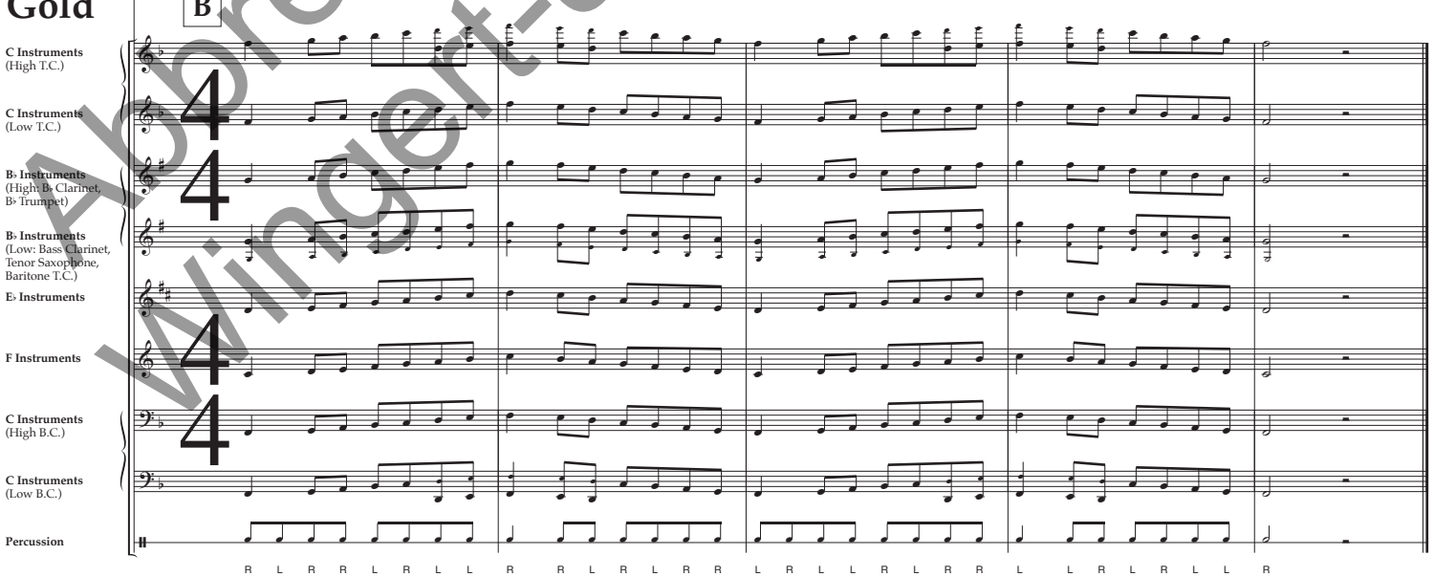
Bronze



Silver



Gold



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FOCUS GUIDE

Lessons 4.1 – 4.3

About these Exercises

The following exercises contained within United Lesson 4 include lessons in the keys of Concert C Major (4.1), Concert F minor (4.2) and Concert Ab Major (4.3) while progressing through time signatures. The variety of keys in this unit provide more options while not over emphasizing keys that aren't as common as those covered in the first three units. Flams are introduced at the Bronze level for percussionists and emphasized at the advancing levels.

A - Long Tones

When beginning the C Major exercises presented in 4.1 you might consider revisiting and applying basic tuning concepts in this key where greater intonation challenges are present. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce or inforce using the third valve slide, compensating valves or trombone triggers if available to your brass players. Dial in the intonation of the opening measure's unison concert C and set expectations!

B - Scale/Technical Study

These three exercises have been carefully crafted to expose younger and advancing students to these extended key signatures while keeping expectations reasonable. At the Bronze level this is especially the case. That said, checking note accuracy separately by level as you begin the process is recommended so students don't practice incorrect notes.

C - Articulation

This unit essentially combines all articulation concepts learned and reinforced while providing alternative challenges. Exercise C in 4.1 for Gold students has slur groupings of various lengths alternating with staccato notes. This is an opportunity to revisit the concept of space between notes to avoid rushing these segments.

D & E - Technical & Lyrical Etudes

These studies provide some of the greatest challenges of the book for students of all levels. How your students navigate this combination of key centers, rhythmic demand and intricacy of articulation can be a good indicator of their readiness for the next level (Bronze to Silver or Silver to Gold). Make sure your students are hitting all of the checkpoints regarding tone, technical facility and musicality (articulation, dynamics, phrasing) and remediate as necessary. You may also consider having them play one of these etudes as an "audition" to pass a level. The opportunity to "move up" to the next level can be a great motivator for students!

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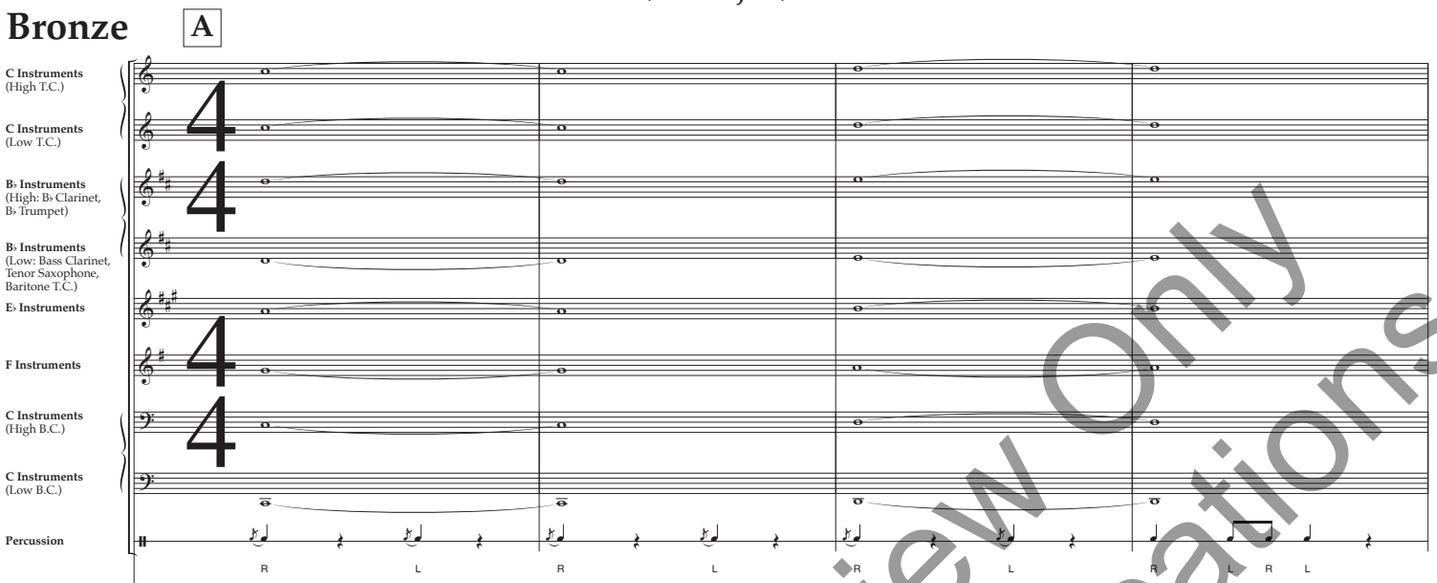
Bronze student page: 12
Silver student page: 25
Gold student page: 38

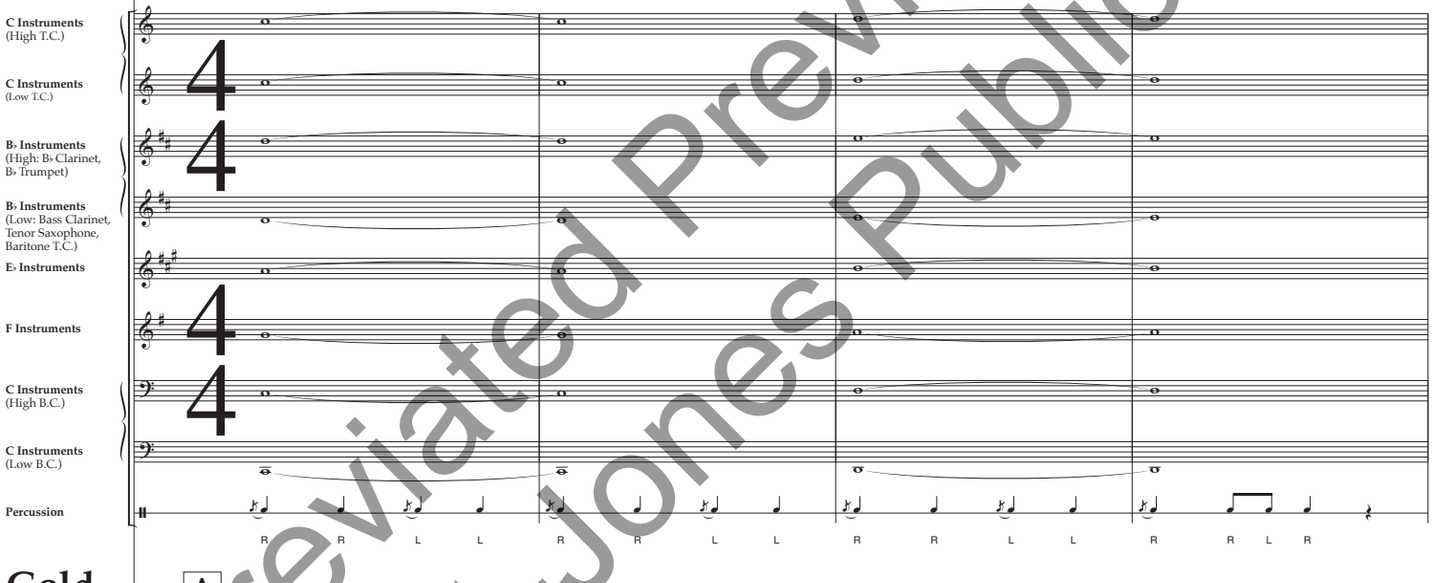
Lesson 4.1

A - Long Tones
(C Major)

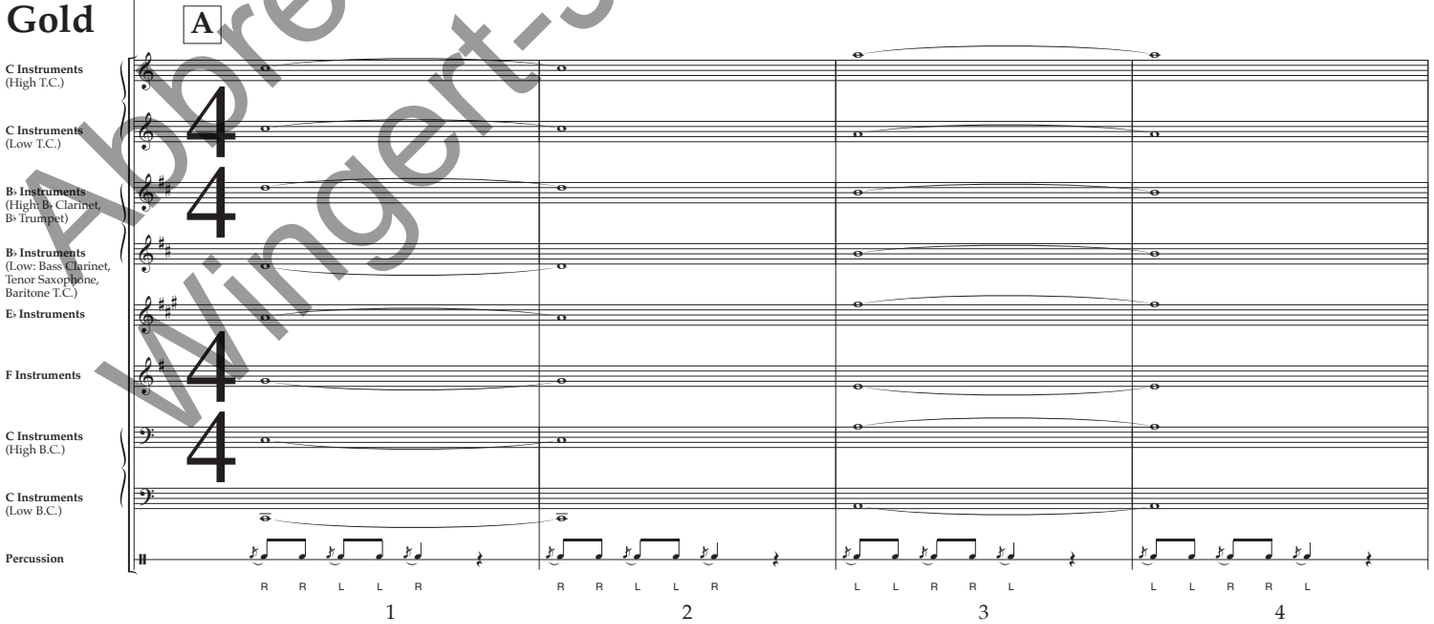
Bronze



Silver



Gold



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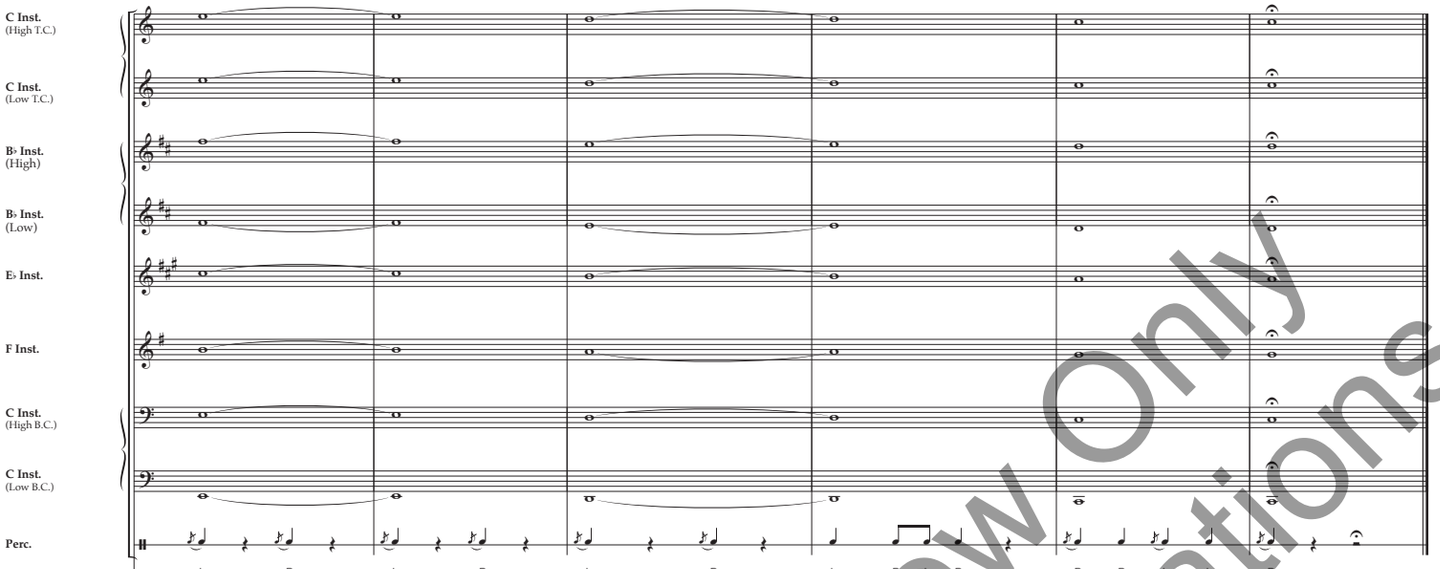
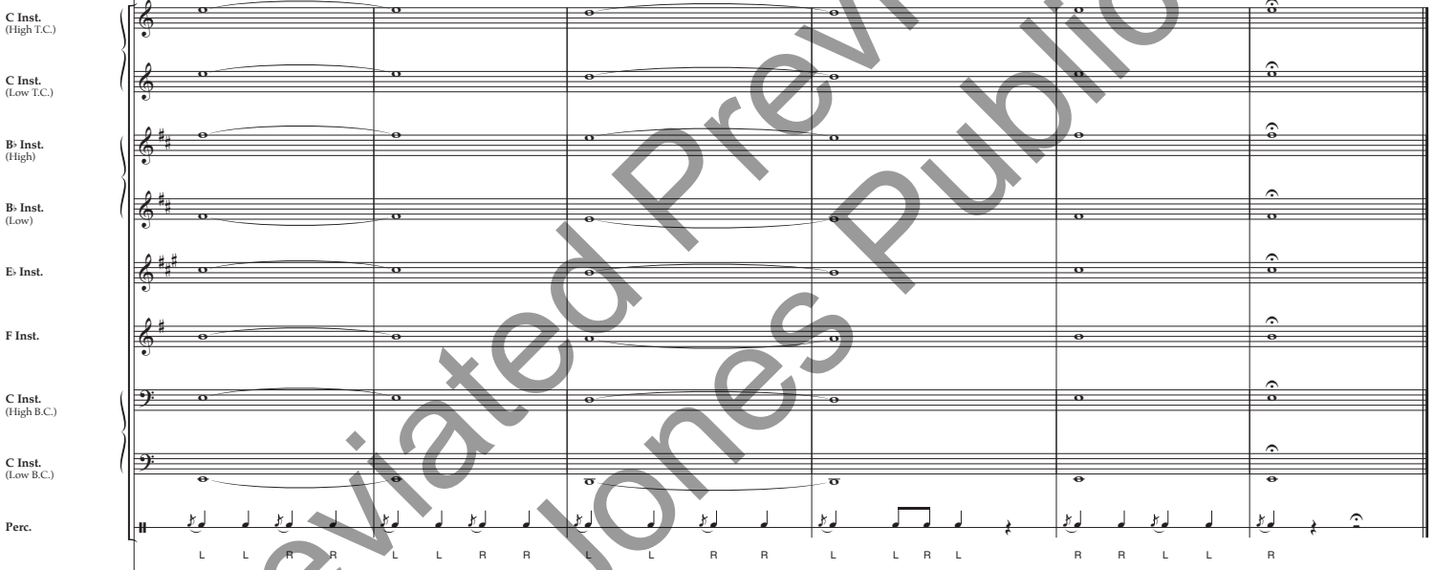
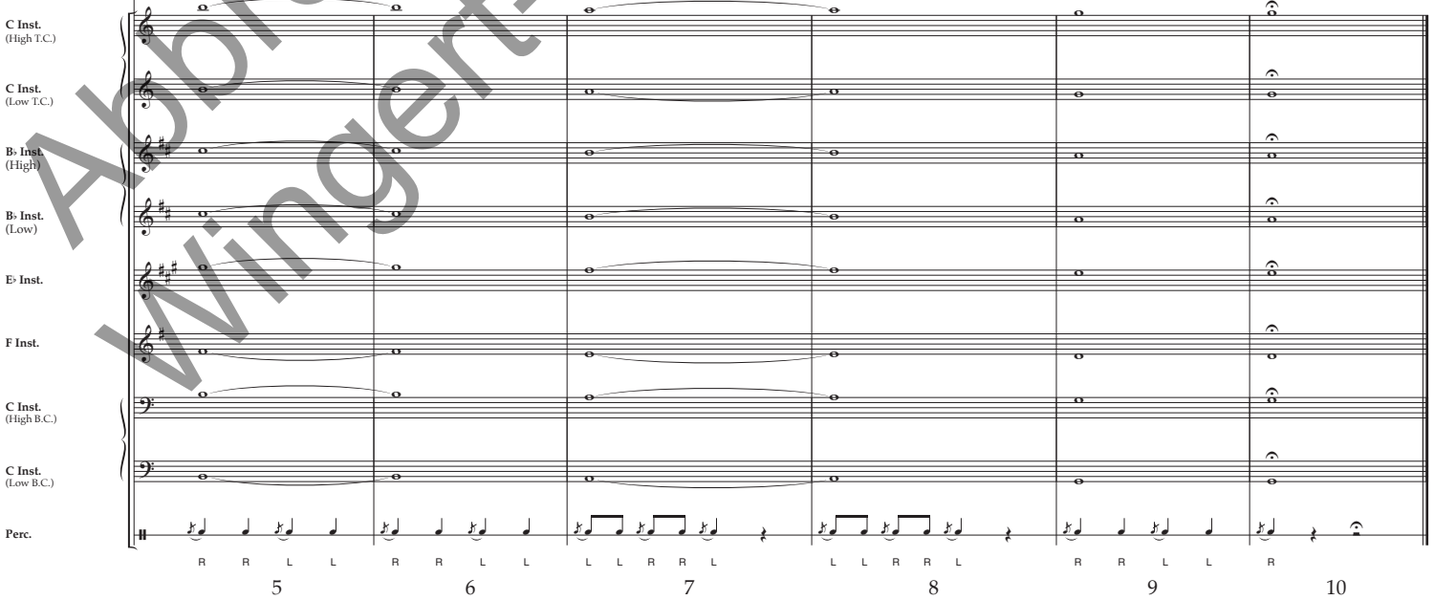
Bronze



Silver



Gold



Abbreviated Preview Only
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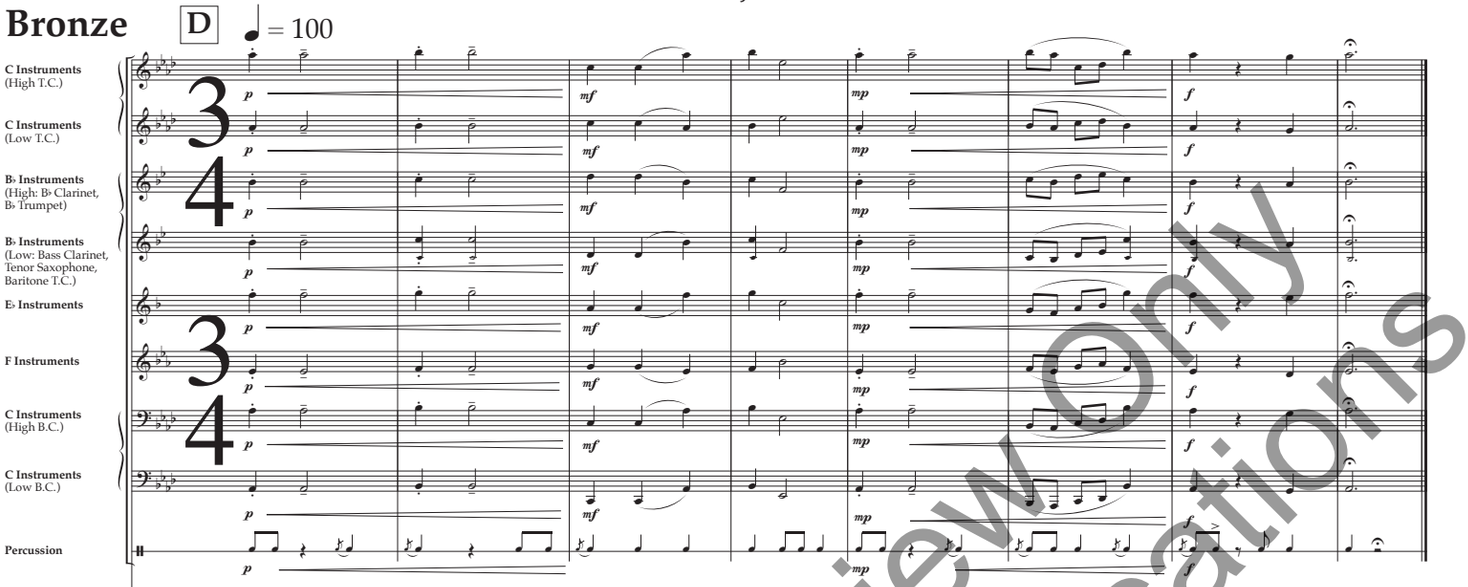
Lesson 4.3

D - Etude / Chamber Piece (Technical)

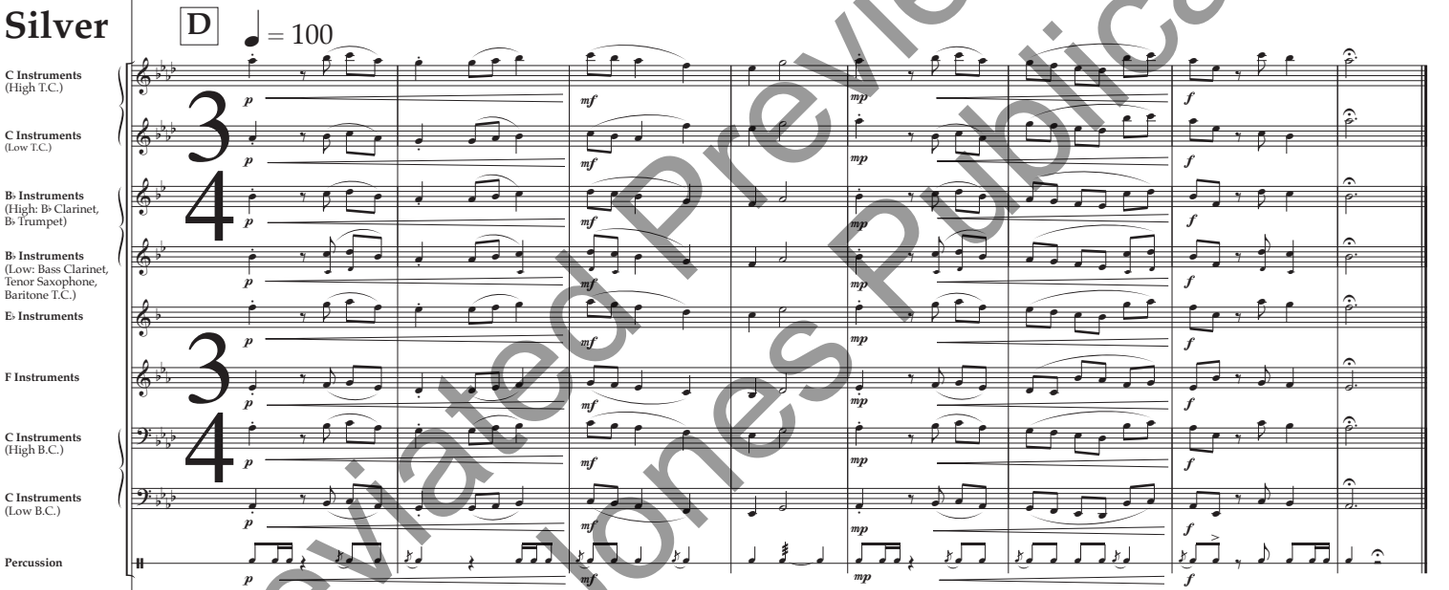
(A♭ Major)

Bronze student page: 14
Silver student page: 27
Gold student page: 40

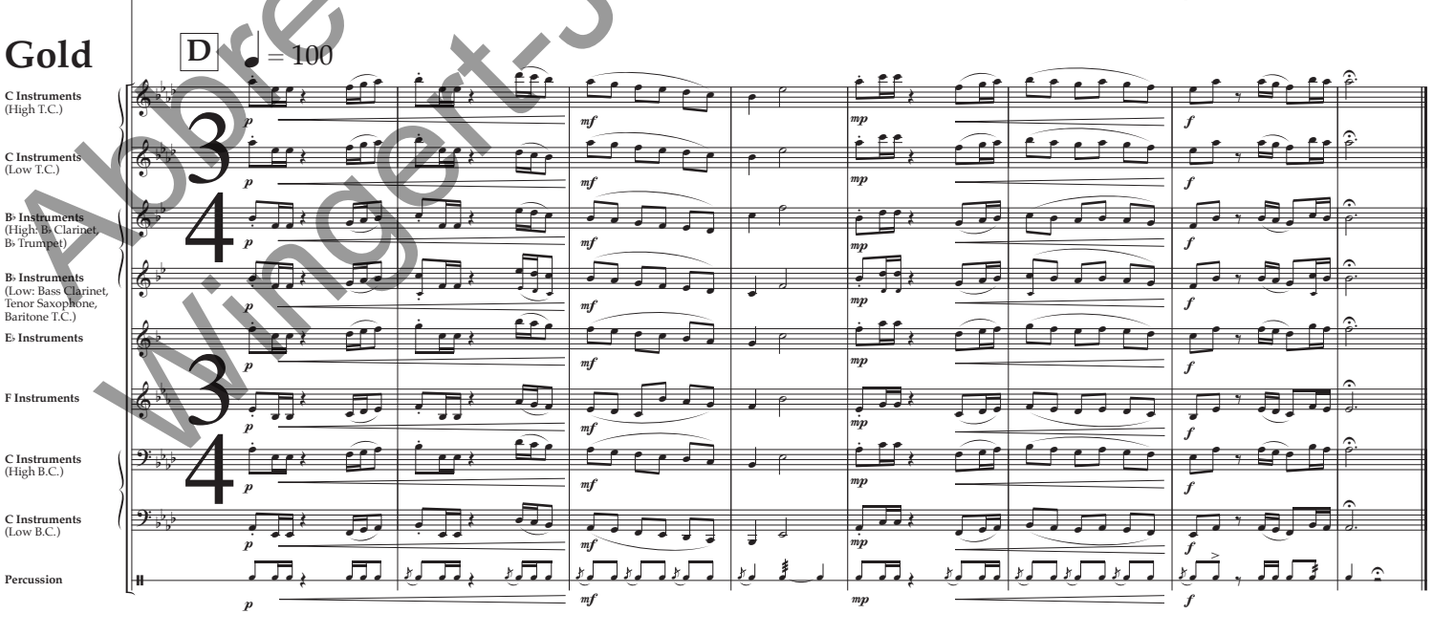
Bronze



Silver



Gold



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