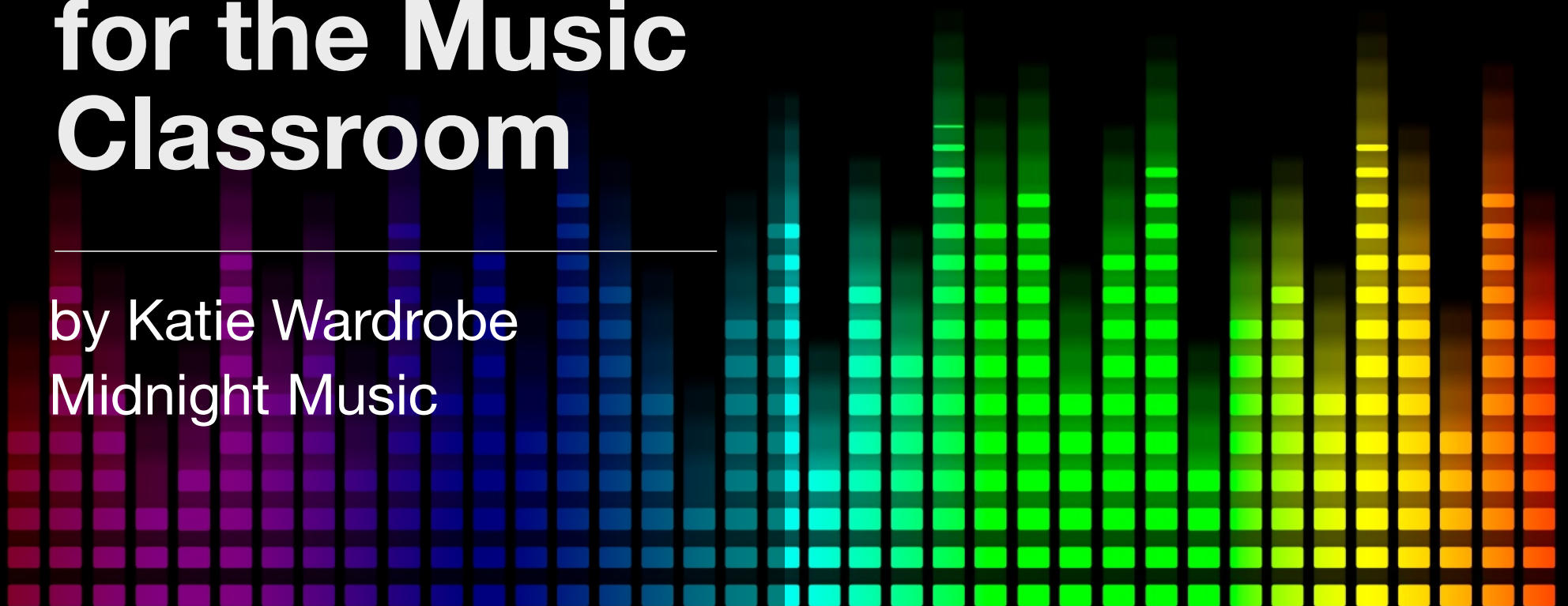

iPad Projects for the Music Classroom

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Midnight Music

Sample project



Project 16

Transforming the Blues

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Objective

To create a unique 12 bar blues arrangement and record a blues solo

Musical elements

Playing the blues chord sequence, improvising using the blues scale

Technology skills

Multitrack recording

Suggested ages

Grades 5-8

iPad access options

1:1 iPads or 1 per small group

Time needed

2-3 lessons

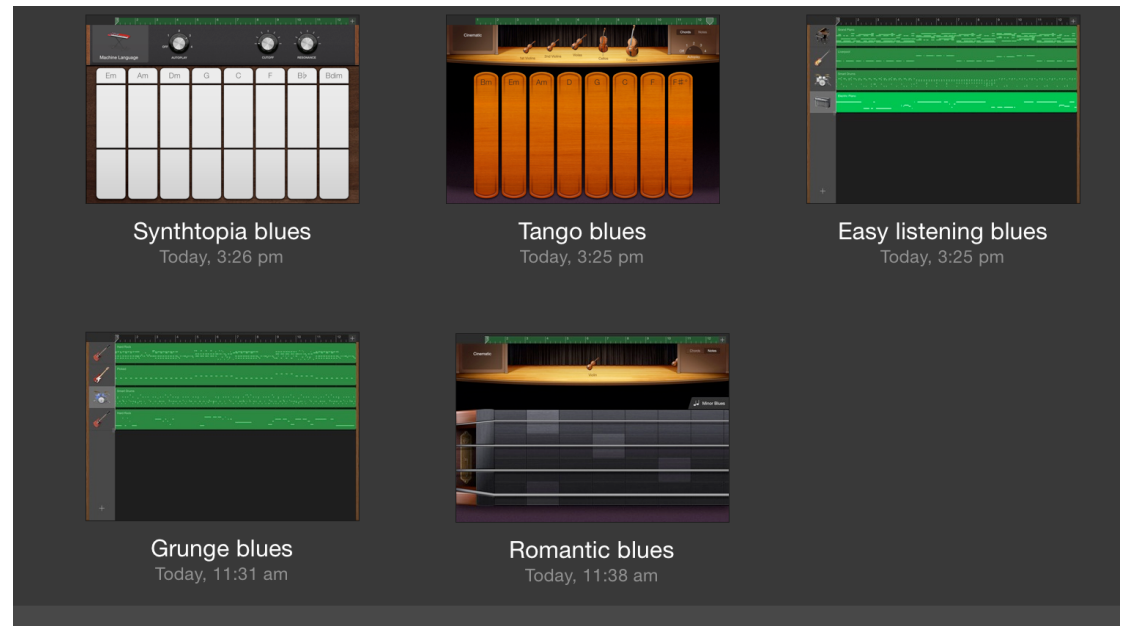
App required

GarageBand (with in-app purchase)

INTRODUCTION

In this project, students will transform the 12 bar blues into a tango, a love story theme, a grunge anthem, or any other unique style they can think of.

Using the GarageBand Smart Instruments and the Autoplay function, they will put together three different tracks to create an accompaniment and then add an improvised solo over the top.



Step-by-step

Preparation

This project assumes that the students have already learnt and played the 12 bar blues previously in class.

The idea is that students will create their own **unique** blues backing track with three parts and then record a blues solo over the top.

The instructions below are for one example - a Tango blues - using the Smart Strings. Some other example “recipes” are given as well - for blues in a grunge style, a romantic style and a synth-dance style - but students are encouraged to create a blues backing in any style they like. They can experiment with the Smart Instruments (the ones with the cog around the instrument icon) and the auto-play function to come up with their own style.

Creating the Tango Blues - setup

1. Open GarageBand and create a new project
2. Select the Smart Strings
3. Go to the **Song Settings** menu and set the tempo to 100 BPM and the key to G major
4. Tap on the **Song Sections** button (+) at the top right of the screen. Next to Manual, change the number of bars to 12

Recording the strings

1. Using the **default Cinematic** string sound, tap on the first setting on the Autoplay dial and then tap on the G chord strip. A tango-style pattern should play. You can change chords by tapping on a different chord strip (Fig.16.1)



Fig. 16.1 The chords view of the Smart Strings

2. Practice! Before recording, practice playing the 12 bar blues pattern:

G	G	G	G	
C	C	G	G	
D	C	G	G	

If you have a class set of iPads, you can practice this as a class ensemble

Once you are comfortable playing the 12 bar blues sequence, get ready to record!

3. Tap the red **Record** button at the top of the screen. The metronome will play a 4-beat count-in and then you can record your 12 bar blues sequence using the G, C and D chord strips

Tip: when using the Autoplay function it's best to tap on each chord strip slightly ahead of the beat so that the chord changes at precisely the right time

4. Once you have reached the end of the 12 bars, GarageBand will play back the string part from bar 1. Listen to the part you recorded to make sure you're happy with it and then press **Stop**

Adding a bass part

1. Tap the **Track View** button to return to Track View
2. Tap the **Add New Track** button and select the Smart Bass
3. Using the default Liverpool sound, turn the Autoplay dial to 1 and then tap on the G chord strip. A bass pattern will begin to play

4. Record the bass part: **Rewind** the playback line to the start and then tap **Record**. Play the bass part by tapping on the G, C and D chord strips at the appropriate times

Adding drums

1. Tap the **Track View** button to return to Track View
2. Tap the **Add New Track** button and select the Smart Drums
3. Tap the **Hip Hop Drums** icon on the left and then choose the **Classic Studio Kit** from the menu
4. Set up a drum pattern of your choosing by dragging drum and percussion sounds into the grid. Alternatively, GarageBand can randomly select a pattern for you: tap on the die pictured at bottom left until you find a pattern you like
5. Once you have a drum pattern you like, press **Rewind** to return the playback line to the start and then press **Record** to record the drum pattern for 12 bars

Recording a solo

1. Tap the **Track View** button to return to Track View
2. Tap the **Add New Track** button and select the **Smart Strings**
3. Tap on the **Notes** button to switch to **Notes** view

4. Select the **Violin** by swiping through the options on the “stage” at the top of the screen (Fig.16.2)
5. Optional: tap on the **Scale** button and select **Minor Blues** from the list. This will limit the choice of notes you can play on the violin to just those of the minor blues scale

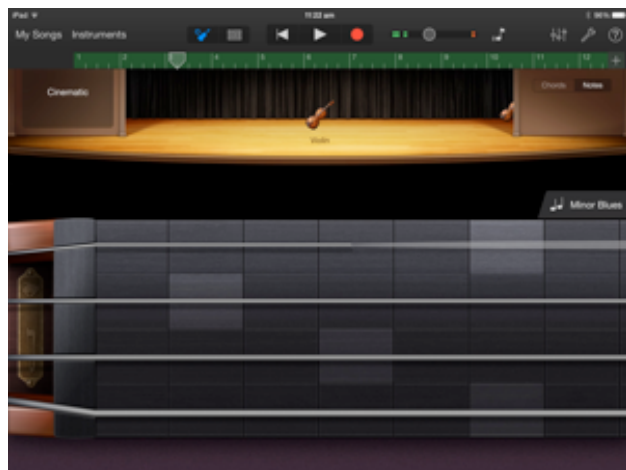


Fig. 16.2 The notes view of the violin

6. Next, press **Play** to start your backing track and experiment with improvising a solo over the top (see next section for some tips and ideas).

Easy ways to get started with the solo part

If you're stuck and don't know what to play for your solo, try these simple variations:

1. **Variation 1** - start by just playing the highlighted notes (the tonic - in this case, G 0 Fig.16.3) in a rhythm of your choosing

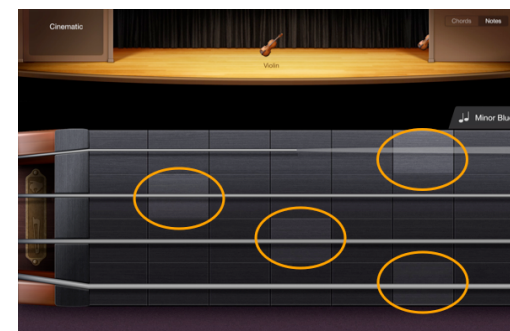


Fig. 16.3 Highlighted notes (the tonic)

2. **Variation 2** - vary your solo by adding in the minor third of the blues scale (in this case, B flat). If you have set your violin to the Minor Blues scale, this is the note to the right of each highlighted note. Start and end your solo on G (the highlighted notes), but add in some B flats every now and again
3. **Variation 3** - add in the dominant: in this case, D. In the limited scale on the screen, it's two notes to the left of the highlighted notes. Again, start and end your solo on G, but add in some B flats and Ds every now and again
4. Then try incorporating the other notes of the scale. As before, start and end your solo on G.

Your own version

The idea of this project is for you to create your own unique blues sound. Here are the basic steps:

1. Track 1: choose **one** of the following - Smart Strings, Smart Guitar or Smart Keyboard. Tap on the instrument icon and choose a sound you like. Then, find an Autoplay pattern you like and record the 12 bar blues
2. Track 2: select the Smart Bass. Tap on the Acoustic Bass icon and select a bass sound from the menu. Find an Autoplay pattern you like and record the bassline for the 12 bar blues
3. Track 3: select the Smart Drums. Tap on the Hip Hop Drum Machine icon and select a drumkit sound from the menu. Set up a drum pattern and record the drum part for 12 bars
4. Track 4: choose **one** of the following - Smart Strings, Smart Guitar or Smart Keyboard. Tap on the instrument icon and choose a sound you like. Tap the Scale button and choose Minor Blues. Record a solo part over your 12 bar blues backing

Recipes for the Blues

If you'd like a little more inspiration, here are a few "recipes" for blues in alternate styles.

Grunge Blues

- Track 1 Smart Guitar: Hard Rock Guitar, Autoplay setting 2
- Track 2 Smart Bass: Picked Bass, Autoplay 4
- Track 3 Smart Drums: Live Rock Kit

- Track 4 (solo) Smart Guitar: Hard Rock Guitar

Love Story Blues

- Track 1 Smart Strings: Romantic Strings, Autoplay setting 4
- Track 2 Smart Bass: Upright, Autoplay 3
- Track 3 Smart Drums: Vintage Kit, use minimal sounds
- Track 4 (solo) Smart Strings: Violin

Synthtopia Blues

- Track 1 Smart Keyboard: Machine Language, Autoplay setting 3
- Track 2 Smart Bass: Retro Bass, Autoplay 2
- Track 3 Smart Drums: Hip Hop Drum Machine
- Track 4 (solo) Keyboard (not the Smart Keyboard): Hyper Dance

Extensions

- a. For a challenge, instead of using the Minor Blues scale button to limit the notes of the solo instrument, use the regular notes view instead which shows the entire chromatic scale. You'll need to know which notes to play for the blues scale
- b. Extend the project by creating contrasting song sections. Tap the **Song Sections** button and then tap **Duplicate** (Fig.16.4). A new section will be created which contains the original 12 bar blues backing. In section B, you can then delete the region

containing the solo part and record a different solo part to replace it. You can also vary the other instrumental parts in section B - such as the Smart Drums (or any other part!)

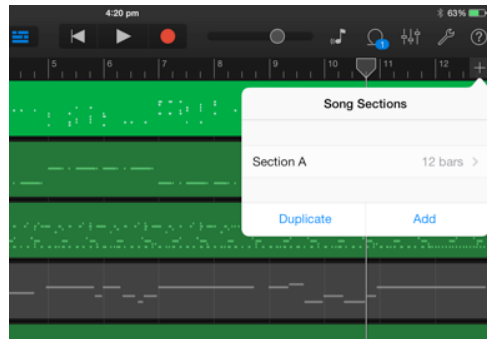


Fig. 16.4 The song sections settings

Tips for working in groups

If you're working in a group, choose the style of your blues arrangement together. Listen to a few of the Autoplay patterns in a variety of instruments until you find a style you like.

Each group member can be responsible for recording one backing track part each. Extra parts could be added to accommodate groups that have more than 3 students.

Once the backing parts are completed, they can be duplicated so that there is one section for each group member (see Extension b above). You can then choose one of the sections and record a solo for that section.

Checklist: Project 14 Transforming the Blues

- 1 Start a new project in GarageBand** ☐
 - Select the Smart Strings
- 2 Set up your song (Tango Blues)** ☐
 - Settings > Tempo 100 BPM
 - Settings > Key G major
 - Song Sections > Manual - change to 12 bars
- 3 Practice playing the 12 bar blues chord sequence** ☐
- 4 Record the 12 bar blues chord sequence** ☐
 - Tip: if it's too fast, you can slow the tempo down while you record
- 5 Add a Smart Bass track** ☐
 - Use the default Liverpool Bass sound
 - Turn the Autoplay dial to 1
- 6 Rewind the playback line to the start** ☐
- 7 Record the bass part** ☐
- 8 Add a Smart Drums track** ☐
 - Choose Classic Studio Kit
 - Set up a drum pattern on the grid
 - Rewind the playback line to the start

- Record the Smart Drums for 12 bars

9 Add a new Smart Strings track



- Switch to Notes view
- Select the Violin
- Change the Scale setting to Minor Blues (optional)

10 Practice your solo



11 Record your solo over the blues backing




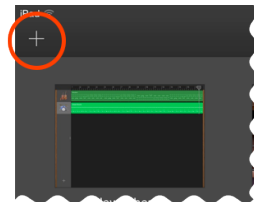
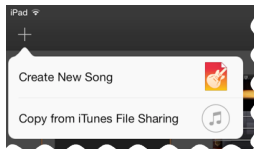
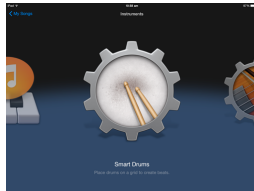
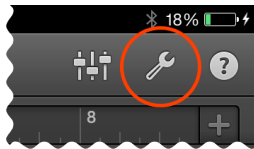
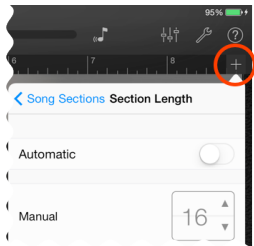
12 Use these steps to create your own version of the blues





GarageBand for iPad

checklist: song project setup

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Open GarageBand for iPad	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. New Project	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Create New Song	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Select your instrument	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Song Settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Key, Tempo, Time Signature • Optional: Edit Chords 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Song Sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap Section A • Next to Manual, set number of bars 	



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Questions?

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