

# Junior Extension Course

## OVERVIEW

Students	Graduates of JMC or JFC
Length	2 years
Lesson format	Group lesson, up to 10 students
Frequency	36 lessons a year
Duration	60 minutes (includes class changeover)

## MATERIALS & COSTS

JXC lessons (hour)	£14 per lesson
JXC Book 1 – 4 materials	£31 per set (2 books and 2 CDs)
Sibling booksets	£15 per set (2 books)
<i>Books change every 6 months</i>	

## INSTRUMENT AT HOME

Please aim to provide your child with a good-sounding keyboard with touch sensitivity or piano (and make sure the 'touch' button is selected!).

[When children move onto the Junior Advanced Course (JAC) in two years' time, ideally they will have a good acoustic piano to play on: an electronic keyboard with weighted keys, e.g. a Clavinova, is satisfactory.]

## ABOUT

JXC is when parents see their children blossom into independent and creative young musicians - it's a really exciting time!

Yamaha's music education system emphasises 'timely education': and with JXC comes a different approach. For example, we still predominantly use our ears at the start of the course, but notation gradually plays a bigger role during the next two years. By the end of JXC Book 3, children start to experience learning pieces using the eye before their ears.

Additional subjects join the curriculum: ensemble playing, keyboard harmony, sight singing, sight playing and composition/improvisation.

Children usually attend JXC lessons without parents although 'open lessons' are offered regularly by the teacher, when parents are invited to come and watch.

## FOR PARENTS

### Parents' Role

Although we encourage students' independence in JXC, parents still play a vital supportive role. The level of support you need to give will depend on your child, of course, but children are likely to need you to encourage regular practice sessions, find and put on the CDs, and give plenty of encouragement. From time to time you can also - with a light touch! - help them to practise effectively. The teacher will increasingly give tips in lessons about not simply playing a piece from the beginning to the end.

As ever, please do not react to mistakes or give information about which notes to play. Encourage your child to keep listening to the CDs - this is vital! - and also to keep playing their favourite pieces. You can find more advice about practising on the back pages of each of the repertoire books.

Please keep in communication with your teacher – we're here to help you get the most out of the course.

## CURRICULUM

### **Repertoire**

The aim of these solo pieces is a musical performance at each child's own level. We use a selection of methods to teach each piece, depending on the focus: by ear, through notation, through harmony, through peer or teacher demonstration and so on.

Masterclasses, where the teacher supports the group in discussing each others' solo performances, are possible in this group environment. Masterclasses help to develop a critical ear, with children sharing ideas for practice and improvement with each other. These sessions are very valuable and are one of the ways in which independent practice is encouraged and supported.

### **Let's Play More Repertoire (Book 2 onwards)**

Independence is fostered in this subject as children choose their favourite from a selection of pieces, and use the CD and the notation to learn how to play it by themselves. The teacher guides the practice, leading the class in planning their practising and supporting where necessary. Children play their pieces to each other when they're ready. Some students will learn one or two per book, others will want to study more – this is just one of the many ways in which learning is differentiated in JXC.

### **Lyric Singing**

A fun and musical start to every lesson – teachers direct the students' attention to the 'musical diamonds' in the songs. We hope you will enjoy these at home too.

### **Solfège Singing**

The solfège songs now come with enticing snippets of notation in the first two books, and full scores in the second year, as notation plays a bigger part. Two-part singing and sequence singing is now added to the curriculum.

### **Keyboard Harmony**

Students acquire the fundamental ability of improvisation by learning how to add chords to a melody as well as creating variations. CD recordings give inspiration for variations, instrumentation, expression and accompaniment styles. Development possibilities include melodic variation, accompaniment variation, transposition, introduction and ending, creating ensembles and structural changes.

The basic aim is to find a suitable accompaniment for the melody...but variations can stretch as far as the student's imagination!

### **Improvisation and Composition**

Composition, along with keyboard harmony, is another characteristic subject of Yamaha classes and aims to develop students' individual creativity in several ways.

Every subject in the course has individual creativity as its ultimate goal, but specific approaches include:

- music analysis to develop an understanding of how music is 'built'
- creating short musical ideas and learning how to extend these (motif development)
- development of creativity and the imagination (Music Plaza)
- class improvisation.

**Music Museum** Children study musical instruments (appearance, tone colour, character etc.) through music appreciation and illustrations.

**Scales and Cadences** Scales and cadences are introduced in relevant keys and are supported with fun harmony exercises (like the keyboard games in the previous course).

**Reading, Writing and Theory** In JMC, 'ear before eye' was the catchphrase, but now notation becomes more important. Teachers use notation as one of the tools with which to teach a piece of music, and regularly include rhythm reading and sight singing. Both books contain writing exercises for homework, including notation exercises after each repertoire piece.

#### FURTHER NOTES

We would ask you not to book individual piano lessons in addition to the group lessons – one to one lessons are coming in two years' time with the Junior Advanced Course and are arranged with our JAC teachers. JXC is designed to help children reach a good level of independence to prepare for the addition of individual tuition to the curriculum, and it is not beneficial to add piano lessons before this point.

If you would like to discuss your child's progress, second instruments, or anything else, please feel very welcome to communicate with your teacher or the office at any point in the term.