

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Welcome to the Jungle III

The website for Guitar Center’s lessons program, [gcstudios.com](http://gcstudios.com), claims, “We teach you to play your instrument, while you learn to play songs from popular bands so you can ultimately perform solo or in a band.”

Are you doing this with your music lessons program? If not, why? You wouldn’t want to be in a band that only played one gig a year or played the same songs all the time. But that might be exactly how your students and their parents perceive your lessons program. If you only hold one recital a year, chances are half your students will quit before they get a chance to take the stage.



Holding a student performance once or twice a year doesn’t cut it. Set a goal to host a performance event every 60 days. People take music lessons because they want to play music. GC knows this and uses people’s desire to play to market its lessons program. Show people that’s what you do, too.

## PERFORMANCE MATERIALS FOR NEWBIES

In last month’s article, “Welcome to the Jungle II,” I outlined some ideas for coordinating songs in your lessons program. Once you develop a list, it’s easier to host student performances on a regular basis. One way to do this is to have your teachers use the same print music books. In doing so, they can collaborate on performances. And remember: Keep in mind the goal of giving all your students the got-on-stage-and-played experience as you develop this plan.

Books with CDs are ideal for students who’ve only been playing one to three months. Hal Leonard’s *Easy Pop Rhythms* lets two or three students jam along with the same track. And, by using this book, all your students will know C, G, D and Em chords, which they will use when playing other songs.

Curnow Music’s *Tons Of Tunes For The Beginner* is a good book for band instrument students. Put flute, trumpet, sax and trombone students together, and have the beginning band play along with the CD.

Level-two students who’ve been playing between four and six months can play the songs from *Tons Of Tunes* with a band. Inte-

grate drum and voice students. Develop your store’s top 10 rock songs list, and work these songs into drum, guitar, piano and voice lessons. Bob Dylan’s “Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door,” for example, features an easy chord progression and drum groove, and it isn’t hard to sing. Play it as a band.

Get input from your teachers, and build a performance track for your music lessons program. Don’t overlook existing print music — you can increase sales by using it.

## PROMOTION, PROMOTION

Also use performance events to cross-promote your teachers. Don’t just host a piano recital; feature all types of instruments at the same event. It’s more interesting for the audience. Plus, when people in the audience see a student playing the piano and other students playing trumpet and guitar, they’ll think, “That’s what I want to do.” On the other hand, if attendees only see piano at the performance, that’s all they’ll assume you offer.

Use these performance events to show publicly the students’ progress and advancement, along with all the fun they’re having.

So c’mon Tarzan — take these ideas and rule the jungle. **MI**

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**People take music lessons because they want to play music, so make sure performance events are ongoing**