



Music Blocks Lesson Plan

Quiet/Loud

Age:

7-12 years

Lesson duration:

60 minutes

- Introduction: Discussion of different qualities of sound in music (15m)
- Part 1: Using volume blocks (15m)
- Break (5m)
- Part 2: Using crescendo (15m)
- Performance/Critique (10m)

Number of students:

Up to 10.

Rationale:

Students will learn about the role of volume in music.

Objectives:

Students will understand the different ways in which volume can be used in a composition and different ways to implement those techniques in Music Blocks.

LESSON

Introduction:

Begin by asking students to sit in a circle and explain that in today's lesson they are going to learn about volume.

Start off by having each student describe ways in which sound can differ: timbre, rhythm, pitch, volume, et al.

How are they different? Can they come up with examples from their favorite music?

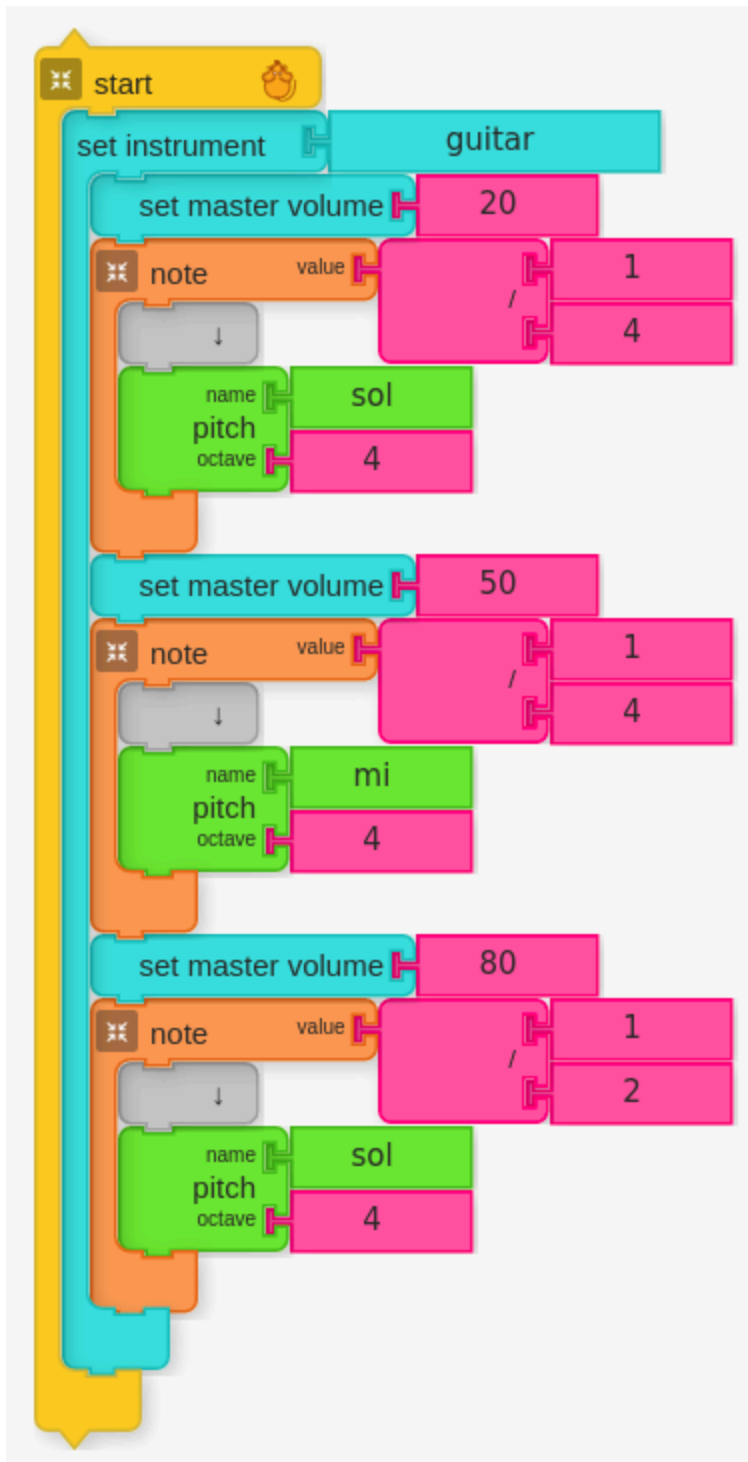
Discuss different ways in which volume might be used: to change the overall (master) volume; to change the relative volume between voices; to change the relative volume between phrases; to change the relative volume between beats; to change the volume over time. Are there others?

Fun Fact: The modern "piano" used to be called "piano-forte", which means "quiet-loud". It was the first keyboard instrument to be able to play both quiet and loud.

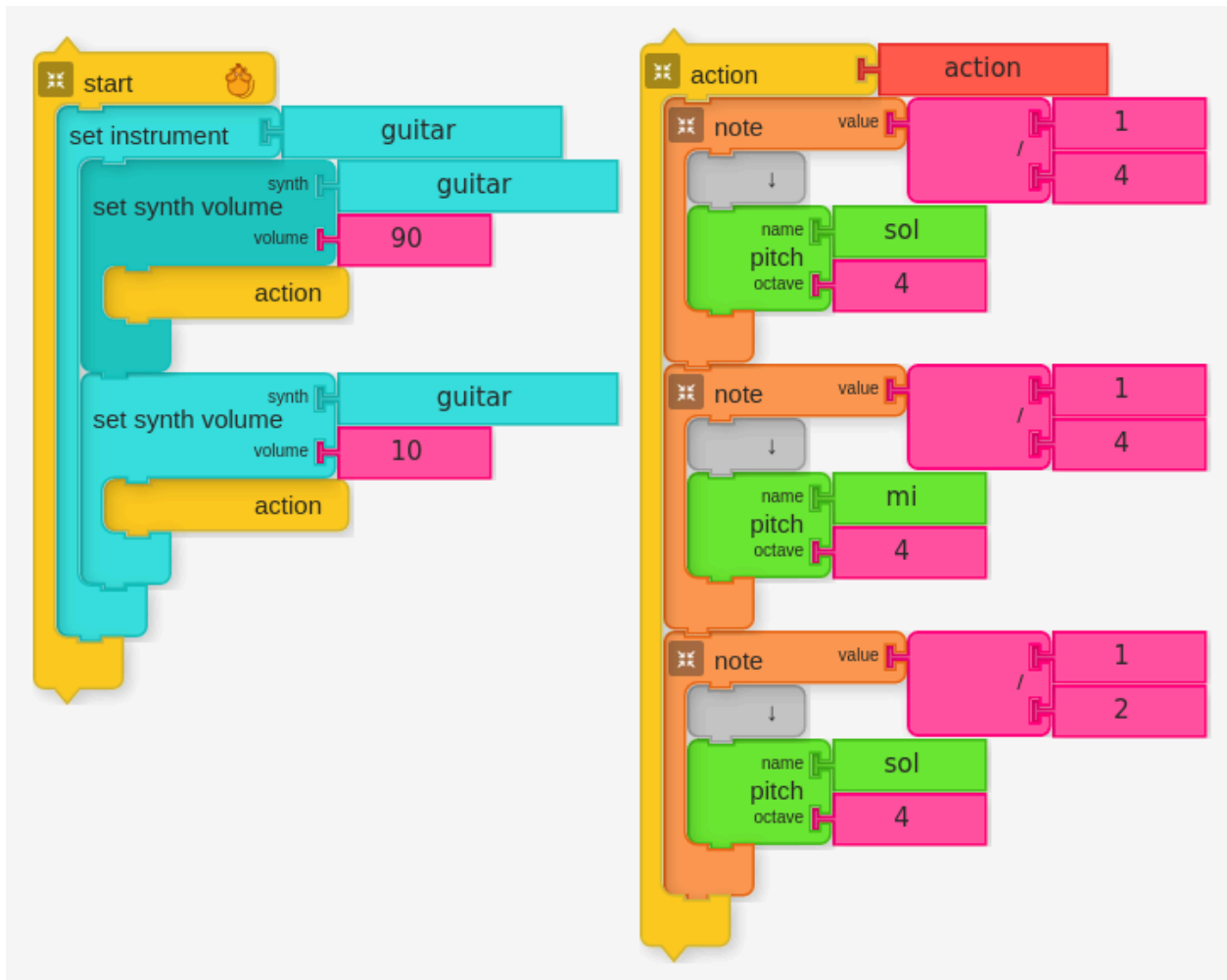
Part 1:

A. Master volume/synth volume

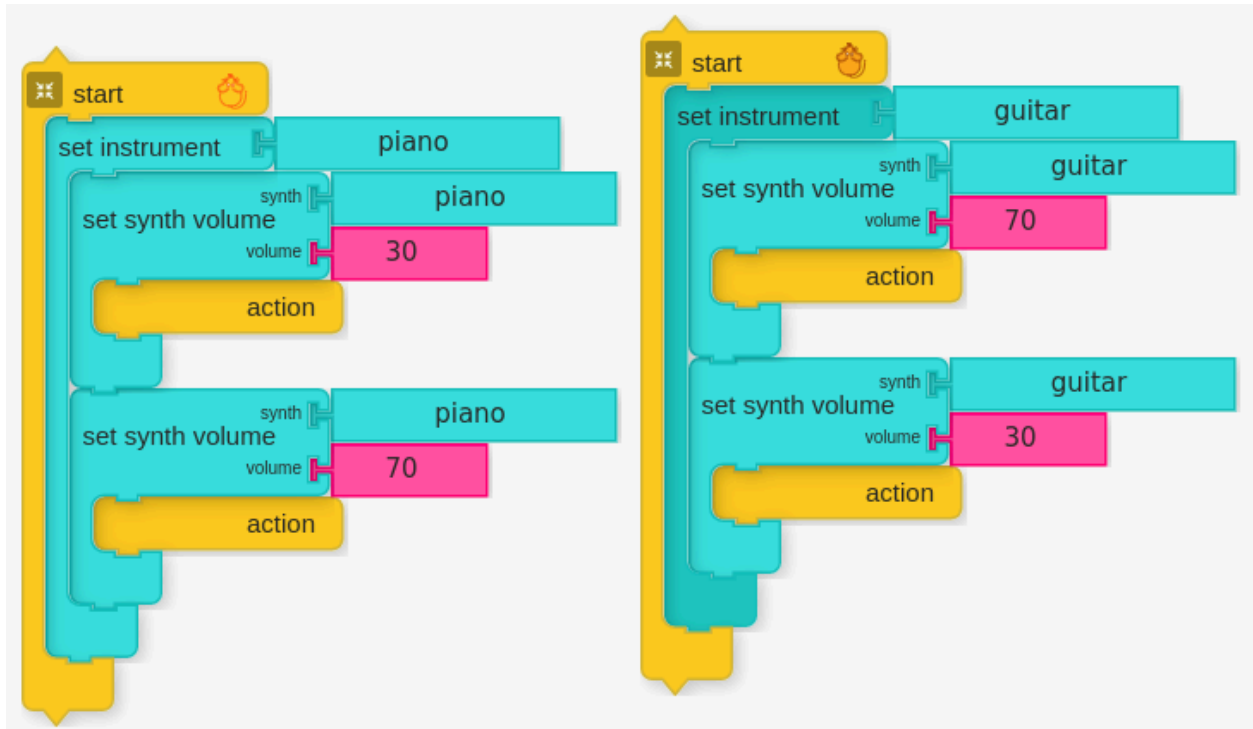
1. Open the volume palette and drag out the Set Master-volume Block. Explore using different values from 1 to 100.



2. Next we'll explore the Synth-volume Block. It only changes the volume of one voice.

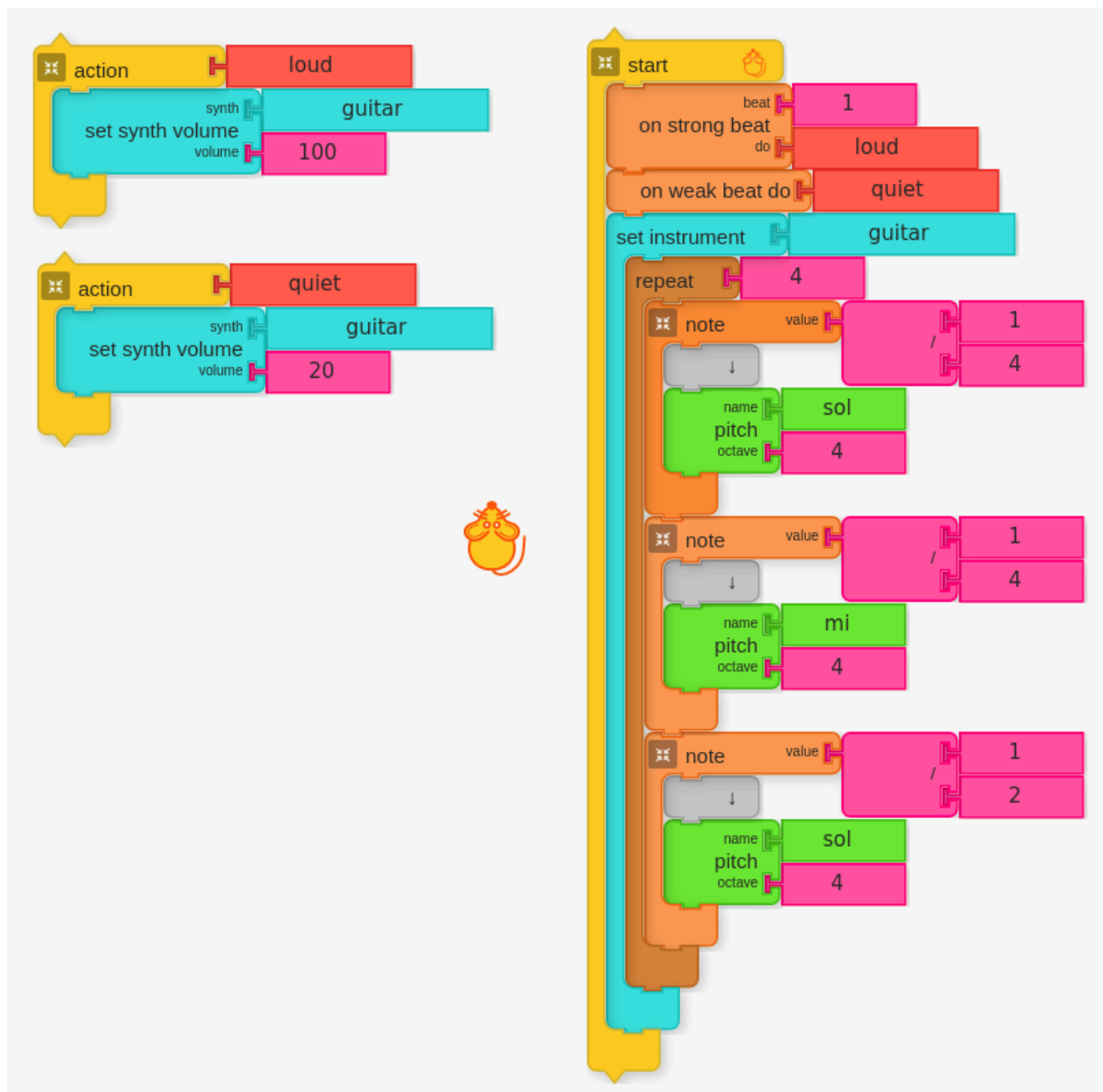


3. Using two different Start Blocks and two different instruments, explore different relative volumes. Do you hear the difference?



B. Volume and beat.

1. Create a rhythm using the Rhythm Ruler.
2. Save out the drum action associated with your rhythm.
3. Create an action call “loud” in which you put a Set Drum-volume Block. Be sure to select the same drum as you used in your drum rhythm.
4. Set the volume to 100.
5. Create an action call “quiet” in which you put a Set Drum-volume Block. Be sure to select the same drum as you used in your drum rhythm.
6. Set the volume to 20.
7. Grab an On Strong-beat Block from the Meter palette. Use the “loud” action for your strong beat.
8. Also grab an On Weak-beat Block. Use the “quiet” action for your weak beat.
9. What happens if you add another On Strong-beat Block?



Break

Part 2

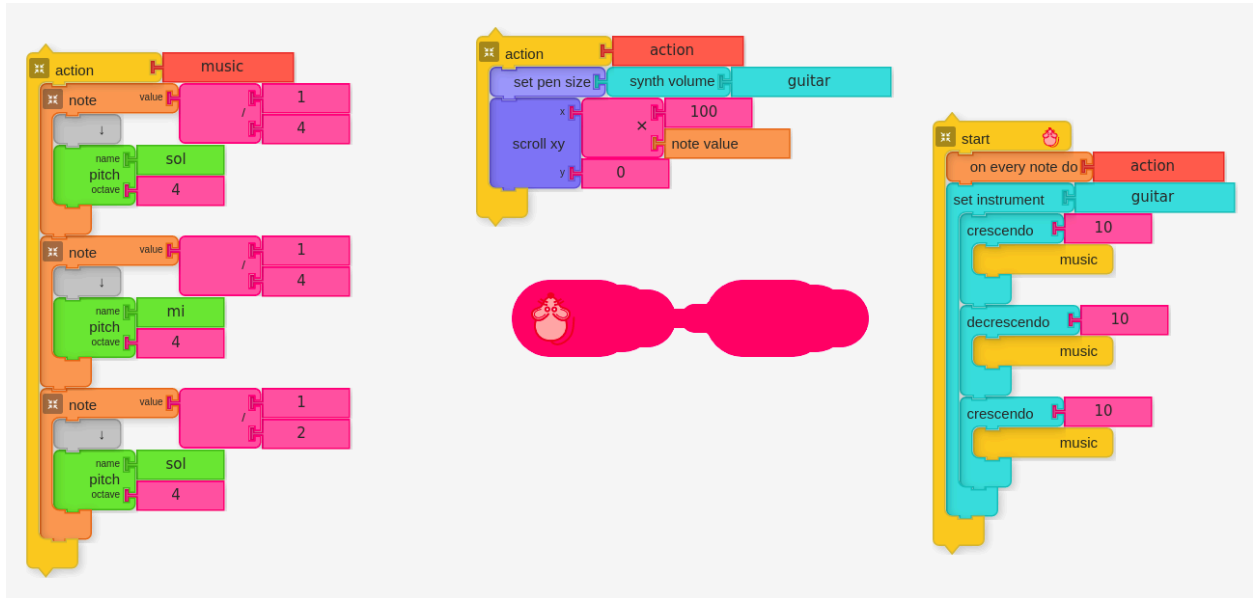
A. Crescendo

1. The Crescendo block will gradually modify the volume of a sequence of notes.

Explore using crescendo and decrescendo.

B. Synth Volume

1. You can use the Synth Volume Block to get the current volume. Try using it to change the color, shade, pen size, etc.



C. Explore

1. Have the students explore on their own.

Performance/Critique:

1. Have each student perform their composition.
2. Engage in a discussion about volume. Are there other ways to use it?

Key events:

- Introduction of key concept: Volume
- The students create their own compositions.

Materials:

- Music Blocks software

Assessment:

- Observe participation.
- Do the compositions include creative use of volume?



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