**GarageBand “Learn to Play” Classical Piano Lessons**

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**Overview**

Apple Inc. is a very successful and popular computer hardware and software company. They have created a suite of native software for their desktop computers called “iLife” which is described as “digital content creation” software (Apple, Inc., 2012). iLife is a suite of software that includes iPhoto, iMovie and Garageband. This suite of software on Macs is free and comes pre-installed as basic software on desktop Macs. Garageband’s music creation software can be used on Apple desktop computers, laptops, iPads, iPhones and the iPod touch. This evaluation will focus specifically on the 2011 desktop version of Garageband.

**Reasons for Evaluation**

Garageband users generate songs; record, mix, master and share compositions; create ringtones, podcasts and movie soundtracks; and compose new repertoire from scratch.

A little known part of Garageband includes a wonderful component that provides music lessons, called “Learn How to Play.” A user can learn how to play the guitar or piano by plugging in their instruments to their computer via USB cable or adapter and following along with pre-recorded lessons with a real instructor. Unfortunately, most Apple users are not familiar with “Learn How to Play.” Oftentimes a user may be quite intimidated by the depth, breadth and seemingly complex initial interface of Garageband and not pursue the software further to the lessons.

Meetings have been held with corporate stakeholders and a select group of Creative Trainers at Apple. These stakeholders have determined what learning objectives need to be included in the evaluations for determining the value of data collected in regard to the future of the software program. This evaluation will begin a process that will seek to determine whether Apple should continue to invest large quantities of money and labor to keep the program updated, make changes to the existing software, employ staff to maintain it’s usage or discontinue the “Learn How to Play” component of Garageband completely. Kirkpatrick’s (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, Evaluating Training Programs, 2006) Level 1 and 2 stages of evaluation have been selected to determine the degree of customer satisfaction, usage level and learning value of the software.

**Description of the Program**

The “Learn How to Play” series is divided into three categories: guitar, piano and artist lessons. The basic lessons for guitar and piano are free and downloadable from within the application itself. In addition to the free basics for guitar and piano, a user can pay for and download artist lessons from accomplished musicians like Sting, Norah Jones, Sarah McLaughlin, and bands like Death Cab for Cutie and Rush for the guitar or piano. Please see Appendix: [“Garageband Lesson Map Showing Evaluation Modules”](#Garageband%20Lesson%20Map%20showing%20Evaluation%20Modules) for a detailed map of software lessons.

This evaluation will concentrate on two of the four free classical piano lessons: Mozart’s Minuet in F Major and Bach’s Musette in G Major. Within each of the four Classical Piano lessons, there are three areas to explore: (1) Learn; (2) Practice; and (3) Play.

In the “*Learn*” section of the lesson, the instructor begins by introducing himself, and giving an overview of the lesson. Following the introduction, the instructor sets the expectations for the course (including specifying pre-requisites), explains the background and history of the composer and the composition, and then launches into the lesson which breaks down the techniques, elements and methods for mastering that specific piece of music. Cues are aural and visual. Visual cues range from watching a video of the instructor, showing fingerings on a keyboard, and watching the musical notation scroll by in real time. Lessons can be paused or made slower at any time. Users can look up terminology in a glossary, practice a section, and navigate backward or forward within the lesson. There are onscreen controls to adjust tempo/speed, change the volume mix and skip to different lessons.

The “*Practice*” area of the lesson allows the user to rehearse what they have learned in the lesson at any time during their session or after completing the entire lesson. Visual cues are given concurrently in the form of keyboard fingerings, musical notation and two simultaneous camera angles on the instructor playing the piece. Aural cues are given through computer speakers of the user’s keyboard and the instructor’s playing.

The “*Play*” area of the lesson allows the user to perform the piece of music freely with their own interpretation while being accompanied by an orchestra. Tempo of the performance and volume levels may be adjusted for each component of the user’s performance. Using the “record button” in the “How Did I Play” section will save the user’s performance. This allows for immediate feedback by using visual cues such as color to show which notes were played correctly (green) or incorrectly (red), real-time audio, and an overall percentage rate of success/failure. Practice can be recorded repeatedly to compare improvement from one attempt to the next.

**Audience and Context**

Garageband users range in age from 10 to 90+. In this case study, learners will be using these music lessons to learn a new skill or improve a current skill for performing music - specifically Mozart’s Minuet and/or Bach’s Musette. Garageband has many accessibility features that allow people with disabilities to use the software easily. Users with previous experience, as well as new users, will learn at their own pace at home or in an Apple retail store while participating in workshops or One-to-One training sessions with a Creative Trainer. There are majority of people in the population have never used the software before.

**Procedures for Gathering Data**

For users that choose to learn Garageband “Learn How to Play” within the Apple retail store environment during a workshop or One-to-One session, Creative Trainers will administer the evaluation forms during the lesson. These instruments will be distributed and collected by Creative Trainers that have had specific training in the methods of administering the evaluations. Surveys will be completed by the user at the end of each 50 minute Garageband session, and before the customer books their next appointment to ensure a 100% completion rate.

Customers that participate in the One-to-One program have already established their motivation to learn, which makes them an excellent source for baseline data. Part of a Creative Trainer’s training is to find out what previous experience a customer has with the software. If the customer has no previous experience, they will mark the form as such in order to identify that their responses will be part of the control group.

Evaluation forms will also be built in to the end of the software itself for users that choose to learn at home, but will be voluntary. These electronic surveys will be sent to Apple automatically. Online evaluation instruments will also have a checkbox that asks whether the user has previous experience with Garageband. If the answer is “no”, the data from that form will be used for the control group. Both evaluation instruments are identical and will be optionally anonymous.

**Measurement Instruments**

*Level 1 - Reaction* (see Appendix: [“Level 1: Reaction Evaluation Sheet”](#Level%201-%20Reaction%20Evaluation%20Sheet))

The evaluation team will collect responses from “Reaction Sheet” instruments. Sections using Yes/No answers will carry a point value of 100 and 0 respectively. Sections using Likert scales will determine the degree of satisfaction by using values as follows: the 5 point Likert scale (100, 75, 50, 25 and 0 points for Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree); 100 points for “Yes” and 0 points for “No” answers. Assuming the response rate is 100%, the goal to justify the continuation of the program is to reach an overall level of 87%.

*Level 2 - Learning* (see Appendix: [“Level 2 - Learning Evaluation Sheet”](#Level%202%20-%20Learning%20Evaluation%20Instrument))

Because Garageband is a commercial product and users may be paying customers, questions are general and few to assure timeliness and motivation to respond. In addition, questions will refer to general musical terms and methods that are referred to in all lessons, so that separate questionnaires will not be necessary for each lesson. Data from users with no previous experience will be separated to provide data for the control group. To determine the degree of learning, responses from the learning evaluation sheets will be tallied and compared to those of the control group. Rates will be calculated as follows: Correct answers = 100%, incorrect/incomplete answers = 0%. The program is considered a success if 80% of the respondents score 87% or higher on the ten given questions. The evaluation team will read narrative responses to determine validity and value.

**Results and Conclusion**

Depending upon the data results collected in Levels 1 and 2 evaluations, management decisions will be made as to whether further evaluations will be necessary to confirm the continuation of investment into Garageband lessons. If management decides to continue with revisions, further levels of evaluation will be necessary to determine what changes will need to be made to the program if needed.

## Appendix

### Garageband Lesson Map Showing Evaluation Modules



### Level 1- Reaction Evaluation Sheet





### Level 2 - Learning Evaluation Instrument



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