

AP Music Theory

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Syllabus Contents

- I. Class Overview
- II. Materials
- III. Grading
- IV. Schedule
- V. AP Exam Information

Overview

Music theory is the name for a branch of study that includes many different methods for analyzing, classifying, and composing music and the elements of music. Music theory generally attempts to reduce the practice of composing and playing into rules and ideas. It includes the study of the theoretical elements of music such as sound and pitch, rhythm, melody, harmony, and notation. In this class we will also practice the acquired knowledge and skills through regular listening to and analysis of a wide variety of vocal and instrumental music including the music of the following composers: J.S. Bach, Cecil Chamanade, Bela Bartok, Ludwig von Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Franz Schubert, Arcangelo Corelli, Johann Christian Bach, Clara Schumann, Dave Brubeck, Scott Joplin, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and others.

Materials

The following texts will be our main resources:

Mayfield, Connie. *Theory Essentials: An Integrated Approach to Harmony, Ear Training, and Keyboard Skills*. Vols. 1 & 2. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2003.

Additionally, students will be expected to bring the following materials to each class:

Pencils with good erasers (no pens ever!)
Staff Paper

Grading

Participation (40% of class grade)

Daily Participation breakdown is as follows:

5 points for being in seat with materials when the bell rings

5 points for class work and attentiveness

Homework (30% of class grade)

Practice assignments are worth 10 points if completed. Students will be alerted when specific assignments will be graded differently.

Exams (30% of class grade)

Chapter exams will be given approximately once a month. These exams will be based on the content of our textbook.

I do NOT require students in the AP Music Theory class to take the AP Exam. I do NOT remove the AP course designation if a student chooses not to take the AP Music Theory Exam. I do NOT change the course grade based on a student's AP Music Theory Exam grade.

Schedule

September

Written Theory: Notation, rhythm, scales, clefs, intervals and time signature

Aural Training: Intro to singing: simple stepwise melodies, intervals

October

Written Theory: root position chords, types of motion, texture, and Seventh chords, pitch names (i.e. tonic, subtonic, etc.)

Aural Training: Rhythmic dictation, Simple melodic dictation

November

Written Theory: Score study, Chord Order (Roman Numeral analysis), four part writing rules, harmonic Progressions

Creative exercise: Compose a soprano line to go with a given bass line. Pay special attention to root movement by a 2nd.

Compose a soprano line to go with the given bass lines. Pay special attention to smooth voice leading.

Compose bass lines to go with the given soprano lines. The resulting chord progression should stick to the circle of 5ths progression and standard deviations.

Aural Training: Listening Analysis, Harmonic Dictation

December

Written Theory: Modulations, Secondary dominants, inversions, non-harmonic tones

Creative exercise: Compose a soprano line for the given bass lines with figured bass symbols.

Aural Training: Sight-singing

January

Written Theory: form, phrase, periods, sequence, cadences, vocabulary

Aural Training: cadence identification

February

Written Theory: figured bass, diminished, augmented, secondary dominants

Aural Training: focus on 6/8 dictation and singing

March

Written Theory: bass-line writing

Aural Training: modulations

April

Practice AP Exam

Written Theory: Score study, Vocab review, Concepts review, review or contemporary techniques

Aural Training: Melodic and harmonic dictation; sightsinging

May

AP Exam

June

Creative/Final Project

Composition project (details to be discussed at a later time)

What does the AP Music Theory Exam look like?

Multiple Choice Section

- Listening to passages and noting which one notated is correct. Make a system. Look at all four choices before they are played and note the differences and similarities.
- Identifying which rhythm is played.
- Listen to excerpts and answer questions regarding;
 - ** Meter
 - ** Form
 - ** Modulations
 - ** Character of piece
 - ** Texture
 - ** Rhythm
 - ** Types of motion used
 - ** Intervals used
 - ** Compositional devices
 - ** Type of period used
 - ** Non-chord tones used
 - ** Cadences
- Error Detection
- Key Signature knowledge, i.e what notes are diatonic, what is a relative and parallel minor?
- Score study and answer questions similar to those present in listening excerpts.
- Identify errors in voice leading
- Knowledge of modes and alternate scales, i.e. octatonic, whole tone and pentatonic.
- Articulations
- Tempo markings
- Basic knowledge of tenor and alto clef

“Free Response” Listening Concepts

- Sightsinging- There will be 2 of these on the exam. Most are 4-6 measures long. Most years there is a major and a minor example. They also usually put a 6/8 example on the exam. Remember that you get 90 seconds to practice.
- Melodic Dictation- There will probably be 2 of these on the exam as well. Most years one of them is 6/8. Like sightsinging, one is often minor as

- well. It will be played for you three times. Under some circumstances, unusually long excerpts are played 4 times.
- Harmonic Dictation- There will most likely be 2 of these on the exam. Some years there is only one. You will only be asked to write in the soprano and bass parts. You will hear it three times. These are worth 24 points! 2/3 of the points are for chord symbols so please focus on these. If your progression doesn't make sense, you may have made an error. Make sure your roman numerals are in the correct key. Rhythm is not graded! One point for each correctly notated pitch and one point for each correct Roman numeral. You will only receive ½ point for the Roman numeral if the inversion is incorrect.
 - Bass part-writing- given a particular piece, you will be asked to finish the bass line. You will also need to write the Roman numeral chord symbols beneath the music. They ask that you use at least 2 chords per measure and that you use a variety of chords. Additionally, your progression should make sense.

Specific Concepts to review:

- Four types of motion
- Cadences (including Phrygian Half)
- Review tempo markings. You may be asked to name the slowest or fastest tempo of the four indicated. Be able to compare them.
- Different types of articulations
- Alternate scales: know all modes as well as octatonic, whole tone and pentatonic scales. Octatonic Scale is also known as diminished. It is made up of alternating whole and half steps. A whole tone scale is made up of all whole steps. A pentatonic scale only has 5 notes. The easiest way to identify a pentatonic scale is to see a major scale missing the 4th and 7th scale degrees.
- Study you circle of fifths and make sure you feel confident with all your major and minor scales.
- Make sure you feel confident in 6/8 time.
- Form ABA, ABB ABACA...listen carefully.
- Know your scale degree names: Tonic(Root) Supertonic Mediant Subdominant Dominant Submediant Leading Tone
- Review types of texture: monophony (probably won't be used, too obvious) polyphony (again, probably won't be used) chordal homophony, Melody with accompaniment, imitative polyphony, melody with counter melody
- Periods-Single, parallel (starts the same), Double, three phrase and contrasting
- All non-chord tones(used a lot) accented vs. unaccented, passing and neighbor tones, escape tones, anticipations, suspension, retardation, appoggiatura, changing tones, pedal tone

LOTS OF TERMS- walking bass, syncopation, pedal point, timbre, tonality, tempo, meter, arpeggios, repetition, sequences, inversion, asymmetrical meter, cadential extension, plagal extension, diatonic, anacrusis, alberti bass, imitative polyphony, crossed voices, chromaticism, ostinato, diminished, augmented, rhythmic augmentation, rhythmic diminution, etc.....

AP EXAM DETAILS

The week for **AP fee collection** will be **Feb. 27 – March 3**.

The **fee** for each exam is **\$100**.

The Pre-administration day will be Tuesday, April 13th during AP class periods. This is a **mandatory meeting** for all AP students.

Exam date – Monday, May 8 – 8 AM – room TBD