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The Gail Boyd de Stwolinski Center
For Music Theory Pedagogy
Steven G. Laitz, Director
Jennifer Sterling Snodgrass, Assistant Director

Contents

Volume 36

From the Co-editors

We are pleased to present Volume 36 (2022) of *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*. We publish the most thoughtful, creative, and current scholarship in music theory pedagogy, and we are confident you will find the materials in this volume continue that trend.

Volume 36 features five articles that touch on salient matters in the field. Aaron Grant and Joan Huguet present an inquiry-based learning approach for students to engage with formal ambiguity after learning the basics of large-scale forms. Patricia Burt and Philip Duker's article explores empowering students to cultivate their curiosity by developing their questions. Jonathan Guez tackles teaching dictation using templates that foster critical thinking and contextual listening.

We are also publishing two papers by the student winners at the stimulating and successful 2022 Pedagogy into Practice Conference held at Michigan State University in June. Alexis Lamb's article showcases creative ways for students to combine analytical and compositional work resulting in group compositions that are both musical and useful for music theory classes. Molly Reid's article offers a critical consideration of approaches to including world music in the undergraduate music theory curriculum.

Volume 36 has five notable resources available for your consideration.

In addition, we share a review-article and three reviews about a variety of topics. Timothy Chenette, Stacey Davis, and Stanley V. Kleppinger offer a comprehensive "state of the field" in aural skills pedagogy, with accompanying videos accessible on the *JMTP* YouTube page. Michael Baker reviews Timothy Cutler's *Bending the Rules*, Allison Wente addresses post-tonal books by Roig-Francolí and Straus, and David Castro reviews the *Routledge Companion to Aural Skills Pedagogy*.

Many thanks to Reviews Editor Melissa Hoag and Resources Editor Daniel Stevens for their fine work on this volume. We also acknowledge the great help of Production Manager Christopher Winders and Web Manager David Marvel. Thanks to Steve Laitz and Jennifer Snodgrass for their work on behalf of the Gail Boyd de Stwolinski Center.

And finally, thanks to outgoing Editorial Board members Mary Arlin, Cynthia Gonzales, Roger Graybill, Stefan Kostka, and Peter Schubert for their many years of invaluable service to *JMTP*.

The editorial team is currently accepting material for Volume 37 (2023); instructions for contributors can be found at our website, http://jmtp.appstate.edu.

We hope you enjoy Volume 36!

David Thurmaier, co-editor (University of Missouri-Kansas City)
Rebecca Jemian, co-editor (University of Louisville)

Either/Neither/Both:[1] Teaching Formal Ambiguity In The Undergraduate Theory Core

BY AARON GRANT AND JOAN HUGUET

Introduction

Large-scale form is an exciting milestone in the undergraduate music theory curriculum, as students can finally engage with the compositional logic behind entire movements rather than being limited to sections or phrases. However, this unit also presents several new challenges for both students and instructors. First, units on large-scale form typically require students to have some familiarity with the stylistic norms of eighteenth-century music. As today's students are often unfamiliar with classical music, units about form must now perform double duty, teaching the style in addition to formal norms. In addition, the discipline of *Formenlehre* has become increasingly complex in recent decades, providing ever-more detailed and often competing taxonomies and systems for analysis.[2] Finally, large-scale form offers logistical challenges, as instructors must not only figure out how to discuss a ten-minute sonata movement in a single class session, but also grapple with issues of ever-expanding curriculum and often-shrinking theory cores.[3] As such, it is all too

1 Our reader will, of course, recognize that our title is a play on Carl Schachter's seminal article "Either/Or." Like Schachter, we hope to encourage an analytical approach that reflects the variety, ambiguity, and subtlety possible in all music. See Schachter (1990).

2 At this moment, it will be helpful to clarify our position on bringing these recent theories of *Formenlehre* into the classroom. We believe that it is possible to teach more challenging repertoire, such as the pieces we discuss in this article, without comprehensively introducing our students to the theories described in Caplin (1996) and Hepokoski and Darcy (2006). As such, while our terminology and approach clearly draws from both theories, we try to keep our terminology relatively agnostic. However, throughout our discussion we have provided explanatory footnotes for the instructor who might be interested in considering how our analyses relate to the broader theoretical discourse on sonata form.

3 Of course, this is less urgent if the majority of students will have the opportunity to engage with *Formenlehre* more deeply in an upper-level form and analysis class. Monahan (2011) engages at length with the possibilities afforded for discussing formal ambiguity when teaching Sonata Theory in an upper-level theory elective. However, this is not the case at our two institutions, where sophomore-level core theory often provides students' only exposure to this topic.

tempting to choose the most straightforward and unambiguous examples of sonata and sonata-rondo form to analyze with students, the "warhorses" of Theory 3. But we must ask: what do our students lose when they believe that every sonata-form movement behaves just like K. 333?

Indeed, these pedagogical choices too often lead students to conclude that common-practice music fits into tidy boxes and that musical forms are a set of rigid rules composers somehow knew to follow, rather than a set of fluid, socially-shared norms that can be engaged with or thwarted in many ways. The consequences of this attitude can be severe: if students feel that they are mechanistically applying labels, learning formal types becomes not only uninteresting but also unmusical. Apathy, though, represents only part of the problem. If students never confront formally challenging music in the theory classroom, they are ill-equipped to understand the music they perform.

We therefore advocate for another approach, employing inquiry-based learning to explore the intriguing messiness of formally ambiguous pieces *immediately after* learning the basics of large-scale forms.[4] Ambiguous pieces allow students not only to gain practice applying formal terminology, but also to critically engage with what these terms mean, as well as to confront the idea that formal labels might not always neatly align with actual music. For the instructor, however, this creates the challenge of identifying a relatively concise repertoire that meaningfully departs from yet engages with Classical norms, while still being accessible to students who know only the basics of *Formenlehre*.

In this article, we discuss how we incorporate this principle into our own core classes. We consider four pieces that offer provocative extensions of sonata or sonata-rondo form, while still being accessible to a second-year undergraduate: Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109, mvt. 1; Joseph Boulogne's String Quartet in C Minor op. 1, no. 4, mvt. 1; Franz Schubert's Octet in F Major, D. 803, mvt. 1; and Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F-sharp Major, op. 78, mvt. 2. For each, we give detailed lesson plans and discussion questions that can immediately slot into any sonata-form unit. Each lesson invites students to describe why each piece does or does not correspond to formal prototypes. In particular, we ask them to consider how the non-alignment of musical parameters (harmony, form, cadence, rhetoric, thematic construction, and texture) can create formally ambiguous moments at

4 For an introduction to the use of inquiry-based learning in the music theory classroom, see Shaffer (2013).

various levels.[5] A central tenet of our methodology is to encourage students to move beyond a taxonomic approach, acknowledging that interpreting formal structure can be an open-ended and subjective process.

Why Musical Ambiguity?

Before delving into the lesson plans themselves, let us consider two questions: what do we mean by ambiguity, and why should we consider it in the core theory curriculum? We agree with William Thomson's definition of ambiguity: moments where certain musical parameters suggest one reading, but other parameters suggest another equally plausible reading.[6] As such, any discussion of ambiguity in the classroom requires students to isolate and compare each separate parameter that participates in determining a piece's form.

This process of breaking down a piece of music into its components and deciding how each parameter supports or undermines a given formal reading has many pedagogical benefits. Kofi Agawu claims that in order to perceive an event or set of events as ambiguous, one must not only specify but *justify* the context that enabled that perception.[7] As such, analyzing ambiguous pieces gives students the opportunity to learn how to defend analytical interpretations. Arnold Winold similarly asserts that bringing ambiguity and multiple interpretations into the music theory classroom rather than just giving students easy answers models the problem-solving process for them.[8] Winold's point is echoed by Robert M. Eisinger, who argues that encountering ambiguity teaches students how to deal with complex, real-world problems.[9] In fact, he contends that the ability to confront ambiguity is particularly needed in today's world, in which students have unlimited information available instantaneously at their fingertips.

Michael Rogers states the benefits most plainly. He claims that "when considering alternatives [in music], real thinking is guaranteed to take place" and points out three specific pedagogical advantages to considering ambiguity in the theory classroom. First, music "can *only* be fully comprehended . . . by acknowledging its wealth of

5 In addition to reinforcing sonata-form and sonata-rondo concepts, these pieces also let students confront formal ambiguity in early Romantic and pre-Classical form—something not always possible within the time constraints of a traditional sonata-form unit.

6 Thomson (1983, 3–4).

7 Agawu (1994, 93).

8 Winold (1993, 38–39).

9 Eisinger (2011).

internal contradictions and paradoxes." Second, the ultimate gain of "filtering in" the inherent messiness of ambiguity gives students a "fuller aesthetic experience since such an approach forces them to encounter artistic issues of genuine significance." Finally, digging into questions of either/neither/both allows students to "do theory" instead of simply learning what others have discovered.[10] Rogers's latter two points reflect an observation made by Ken Bain, who states that students take the most ownership for their learning when engaged with questions that they find personally "important, intriguing, or just beautiful."[11] As such, exposing students to ambiguity early and replacing hunt-and-peck labeling with more meaningful and musical questions has the potential to increase intrinsic motivation. What is more, by grappling with music where traditional labels do not perfectly graft onto the piece, students immediately learn that such labels are not universally applicable. This may seem counterintuitive, but this means the analysis of ambiguous pieces allows students to critically engage in discussion about how and why a particular piece functions and what each label means, instead of blindly placing a label that is merely "good enough."

Where is the Recapitulation?: Boulogne's String Quartet in C Minor, op. 1, no. 4, mvt. 1

Identifying the exposition's formal components typically occupies the majority of a core theory sonata-form unit, leaving little time to explore the creative ways in which composers might transform this material in their recapitulations. Emphasizing expositions, though, can lead students to believe that the recapitulations are purely mechanistic. Recomposed recapitulations can offer a wonderful opportunity to explore formal ambiguity. While some feature a clear "double return"[12] and exact reprise of the exposition's thematic layout, many others defy listener expectations through off-tonic beginnings, new material, and thematic omission, reordering, and recomposition. The first movement of Joseph Boulogne's String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 1, no. 4,[13] offers a particularly concise example of a sonata form in which the reprise of the primary theme and the return to the global tonic occur at different

10 Michael Rogers (1990, 140). Lynne Rogers (2017) further describes how the process of asking good questions can help students not only to hone their analytical skills, but also to improve their class discussions, presentations, and analytical writing assignments.

11 Bain (2011, 18).

12 Webster (2001, 23–68). For a critique of this term, see Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 343–45 and 365–69).

13 For more information on Boulogne, see in particular Banat (1990 and 2006).

points in the second half of the two-repeat structure. This piece thus asks students to consider whether harmonic or thematic criteria are more important when identifying the moment of recapitulation—or, perhaps even to question whether the movement possesses a recapitulation at all.[14]

Step 1: Analyzing the Exposition

Due to its straightforward parsing, Boulogne's exposition may be assigned as either pre-class preparation or as an in-class review of exposition formal functions depending on class period length and student skill and engagement level. [15]

- In either scenario, students should annotate a score with cadences, key areas, and thematic units. Preparing an annotated score such as this will allow for the easy identification of correspondence bars, an important first step when analyzing recapitulations.
- Then, go over the analysis with students. Boulogne's periodic primary theme material stretches from m. 1 through m. 9. A non-modulating transition follows in mm. 10–20, concluding with a HC MC in the tonic key. After the medial caesura, a periodic secondary theme begins in m. 21 with motives clearly drawn from the transition. Once the secondary theme achieves cadential closure in m. 40, an eight-measure closing section concludes the exposition.

Step 2: Where is the recapitulation?

Once analysis of the exposition is completed, the remainder of the class session can focus on unpacking the ambiguous second half of the movement. For this portion of the lesson, we divide the students into four groups and ask them to complete the following tasks:

- This portion of the lesson begins similarly to the first, as we ask students to annotate a score of the second half of the piece with cadences, key areas, and thematic units. In addition, we request that students compare this material to the exposition and mark identical or closely analogous material with correspondence bars.

14 For those well-versed in Sonata Theory, this is a clear Type 2 sonata form. See Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 353–87) for more information on Type 2 sonatas. However, no textbook to our knowledge discusses this type of sonata-form design. While students do not need to understand the nuances of "Type 2" as a theoretical construct, they are very capable of appreciating the analytical challenge posed by such a piece.

15 Because the exposition is so straightforward, this piece slots in nicely after an introductory look at sonata forms with one or two other movements from the same op. 1 set: Boulogne's String Quartet op. 1, no. 1 (mvt. 1) and the String Quartet op. 1, no. 5 (mvt. 1).

- Then, we circulate two form charts of the entire piece (see Examples 1 and 2). The first places the recapitulation at m. 49, emphasizing the clear second rotation of themes that stretches from the repeat signs to the end of the piece (albeit with a highly recomposed TR and S). On the other hand, the second places the recapitulation at the tonal crux of the movement: in m. 76 after the i: HC MC a measure prior.
- Next, we assign each group to do one of the following: 1) defend *only one* of the readings; 2) make a case that *either* reading is equally correct; or 3) make a case that *neither* reading is correct. In the last case, students must either claim there is no recapitulation or put forth a better reading.

Step 3: Take-Home Points

After each group presents the strengths and weaknesses of their assigned interpretation, the class might agree about how to interpret the misalignment of this piece's harmonic and formal features—or they might not! This uncertainty is at the heart of this lesson: its pedagogical goal is not to conclusively decide whether or not Boulogne's sonata has a recapitulation, but to engage with the ways in which hearing the tension between this piece and standard models of sonata form can enrich our listening and performance.

Example 1

Boulogne, String Quartet No. 1, op. 1, no. 4, Formal Option #1.

Example 2

Boulogne, String Quartet No. 1, op. 1, no. 4, Formal Option #2.

Sonata Form vs. Sonata Style: Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109, no. 1

Distinguishing between sonata form and sonata style can be a complex distinction for students to make in the theory core classroom, but it is essential to understanding the evolution of musical forms. Our next example differs from the previous one in that it does not ask students to make an either/neither/both decision about a piece's formal identity, but instead to grapple with an unambiguously sonata-form movement that nonetheless does not *sound like* a typical Classical sonata. The first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109, offers an unusually compact sonata form, asking students to think about how formal and harmonic functions can express themselves outside of the relatively expansive lengths of the late Classical and early Romantic sonata movement.

This piece can be taught at any point after introducing the standard sonata form, preferably including examples from the early Beethoven repertoire such as the first movement of the Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, the Sonata in E-flat Major, op. 7, or the Sonata in G Major, op. 14, no. 2. Before our in-class analysis session of op. 109, we ask students to listen to it twice, once without score and once with score, and then to mark key areas, cadences, and formal sections. For their initial encounter, we hide the piece title and composer from students, providing a score and recording with identifying information redacted on our learning management system. Because of the extreme register shifts throughout the piece, remind students to be mindful of clef changes in order to avoid unpleasant surprises in class.

Step 1: Stylistic Features

We begin the analysis session by asking students to discuss the piece's style in small groups. Even such a basic question as "What does the piece sound like?" can lead to important observations.

- For example, a student will often suggest that the movement sounds like a Baroque figuration prelude: a form which our students know well, having written one in Theory 2.
- Conversely, pianists in particular will often grasp onto the stylistic parallels between this piece and early Impressionist piano works (see, for example, *Jeux d'eau* by Ravel and "Jardins sous la pluie" by Debussy).
- What will students not guess? Beethoven. This opens the door for a discussion of the non-linearity of musical style, musical influence, and the ways in which the canon has not only emphasized selected composers, but also particular narratives about their "typical" musical styles.

We then ask students to identify those features of the work that seem stylistically significant to them. Answers here often include texture, register, abrupt tempo shifts, and the frequent return of the initial harmonic sequence. Note that all these answers, significantly, have little to do with the form of the work, driving home the importance of so-called "secondary" parameters in establishing our understanding of a given piece.[16]

Step 2: Analyzing the Exposition

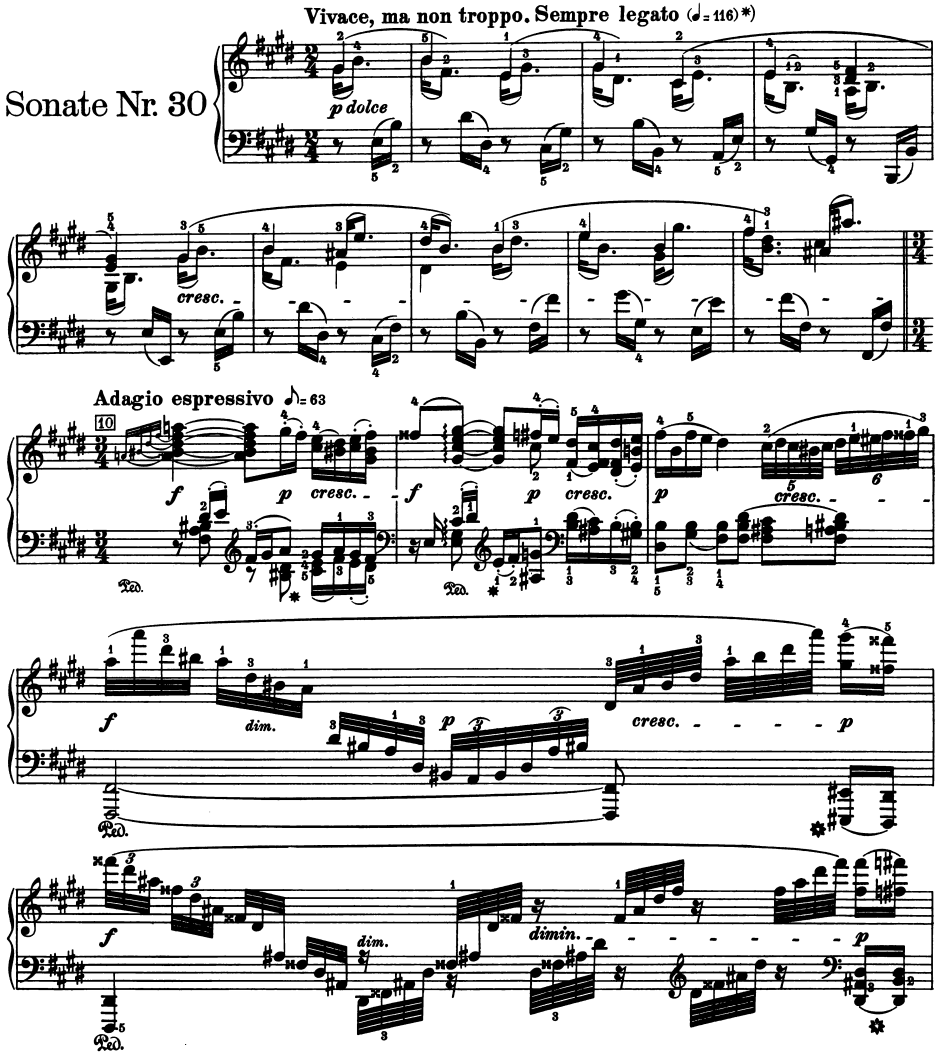
Next, we ask the students to consider the first 15 measures of the piece, provided in Example 3—at this point, of course, still not using the word exposition. What cadences, themes, or harmonic arrivals can they identify?

- A I: IAC in measure 4 provides the first cadential closure of the movement.
- Then, a restart of the original sequential theme seems to signal a parallel period, but instead leads to a thwarted arrival on V/V in mm. 11–12.
- Measures 13–15 then offer a recomposition of mm. 11–12, concluding with a cadential gesture implying a V:PAC in mm. 14–15.[17]

Only at this point do we use the word exposition, asking students to consider whether it is possible to apply sonata-form terminology to the first 15 measures of this movement in their small groups. After they hypothesize about where each section of the exposition might begin, students are asked to evaluate them in light of the standard definitions for a primary theme, transition, and secondary theme. What is the evidence for or against using these terms to analyze this piece?

16 The term "secondary parameters" comes from Leonard Meyer. Meyer suggests that there are two types of musical parameters: primary and secondary. On the distinction, he writes: "The primary parameters of tonal music-melody, harmony, and rhythm-are syntactic. That is, they establish explicit functional relationships. . . . Secondary parameters, on the other hand [e.g., ' louder/softer, faster/slower, thicker/thinner, higher/lower'], are statistical in the sense that the relationships to which they give rise are typically ones of degree that can be measured or counted. . . . [T]he syntax of tonal music, like other kinds of syntax, is rule-governed, learned, and conventional. The secondary, statistical parameters, on the other hand, seem able to shape experience with minimal dependence on learned rules and conventions." See Meyer (1989, 209).

17 Here, some students will push back at the idea of a "cadential gesture," correctly recognizing that this ending is much weaker than the familiar Classical PAC. This opens the door for a discussion of attenuated and weak cadential closure in Romantic music. At this point, we often invite the students to consider which musical parameters weaken the closure, as well as to identify other moments in this movement at which cadences are compromised.



Example 3
Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109, mvt. 1, mm. 1–15.

- Evidence for analyzing this excerpt as an exposition includes its clear primary theme, as well as a series of cadential articulations that follows the standard order for a sonata exposition.[18]
- Students might cite the lack of a true secondary theme, thematic contrast, or a medial caesura as evidence against hearing this music as an exposition.

After this activity, our students are typically fairly equally divided between hearing this passage as an exposition or not.

Step 3: Full-Movement Analysis and the Problem of Proportion

How can analysis of the full movement shed light on the challenges of interpreting its first fifteen measures? We continue by inviting students to listen to the remainder of the movement (see the form chart in Example 4)[19] and identify its large formal divisions.

In particular, we ask our students to consider the following points:

- How does the lack of repeat signs, a common feature of late Classical and Romantic sonata-form movements, complicate formal analysis?
- Does the development (mm. 16–48) function as we expect? Students might note that the development is much longer than the exposition, that it exclusively develops the primary theme, that register and texture continue to be more important than formal articulations, and that the retransition's dominant harmony is very short and inverted.
- Where is the recapitulation, and how does it compare to the exposition? Here, students can employ correspondence bars to discover that these measures make only limited surface-level changes to the exposition's material, thus establishing a standard relationship between the exposition and the recapitulation.
- Where does the coda begin, and what material does it contain? Here, we highlight two features of this formal unit: its unusual length in relation to the movement's exposition and recapitulation, and the presence of a new, chorale-texture theme in mm. 75–86.
- We then invite students to synthesize our analyses of each individual section into an overall interpretation of the movement: is this movement in sonata form? Why or why not?

18 Richards (2012) endorses teaching sonata forms through their order of cadences, an often-helpful framework for students to follow when confronted with large forms for the first time.

19 For those unfamiliar, this diagram uses a double-lined arrow to signify what is known as form-functional "becoming." This symbol signifies "the special case whereby the formal function initially suggested by a musical idea, phrase, or section invites retrospective reinterpretation within the larger formal context" (Schmalfeldt 2011, 9). For an in-depth look at the concept, see also Vande Moortele (2013).

Example 4

Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 30, op. 109, mvt. 1, Form Chart.

Step 4: Take-Home Points

In the case of this movement, the either/neither/both question at hand is quite straightforward: either it is in sonata form, or it is a nonstandard form, operating outside of typical Classical practices. While this question might seem facile to those of us who are versed in *Formenlehre* studies and thus able to conceptually distinguish between form and other musical parameters, such a matter is by no means straightforward for our students. And indeed, this is an important skill for our students to develop: considering pieces as individual and unique works which may or may not conform to the highly structured norms of sonata form prepares them to confront repertoire written in the 250 years since the emergence of the Classical style, as well as to explore and appreciate music in which generic norms—formal or otherwise—are perhaps not quite so clear.

Problematizing Sonata-Rondo Form: Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F-sharp Major, op. 78, mvt. 2

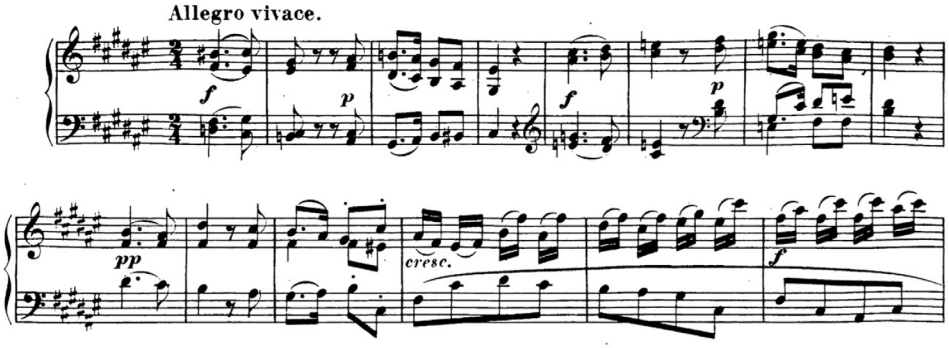
Sonata-rondo form, most often introduced as a variant of first-movement sonata form, offers new opportunities to explore formal ambiguity due to the form's many combinations of sectional rondo and sonata-form prototypes.[20] However, it can be even more difficult to find examples that are suitable for discussion in the undergraduate core classroom, as sonata-rondo's additive structure often makes all but the most straightforward movements even more unwieldy than sonata forms. However, an exception to this exists in the finale of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F-sharp major, op. 78, a remarkably compact, yet musically rich movement. In contrast to some of our other examples, we do not ask our students to listen to this piece in advance, so that we can gradually introduce it to students in a way that allows them to consider its different thematic units both individually and as a whole.

When designing our Theory 3 courses, we schedule this activity after students have spent a day in class on sonata-rondo form and completed an analysis assignment on a prototypical example of the form. Typically, our examples for this material are the finales of Mozart's Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 333; Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E-flat Major, op. 7; and Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13. Opus 78 offers an interpretation of the form that is clearly in dialogue with both rondo form and the more general principle of rotation, but with an atypical thematic pattern of refrains and episodes. In addition, it presents an unusual harmonic plan that avoids the expected tonic-dominant polarity of the Classical period.

20 For a concise summary of sonata-rondo form, we suggest Caplin (2013, 644–47).

Step 1: The Refrain's Construction

We begin by asking students to listen to only the first twelve measures of the movement, which we have provided in Example 5.



Example 5
Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F-Sharp Major, op. 78, mvt. 2 (mm. 1–14)

- First, we ask students to identify the unusual use of an augmented sixth harmony at the beginning of the theme, thus reinforcing a recent Theory 3 harmonic topic. Why is this a strange initiating chord for a Classical work, and what is the effect of this on listeners?

- Then, we request that they parse the unit into phrases and attempt a small-form analysis. Since the theme is 12 measures, rather than the eight measures typical of a standard sentence or period, students sometimes struggle with this question.[21] If needed, we quickly review the difference between tight-knit and loose-knit construction, and then ask the students what we would need to do to tighten the construction of this theme. After this prompting, a student will generally realize that the middle material is an interpolation.

- This discovery naturally leads us to the next unusual feature of this refrain: its internal, cadentially-confirmed modulation to the key of IV. We remind our students at this point that rondo refrains typically do not modulate, as they normally function as the most stable material of the movement.

- Finally, we ask students to identify the cadences at the end of each phrase. Once they tell us that the theme ends with an IAC, we remind them that rondo themes usually close definitively with a PAC, and that they typically do not elide with the following material.

21 In example 6, we analyze this piece as a continuous period (antecedent in measures 1–4, consequent in mm. 9–12, and an interpolation in measures 5–8). It would also be possible to interpret it as a hybrid form of antecedent–interpolation–continuation, using William Caplin's terminology (see Caplin 1998, 59–70). Both of these interpretations emphasize the highly unusual modulation to the key of IV, while still acknowledging the return to tonic in measure 12.

At this point in the discussion, students are comfortable with the basic harmonic, cadential, and formal aspects of the theme. We then conclude by summarizing the unusual features of this refrain, and we suggest to the students that these features—its unstable opening harmony, its modulation to IV, its abrupt character, and its elided, weak cadential closure—will provide important clues for decoding the remainder of the movement.

Step 2: Overall Thematic and Harmonic Plan

We then listen to the entire movement twice, once without score and once with score (a form chart is provided in Example 6). This is where the movement's short length is particularly valuable: clocking in at approximately three minutes, it allows students to engage with a full piece together in the classroom, without eating up a substantial portion of a class period.

- We then ask students to identify each of the movement's thematic units, using standard letter notation, in small groups. After a few minutes, we return to the large group to create a simple thematic and harmonic chart.[22] Note that at this point in the discussion, we do not ask students to identify the large form of the movement.
- What are the limitations of this thematic plan? Or, to frame it more bluntly, what does the succession of letters ABABCABCA provide us? In order to understand this movement, we must move beyond identification to function.
- We then ask students to consider the role of each of the three units. Which is most stable? Which is least stable? Do all of them function as true themes, or are some of them developmental or transitional in nature?

Through this discussion, they typically arrive at the realization that the B material is more transitional than the A or C material, despite being melodically distinct. Does this material serve as its own thematic unit, or is it transitional? This question has important ramifications for the movement's large form.

22 While constructing their form charts, students will often comment on the unusual subdominant A3 refrain. Of course, an off-tonic refrain or recapitulation is atypical in both sonata and sonata-rondo forms. This might lead some students to suggest a reading of rondo. Yet, this reading is less preferred to sonata-rondo because an episode that originally appeared off-tonic (C1) returns in tonic (C2). As such, this detail does not affect our overall large-scale reading of the piece. That being said, it can lead to fascinating discussions once the students realize that the A1 refrain's local modulation to the subdominant foreshadows the movement's large-scale harmonic plan.

Example 6

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F-Sharp Major, op. 78, mvt. 2

Step 3: Interpreting the Large Form

While clearly in dialogue with the sonata-rondo, the form of this piece is ambiguous, depending on whether we consider this B unit as thematic or transitional. The form diagrams provided in Example 7 present these two options.

- If B is thematic, serving as a rondo episode, the piece is a sonata-rondo variant. This reading emphasizes the rotational aspects of the form, hearing every return of A—even the off-tonic A3—as a refrain.
- If B is non-thematic, then its function differs based on whether it leads to A or to C. When B1 leads back to A, it serves as a rounded-binary digression. When B2 and B3 lead to C, it functions at a higher level as a transition. In this reading, the large-scale form of the piece is a sonata without development.

This leads us to our foundational either/neither/both question for this movement: can a piece have two large-form interpretations? Our pedagogical goal is not to force students to choose, but to embrace the possibility that "neither" and "both" are simultaneously possible for this piece.

If B1 is an Episode...

The movement is a variant of sonata-rondo in which C recapitulates instead of B

Rotation 1				**Rotation 2**				**Rotation 3**				**Rotation 4**	
A1	B1		A2	B2	C1			A3	B3	C2		A4	
1	12		32	43	57			89	100	116		150	
F♯					d♯			B		F♯			
P	*TR* ⟹ *Weak S*		*P*	*TR*	*Int. Theme*			*P*	*TR*	*"Recap"*		*Coda*	

If B1 is the Middle of a Small Ternary...

The movement is a variant of Type 1/slow-movement sonata form

Exposition						**Recapitulation**			**Coda**
P (Small Ternary)			TR	S		P	TR	S	Coda
1	12	32	43	57		89	100	116	150
F♯				d♯		B		F♯	
A1	*(B1)*	*A2*	*B2*	*C1*		*A3*	*B3*	*C2*	*A4*

Example 7

Two Formal Readings of Beethoven, op. 78, mvt. 2

Conflicting Musical Dimensions: Schubert's Octet, D. 803

Theorists of sonata forms have long debated how to analyze three-key expositions, particularly with regard to how to categorize the latter two tonal areas.[23] The first movement of Schubert's Octet, D. 803, differs from our other examples in that it invites students to grapple with an exposition that outlines *three* rather than two tonal centers. This work can pose a significant initial challenge for students, yet one that they can overcome with some guidance. And the challenge is well worth it: three-key expositions were an extremely popular formal strategy in the nineteenth century, and such pieces are mainstays of the performance repertoire for many of our students.

Step 1: Pre-Class Preparation

While perhaps overwhelming at first, the number of possible interpretations of this exposition creates many opportunities for rousing class discussions, particularly when positioning this analysis towards the end of a sonata-form unit. We begin by assigning the following preparatory activities as homework:

- Listen to the exposition of this piece (mm. 19–138).
- Then, label cadences, keys, and small forms on a score.
- Finally, attempt a global analysis of the exposition, and post it to a discussion board on our class LMS.

We tell our students up front that the music after the initial transition will not fit our standard sonata form models. As such, we ask our students to defend their interpretations in a couple of sentences on the discussion board, discussing what specific musical parameters they find themselves responding to in each of the exposition's sections.

Step 2: Setting the Stage

Class can begin, then, by going over students' posted analyses in order to help them come to a neutral understanding of the piece similar to Example 8. Discussion at this time can center on many topics, but we like to steer it towards the musical features of this exposition that make it so difficult to parse, most notably the disjunction between

23 For more information on this debate, see Grant (2022); for broader analytic discussions on three-key expositions, see Hunt (2009 & 2014) and Grant (2018 & 2022).

Example 8

Schubert, Octet in F Major, D. 803, mvt. 1, Form Chart of Exposition.

the rhetorical and tonal trajectories of the exposition and Schubert's idiosyncratic use of cadences. Carefully unpacking these two issues reveals that there are two possible locations at which a secondary theme might begin:

- If we follow the normative tonal plan for a sonata exposition, S-space begins in m. 89 along with the onset of music in the dominant. Yet this music is rhetorically incongruous with that interpretation, as its end-accented, codetta-like music sounds more like a closing theme.
- The section that begins in m. 49 is rhetorically more S-like, with its songlike melody traded among all three instruments. However, this unit not only begins in the key of vi, but also modulates several times, even visiting the key of the global *tonic*! That is manifestly *not* S-like.
- Adding to the confusion is Schubert's use of cadences. According to most sonata-form theories, a V: PAC within a major-mode work nearly always signals an EEC. Yet, there has not been any music in the dominant key up to the first V: PAC in m. 89.

Step 3: Debating Possible Interpretations

As summarized in Example 9, this harmonic-rhetorical disjunction can lead to five possible interpretations of three-key expositions such as the Octet, each of which with particular pros and cons.[24]

- Option 1: The exposition is a two-part form with a two-part subordinate theme.
  - Pro: This option shows how the rhetoric of this exposition nearly follows the rhetorical progression of a typical sonata-form exposition (P-TR-S-C).
  - Con: This interpretation ignores the extremely unusual tonality of S1 and the C-like initiation of the section beginning in m. 89.
- Option 2: The exposition is a two-part form with a two-part closing theme.
  - Pro: This option shows how the rhetoric of this exposition nearly follows the rhetorical progression of a typical sonata-form exposition (P-TR-S-C).
  - Con: This interpretation ignores the extremely unusual tonality of S and processual rhetoric of C1.
- Option 3: The exposition is a two-part form with a two-part transition.
  - Pro: This option nicely fits the exposition into the typical tonal trajectory of a sonata-form exposition (I–V).

24 As described in Hunt (2009) and Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 171–72), another option for this exposition would be viewing it as a trimodular block (see also Grant (2022) for a critique of this interpretation). While this is a somewhat viable option, we feel that this terminology comes with too much baggage to introduce to a typical undergraduate student.

Option #1: The exposition is a two-part form with a two-part subordinate theme, ignoring the tonality of S[1].

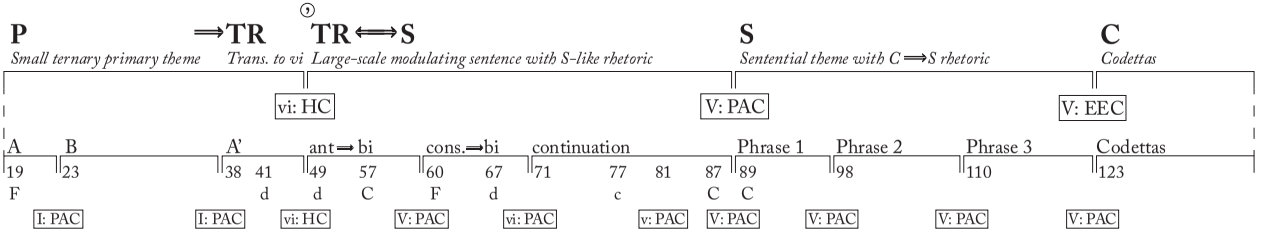
Option #2: The exposition is a two-part form with a two-part closing theme, ignoring the tonality of S and processual rhetoric of C[1].

Option #3: The exposition is a two-part form with a two-part transition, ignoring the rhetoric of TR[2] and S.

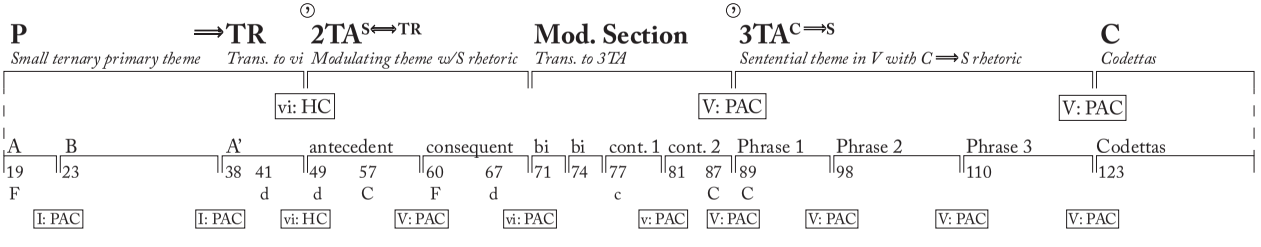
Example 9

Schubert, Octet in F Major, D. 803, mvt. 1, Five Different Interpretations of the Exposition.

Option #4: The exposition is a two-part form with the 2TA functioning as both TR & S, the 3TA an odd S with closing rhetoric.



Option #5: The exposition is a three-part form that does not conform to 18th-century models of sonata-form expositions.
Superscripts represent the modulating tonality of the second tonal area (2TA) and rhetoric of the third tonal area (3TA)



Example 9 (cont'd)
Schubert, Octet in F Major, D. 803, mvt. 1, Five Different Interpretations of the Exposition.

    - Con: This interpretation ignores the S-like rhetoric of TR2 and C-like initiation of S.
- Option 4: The exposition is a two-part form with a 2TA functioning as both TR and S.
    - Pro: This option nicely characterizes the formal function of the music from mm. 49–88.
    - Con: This interpretation ignores the C-like initiation of the material marked S.[25]
- Option 5: The exposition is a three-part form that does not conform to 18th-century models of sonata-form expositions.
    - Pro: This option allows for the idiosyncratic sonata to not be stuffed into an ill-fitting box.
    - Con: One analysis of one piece can hardly justify jettisoning typical sonata terminology entirely. Rather, more work is needed to confirm that other pieces act similarly.

We give all five to our students and have them prepare to defend whichever interpretation aligns most closely with their hearing of the piece. To do so, we:

1. Divide students into groups based on their preferred interpretation
2. Ask the groups to take 5 minutes to discuss their interpretation
3. Have each group present their chosen interpretation and reasoning to the class, as well as respond to feedback from classmates who chose a different option.

Like the other examples, this piece asks students to engage in questions of "either/neither/both," but in a way that introduces them to a significant 19th-century modification of sonata form that has plagued and fascinated scholars and performers. In fact, this analytical debate naturally leads to discussions about the dissemination and development of musical forms in the 19th century, the ways in which theories designed for other repertoires can aid or hamper scholarship, and even the scholarly process itself. Indeed, one of the primary benefits of this class is the way it asks students to get in the mind of the scholar. Throughout the class, students interrogate different interpretations, decide what they like or do not like about each, and come to their own conclusions, while acknowledging that multiple interpretations might be

25 The double arrow in this option indicates a "form-functional situation that is internally dynamic—one that bounces back and forth between conflicting form-functional profiles—but that in the larger scheme is entirely static" Martin and Vande Moortele (2014, 142).

valuable, each for different reasons. In particular, Option 5 gives students the chance to take a leap and make meaningful theoretical claims of their own. To emphasize this point, we follow this class up with a homework assignment that asks students to compare and contrast D. 803 with another of Schubert's three-key expositions, such as the Allegro in A minor, D. 947.

Conclusion

The language that we use in the classroom is powerful. Our word choices help to form the vocabulary that students will use to engage in communication throughout their lives as musicians. In the typical sonata-form lesson plan, students often are taught how to apply labels to various sections of a musical work as if these labels are static, universally applicable entities. While students should certainly be able to identify the standard small and large forms, framing formal analysis in this way can create an inflexible mindset: what happens if a student believes that *every* Classical piece must exactly conform to these textbook prototypes?

In each of the lessons that we have proposed in this article, we aim to show students that words such as either, neither, and both are not a means of hedging or equivocating about challenging repertoire, but that they have an important role to play in formal analysis and music scholarship. In doing so, we hope to steer students away from mechanistic labeling towards a more realistic understanding of the nearly limitless possibilities offered by a flexible approach to musical form.

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Student-Driven Music Theory: How the Question Formulation Technique Can Promote Agency, Engagement, and Curiosity

BY PATRICIA BURT AND PHILIP DUKER

How can we move our students from answering questions that we pose to them, towards developing their own avenues of inquiry? In this paper we make the case for teaching students how to ask meaningful questions about music. We argue that asking questions can be a crucial activity that motivates students' development as thoughtful and effective musicians.

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) is a pedagogical tool that teaches students how to develop their own questions, centers those questions in learning activities, and lastly encourages reflection on the entire process. This method foregrounds students' ideas and agency, motivates them to engage creatively with the topic, and thereby increases their confidence with and interest in the course material. We will share strategies for using the QFT, highlighting how this approach can create deeper learning and ultimately challenge students in ways that are meaningful for their own musical pursuits.

Introduction

How can we move our students beyond answering the questions we pose to them in our music theory classes, towards developing *their own* pathways of exploration and inquiry? Learning to ask questions is a crucial skill that can cultivate students' development as thoughtful and effective musicians. The music theory classroom has potential to be an ideal site for exploring and answering questions about music, but to realize this potential these classes would need to teach our students how to ask good questions. The process of students asking and pursuing their own questions can increase engagement with course content; this also increases the likelihood that students will apply these more personalized skills to their other musical contexts.

In this paper we show how the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) can help students learn to ask meaningful questions about music by teaching them to develop their own questions in relation to a prompt (Rothstein and Santana 2011).[1] The QFT

1 Source: The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) was created by the Right Question Institute (rightquestion.org); for more examples of how to use the QFT, see the Right Question Institute website: https://rightquestion.org/resources/level/higher-education/ (accessed August 2, 2021).

foregrounds students' ideas and agency, motivates them to engage creatively with the topic, and thereby increases their confidence with and interest in the course material. Using this technique, students generate, manipulate, and prioritize their own questions as a springboard for further learning. We will share specific examples of how the QFT process can work in music theory courses through a series of case studies. Our use of the QFT has helped students learn about specific music theory concepts as well as more global ideas such as the philosophical underpinnings or assumptions of a course or how analytical skills could be applied outside of the theory classroom. When incorporated regularly across the theory curriculum, the QFT leads to a learning cycle where students develop their own questions, learn analytical skills and explore theoretical lenses in pursuit of those questions, and then reflect upon the process. More broadly, getting students to consistently practice formulating their own questions over multiple semesters can encourage a habit of curiosity—a trait that can drive life-long learning.

Overview of Question Formulation Technique

The QFT is a structured process for generating, manipulating, and answering questions that culminates with students reflecting on their learning. Students explore course concepts while using the creative problem-solving techniques of divergent and convergent thinking.[2] After they have gone through this progression (Example 1), the last step asks them to think metacognitively about both the content and the process they used to learn that content.

After the instructor provides a prompt (the Question Focus or QFocus), students produce questions about the prompt according to a set of rules intended to help them think in terms of interrogative rather than declarative statements. Then, through the dual process of categorizing their questions as open or closed and manipulating queries from one form to the other, students learn that how they ask questions can dramatically alter the responses. Students then choose their top questions according to some criteria for prioritization; by switching to an evaluative mode, students compare the many inquiries they came up with and make judgment calls about which ones should be selected. The instructor can then use these questions in a number of

2 Divergent thinking is characterized as an approach that creates multiple and varied solutions to a problem, in contrast with convergent thinking which often tries to settle upon the best solution among a set of options. For more on these problem-solving techniques or ways of thinking, see Runco and Acar (2018).

Step 1: Teacher presents prompt (QFocus).

Step 2: Students produce questions according to four rules.

Step 3: Students categorize and manipulate their questions.

Step 4: Students prioritize their questions.

Step 5: Questions are used to drive learning.

Step 6: Students reflect on the process.

Example 1
Six steps of the question formulation technique: an overview.

ways to drive learning. Finally, students reflect on both the QFT process and what they learned in response to the QFocus.

With this overview in place, we will now present three case studies in which we have used the QFT in our theory classes, elaborating on each of the above steps. In all of these reports, we will quote heavily from our students, as it is ultimately their responses that demonstrate the strength of this approach. The first case study shows how the QFT can be used at the end of an analysis unit so that students dig deeper into a piece they have already explored. The second case study, from the beginning of a post-tonal music course, encouraged students to examine their listening habits and expectations in preparation for an unfamiliar sound world. The third case study, which took place on the last class of a semester, features students exploring the relationship between performance and analysis, particularly how performances can reflect analytical interpretations.

Case study #1: QFT for deeper analysis (Burt)

In a first-year diatonic harmony class, students used the QFT to consider large-scale connections in a rondo (Example 2). Prior to the QFT activity, they had already performed an in-depth melodic and cadential analysis of each of the individual sections of the rondo movement from Joseph Bologne's Violin Sonata No. 3 in G minor, op. 1a (Bologne 2020). However, they had not yet been explicitly asked to consider the piece as a whole. This QFT session was designed so that students could begin making connections across the entire piece and recognize that this activity is fundamentally different from an activity like deciphering cadence types in a short excerpt of a composition.

Context:	1st-year diatonic harmony class, fully online, 3rd week of classes
Class and group characteristics:	56 students total (3 sections), groups of 4–5.
Total questions produced:	136
Logistics:	Steps 1–4 in class, students chose 2–3 questions to answer for homework, post-activity reflection also completed for homework
QFocus:	Write down your questions about the Bologne violin sonata movement we've studied in light of the following statement: *It is musical analysis, not musical description, that can help us understand the significance or uniqueness of a musical work.*

Example 2
Case study #1—quick facts.

Step 1—Instructor presents the Question Focus (QFocus)

The first step of the QFT process is to present students with a prompt or Question Focus (QFocus). For this QFT activity, the QFocus asked students to formulate questions about a movement from a sonata for violin and piano. At the same time, the prompt challenged them to differentiate analysis from description as a key to revealing the uniqueness of this musical work; we had neither defined nor discussed this distinction in class. I specifically chose the language in the QFocus so students would consider this difference for themselves by reflecting on what they already "knew" about the piece and what more there might be to understand as they considered the piece in its entirety. When designing a prompt, instructors should think carefully about what will capture their students' imaginations and encourage them to explore the material or topics deeply. After the initial presentation of the QFocus by the instructor, students then lead the next three steps of the QFT process which are carefully scaffolded to ensure that students have clear direction.

Step 2—Students produce questions according to four rules

For step two, the students were sent into Zoom breakout rooms of 4–5 students each where they began the foundational stage of the QFT process: question generation according to four rules (Example 3). The goal for this phase is for the groups to come up with as many questions as possible, prioritizing quantity while maintaining relevance to the prompt. As Rothstein and Santana stress, the four rules are designed

to help ensure that the process is a positive experience for all students (Rothstein and Santana 2011).

1. Ask as many questions as you can.
2. Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss.
3. Write down every question exactly as stated.
4. Change any statement into a question.

Example 3
The four rules for generating questions.

The second rule is often one of the hardest for students to follow: "Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss." Refraining from discussing and answering the questions they come up with can be challenging for many students, especially those who enjoy small discussions and want to start talking about answers immediately. This rule ensures that students are focused on question generation and are not pulled into exploring the answers to questions at this early stage.

The prohibition on judgment is also important as it frees students from the worry that they will come up with a "stupid question." In combination with rule 3, this rule creates a judgment-free space for students to state whatever questions enter their minds without worrying about the quality of their questions. This freedom of exploration encourages students to relate the prompt to their own lives and experiences, and they can come up with personally meaningful questions. Although open exploration can lead to some silly questions or even to questions that seem irrelevant to the prompt, these seemingly unrelated questions can give instructors insights into how students understand and relate to the material and to each other.

This phase of the QFT encourages divergent thinking by promoting the unfiltered creation of questions and allowing many possible perspectives on a topic. In this particular QFT exercise, students asked questions about the following topics: the overall form, specific analytical details of the piece, the instrumentation, and the historical context. They also asked more general questions about music description versus music analysis, two activities that the prompt suggested are quite different. Example 4 provides a sampling of student questions from each of the topics.[3]

3 This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Delaware.

About the form:

- Why did he choose this particular form structure out of all the options that are out there?
- Why are the B and C sections different keys?
- Why does the piece use the key centers that it does?
- What is the significance of the key changes and repetitions?
- How does the repetition of the A section three times affect the overall suspense of the piece?
- How are the melodies of each section related/different and does this have to do with what key they are in?
- What is done in order to connect these three sections in order to make it sound like one cohesive piece?
- Why are there so many transitional bars between cadences and sections?
- What would the overall bubble diagram look like?

About specific details of the piece:

- What musically makes the A section so catchy?
- Why does he use uneven phrase lengths?
- Why use metric dissonance in the piece?
- How does the composer pull off delaying strong cadences in the B section?

About instrumentation:

- How did he choose which sections to give keyboard melody vs violin?
- Why did he choose the instrumentation of violin and keys?
- Did the instrumentation of this piece affect how the composer constructed it?
- Why use a harpsichord instead of piano?
- Why choose this specific instrumentation?

About the context of the piece:

- What is the historical context of when this piece was written?
- What makes this work stand out from the other works of his time?
- Was this piece written purely to get money or was there deeper motivation for it?
- Does the context and time period help contribute to the analysis or description?
- How does this sonata movement fit in with the whole piece?

About description vs. analysis:

- How can we distinguish between musical analysis and description?

Example 4

Student questions organized by theme.

Many of these questions could serve as wonderful entry points to further analysis of the piece, and many are similar to what an instructor might use to guide an activity. We have found that this is typical of QFT activities: students will often come up with questions that overlap with what we instructors would ask our students. However, using student questions can result in a marked difference in student engagement and ownership of the material because the class is exploring *their* questions. Also noteworthy is that many of the questions move beyond analytical statements (note the many "why" and "how" beginnings); these questions take salient analytical observations and probe deeper by asking for explanations of the compositional decisions. While many instructors might not often indulge in these kinds of questions, encouraging students to wrestle with causation, explication, and justification can be great ways to explore a composition.

Step 3—Students categorize and manipulate their questions

Once students have come up with a wide range of questions in relation to the QFocus, the third step begins by asking them to categorize their questions as being either open or closed. Closed questions are those that can be answered with a one- or two-word response such as yes or no, a number, a date, or a chord name. Open questions on the other hand require more elaboration and explanation. Once students have categorized each of their questions, they transform a question of each type into the other type: students choose an open question to become closed, and then turn a closed question into an open one. This process of classification and transformation allows students to see how the wording of a question matters and can alter the form of the answer. Students also see how manipulating a question can frame the responses; such manipulation leads to the kind of answers that you want. Changing questions in this way is a great exercise for future educators who will need to think carefully about how to word the questions they will pose to their students.

Step 4—Students prioritize their questions

The fourth step in the QFT process is for students to prioritize their questions. Teachers can specify a standard for prioritization or let students decide which questions they think are most important. After coming up with many questions (divergent thinking), students must then come together to decide which of the questions from their list are most important (convergent thinking). Asking students to explain or justify their choices can reveal fascinating insights into what students find meaningful and important. Also interesting is seeing what students *do not* choose

to value as this can reveal areas that are outside of students' horizons of concern and relevance. Ultimately, either prioritization scheme gets students to do the hard work of evaluating the different questions and discussing the ways that they could rank each of the questions. (These kinds of evaluative judgment are considered more advanced activities on Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Objectives; see Anderson and Krathwohl 2001, and also Rifkin and Stoecker 2011.)

In this QFT activity, each group of students picked three questions from their group's list to share with the class. While the complete question list for every group contained at least some questions that were related to specific details of the piece, students usually prioritized questions dealing with large-scale aspects of the piece. This tendency to prioritize questions about connections across the piece resulted from where the QFT was placed in this unit and the ways in which the students had already engaged with this piece prior to the activity. I was happy to see that the prompt itself inspired some metacognitive thinking as many groups prioritized questions about the difference between description and analysis. The students in these groups discussed which previous activities were more descriptive in nature and which were more analytic.

Working through the first four steps of the QFT process took the full 50-minute class period. We have found that this pacing is typical; even with a few minutes of announcements or housekeeping, these steps of the QFT can usually be completed in one class. The second time a class goes through a QFT activity, they are usually more efficient and mostly need reminders rather than full instruction for each stage in the process. This timing division works out well as the first four steps are best done in groups with students actively discussing their ideas, while the latter two steps (using the questions to drive learning and reflecting on the process) can be approached in a variety of ways that do not necessarily involve groups.

Step 5—Students use questions to drive learning

The next step in the QFT is to use the questions that students came up with to engage with the course content. Questions could be used as in-class activities where groups explore the same question leading to a class discussion, or different groups could each explore one question and then use the jigsaw technique to share responses with the whole class.

In this QFT exercise, each student chose two to three questions to explore for homework. This kind of assignment allows for differentiated learning as students can choose questions that are of personal interest to them and engage with the material at

an appropriate level of complexity.[4] Because this activity took place during a semester that was entirely online, all questions were recorded on a Google Doc and placed in shared folders, giving students access to each group's full list of questions. For the homework assignment, students could choose a handful of questions they wanted to explore from any group's initial list of questions. This allowed students to see how similar or different each group's line of questioning was while allowing them to concentrate on what aspects of the QFocus most interested them.

Step 6—Students reflect on the process

The final phase of the QFT is for students to reflect on what they learned and the process they used. As other researchers have found, student reflection at the end of an exercise is an invaluable step in consolidating learning and organizing information to make it more memorable (see, for example, Dunlosky and Metcalfe 2009). Reviewing the learning goals of the unit and some of the exemplary questions and answers that the students came up with in relation to those learning goals can help clarify for students the most important ideas. When using the QFT, it is also advisable for students to reflect on the process they used to come up with questions as a strategy that they can use in other contexts.

For this case study, students reflected on the activity by answering the following two questions:

- How does asking questions about a piece of music deepen your understanding or appreciation of the piece?
- How would asking questions about music you are performing change your learning process?

In their answers to the reflection questions, students seemed to tease out the difference between description and analysis and also thought about how each activity can be useful:

> Doing simple things, such as chord analysis and structure, can help when memorizing sections and parts that would have to be played, but asking questions about the reasoning and ideas behind certain musical decisions can help bring emotion and experience into the piece that you would not have brought in before.

4 Differentiated learning refers broadly to offering multiple options for how deeply students explore material, the process of how they engage with content, and, lastly, how they demonstrate their learning. It embraces the idea that students will benefit from exploring content at a level that challenges them appropriately and that this level will likely vary widely within a classroom. There are many similar ideas found in Universal Design for Learning; see, for example, Quaglia (2015). For more on differentiated activities and classrooms, see Tomlinson (2017), and Palfy (2020) for specific examples in music theory.

Many students appreciated how the QFT encourages divergent thinking:

> Well, asking questions with a group of people allows you to think about things you may not have thought about before. It also helps you to realize just how complex music can be.
>
> Asking questions, especially with the method that we used, opens up a wide variety of ideas about the piece that may be often overlooked, but actually serve as a vital aspect of the piece.
>
> It makes you think about what you don't know about a piece of music, and helps you to discover what you might be curious to learn more about. Typically, good questions will prompt other good questions, which can be an interesting path to delve down.

Students also reflected on how asking questions helped them gain a deeper understanding of the piece:

> Asking questions helped me break that initial barrier to a deeper understanding of the piece because it encouraged me to actually take a look inside my brain and vocalize the things that I was genuinely curious about. . . . It really forced me to think about things like the composer's motivation, and more large-scale questions that in the end help me get that deeper understanding.

Many students, like the one above, appreciated the opportunity to explore what they were genuinely curious about. One student summarized in the following response why developing curiosity is so important:

> If there is no curiosity, there is no intrinsic motivation to learn, and as a result, there is no learning. So, if I'm curious about the music I perform and take a genuine interest in asking questions and discovering new things about it, I would be more likely to get invested in the deeper meaning behind the music, and that would benefit my overall experience in performing it.

Through this QFT activity, students practiced asking questions that would lead them to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of a composition we had been studying. More importantly, however, this activity allowed students to think consciously about the analytic process. I have had many conversations with theory instructors who bemoan the students for whom theory is only labeling items on the score without thinking more deeply about what those labels mean. This activity allowed students to discover for themselves that the understanding they can gain from music theory is significantly more powerful than the mere act of labeling. It is another tool they can use to make sense of and create meaning in the music they encounter.

Case study #2: Exploring listening expectations (Duker)

Context:	20th-century theory and analysis (3rd year), fully online, 1st week of classes
Class and group characteristics:	48 students total (2 sections), groups of 3–5.
Total questions produced:	248
Logistics:	Steps 1–4 in class, asynchronous discussion on LMS with prioritized questions, post-activity reflection as a quiz.
QFocus:	Music should always be pleasant and entertaining to listen to.

Example 5
Case study #2—quick facts.

In addition to being used to dig deeper into a piece of music, the QFT can be used to examine broad concepts and ideas, even preconceptions that students may not realize they have. The second case study, summarized in Example 5, comes from a post-tonal analysis course in which the QFT activity occurred during the first week of classes. In this case, the QFT exercise encouraged students to consider the listening expectations that they bring to pieces of music, knowing that the level of dissonance that they would encounter in a 20th-century course would likely be challenging. The QFocus was the simple sentence: "Music should always be pleasant and entertaining to listen to."

Careful crafting of the QFocus is important as subtle tweaks to the prompt can significantly change how students respond. If the QFocus is a text, the wording is crucial; having an absolute (such as "never") will spur strong reactions from the students. In the case of this prompt, the word "always" encourages students to consider unfamiliar and atypical listening contexts which could challenge this absolute.

The first four steps of the QFT (presentation of QFocus, question generation, classifying and transforming questions, prioritizing questions) took place during class in small groups of three to five students. Moving around and observing the small group interactions, I was pleasantly surprised to see how many groups would seemingly finish coming up with questions, but then dig further and find more perspectives or questions after a short pause. Give students ample time in the second step to allow for groups to catch this "second wind" and come up with even more questions than they had previously thought possible. Many times, a group will remark that, after moving past an initial stopping point, a new question sparked more questions along a different avenue of inquiry.

The first time that students classify questions as open or closed, it can be helpful to discuss some of the pros and cons of each question type. Many students will assume that open questions are better than closed ones since they require more of a response. Pointing out some of the advantages of both types allow students to see the value and potential uses of each kind of question (e.g., the efficiency and speed of closed questions and contexts where that might be a priority). On the post-activity reflection, one student particularly appreciated this part of the process, writing:

> I especially liked the section of the QFT process where we classified the questions into open/closed and then altered these questions to fit into the opposite category. As a future educator, I think that this process is both important and applicable to my future career.

When working through step three, classifying and manipulating questions, some groups mentioned that some of their questions were not really open or closed. There are questions that can seem ambiguous. One way to prevent students from becoming too focused on any one question is to tell them that if a question does not fit neatly into either category, it could be considered both open and closed. This is often a better use of time than a digression on logical strategies for parsing.

For step four, students were asked to choose the top three questions that "most interest you and your group." A sample of what one of the groups produced from these first four steps is given in Example 6.

Prioritized questions:

1. (6) Since music is an art form and art reflects life, why should music not also reflect the unpleasant parts of life? O
2. (15) What if it's not "entertaining" or "pleasant"? O
3. (20) What was the reasoning behind the composer wanting to create a piece to get a specific emotion? O

Full question list:

1. How are you defining pleasant? O
2. How are you defining entertainment? O
3. Does it have to be pleasant throughout? C
4. How does entertainment vary from person to person? O
5. Whose perspective are we prioritizing as the standard for what pleasant and entertaining is? o/c

Example 6
Case study #2—sample group submission.

6. Since music is an art form and art reflects life, why should music not also reflect the unpleasant parts of life? O
7. Visual art is a medium often used to provoke response, whether the response be discomfort, joy, repulsion, etc. This is often to provoke or plant seeds of thought about a given topic. Why shouldn't music also be used/exhibited in this way? O
8. What is good music? O
9. Was music always used for entertainment? C
   a. How has music been used as entertainment? O
   b. How has the usage of music developed over time? O
10. How do other cultures define music? o
11. Is music a cross-cultural constant/phenomenon? c/o
12. Since music was originally classified as a math (see quadrivium), why shouldn't it embrace its more mathematical and (and often strange) tendencies? O
13. How do we define music? o
14. How do you know as a composer if your piece is entertaining? O
    a. Is the piece entertaining? C
15. What if it's not "entertaining" or "pleasant"? O
16. Can someone's circumstances or perspective affect the enjoyment of the piece? C
17. How pleasant or entertaining? 100% or some? O
18. Why does it matter? O
19. How do you plan on pulling out emotions with your music? o
20. What was the reasoning behind the composer wanting to create a piece to get a specific emotion? O
21. In what circumstance is it appropriate to listen to music (if it's only ever supposed to be pleasant or entertaining)? O
22. How do you plan on enforcing that it should only be pleasant or entertaining? O

Example 6 (cont'd)
Case study #2—sample group submission.

After each group had submitted their top three questions, I organized all of the prioritized queries into groups for the students (Example 7). Each student was then asked to reply to a question or reply to one of their peer's responses or both (the due dates were staggered to encourage responses and dialogue).

Role of art/music:

What is music? Can we define music?

Since music is an art form and art reflects life, why should music not also reflect the unpleasant parts of life?

What makes music compare to other art?

Composers:

Is the composer or the performer responsible for making the music pleasant and entertaining?

What was the reasoning behind the composer wanting to create a piece to get a specific emotion?

Why should there be any intention at all?

Can we express pleasant emotions with unpleasant sounds and vice versa?

Does instrumentation make something more or less pleasant?

Listening frameworks:

What makes things pleasant?

Does context change the way we perceive music?

Is there any way to objectively measure how pleasant or entertaining a piece is?

Is the listening experience of music biased?

What qualifies a song to be entertaining?

Is music only something that you listen to or is it something you experience?

How do you qualify entertainment/pleasant? Or how do you define entertainment/pleasant?

Audiences and pleasure:

Do people seek out "unpleasant" music?

What if it's not "entertaining" or "pleasant"?

Should music always be pleasant and entertaining to listen to? (Why?)

Should music always be pleasant?

Where is the line drawn between audiating and listening? Can audiation be pleasant?

Can you grow to think something is pleasant and entertaining that you originally disliked?

Do you have the right to say if music is unpleasant or entertaining?

Example 7
Case study #2—questions and themes.

As Example 7 shows, the students came up with many good questions about a wide variety of topics. The ensuing discussion on the LMS was thought provoking for the students, and I was glad to see that they could have respectful disagreements. Many of the questions were more challenging than what I would normally ask students to respond to in class, but because the students came up with the questions,

Performers/ performance:

Is the composer or the performer responsible for making the music pleasant and entertaining?

Can execution of the music affect whether it's pleasant or not?

Can a live performance be pleasant and entertaining, while a recording of the same piece isn't? What about a recording of the same exact performance?

Some good questions from groups that were not prioritized:

Is there a relationship between culture and what music is entertaining or pleasant?

Has the perception of "pleasant and entertaining" changed over time?

How would one adjust an unpleasant piece to make it pleasant or entertaining?

Can music still be enjoyable if it is not "pleasant"? When, if ever, are the concepts of enjoyability and pleasantness mutually exclusive?

Whose perspective are we prioritizing as the standard for what pleasant and entertaining is?

Visual art is a medium often used to provoke response, whether the response be discomfort, joy, repulsion, etc. This is often to provoke or plant seeds of thought about a given topic. Why shouldn't music also be used/exhibited in this way?

Does the background of the creator of the piece influence if the piece is worthy or not?

Example 7 (cont'd)
Case study #2—questions and themes.

they embraced the process, sometimes acknowledging that perhaps only provisional answers were possible. These discussions allowed students to wrestle with deeper questions about listening and their own expectations about music and allowed them to guide the direction of the conversation. There were echoes of these discussions in many class meetings over the next few weeks when we began to encounter challenging pieces. While it was not possible in the online format of the class, I imagine that an in-person small group discussion would have been even more successful. On the other hand, having the discussion online saved class time for other activities and allowed students to practice arguing for different positions while putting their ideas into written form.

Although I briefly went over some of the goals of the QFT exercise in class, the reflection step came mostly in the form of an asynchronous quiz without a class discussion. There were three questions that students had to answer regarding the role of questions in learning, their specific listening habits and expectations, and, finally, what they thought of the QFT process. Example 8 gives some examples of exemplary student responses to the first two prompts.

Reflection Question 1: Why is asking and developing your own questions important for learning?

> It helps to know where your mind naturally goes and understanding how broad/narrow a topic may actually be and can also points out any potentially biases one may have. Also, understanding the limits of your own knowledge through what questions come to mind helps in focusing your learning towards new things rather than something that may simply be review.
>
> It makes the student think about the subject instead of just giving them facts and letting them memorize things.
>
> Formulating questions about a specific topic reveals a level of engagement that is not always present when a student is copying down notes from a lecture or words from a textbook. This "copy-paste" learning style leaves too many holes in comprehension, and while you might almost completely grasp an idea this way, creating your own questions forces you to place into words what you either don't understand about the idea, or understand to be left up for interpretation (which is very common in musical conversation).

Reflection Question 2: Hopefully this process allowed you to think critically about listening expectations. Please describe any insights or thoughts that you had in relation to the idea of listening habits or expectations.

> This activity really opened my eyes to the certain expectations I had about music based on my background. Although I was aware of some biased I had, I learned a lot about the ways I view music through asking questions. I feel more mentally prepared and open to listening to different genres of music now that we were briefed through this question activity.
>
> We realized that the listening experience is extremely subjective, but there are still things we can objectively listen for to point out and discuss. When we point these things out, we can talk about why they were written/performed the way they were and how they affect the piece as a whole but we can't objectively say if they make a piece "good" or not.
>
> We have a lot of implicit bias that plays into the way we listen. Our expectations are often set from the start, and this activity allowed us to understand our biases (hopefully to combat them).

Example 8
Case study #2—reflection comments.

Overall, the QFT was a great way to prepare students to encounter the challenging world of post-tonal music. Once they had taken the time to think about their expectations and listening habits, many students seemed more willing to listen to non-tonal music and acknowledge that there could be many different perspectives on this kind of repertoire. Even those students who still found this style off-putting expressed their distaste in more interesting ways. They would say things like: "I don't understand why someone would create a piece in this way," or "I think I still prefer pieces that are less dissonant." Taking one class period with the QFT to allow students a moment of introspection about their listening expectations ended up paying benefits throughout the semester.

Case study #3: Performance and Analysis (Burt)

Context:	1st-year diatonic harmony class, fully online, last day of class
Class and group characteristics:	56 students total (3 sections), groups of 4–5.
Total questions produced:	121
Logistics:	Steps 1–4 in class

QFocus:

> "As someone who is professionally active both as a music theorist and a pianist, I find the line between analysis and performance rather fuzzy. Even if an analyst writes nothing about performance, reading that analysis and internalizing the corresponding hearing will impact some aspects of performance. It is difficult to imagine a genuinely satisfying analysis of a composition that would in no way inform one's subsequent performance of that piece, and most analysts would concede that their writings shape more than our understanding and aesthetic appreciation of musical works."
>
> -Ryan McClelland in "Performance and Analysis Studies: An Overview and Bibliography"

> "The purely spontaneous, unknowing and unquestioned impulse is not enough to inspire convincing performance, and surely not enough to resolve the uncertainties with which the performer is so often faced."
>
> -Wallace Berry in "Musical Structure and Performance"

> "It is one thing to be convinced that something is true analytically, quite another to decide how—even whether—to disclose such information to one's listeners in a performance. Sometimes...it is better for the performer to suggest something which is 'false'—or more precisely, something which is 'true' only from a certain, partial vantage point—than to spell out everything one knows. In that way, the performer adopts temporarily the viewpoint of one or two characters in the drama, so to speak, rather than assuming omniscience at every moment. Dramatic truth and analytical truth are not the same thing; a performance is not an *explication du texte*."
>
> -William Rothstein in "Analysis and the Act of Performance"

Example 9
Case study #3—quick facts.

In the last class of the semester, I typically ask students to list—in the order studied and from memory—the main topics we explored in the course. Taking a moment to review and reflect allows the students to feel good about how much they learned during our 14 weeks together. However, over the two years where I was experimenting with the QFT, I frequently thought about a striking and memorable statement from one of my graduate school professors. He said that perhaps what is more important than leaving an academic program with a body of knowledge is

leaving with a handful of really good questions. In that spirit, I thought it might be interesting to end our semester with questions for future exploration rather than a review of what we already knew. Having students transfer theory knowledge learned in the classroom to their own musical experiences when listening to, practicing, and performing music is one of the more difficult learning outcomes. For the last day of Theory II class, I crafted a QFocus that would provide the opportunity for students to ask questions about how to use the tools they gained from our course. The QFocus, shown in Example 9, contained three passages offering different ideas about the connection between analysis and performance.

The students spent 25 minutes of class time writing their questions and prioritized three of them before sharing their questions with the rest of the class. Students generated a total of 121 questions, a sampling of which can be found in Example 10. As expected, many student questions dealt with how analysis might directly impact performance, but students extended that idea to include questions about how analysis might affect listening to a piece. Some groups included questions about refraining from analyzing the music you perform and the value of spontaneous performance. Also, somewhat predictably, students asked about possible negative effects of analysis, like whether analysis can dampen the joy of performing music (see Margulis 2010). There were also two lines of questioning that I did not expect: First, students from more than one group wondered about the connection between the instrument one plays and the approach to analysis. Second, they also questioned whether there might be some overlap between analytic truth and dramatic truth.

Analysis and performance:

- Why is analysis so important to our interpretation of music?
- How can a knowledge of musical analysis improve one's performance?
- Is it necessary for a performer to do a harmonic analysis of a piece?
- Do we need harmonic analysis to understand the music?
- Does doing harmonic analysis make you a better performer?
- Is harmonic analysis necessary to perform a piece *convincingly*?
- Does harmonic analysis help you internalize the music better?
- How much do professionals analyze their music in general?
- Is it possible to perform an analysis and not have it influence a performance?
- Why wouldn't you "disclose such information" to one's listeners in a performance?

Example 10
Case study #3—questions and themes.

How analysis affects listening:

- How does analysis shape our listening of a piece as well as performance?
- How analytically should we be thinking when we listen to music?
- Does harmonic analysis help you *appreciate* the music more?

Refraining from analyzing music:

- Is there any value in spontaneous performance without analysis?
- Can you tell when a performer *doesn't* understand the musical analysis of the piece they're performing?
- How does one make a convincing performance without understanding musical analysis?
- Does someone need to be professionally trained in music to understand music?
- What would happen if you ignored an analytical approach and just performed the piece as your emotion dictated?
- Are there any pieces that have been designed to be played without analysis?

Negative effects of analysis:

- How do you find the point where analysis starts to drain the joy in performing?
- How do we know when we have overanalyzed a piece?
- Does analysis of the piece interrupt a performer's creative liberties?

Interactions between instrument played and analytic approach:

- Does the instrument you play affect the way you should analyze a piece?
- Does the instrument you play affect the way you analyze or perform?
- With a focus on instrumental concentration, how can harmonic analysis benefit the performer's performance (i.e. choir)?

Dramatic truth vs analytic truth:

- Is dramatic truth or analytical truth better for a performance?
- How do you inspire convincing performance/how does analysis allow us to communicate dramatic truth?
- How do we bridge the gap between creative impulse and theoretical analysis in performance?
- Can the lines between dramatic truth and analytical truth blur?

Questions about the Qfocus:

- In the second quote, what is the author referring to when they talk about an impulse?
- What does the "*explication du texte*" mean?

Example 10 (cont'd)
Case study #3—questions and themes.

Finally, some students had questions about the quotations themselves. As mentioned earlier, the QFT offers the instructor a window into what students find relevant; it can also offer a window into what students find problematic. When constructing the QFocus, I decided not to provide the identities of the authors of the quotes. When we had returned together as a class after the question formulation period, one student asked who wrote the quotes, suspecting they were written by white men. I shared the authors of the quotes which led to a discussion about what values are hidden in the undergraduate theory curriculum (Palfy and Gilson 2018). Indeed, this particular student's group had asked a number of questions addressing diversity issues in music theory, many of which we had discussed at the very start of the semester.

> Where are these quotes coming from?
>
> Why do we only learn western tonal theory?
>
> Why don't we use more examples from pop, hip-hop, and other modern forms of music?
>
> Why don't we examine world music?

Students from other groups had also formulated questions about the limitations of what we learn in the classroom when presented with music that is outside the western canon.

> If we're looking at a different culture, how does our own perspective affect how we analyze something we aren't familiar with? Is it necessarily right to analyze a piece that isn't from our own culture in that way?
>
> Does the content of our theory curriculum (SATB western) limit the scope of what can inform our performances?

The questions about diversity, though outside of my specific goal of connecting analysis and performance, led to the course ending where it began. This particular class occurred in Fall 2020 after the discipline of music theory made national news with the response of the *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* to Philip Ewell's 2019 talk at the national meeting of the Society of Music Theory (see Ewell 2019 and Jackson 2019). The first unit of the class included reading and discussing ideas about what Ewell calls music theory's "white racial frame" (Ewell 2020). Despite an increased focus on including examples by women and BIPOC composers as well as including music from a variety of genres (pop, movie, video game, jazz), some students continued to sense limitations of the applicability of the course content to music they care about. Their questions at the end of the course offer another data point as we music theorists consider the extent to

which inclusion of more diverse examples—without dismantling the traditional theory curriculum—actually addresses the diversity issue in music theory.

Varieties of prompts and contexts

While the case studies above have provided an in-depth demonstration of how one might use the QFT in theory courses, the following brief summaries are meant to show the breadth of approaches and topics that are possible with this technique. As the above examples show, the QFocus is typically a short statement or quote; the only limit is that the QFocus should not be a question. In a music classroom, it could be appropriate to offer visuals (such as scores), multimedia, or audio excerpts as a prompt instead of text alone. Bringing in an unfamiliar piece (with or without the score) as a QFocus can be a good way to measure how students are processing new music and to gain a sense of a given group's range of reactions. Visuals—such as manuscript scores of continuo parts showing the range of approaches to figured bass (in addition to the misaligned staves and other idiosyncratic elements of older sheet music) or the illustrated scores to one of the fugues in Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*—could also provide fertile territory to explore. (See Walden 2010).

Multimedia prompts may seem less structured and unfamiliar, so it is helpful if students have had some experience with contextual listening, such as making observations about pieces or videos they hear. It is an especially good idea to provide foundation work for 1st-year students, who may not know where to start if given an excerpt for listening. Even in these cases, the QFocus can reveal how students approach listening or viewing and what aspects of these experiences draw their attention. Student reactions generate instructor insights about appropriate approaches for a given group of students. There are many possibilities for the QFocus, and we have found that a wide variety of prompts can be successful in different theory classes.

Score as QFocus: Arnold Schoenberg's "Nacht" from Pierrot Lunaire *(Burt and Duker)*[5]

Using a score as the QFocus allows an instructor to see what approaches and considerations students default to when examining an unfamiliar piece. We offered the score to Arnold Schoenberg's "Nacht" from *Pierrot Lunaire* as the QFocus in a post-tonal course. After a brief introduction and explanation about the QFT, we listened to

5 In this and the following QFocus example, Burt was the instructor of record for this course. That said, both co-authors participated in the presentation of this activity. Uses of the first person refer to Burt's perspective.

the piece and then the students went into groups to generate questions. As is typical, the questions ranged from trivial to insightful; many of them— such as one group who wondered why the piece was subtitled "passacaglia"—could have been used as good entry points into exploring the composition.

Using a piece of music as the prompt to a QFT activity holds great potential for allowing students to practice the skill of domain transfer. Even when instructors work hard to make their courses relevant to students, transferring ideas to different contexts is an additional skill that students often need to be taught. By allowing the students to lead an exploration of a composition, they practice applying the various analytical lenses they have learned. Letting students explore a piece in this way can increase the likelihood that they could apply what they learn in their theory courses to other contexts without the assistance of an instructor.

Video as QFocus (Burt and Duker)

As part of the first Theory I unit on texture and timbre, students learn about the physical characteristics of sound that determine timbre. I taught this course in 2019 and 2020 and, in the second year, prior to delving into the physics of timbre, I exposed the students to spectrograms through a QFT activity, summarized in Example 11. In both renditions of the course, the learning outcomes, assessments, and projects for this unit were similar so these two classes provide a point of comparison as well as a good framework for discussing some challenges an instructor may face when implementing the QFT.

Context:	Music Theory I (1st year), week 2
Class and group characteristics:	51 students total (3 sections), groups of 4–5
Total questions produced:	278
Logistics:	Steps 1–5 in class (1.5 classes used for this), students answered selected priority questions in groups and presented their findings to the rest of the class, post activity reflection as a homework assignment
QFocus:	Video of two contrasting pieces (solo shakuhachi and electronic music) played along with a spectrogram

Example 11
Case study #4—quick facts.

In the 2019 rendition of this class, spectrograms had been gradually and methodically introduced to students to demonstrate the physical properties of sound. For example, prior to studying spectrograms of an entire musical work, students looked at simple spectrograms of sine tones, white noise, and different instruments playing the same note as a way of gradually building up their understanding of frequency and the overtone series. In the 2020 rendition of the class, my students had no prior instruction about the physical properties of sound before encountering the QFocus: a shakuhachi piece and an electronic piece, both played along with videos of their respective spectrograms.

I was somewhat apprehensive about incorporating the QFT in this way because I had specific ideas about what I wanted the students to understand, and I was not sure how well the students' own questions would line up with my desired learning outcomes. In fact, this decentering of teacher authority is one of the challenges that can result in some discomfort on the part of instructors. In traditional course structures, learning is largely instructor-driven: the instructor chooses the topics, assigns the readings, decides the questions to ask, creates the assessments, designs grading systems, and, finally, evaluates the students. With the QFT, students can direct their own learning as they ask and research their own questions about a topic. The QFT requires that instructors share power over the curriculum with the students, and, because of this, student learning may not align perfectly with learning outcomes the instructor might have chosen in a more traditional setting. However, what they learn may be better retained and applied in the future, because it overlaps with their personal interests and musical experiences.

Student-centered pedagogies such as the QFT acknowledge that students come to the classroom shaped by a unique combination of educational background, life experiences, and personal interests. These differences in background can benefit some students and hurt others when students are asked to engage similarly with course material and achieve uniform learning goals set by the instructor. In contrast, the QFT can have a levelling effect where all students can contribute to the activity regardless of their previous preparation in music theory. When students who might struggle in some areas of theory come up with great questions and shine in the group stages of the QFT, they can dramatically increase their confidence and reinvigorate their performance in class. Furthermore, by allowing students to engage with topics according to their individual curiosities, we celebrate the differences that our students bring to our courses. Jesse Stommel, the co-founder of *Digital Pedagogy Lab* and *Hybrid Pedagogy*, encourages instructors to "start by trusting students" (Stommel

2020). We have found that students respond well when we trust them to take on the responsibility of their own learning.

In the instance of the spectrogram QFT, while students formulated questions about everything from what exact instrument was performing on the first excerpt to whether or not the electronic excerpt has any kind of organization, the questions the students prioritized overlapped with the main four questions I explored in the previous year:

- What are the axes on the spectrogram?
- What do the colors represent?
- What is the difference in sound between vertical bands and horizontal bands?
- Why are there often multiple horizontal bands when there is only one note being played?

After students completed steps 1–4, they chose some or all of the prioritized questions to research together and then presented their findings to the class. As we visited the different groups during the research process, we noticed the students seemed far more engaged than they typically would be in a lecture situation, and students who had some previous understanding were able to guide other students for whom this information was new. Group work of this kind offers many opportunities for peer instruction, the value of which has been well documented (see Mazur 2014).

Although, overall, students seemed more engaged when learning about physical properties of sound through the QFT, some students communicated in their reflections that they did not enjoy the QFT process:

> My learning process is more listening to things being explained and taking notes, so this particular learning experience wasn't for me. I like to ask questions when I have them, but I don't like having to ask questions if I don't really have any.

> I did not enjoy this learning process more than others. . . . The more straightforward the learning process is, the better I feel about the information I've been given, and the more secure I feel about my knowledge.

Unfortunately, many students arrive on college campuses having mostly experienced what Paulo Freire called the "banking model of education" (Freire 2018). In this model, instructors are depositors of knowledge and students are passive recipients. Among the many problems with this model is that it encourages students to passively accept rather than creatively inquire about the world around them. In contrast, the QFT encourages curiosity and allows students to freely explore a topic (and thereby to develop the skill of learning on their own). This kind of active

participation and construction of knowledge requires significantly more energy from the student and may, at first, feel uncomfortable. Taking some time to explain to students the pedagogical value of the QFT may assuage some of the discomfort or resistance on their part. Though some students may not prefer learning through the QFT, most students do understand the value of this learning process and even find it enjoyable:

> I feel much safer asking the questions rather than always being expected to know the answers. I enjoyed creating our own questions in a collaborative way because I was able to not only understand my learning process, but other perspectives and processes as well.

In addition to some occasional student resistance, another challenge an instructor might face when using the QFT is a perceived lack of efficiency. Before embarking on this particular QFT activity, I was concerned that the process might take too long for students to come away with what I considered to be the most important concepts. Student-centered approaches like the QFT can seem inefficient, particularly when an instructor is crunched for time. This QFT process, for example, took 1.5 class periods. In a similar amount of time, I could possibly "cover" significantly more information using a lecture format. However, "covering" material does not necessarily translate into students learning or being able to retrieve information or skills at some point in the future. The QFT favors student engagement and depth over coverage (see Alegant 2014). The benefit of this approach was not lost on our students, one of whom wrote the following in a post-activity reflection:

> It would have been way "easier" to learn about the spectrogram if we had been given a lecture about it, but the process of learning about it in groups by asking as many questions as we could was so much more engaging and thought-provoking. Now, chances are much higher that I'll actually remember stuff about the spectrogram, because I went through the process of thinking about it for myself.

In the end, using the QFT process to learn about the spectrogram and related concepts added 25 minutes of extra class time compared to the year before. For me, this extra half class was time well spent as surely the experience of asking their own questions about what was initially a puzzling video, prioritizing their questions, researching answers to their questions, and finally teaching their peers what they had learned, was a more memorable learning experience.

QFT in the Aural Skills classroom (Duker)

Although the QFT probably fits best in written theory courses, it is possible to bring the QFT into the Aural Skills classroom. For example, in Aural Skills II, I used the QFT to encourage students to consider how much attention they pay to the sounds and music that they hear (see Example 12).

Context:	Aural Skills II (1st year), fully online, week 9
Class and group characteristics:	60 students total (3 sections), groups of 3–5
Total questions produced:	592
Logistics:	Steps 1–4 in class, asynchronous discussion on LMS with prioritized questions, post activity reflection as a quiz

QFocus:

"I have been training myself to listen with a very simple meditation since 1953 when my mother gave me a tape recorder for my twenty-first birthday. The tape recorder had just become available on the home market and was not so ubiquitous as it is today. I immediately began to record from my apartment window whatever was happening. I noticed that the microphone was picking up sounds that I had not heard while the recording was in progress. I said to myself then and there:

'Listen to everything all the time and remind yourself when you are not listening.'

I have been practicing this meditation ever since with more or less success. I still get the reminders after forty-six years. My listening continues to evolve as a lifelong practice."

- Pauline Oliveros

Example 12
Case study #5—quick facts.

Going through the QFT process during class was quite a switch from the typical Aural Skills meeting which is mostly focused on skill-based drills and discussion of listening strategies. As one can see from the total number of questions produced, there were a few groups that embraced the idea of healthy competition to produce the most questions (one group came up with 83 questions in a little over 15 minutes). Many students also enjoyed the asynchronous discussion about the questions and enjoyed thinking about how their listening habits differed in the many different contexts they experienced in a normal day. Reading through the reflections gives the impression that, while some students were rushed, quite a few others had epiphanies and were exploring ways to expand and be more conscious of their listening habits.

In full disclosure, the overall effect of the QFT with this class was not as successful as I would have hoped; quite a few students did not understand the point of the activity while we were doing it, and others saw it as an inefficient use of class

time once they heard from me and their peers why we were doing this. I think that I could have set up the activity better (especially given this was with first-year students in a fully online environment), and this course in particular could have benefitted from a class reflection discussion instead of asynchronous work after the activity. Nonetheless, it allowed the students to consider and reflect on their own listening habits and consider how they could focus more on the act of listening. Bringing this activity into the beginning of the semester and allowing a small amount of time for in-class discussion could have provided a better experience with this group, and these changes are worth exploring in the future.

Teacher preparation

When preparing to use the QFT in a theory class, there are a number of logistical aspects for an instructor to consider.

Group formation

A full study of group formation—the myriad approaches to creating and dividing up students into teams—is beyond the scope of this article, but in general it is advisable to have heterogeneous groups so that students are exposed to different ideas and perspectives (for more on group work, see Chi 2009; and Michaelsen, Knight, and Fink 2004.) When creating different groups, one can consider gender, age, ethnicity, native language, major, academic record, and personality type. In music classrooms, prioritizing heterogeneity could also include grouping across vocal and instrumental specialties; you can pair singers with instrumentalists, string players with brass players and other such combinations. Another potential structure to put in place is to designate roles (such as scribe or rule reminder); these roles could be rotated within a single session or over multiple class meetings.

How to record group questions

An instructor can adjust the mechanics of how groups record and share their questions to fit the course format. When we initially experimented with the QFT, we did so in a face-to-face classroom in which students could write questions on large posters on the wall (as in the "Nacht" example mentioned above). This layout for question recording was particularly effective for creating synergy and dialogue within each group; students listened and responded to each other with one person acting as the scribe to record questions on a single document. The act of attentive listening opened up entirely new lines of questioning. When the question formulation period was complete,

we held a gallery walk around the classroom so students could view the questions of the other groups. During the gallery walk, the act of physically moving around the classroom to view the posters created a sense of traveling to unique thought spaces.

An alternative method is for students to record their questions in a shared document (such as a Google Doc). In a virtual classroom, using a shared electronic document is much more feasible than the posters distributed around a gallery, but a shared electronic document can also be used in a face-to-face setting. One potential drawback is that, depending on how the groups are interacting, students can enter their questions simultaneously without any awareness of their peers' questions. Designating one student as the scribe can help mitigate this. Writing questions on an electronic document does allow for easy sharing with other groups and, furthermore, the shared document can easily be accessed any time after the class period for future work.

Using questions to drive learning while balancing class time considerations

An important question to consider is how an instructor will use the student questions developed through the QFT process. A related question is the availability and balance of in-class and out-of-class time. As we have shown above, one can take a number of different approaches to using the questions that do not need more in-class time. For instance, these questions can be used for individual homework assignments, small group projects, or asynchronous discussions. Another option, discussed with the Spectrogram QFT, is to have groups research the answers to their prioritized questions and then give short presentations to the rest of the class, either in- or out-of-class). Yet another alternative is to bring some of those questions into the classroom for deeper exploration of a piece or an idea. Using the questions to drive in-class activities both increases student ownership of the material and models a process that students can use with their own repertoire. The music-theoretical "answers" that an instructor provides would tie into authentic questions that the students have already considered. By selecting those questions that best align with the learning outcomes of a unit, instructors can be responsive to the students while simultaneously meeting course objectives. Other questions that are outside the scope of a unit could be used as extra-credit opportunities for either groups or individuals, or they could be saved for later units where they would be more relevant.

Student assessment

The work submitted at the end of the QFT process (e.g., the presentation or group

report) can often be graded the way that an instructor would approach any other individual or group project; similarly, student reflections (see below) can be graded as another assignment. In considering the initial four steps of the process, we have found that a low-stakes approach is often best so that students can freely discuss and explore ideas, rather than try to guess what will earn them more points and better grades. When we have done this activity, student participation is rarely a problem; in fact, classwork that is detached from grading concerns is often refreshing for students. If a group member seems disengaged, we have found that going over to the group, listening for a few moments, and then asking the disengaged member, "What do you think?" or a similar question is often enough to pull them back into the process. That said, if an instructor has had participation problems, they could certainly consider some mechanism of credit to incentivize good group work.

If there is a significant group project or component on either of the last two steps of the QFT (answering the questions and reflecting on the activity), it is beneficial to ask students to provide some feedback on how they and the other members of their group performed. A set of guiding questions can help structure the feedback and encourage students to consider the different roles and aspects of how the members of the group worked together. This peer feedback is also useful in talking with a group member who needs to improve their collaborative and groupwork skills—skills considered essential for almost all musicians.

Guiding students to reflect

An important final step of the QFT is for students to reflect on the process. It is worthwhile to take some class time for a final discussion to examine the QFT process and summarize the main learning goals. This gives students the opportunity to consider the role that questions played in acquiring knowledge and also to review and solidify the main learning goals of the unit. Metacognition, or thinking about thinking, is a practice that helps students understand their own process of learning as well as transfer skills and knowledge to new contexts (see Ferenc 2016, 2017). For each QFT reflection session, we include the following two question types: one aimed at students verbalizing what they learned with regard to content and another aimed at their thinking about their own learning process. The first question was typically a variation of: "What ideas, skills, or tools did you learn that relate to the course content?" For the second question, we pulled from the list of questions in Example 13 that ask students to think about the QFT process, the role of questions, and how they learn.

Why is learning to ask your own questions important for learning?

Describe your learning process.

Did this process change how you feel about asking questions? Please explain.

Did you enjoy this learning process more than other learning experiences? Please explain.

Describe some of the differences in your experience of learning with the QFT as compared with more traditional classroom learning activities.

How could the process of asking questions relate to your other musical activities?

How does asking questions about a piece of music deepen your understanding/appreciation of that piece?

After going through the question formulation process, what questions do you have about some of the other music you are performing or listening to?

How would asking questions about music you are performing change your learning process?

Example 13.
Sample post-activity reflection questions

Wrestling with these kinds of reflection activities helps our students develop awareness of themselves as learners. This reflection period can also be an opportunity to encourage transfer of ideas as students discuss other contexts where questions could be useful for learning. A follow-up assignment could encourage them to think of how they might apply this technique of questioning in other situations or even go through this process on their own—perhaps prompted by a jury piece or some large ensemble repertoire and then finishing with a written summary of their experience.

Conclusion

As we have shown, the Question Formulation Technique can be a valuable pedagogical tool in the music theory classroom. It encourages our students to develop their ability to ask questions and then transform those questions to focus on what interests them. Along the way, the QFT helps our students develop both agency and confidence in finding ways to explore music on their own. It gives them tools to follow their inclinations and curiosity wherever it may lead them, expanding the scope of topics and repertoire normally found in theory courses. At the same time, students will often pose questions that can be used to meet the previously established learning goals of a course, letting a teacher weave together their own objectives with student interests. The QFT generates a flexible space for creative assignments and differentiated learning, allowing each student to be challenged at an appropriate level.

Integrating the QFT throughout the theory sequence can reinforce a habit of questioning, which is among the many other skills that we want our students to develop. In describing an ideal music theory curriculum, Justin London emphasizes that "it should respect and engage the student's intellect—it should encourage our students' *curiosity* about the music they hear and play" (London 2020, 427, see also Duker 2020). The QFT is one approach to developing this curiosity and teaching our students how to harness the power of questioning to explore music they care about. Furthermore, learning how to ask meaningful questions is a skill that will serve students well beyond the end of a theory curriculum and indeed their undergraduate years. This skill can validate the curiosity that is often otherwise diminished through traditional educational practices. One of our students summarized this nicely:

> Asking questions and developing questions is vastly important to the creative process and the process of learning. When you ask questions you seek to fill or expand parts of your knowledge and your greater understanding of the world and the connections you have in your life to everything happening around you. Developing questions allows you to discover more about yourself, your values, and your place in the world. I think that questioning and curiosity are essential to determine who you are and the role you have in the world.

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Dictation by Template: A New Approach for the Aural Skills Classroom[1*]

BY JONATHAN GUEZ

> CECILY: I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached 'absolute perfection'. You can go on. I am quite ready for more.
>
> ALGERNON [somewhat taken aback]: Ahem! Ahem!
>
> CECILY: Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough.[2]

Abstract

This article proposes a new approach to dictation based on using templates, essentially carefully designed worksheets that direct students' eyes and ears toward relevant musical phenomena as they listen to commercial recordings. Taking dictation from templates, I argue, allows the exercise to work in service of higher order learning goals such as (1) familiarizing the student with real repertoire and compositional styles, (2) exposing students to musical recordings and offering a vocabulary for discussing them, and (3) privileging the role of sounding music in the path toward understanding music-theoretical concepts. It also provides a broadly humanistic approach to dictation that connects the sounding stuff of music to concepts that are often left to be studied on their own in written theory courses. It thus represents a reevaluation of the role of aural skills in leading the student toward mastery of theoretical, historical, and philosophical concepts.

A story you may have heard about the young Mozart is that one day, while traveling in the Vatican with his father, he heard Gregorio Allegri's gorgeous *Miserere*, a late-Renaissance style a cappella work for double choir based on the text of Psalm 51 (*Miserere mei, Deus*, or "Have mercy on me, O God"). The piece, written in the 1630s, was sung exclusively in the Sistine Chapel (see Example 1) and only during the Tenebrae services of Holy Week.

It was forbidden to perform it anywhere outside the Sistine Chapel, for which reason—on penalty of excommunication from the church—it was likewise forbidden to transcribe the score. Nevertheless, after hearing the polyphonic work performed one Wednesday morning in 1770, young Wolfgang, who is shown in Example 2, left

1* I thank the anonymous reviewers at the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* for insightful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

2 Wilde (1986, 286).

the chapel, gathered together some manuscript paper, and wrote it down in full from memory. He was fourteen.[3]

Example 1
The Sistine Chapel
© *Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei*
(from a Google image search)

Example 2
The 13- or 14-year-old Mozart. The portrait was painted in Italy in 1770 while Mozart was on the tour described above. It is attributed to the Rococo artist Giambettino Cignaroli.
(From Wikipedia)

As students of music theory (and readers of this journal) know, far from being superhuman, what the puckish young Mozart was doing when he translated the choral sounds that he heard in the Sistine chapel into music notation is done every day in college classrooms across America, if not quite at the same level of difficulty or illegality. The activity is of course called "dictation," and, along with sight singing (which is essentially the reverse exercise), it is one of the two most entrenched components of college aural skills curricula.[4] In this article, I propose an approach to dictation that involves using templates, essentially worksheets that direct students' eyes and ears toward particular musical phenomena as they listen to recordings. Dictation templates—designed to hone exactly the set of seemingly preternatural skills that Mozart drew upon to write

3 His father, Leopold, wrote home to his wife on April 14, 1770: "You have often heard of the famous Miserere in Rome, which is so greatly prized that the performers in the chapel are forbidden on pain of excommunication to take away a single part of it, to copy it or to give it to anyone. *But we have it already*. Wolfgang has written it down" (Anderson 1989, 187). For a colorful reading of the "subversive force" of this act and the "*phonographic* power of active, expert hearing," see Szendy (2008, 9–10).

4 See Karpinski (2000a, 6 and 62). Elsewhere (2000b, [5.1]), Karpinski sketches a history of this dualism stretching back to Guido of Arezzo's "advocacy of teaching devices such as solmization." Dictation is now the only listening skill mentioned as a requirement by the National Association of Schools of Music, the primary accrediting agency for post-secondary schools in America. For more on the centrality of dictation to aural skills curricula, see Baker, et al. (2018) and Chenette (2020, [1.2]).

down Allegri's famous *Miserere*—have revitalized the practice of dictation in my aural skills classroom. My experience using them suggests that they inspire better and more musical results than other ways of approaching dictation.

Before beginning, I should clarify my position on dictation. I do so by taking two stances on it, one less controversial and one more so. The less controversial stance is that dictation's privileged position as the most common ear-training exercise in the college classroom is justified. The slow, careful, and repetitive listening it encourages has been shown by many scholars to aid in developing several musical and extramusical skills. Many of us, with Gary S. Karpinski, take for granted that confronting a passage of music with the goal of writing it down enhances listening skills, sharpens short- and long-term musical memory, hones musical understanding, and develops notational competency.[5] "Each of these skills," he adds, "is necessary for survival not only in the aural skills classroom but in the musical world at large" (1990a, 221).[6] Dictation, then, is a crucial tool in the budding musician's shed; sharpening it is a process that affords musical, intellectual, and professional benefits.

The more controversial stance I take is that though the use of dictation is justified in aural skills courses, its potential to train the ears, the intellect, and the person is rarely fully realized. Too often, it seems that aural skills textbooks reduce dictation to the apish ability to transcribe notes and rhythms from an audible signal, with no attempt to connect these skills to musicianship broadly speaking, not to mention the understanding of compositional, music-theoretical, or performance practice. My approach to dictation using templates seeks to remediate this state of affairs by framing dictation, not simply as a way to hone the ear as some dumb bodily organ—as if it were unmoored to the rest of our consciousness—but rather as an activity that serves as a springboard for higher order learning goals such as (1) familiarizing students with real repertoire and compositional style, (2) exposing students to musical recordings and offering a vocabulary for discussing them, and (3) privileging the role of sounding music in the path toward understanding theoretical concepts.

5 See Karpinski (2000a, 62). Cf. Karpinski (1990, 222): "Dictation helps to develop attentive hearing, short-term musical memory, focused concentration on specific passages, and an understanding of the fundamentals of pulse, meter, and tonality, as well as traditional notions of rhythm and pitch discrimination and notation." And (192): "melodic dictation—when properly taught—can be the best means of developing [hearing, memory, understanding, and notation] as a preliminary to applying them to a variety of listening situations at more advanced levels."

6 Karpinski (2000a, 142) adumbrates but unfortunately does not say more about a further benefit of dictation, namely that, unique among the exercises typically given in aural skills courses, it has the potential to instill a deep and lasting love for music.

All this and more, I suggest, can be achieved by providing students with a well-crafted dictation template designed to direct the student's attention to whatever musical processes or structural details may be appropriate to a particular place in the curriculum. I piloted the use of such dictation templates in the core curriculum at the College of Wooster between 2017 and 2021, where they led to improvements in literacy and musicianship, wider repertorial knowledge, increased student participation, and deeper understanding of theoretical concepts. Since the templates connect the sounding "stuff" of music to issues often left to be studied in written theory courses, this represents, if not a reversal of the typical approach to teaching music theory and aural skills, then at least a reevaluation of the role of dictation in leading the student toward mastery of theoretical, historical, and philosophical concepts.[7] Understanding of musical concepts (and acquisition of the attendant theoretical vocabulary) is still taken to be a primary curricular goal, but the process toward understanding begins with, and is at every stage enhanced by, the music itself.

I have developed some 300 dictation templates for use in the core theory curriculum, in repertoires ranging from pre-tonal musics through the common practice, to various post-tonal musics, rock, pop, blues, jazz, musical theater, top 40, film music, R&B, and more. Here, I provide a sample of six templates along with a defense of their pedagogical methods. The structure of the article is as follows: In the following section, I provide an example dictation template, list its novel features, and give an abbreviated discussion of how these facilitate student understanding. In third section, I provide a more complete discussion of the benefits of the approach, connecting these to research on aural skills acquisition and pedagogy. The final section is addressed to instructors and lists some ways to integrate the templates into theory and aural skills classes.

An Example Template

Example 3 shows the template for the opening period of Schubert's song "Am Meer," from *Schwanengesang*, which is appropriate for a first- or second-semester dictation exercise.

7 Chenette (2020, [1.4]) notes the problem of founding aural skills curricula on music theory curricula, which leads to a priority of "the *logical* over the *perceptual*" (his emphasis).

09. Melodic Dictation (+ bass line + Roman numerals + cadences)
Schubert, "Am Meer," from *Schwanengesang* (1828)

Notate the vocal melody for this song, which was written in the final year of Schubert's life (1828) and included in his song cycle called *Schwanengesang* (Swan Song). Remember that in vocal music, changes of syllables are always denoted by an individual flag and never by a beam.

If there is time, also notate elements of the bass line, add Roman numerals, and label the cadences. Then consider:

- What is the form of the piece's central 8-measures (mm. 3–10)?[1]
- What do you make of the introductory two chords? Is their voice leading smooth or disjunct?
- What dramatic effect do these chromaticisms have on the placid diatonic music that follows?[2]
- Find a musical echo. (Remember, echoes are sometimes quieter than the music that they repeat.)
- What is the relationship between the top voice (pinky) of the piano right hand and the vocal line?
- Do you see any indications to get *louder*? What dramatic effect does this have on the piece? Is the singer in the recording able to bring it off?

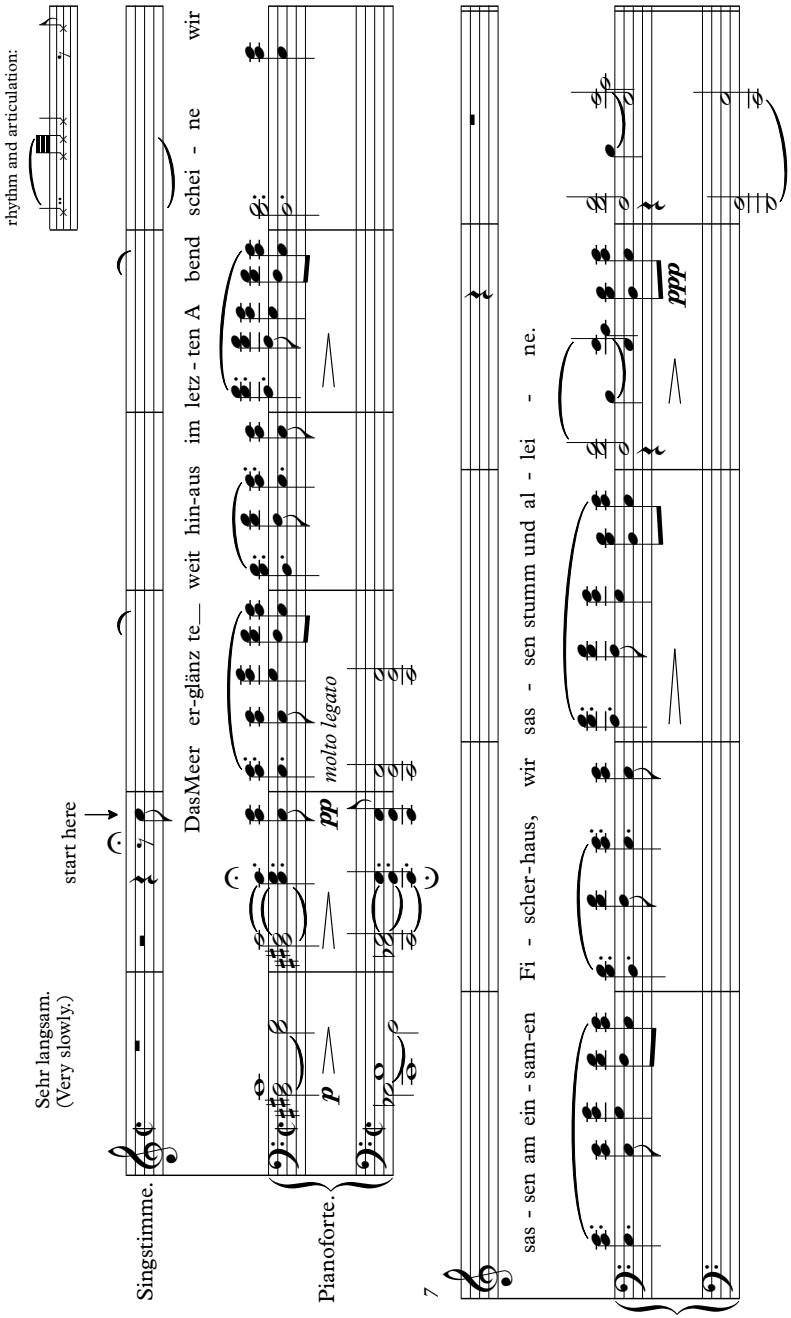
Text (by Heinrich Heine):

Das Meer erglänzte weit hinaus	The sea sparkled far and wide
Im letzten Abendscheine;	In the last glow of evening;
Wir saßen am einsamen Fischerhaus,	We sat at the lonely fisherman's hut,
Wir saßen stumm und alleine.	We sat silent and alone.

1 Regarding the form and affect of this passage, instructors and interested students may consult Stephen Rodgers, "Schubert's Idyllic Periods," *Music Theory Spectrum* 39/2 (2017): 223-246.

2 Joseph Kerman referred to this introduction as "an unforgettable, enigmatic solemnity, which seems to plumb infinite marine and spiritual depths." Its formal function has been superseded by its status as "oracle": "From the Classical point of view, the introduction is nonfunctional; it illuminates nothing. But from the Romantic point of view it suggests everything—everything in the world that is inward, sentient, and arcane." See Kerman, "A Romantic Detail in Schubert's *Schwanengesang*," *The Musical Quarterly* 48/1 (1962): 40.

Example 3
Cover Sheet and Template for "Am Meer," from Schubert's *Schwanengesang* (1828)



Example 3 (cont'd)
Cover Sheet and Template for "Am Meer," from Schubert's *Schwanengesang* (1828)

The template itself is preceded by a cover sheet that introduces the piece and describes the task. At first glance, one may be struck by the resemblance of the exercise to the sort of dictation that most of us already do: the student is to supply the missing part or parts of a piece based on a set of instructions—albeit here, while listening to a recorded performance of the piece of music.[8] There are, however, numerous differences from the way we traditionally do dictation.

The cover sheet introduces the piece and situates it historically by giving pertinent information about its composer, title, date of composition, and historical or biographical context. It supplies information about text or plot as relevant. On the cover sheet in Example 3, Heine is identified as the poet, and the portion of the poem that appears in the musical excerpt is included in the original German and in translation, to facilitate understanding of elements such as mood, tone, and text painting. (I supply texts and translations for all texted excerpts, which range from Lied to Latin mass, from mariachi to *mélodie*, from psalm setting to standard to popular song).

All cover sheets identify one primary and additional secondary tasks. On Example 3, this is expressed as "Melodic dictation + bass line + Roman numerals + cadences."[9] Hierarchizing tasks in this way obviates a difficulty that every aural skills instructor has faced, namely, how to deal with the differences in background, ability, and solving time that characterize the student population of any course. For most templates, students who complete the primary task quickly will have something further to listen for in subsequent hearings, while other students are still solving the primary task. Perhaps more importantly, the combination of primary and secondary tasks provides a natural way to integrate polyphonic and/or analytic processing. "Extra" tasks are typically more difficult, because they involve notating a part that is more challenging or more hidden in the texture than the primary part, or more analytical, in that they fuse the vocabulary and skills of written theory with the sounding content of music.

In an effort to tether the acquisition of notational skills to the aural skills curriculum, many cover sheets provide reminders about notational principles and practices. In this way, students gain procedural knowledge of notation, in addition

8 Karpinski (1990, 212) suggests that students who listen to recordings (say of Haydn symphonies) "benefit from both increased memory skills and greater familiarity with the literature through such exercises."

9 Templates include these "extra" tasks from the very start; see, e.g., the templates for pieces by Lloyd Webber and Britten below. When (as in Example 3) the extra task involves notating a bass voice, this exposes students to what Karpinski (2000a, 121) calls "an entirely new mode of perception," one that is "at first puzzling and seemingly inscrutable."

to the declarative knowledge gleaned in the theory classroom.[10] Along with a few other cover sheets from early in the curriculum, that for "Am Meer" offers a reminder about an idiosyncrasy of notating music with text—in this case that changes of syllable should be notated with flagged notes (even if the group would otherwise be beamed together to project the piece's metric subdivisions). The first template to mention this practice (for "Memory," from *Cats*) points students to Thomas Forrest Kelly's description of its origin in the history of notation.[11]

Cover sheets also provide sets of questions and comments that address elements of harmony, form, motive, and other musical details.[12] The questions avoid proprietary jargon and are cast in intuitive language, making the templates adaptable to different populations and uses. Some cover sheets feature sophisticated comments and questions about issues such as affect, history, meaning, articulation, and/or performance. These are designed to galvanize musical and creative thinking and to serve as prompts either for in-class discussions or for lengthier, written responses. Some cover sheets cite scholarly work on the excerpt in question, so that interested students can get a taste of the ways that music researchers in various subfields have attempted to elucidate the music. For instance, the cover sheet for "Am Meer" cites Joseph Kerman on the song's affect and Stephen Rodgers on its form. My hope is that including the voices of theorists and musicologists, composers and conductors, performers, philosophers, and more will help to lay the foundation for a broad, humanistic understanding of music.

On the templates themselves, terms from foreign languages, including those denoting tempo markings, articulations, and more, are translated. This eliminates the need for an unwieldy glossary, such as one sometimes sees in aural skills workbooks[13] and invites students to engage with performance indications. In my classes, it has led to fruitful discussion of the extent to which the performers heard in the recordings obey them. Unusually, for dictation exercises, slurs, hairpins, and other articulations are also given for all parts, including those that are missing. This also raises issues about performers, performances, and performance practice—what do slurs, portamentos, dynamic markings, and accents, mean? What do they sound like, and do performers actually pay attention to them?

10 Cf. Karpinski (2000a, 87–89).

11 Kelly (2014, 10–16).

12 Karpinski (2000a, 12) mentions the benefits of asking such questions. My templates merely build them in to the task.

13 See, for example, Merritt and Castro (2016).

For texted pieces, the sung text is notated on the score itself, even where the notes have been hidden, which acts as a springboard for the understanding of meter, scansion, and text setting. Sometimes, as in m. 6 of Example 3, tricky rhythms or pitches are provided on an ossia staff; other times, they are given on the main staff itself. This permits the use of pieces containing pitch and rhythm materials that are above the students' levels at otherwise appropriate points in the curriculum. It provides valuable experience seeing and hearing musical phenomena that are more challenging than students can dictate before these are officially broached.

Finally, relevant analytical questions and observations are given on the templates themselves, where they can direct the students' ears and analytical faculties in real time. From the first templates to the last, this practice encourages students to recognize and deal with fundamental musical behaviors such as motive, repetition, sequence, retrograde and inversion, cadence, and more.

The project I advocate here, then, only superficially resembles the sort of dictation exercises that are carried out in most aural skills classrooms. For in addition to cultivating and honing various aspects of students' hearing, the templates I offer are designed additionally to develop their understanding of musical concepts, music history, performance practice, notation, music recordings, foreign languages, research in music and the humanities, and more. They train the student to bring the visual aspect of music into contact with the more familiar sonic one, and in so doing, they turn the sounding stuff of music into an object of study. The primary benefits of these novel features are treated more fully in the next section, where they are placed in relation to research on aural skills acquisition and pedagogy. Instructors seeking details on how to use dictation templates effectively may skip to the second-to-last section of the article.

Novelties and Benefits

Real Recordings, Real Music

One of the most distinctive parts of my approach is that it revolves around recordings of real pieces of music, to be found by instructors and students in the vast ecosystem of internet streaming media. As far as I know, these templates are unique in that they avail themselves of the massive amount of commercially recorded music available on YouTube, Spotify, and similar services, imbricated as these are already in the lives of students and instructors alike. In so doing, they sidestep at least two significant problems that bedevil current aural skills texts, including: (1) that these often feature MIDI recordings or recordings that are made "in house" by students and

faculty, with their attendant limits on ability, instrumentation, and technology[14]; and (2) dealing with the fuss of proprietary publisher webpages, which are user unfriendly, compared with those of the mainstream commercial behemoths. Where pieces and/or recordings are under copyright, students can get a taste of the feeling that Mozart had in 1770—that they are bringing them into circulation by illicitly transcribing them in the way that he did the famous *Miserere*.

Listening primarily to professional and semi-professional recordings invites students to deal with a handful of essentially musical difficulties absent from the sterilized environment of the traditional dictation exercise. Foremost among these are the needs to factor for expressive timings, timbral differences, and the vagaries of recorded sound, all of which are absent from laboratory-style dictation exercises led by an instructor from the keyboard.[15] Also crucial is the need to find downbeats and starting pitches based on musical context, not on the artificial grounding in meter and key that are typically given before playing dictation exercises.[16] In this way, the templates confront and engage actual musical performances in their total musical contexts. They inculcate musicality from the earliest stages of the curriculum.

"Real pieces of music" is a charged construction that deserves comment. What I mean is perhaps most easily put in a negative formulation: the approach advocated here is designed to avoid what I see as a particularly harrowing (and potentially stunting) Scylla and Charybdis of aural skills education. On one side, threatening Scylla: a heap of made-up and extracted sight-singing exercises that strip context, history, and timbre from the melodies that they present. On the other, treacherous Charybdis: a mass of dictation exercises, run from the piano, in which, in one fell swoop, "pedagogical" melodies played on the single-timbred instrument leech the lifeblood from the music and the interest from the student.[17]

14 Inman (2018) praises the recordings in Merritt and Castro's *Comprehensive Aural Skills* but notes that "a few contain flaws in intonation or rhythm."

15 On tempo fluctuations in the context of the aural skills classroom, including a summary of research, see Karpinski (2000, 16).

16 More on the question of whether to ground students in a key may be found in Karpinski (1990, 205) and (2000a, 92–98); I discuss the issue more fully in the final section of the article.

17 In making dictation exercises less artificial, the hope is to remove at least some of the dread and boredom reported by students who do not see why dictation should be a component of their aural skills education (see Paney, 4 and cf. Karpinski 2000a, 129). Karpinski (2000b, [5.2], [5.4], and [5.5]) provides a trenchant critique of "atomistic" training exercises that strip context from aural skills: "it still seems that a vast amount of aural skills training uses artificially constructed music."

It is not that our training as music theorists does not provide us with sufficient skill to write any number of anodyne little tunes that drill this or that element of written theory, but rather that relying exclusively on such tunes can have deleterious effects on our students' acquisition of knowledge. For one thing, doing so does not expose students to the way that these musical phenomena are *expressed* in the various repertoires that we claim to be introducing them to. For another, it may keep hidden from view all the wonderful aspects of music that have drawn students and instructors to music in the first place. From the vantage of the current approach, resources that boast the "unparalleled musicality" of their proprietary examples, represent the problem in its purest form.[18]

My dictation templates instead use melodies from the treasury of published and recorded music spanning several centuries, genres, and styles. Filling out the templates thus exposes students to the very music that we theorists too often hope they will get to know elsewhere, be it in music history courses, private lessons, or the concert hall. Making real recordings part of the process of dictation means creating space to talk about elements of musical performance that are more often left out of theory curricula. (These include, most obviously, instrumental and vocal timbres, which Karpinski (2000a, 13–14) notes are often absent from the aural skills curriculum.) But the approach grounds students in all of the so-called "basic features" of music mentioned by Karpinski, including texture, timbre, tempo, dynamics, articulation, and more (11). Making real recordings the basis of dictation also obviates the need for an anthology of pieces, that common adjunct for aural skills textbooks; in my classroom, the collection of templates *is* the anthology.[19]

I raise here the possibility that my templates have transcended one of the limitations of dictation identified in a well-known article by Karpinski: "Certainly," he wrote there,

18 The quotation comes from the online platform Artusi, which features "a proprietary library of 1000+ progressions and melodies, all hand-written by music teachers, *for unparalleled musicality*" (my emphasis); Similarly, the platform called Picardy uses "musical examples and exercises [*that*] *are expertly crafted and sequenced* to promote an effective and meaningful learning experience" (my emphasis). Other online resources, e.g., the website http://music-literacy.com/, both auto-generate and auto-grade their melodies.

19 A further benefit of using recordings of real music is that it leads directly to knowledge of repertoire and the differing style characteristics of various genres and time periods. Cf. Karpinski (2000a, 129) on the benefits for students of exposure to the "realistic and contextual environment" of music and the "indoctrination with a body of literature."

> dictation does not address the kinds of broad-scaled listening skills often taught in music history, literature, analysis, and appreciation classes. . . . ear-training classes are geared towards a kind of fine, detailed listening with attention to the smallest items of pitch and rhythm. (1990, 191)

"On the contrary!" the current approach protests. For the type of dictation advocated here addresses exactly the sorts of "broad-scaled listening skills" Karpinski mentions. Think only of the experience with listening that taking dictation from real recordings offers the budding orchestral musician; the way it will likely render preparing for listening and style exams less onerous; the runway it surely provides for counterpoint and orchestration courses.

Polyphony, Channels, Streams

Because dictation templates make use of recordings of multi-voice (and multi-instrumental) music, they lead naturally to a conception of music as a combination of separate melodic "streams."[20] This conception, and the sort of perception that it affords, is obviously decisive for understanding and learning to adequately account for certain repertoires and genres (for instance Renaissance and Baroque music, the invention, canon, and fugue). It plays an equally important, if perhaps less obvious, role in other repertoires. Yet, despite its importance for developing musicianship, training students to perceptually separate the individual threads of polyphonic fabric does not seem to be emphasized in high school or college curricula.[21]

My dictation templates ask students to segregate melodic streams in both imitative and non-imitative multi-voice dictations, in both classical and popular styles (see, e.g., my template for of The Cranberries, "Dreams"). They do not treat polyphony as some added or "extra" component of music or of dictation, to be studied

20 I borrow the word from the auditory psychologists, for whom an "auditory stream" is a single line of a polyphonic texture, understood as a "mental organizational entity" (Hartmann and Johnson 1991, 156). "Stream segregation," a term coined by A. S. Bregman in 1971 to describe humans' innate ability to group multiple auditory signals together, is reliant on a faculty called "peripheral channeling." The most important peripheral channels seem to be based on frequency (i.e., grouping by pitch proximity) and left/right ear presentation (i.e., grouping by location of the sound source). For more on these, see Deutsch (2007). A fascinating podcast about Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony that includes auditory examples may be found at https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/06/hi-phi-nation-on-sound-illusions-tchaikovskys-6th-symphony-and-how-the-mind-constructs-the-world-of-sound.html?fbclid=IwAR2WB1lPBUNoHc3g8gf3bb5Q5LBjOdWexUJUp7PP52xHr9DN7QcZl6pdoOA

21 See Karpinski (2000a, 111). Duerksen (2009, 398) criticizes Karpinski's *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing* on these grounds: "Another element that receives only cursory attention is dictation for more than one part." This is perhaps striking, since Karpinski himself criticizes the dearth of multipart dictations in American textbooks."

in a unit on counterpoint; they simply present it as part of how music is. Multipart dictation exercises emerge already in a unit on rhythmic fundamentals, before pitch has even entered the equation (my template for Haydn's "Nelson" Mass serves as a representative example). Templates that feature multi-voice (and even imitative) counterpoint in the pitch domain first appear in the first unit on diatonic materials (see e.g., the Appendix for template for Grieg's "Heimweh"). Many templates ask students to perform analytic tasks that strengthen their understanding of polyphonic music, including identifying points of imitation, labeling vertical intervals created through the combination of statements of a subject, and notating various parts of an orchestral fabric. Needless to say, these and similar exercises lay the groundwork for an understanding of counterpoint. The results of some empirical studies suggest that they should also lead to improvements in sight singing, performance, and composition.[22]

Score Reading and the Visual Aspect

My dictation templates encourage students to see and understand the operative elements of music notation. Gaining familiarity with reading scores is not typically seen as the goal of dictation, which may explain why it has seemed satisfactory to present exercises on staves with minimal or acontextual information (e.g., "Ex. 1.6"), or to have students "set up" their own blank staff paper at their desks by adding meter and key signatures and barlines. Since my templates for dictation include the totality of visual symbols that appear on a printed score, they invite students to grapple with such things as the traditional layout of multi-instrumental scores called "score order"; how to read multipart scores quickly and efficiently; which instruments transpose; and the various C clefs. On a higher order, and relating to the foregoing section on polyphony, multipart templates invite students to understand how voices combine, which voices are perceptually salient and why, and how harmonic hearing can be seen to arise from the combination of parts. (Such questions are typically placed under the umbrella of "harmony and voice leading" and saved for written theory courses.)

Providing fully fledged, multipart scores also means that the parts already provided on the template guide the eyes and ears of students while taking dictation. Students may use their analytic understanding to ask whether a pitch they are writing does or does not fit in a given context (e.g., "I am writing a ninth above the bass here; does this pitch sound like a dissonance?") Moreover, many of the dictation templates

22 Rogers (2013) writes that "high achievement in multipart aural dictation was the best predictor of high achievement in [sight singing, performance, and composition skills]."

easily double as exercises in aural or written harmonic analysis; students may be asked to provide Roman numerals using either their ears, during the exercise, or their eyes, as specified by the instructor. However the templates are used, completed exercises double as objects of analytic study: they can, in turn, be used in various ways for follow-up assignments.

In modeling proper practices regarding notes, dynamics, articulations, flags and beams, score order, and more, my templates transcend another of the limits of dictation identified by Karpinski (1990, 196), namely that it does not teach or develop "the craft of notation," but merely "serves as drill and practice" for it. That the "essence" of notation "is traditionally taught in the written theory classroom" does not preclude meaningful engagement with it elsewhere. Indeed, students taking dictation from my templates learned a great deal about notating multipart scores that they may not have learned elsewhere in the College of Wooster's core theory curriculum. I would argue, then, that the templates have been useful for developing musical *literacy*, a process not even mentioned by Karpinski in sections on dictation. Karpinski seems to think that literacy is necessary in order to take dictation and does not consider the various ways in which dictation can serve as an aid to literacy.

C Clefs and Transposition

Several of my templates involve C clefs and transposing instruments. These templates develop and reinforce skills that are presented in music theory textbooks but that (at least my) written and skills curricula do not confront head on. Such skills will no doubt be valuable for students in conducting and music education programs and should also appeal to instructors who teach at a wide variety of institutions. Templates for transposing instruments and C clefs give students an idea of what it is like to notate and compose music for various ensembles. It has been pedagogically useful for me to present C clefs and transposing instruments, not as abstract concepts to be understood, but as skills to be mastered through drill and practice.

I would emphasize that dictation templates can develop musicianship not only during the act of dictation but also after the exercise has been completed. Since completed templates become musical artifacts—not a line of music on an otherwise blank sheet of torn-out manuscript paper but a score of various parts, with dynamics, articulations, and texts—they encourage students to play through them afterwards. Students who are entranced by the harmonies in a Tchaikovsky symphonic movement or enchanted by a love song by Jimmy Van Heusen may realize these on their own instruments in groups, or individually at the piano (I often hear my students playing

through pieces I have assigned in the practice rooms below my office). To bring the templates in this unit to life, they must be able to factor for transposing instruments and C clefs.

Music Theory, Music History, Music and the Humanities

My approach to dictation aims to ground a broad, humanistic understanding of music—including music theory, history, and criticism—in the stuff of music itself. If this seems unusual, this is only because my goal, which is to cultivate a more complete understanding of music, is not typically associated with the aural skills curriculum, as Karpinski and others have pointed out. I would argue that the aural skills classroom has been unfairly overlooked as a place where students can be exposed to histories, biographies, theories, and ideas, and that our conception of aural skills courses in terms of learning the "brass tacks" of hearing and notation has had the unwanted effect of minimizing their effectiveness as gateways to a love and understanding of music. Using these templates in my classes has shown that it is possible to move from the sounding surface of music to a robust understanding of musical histories and styles, one that complements and supplements the written theory curriculum in desirable ways.

The observations and questions on my cover sheets and templates are designed to seed students' imaginations. Some of these concern what music theory textbooks consider brute facts about music: form and formal function, harmony and voice leading, dynamics and articulation, notation, and so forth. Others raise issues about "extra-musical" phenomena that are more often passed over in textbooks: intertextuality, composer biography, and performance practice. Still others invite students to comment upon dramatic aspects of the piece or the performance or invite students to speculate on passages that behave unexpectedly, or differently than the ways that they have been taught that they "ought" to. This, I think, is uncommon in the undergraduate aural skills classroom.

As I have mentioned, questions on cover sheets do not demand familiarity with any particular analytical approach (that of Caplin, say, or that of Laitz). This is because the goal is not to test for understanding of proprietary vocabulary but to spur students' musical thinking and imagination. Indeed, what distinguishes the approach is the nature of the questions themselves: students are invited to understand musical behaviors from the (sounding) music up, as opposed to from the (written) concept down. In this, my project is again consonant with that of Chenette (2020), who argues

for perception-based learning goals.[23]

It is noteworthy that these hints, questions, and insights appear on the templates themselves. Some annotations are analytical, and call attention to a sequence or motivic parallelism, or ask a question about an initial scale degree or a repetition. Others are pedagogical, highlighting practical difficulties like tricky melodic leaps or chromatic tones and offering suggestions for ways to overcome them. These visual aids are primers in music analysis; they direct the students' ears in real time, inviting them to come to terms with analytic issues at the very moment that they are listening to music. This real-time exposure to analysis is a valuable experience that further distinguishes my templates from similar exercises.[24]

Additional historical, analytical, and interpretive tidbits further broaden the range of ways in which students may engage with the pieces of music. These include quotations from historical and recent literature on music, where those passages are relevant, enlightening, or beautiful. They sometimes include information about historically important performances (e.g., riots at premieres, copyright scandals, and so forth). Where possible, they point to particular features in the pieces that may have caused such excitement and disputes. I have done this, not only to integrate the intellectual aspect of music with the sensuous one, but more broadly, to integrate the subjects taught in the music department with those from other departments in the college or university: English, history, comparative literature, African American Studies, Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, and so on. In this respect, my templates seek to participate in the current "decentering" of music theory and the radical opening of its boundaries.

How to Use Dictation Templates

Dictation templates are versatile and easy to use; they should be plug and play for college theory, musicianship, and fundamentals courses. Since students may find their own recordings of pieces for dictation using YouTube, Spotify, etc., and since the excerpts in question all come from the beginnings of works (or of sections of works), all that an instructor must do is simply choose from among the templates one that

23 Cf. Karpinski (2000a, 139), who writes that "many pages of theory and analysis textbooks are devoted to identifying [particular musical features] by sight from music notation. . . . But—since music is at heart an aural art form—we should concentrate equally emphatically on the ability to recognize and identify these features through listening."

24 For instance, those found in Laitz's *The Complete Musician*. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for emphasizing this point.

is appropriate to the students' level and consonant with their learning goals and set the parameters of the exercise (in-class versus out of class; homework versus quiz; number of hearings; and so on). The following section details some possibilities for integrating dictation templates into existing curricula.

I use dictation templates both in and out of the classroom. I assign them for ungraded practice as well as in graded situations like homework assignments, quizzes, and exams. Periodically, when students need extra work, I give them out as extra credit assignments. In some semesters at the College of Wooster, my templates were regular parts of students' weekly homework exercises, either as required or as extra-credit tasks.

The differences in length and difficulty of the templates make them adaptable to a number of situations. Because multi-voice dictations, C clefs, and transposing instruments are available even on rudimentary templates, instructors may integrate these skills into dictations as early as they wish (for purposes of versatility, I have both concert and transposing versions of templates for pieces with transposing instruments). I try, especially in early sections of the curriculum, to emphasize music that students are connected to, which brings them into the process of dictation as willing participants. Once they are hooked, as it were, there tends to be more goodwill toward repertoires that they may be less familiar with.

Number of Hearings and Assessment

On the templates below, I do not specify a number of hearings for each of the dictations. This is because the appropriate number of hearings depends on, among other factors, student population, instructor goals, and the nature of the given task. For out-of-class assignments, such as homework or extra credit, I often give students as many hearings as needed, making these more transcription than dictation exercises.[25] This is especially true in classes that struggle with dictation and with musicianship generally; such classes profit from the extra practice. For in-class, quiz-style exercises, by contrast, the instructor may wish to limit the number of hearings.

On grading criteria, too, I remain mum, although I emphasize, as Karpinski does on this "personal matter," that whatever criteria of assessment are used "should be clear to students" (2000a, 109). As with the number of hearings, how one assesses dictation exercises will necessarily depend on the nature of the task. For example, is

25 On the differences between dictation and transcription and the attendant benefits of each, see Karpinski (2000a, 98–99 and 128–29). For the purposes of this project, I use the general term "dictation" to cover both activities.

the dictation being submitted as extra credit? Has it been done at home with unlimited hearings, using the piano? Is it done in the classroom in a quiz situation? Are all students completing the same "primary" task of the template, or have some been instructed to try to complete its more advanced tasks? Instructors seeking particular suggestions for grading methods and rubrics may seek out Karpinski (2000, 103–10) and Paney (2007, 18–35). Such rubrics will need to be constructed and employed with flexibility. Of course, as Karpinski has noted, no matter what approach instructors take to assessment, they must be willing to provide robust and judicious feedback to students (2000a, 104, n. 58).

Choosing a Recording

The instructor may wish to vet the recordings to be used ahead of time. I have sometimes searched for them in the classroom, which leads to productive real-time discussion about quality of sound and performance. When I do choose the recordings ahead of time, I try to choose either one recording that presents the material in question clearly, or two contrasting recordings, a practice that can spark instructive (and sometimes passionate) discussion. Listening to a historically-informed performance of a Baroque work, say, alongside a recording of the same work played by modern orchestras, invites students to think about issues such as clarity, tempo, phrasing, acoustics, history, organology, and authenticity.[26] Indeed, comparing any two recordings of the same work raises crucial issues of performance and interpretation.

All excerpts for dictation are easily found online because they come from the beginnings of pieces. Instructors who wish to provide exact timings or a particular recording may certainly do so. On the other hand, instructors who wish to allow students to find their own recordings (as I often do) will not have to worry about their having to hunt to find the right spot. The only templates that require special attention in this regard are those for jazz tunes and standards, whose keys, instrumentation, character, and indeed, notes, can vary by recording. In such situations, I typically suggest a particular recording or pair of recordings to compare and contrast. In rare cases, templates are constructed with a particular recording in mind (see, e.g., my template of "Send in the Clowns," from Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*).

26 Consider, for instance, two recordings of the opening chorus from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, by John Eliot Gardiner (1988) and Otto Klemperer (1961). The chorale "Ich bin's, ich sollte büßen" is equally instructive.

Other Parameters to Consider

In addition to the number of hearings, instructors may wish to determine the extent to which a piano may be used, whether to orient students in a key or a meter, whether to have students perform a preparatory singing pattern, whether to conduct during the recording, and whether to give a starting pitch or other tricky pitches or rhythms. Much of the cognitive scholarship on melodic dictation suggests that instructors should not provide such "extramusical" information to students.[27] In his *Manual for Ear Training*, Karpinski summarizes the findings of this scholarship:

> Instructors are urged to present dictations and transcriptions while revealing only the most basic parameters . . . . Instructors should not provide a written starting note. . . . It is . . . important that instructors not play anything before students hear a dictation or transcription—no chord progression, no scale, not even a starting pitch. In addition, instructors are discouraged from counting preparatory beats before playing, and from counting, tapping, conducting, or otherwise indicating the beat or meter during dictations and transcriptions. Students must learn to *infer* the tonic, starting scale degree, pulse, meter, and other features from listening to the actual music. Similarly, breaking dictations into smaller sections and artificially emphasizing certain voices should be avoided during playings. (Karpinski 2017, x–xi)

"In practice," he had already written in 1990 (203), "we should only reveal those facts that are not audible."

Other approaches to dictation are irreconcilable with Karpinski's position. In one Kodály-inspired curriculum described by Houlahan and Tacka (1990), students are asked to conduct, sing, solmize, determine beginning and ending notes, and identify contour, cadences, and meter, all before writing anything at all.[28] My own practice is located somewhere between these two extremes. I tend to provide some extramusical cues, especially toward the beginning of the curriculum. And for in-class situations, I very often move from the recording to the piano. If students are having trouble in class during ungraded situations, I conduct or even sing during the recording or at the piano, where, if necessary, I can also slow down the tempo. In ungraded situations, I also walk around the classroom offering personalized help. In graded situations, such as exams, I have sometimes specified ahead of time the number of hearings

27 "Extramusical" is from Karpinski 2000, 92. On orienting students in a key, see Karpinski (1990, 205), who writes: "No one plays the tonic chord before an actual performance, so why do it in the aural skills classroom?" And: "one practice that prevents students from developing the skill of tonic identification is playing the tonic pitch or chord before performing a dictation." On the pitfalls of preparatory singing patterns, see Buonviri 2015. On the downsides of giving students meter signatures and conducting during the performances see Karpinski (1990, 202–03). For summaries of studies in cognitive psychology, see Baker (2019).

28 See Paney (2007, 32–33).

we will have from recording and the number that we will have from piano. Most of my templates provide meter and key signatures, but a few, especially early in the curriculum, ask the student to supply these.

Aural skills instructors may benefit from reading the cognitive science on the topic, which is concerned with such issues as how to ascertain the difficulty of melodies, the appropriate number of hearings, the appropriate amount of time to give between hearings, whether to break dictations into parts, whether students should start writing immediately or listen first, whether they should concentrate on rhythm or pitch first, and perhaps especially how instructors can diagnose and remediate aural skills problems for struggling students.[29] But this is not necessary to make effective use of the templates below. Instructors will find my templates compatible with any number of other approaches to dictation, including both those grounded in the Karpinski method and the Kodály method. They may count, sing, or tap over the recordings, or not; they may conduct, or not; ask students to sing the tonic after playing the recordings, or not; work through tricky metrical problems, or not; and so forth, as they see fit.

Whatever differences my approach shares with that of Karpinski (e.g., in supplying staffs, meter signatures, and key signatures), my enterprise is deeply consonant with his. This is because, for Karpinski, the detrimental practices surrounding dictation are those that offer artificial or acontextual listening experiences. This is the crux, too, of my position: why teach the rudiments of dictation in some laboratory, only to have to teach all the rest of what makes music *music* in some later, "advanced" course or unit of the curriculum? I might even submit that my templates, taken together, present music to the student more directly than does Karpinski: for the topics they choose to drill are not suggested by the results of some statistical corpus analysis that lays out the frequency with which this or that musical phenomenon (say, an interval) occurs in so-called real music. On the contrary, the music in my collection of templates *is* the statistical data, and the behaviors that are showcased therein are the behaviors that students are exposed to, without the mediating influence of corpus or statistical analyses. To borrow a turn from Whitman (100), I "send no agent or medium . . . and offer no / representative of value—but offer the value itself."

29 On ascertaining the difficulty of melodies for dictation, see Paney (2007, 12). For summaries of best practices concerning the other issues in this sentence, see Karpinski (2000, 92–103).

Further Work, Specified and Un-

Most of my templates permit further work, subject to the desires of the instructor (or the interested student). Often, further work is specified on the cover sheet or the template. Where it is not, the instructor may proceed along several lines. They may, for example, ask students to hear extra or inner voices, supply Roman numerals, provide an analysis of form, label sequences and/or vertical contrapuntal intervals, identify cadences, analyze modulations by type, or provide voice-leading reductions. They may also use the template in conjunction with other aural tasks, such as identifications (of mode, scale, scale degrees, contour, intervals, pulse, meter, hypermeter, timbre, texture, and tonic), singbacks, playbacks, error detection and correction, tapping, moving, dancing, and all number of imaginable others. They may ask the class to perform the music on the completed template. As mentioned above, such additional work can help level the playing field: students who are quick at solving the primary task of the dictation may be asked to provide extra information while others stay focused on the primary task. Each instructor, and each class, will have different goals and different priorities.

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Appendix: Twenty-Five Dictation Templates

Templates From Unit I on Rhythm Alone

Templates in this unit are designed to help students to learn to hear and notate rhythm and meter in one and then in multiple parts. Multipart rhythm exercises provide an early opportunity to try to separate polyphonic streams and to get to know the sounds of different instrumental and vocal timbres. A full staff is given for students who want to experiment with adding pitch information.[30] Sometimes, I return to these pieces later in the curriculum in order to add pitch content. But in the first few weeks of fundamentals or first-semester aural skills, full credit is earned simply notating the correct rhythms on a single line or space of the staff.

For simple meter:

1. Lloyd Webber, "The Music of the Night," from *Phantom of the Opera*

For compound meter:

2. Lloyd Webber, "Memory," from *Cats*

For a denominator of 2 in the meter signature:

3. Britten, from *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*

For stream segregation on a multipart score:

4. Haydn, "Kyrie," from *Missa in Angustiis*

Templates From Unit II on Diatonic Materials

Once pitch is introduced, my templates eschew atomistic exercises that introduce and drill rhythmic patterns, scales, and so forth. Instead, the relevant musical phenomena are folded in to melodic (or multipart) templates. This makes for a homogeneous experience across units and also means that exercises throughout the curriculum are maximally contextual.[31] The diatonic templates below are divided into

30 Students may, for instance, provide approximations of contour and intervals, perhaps in the manner described by Karpinski 2000a (48–49), in which they write "s" for step and "l" for leap, "+" for ascending and " - " for descending, and letters for solfege syllables. Some instructors may wish to be more specific about pitch-based extras, asking students to identify aspects of the work aurally (e.g., mode), or to notate scales, identify key signatures, scale degrees, contour, or intervals beyond those asked for on the cover sheets. If the dictations are done in class, instructors may use the templates to inculcate Karpinski's "preliminary listening skills (identification of pulse, meter, hypermeter, timbre, texture, inference of tonic). They may be integrated with the "other exercises" he mentions (129–132) such as singbacks, playbacks, error detection and correction, and more.

31 This is consonant with Karpinski (2000a, 32), who writes that "it seems more musical and more responsive to the innate behavior of musical memory to contextualize rhythmic listening, understanding, and notation as part of the broader study of melodic dictation. Metric and rhythmic

four sections: (1) single-voice; (2) multi-voice; (3) transposing instruments; (4) C clefs. Three of these templates, for Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet, Jacobs-Bond's "I Love You Truly," and Schubert's G-flat major Impromptu, are relevant to the transition between diatonic and chromatic materials.

Single-Voice Diatonic Dictations

5. Britten, arr. "The Salley Gardens"
6. Price, "Sympathy" ("I know why the caged bird sings")
7. Burleigh, arr. "Deep River"
8. Sondheim, "Send in the Clowns," from *A Little Night Music*
9. Schubert, "Am Meer," from *Schwanengesang*
10. Verdi, "Addio del passato," from *La Traviata*
11. Mozart, "Laudate Dominum," from the *Vesperae solennes de confessore* ("Vespers"), K. 339
12. Mahler, "Die zwei blauen Augen," from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*
13. Jacobs-Bond, "I Love You Truly," from *Seven Songs as Unpretentious as the Wild Rose*

Multi-voice Diatonic Dictations

14. The Cranberries, "Dreams"
15. Schubert, Impromptu in A-Flat Major, D. 935, no. 2
16. Grieg "Heimweh" from *Lyric Pieces*, op. 57, no. 6
17. Mahler, Symphony No. 1 in D Minor, iii
18. Bizet, "Farandole" from *L'Arlesienne* Suite No. 2
19. Haydn, String Quartet in C Major, op. 76, no. 6 "Emperor," ii. Poco adagio
20. Schubert, Impromptu in G-Flat Major, D. 899, no. 3

Dictations With Transposing Instruments

21. Dvořák, Symphony No. 9, "From the New World," ii. Largo
22. Franck, Symphony in D minor, ii, Allegretto.

Dictations With C clefs

23. Brahms, "Geistliches Wiegenlied," op. 91, no. 2
24. Dvořák, String Quartet Op. 96, "American," i
25. Dvořák, String Quartet Op. 96, "American," ii

cognition play an integral role as part of this more comprehensive process—particularly as practitioners begin to grapple with each remembered section of music." He continues (115): "isolated rhythmic drills. . . if practiced at all, should be integrated as soon as possible into the world of pitches."

01. Meter Signature and Rhythmic Dictation (+ pitch extras)
Andrew Lloyd Webber – "The Music of the Night," from *Phantom of the Opera* (1986)

Add a time signature to this piece by Andrew Lloyd Webber using the first two bars as clues. Then, notate the rhythm only of the Phantom's song on the upper staff. I've removed the bar lines, so you'll have to add your own in the appropriate places!

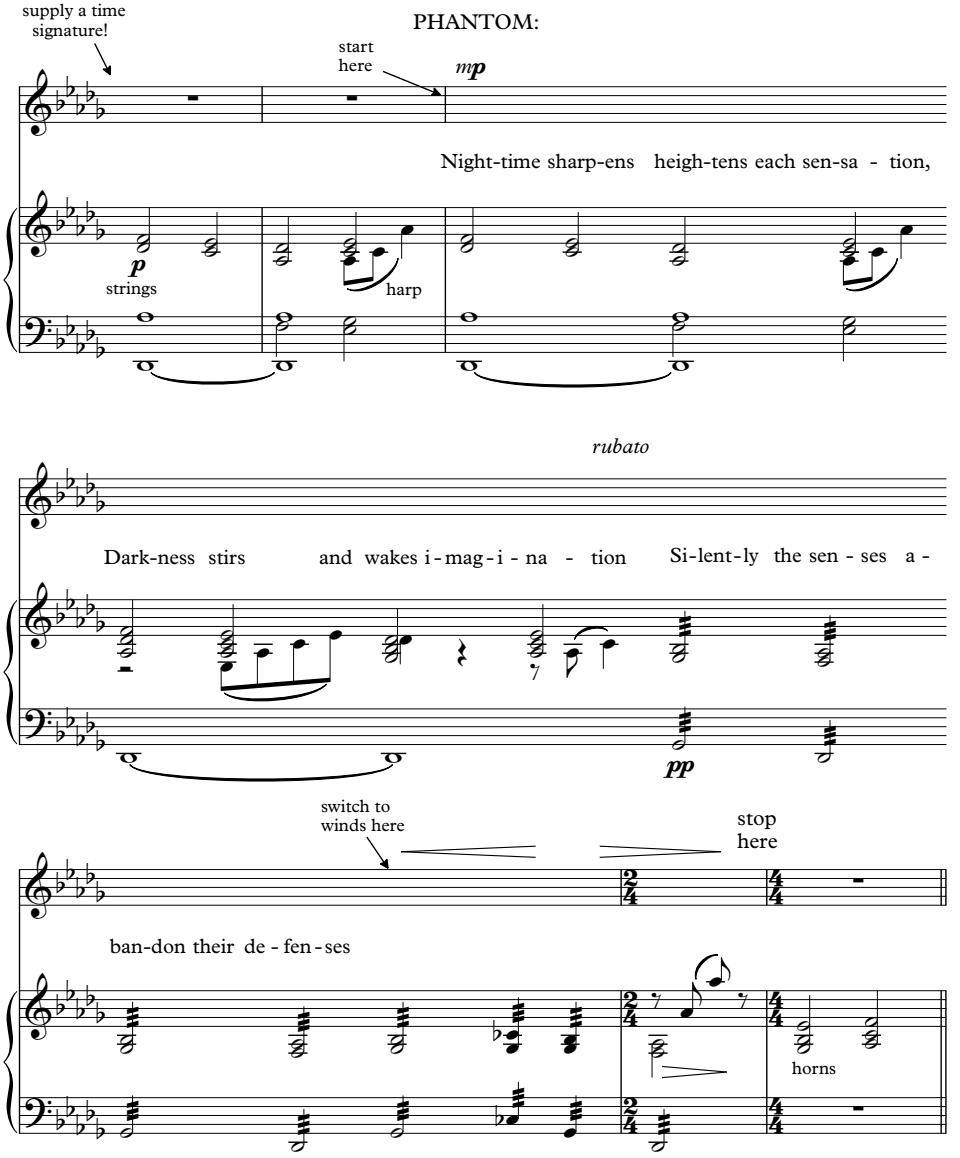
Also notate the rhythm of the winds when they come in on the second system of music. (You can do this on the same staff as the vocal melody.). The last bar you notate should be the 2/4 bar.

Note: You may notate the rhythm on a single line or space of the staff. If you'd like to take a crack at the pitches of this excerpt, feel free. You will not lose points for trying it out!

To consider:

1. Have you ever noticed this 2/4 bar? Before making this template, I hadn't. It is a wonderful touch, and it comes back every time this music occurs, altering the song's placid quadruple periodicity.
2. String players: at the words "silently the senses," are the strings playing quiet tremoli, as I've notated? I think I hear that, but I'm not sure!
3. Singers: have you ever wondered about the difference between "head voice" and "chest voice"? Michael Crawford gives a pretty clear example of both here in his treatment of two A flats: for head voice, listen to the one that occurs on the word "soar" at around 1:53. For chest voice, compare the parallel moment, on the word "be" at around 3:20.
4. Webber writes *rubato* here as an indication to the performers. *Rubato* is an Italian word that means "robbed"; it refers to *tempo rubato*, or "stolen time," a sort of elastic way of shaping a phrase by speeding up and slowing down for expressive effect. The Crawford recording, I think, does a good job with this. But does it make it harder to hear the underlying meter?
5. A snippet from this melody was so similar to the love theme from Puccini's 1910 opera *La fanciulla del west* that Puccini's estate took Andrew Lloyd Webber to court over it. The passage in question is from "Quello che tacete," toward the end of the first act. (The text is "E provai una gioia strana." Have a listen on YouTube or Spotify and answer: in your opinion, is this music similar enough to warrant a law suit?

Template 01: Cover Sheet
Andrew Lloyd Webber – "The Music of the Night," from *Phantom of the Opera* (1986)



Template 01: Score
Andrew Lloyd Webber – "The Music of the Night," from *Phantom of the Opera* (1986)

03. One-Voice Rhythmic Dictation (+ diatonic melody with a sequence)
Britten – *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell* (1945)

This music was commissioned from Britten by the British Ministry of Education. They wanted a piece to go with a documentary film about the instruments of the Orchestra. In the film, conductor Malcolm Sargent uses Britten's music "to take this great musical box to pieces—[to] show the various instruments and let you hear their own particular sounds." (The film is available online; Google it!)

The famous melody that Britten here subjects to a series of variations is based on an earlier British piece, the Rondeau from Purcell's incidental music to Aphra Behn's play *Abdelazer*, from 1695.

Notate the rhythm only for its first period, which lasts eight measures. If you'd like, take a crack at pitches as well.

Note: The beat note here is different than the quarter note, seen more commonly in triple meter. Research has shown that students score higher when the bottom number of simple time signatures is 4 (and when the bottom number of compound signatures is 8). (Karpinski 2000, 89-90) Be sure to get this right!

Two things are marked with brackets on the score:

1. The first four notes outline the tonic triad (D Minor, D, F, A, D). Can you hear this? Notate the pitches for an extra point.
2. The melody in measures 3-6 forms what is known as a "sequence," a series of repetitions of a melody at different pitch levels.

Template 03: Cover Sheet
Britten – *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell* (1945)

Template 03: Score

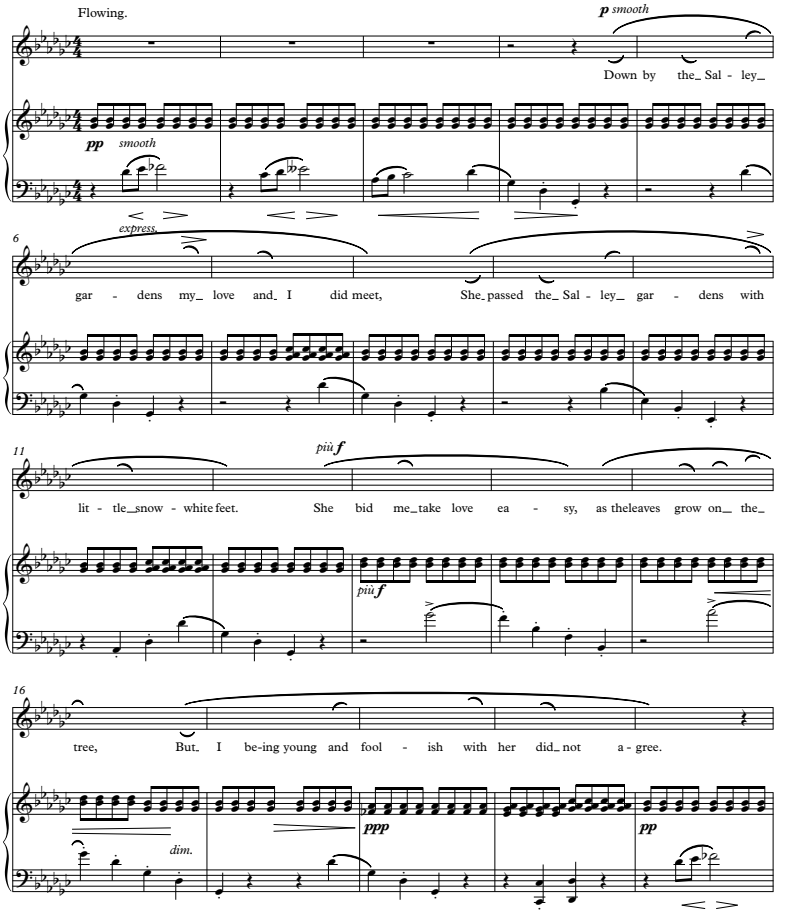
Britten – Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell (1945)

05. One-Voice Diatonic Dictation Template (+ analysis of form)
Britten (arr.) – "The Salley Gardens" (1943)

This is an Irish folk song arranged by the English composer Benjamin Britten. The text is by the Irish poet W. B. Yeats; it's from *The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems* (1889).

Notate the four phrases of the folksy vocal melody, which is completely diatonic.

Then consider the "form" of the melody. Are any phrases repeated exactly? Write onto the score the form of the entire 20-measure melody using letters as you would for a rhyme scheme (e.g., "A" for the first section and all repetitions of it, "B" for sections that aren't A and for any repetitions of it, and so on...) Have you heard the music that appears in m. 20 before? Where?

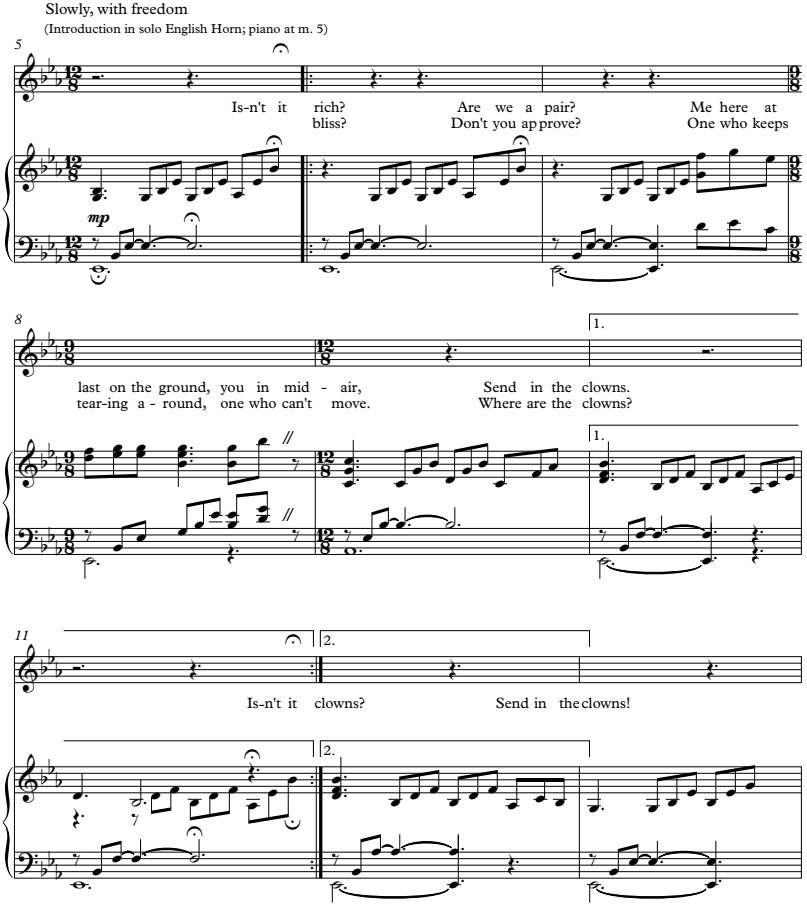


Template 05
Britten (arr.) – "The Salley Gardens" (1943)

08. One Voice Diatonic Template (+ analysis)
Sondheim – "Send in the Clowns," from *A Little Night Music* (1973)

This template is designed for use with a particular recording: that of Judy Collins, from 1975. Collins sings Sondheim's most famous song in E Flat, a whole step above the key it was written in for Glynis Johns, who created the role of Desirée for A Little Night Music. An additional detail: in the introduction, Collins's recording features an English horn instead of the clarinet called for on Sondheim's original score.

Notate the top voice of this show tune (and now standard). Notice in mm. 8–9 the combination of two harmonies, tonic in the left hand, and dominant (or sometimes subdominant) in the right. Which do you suppose represents "me" ("here at last on the ground"), which "you" ("in mid-air")?



Template 08
Sondheim – "Send in the Clowns," from *A Little Night Music* (1973)

14. Multi-Voice Melodic Dictation: An exercise in stream segregation
The Cranberries – "Dreams" (1992)

Notate the two vocal melodies of this breakout single from Irish band The Cranberries (1992). Both melodies are sung by the band's lead singer, Dolores O'Riordan, who also wrote the song.

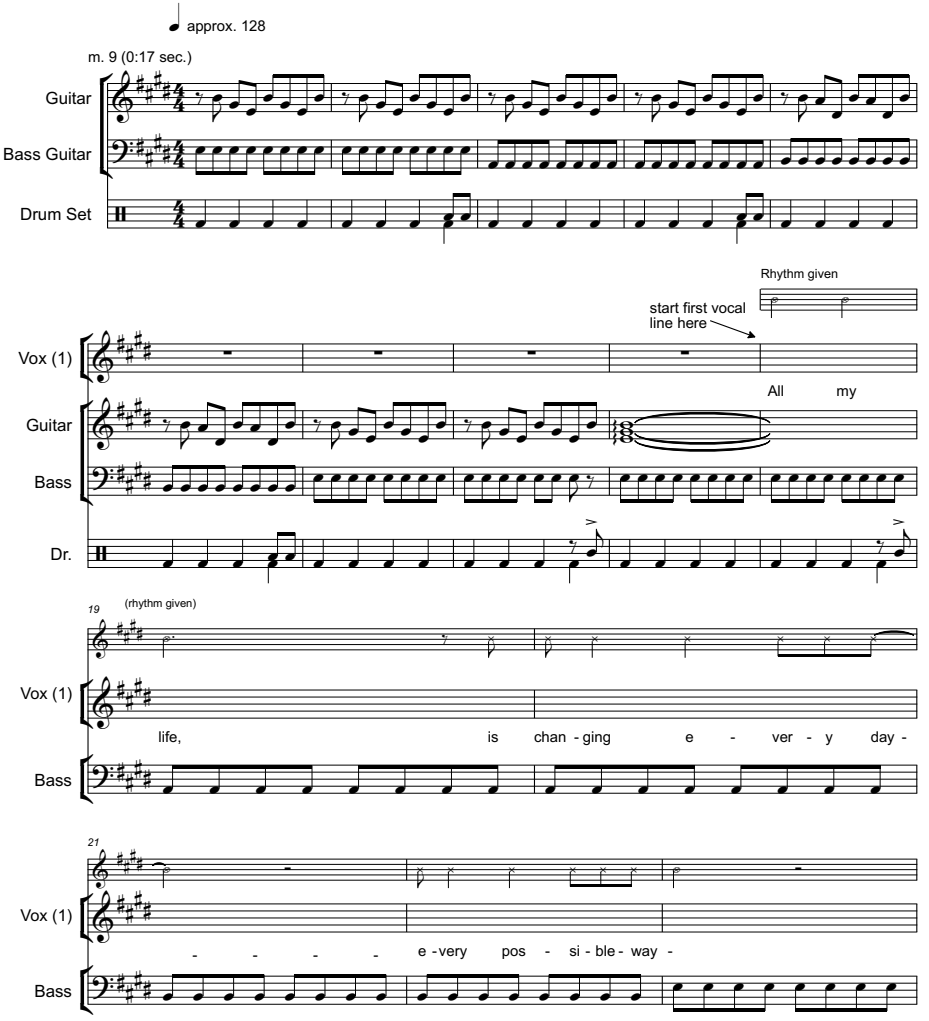
Some notes:

- I have tried to save space on the template in a few ways. First, it begins at m. 9, which is at the 0:17 second mark. Second, after the voice comes in, I have minimized information from other instruments.
- Though the rhythm of the vocal lines does not sound unusual, nevertheless syncopations make it difficult to notate. This happens quite a bit in popular music, in which syncopations are more common than in 18th- and 19th- century classical music. I have provided the rhythm for the melody on an ossia staff so that you don't have to fuss with it. You will notice in copying it how awkwardly the system of notation deals with relatively simple sounding rhythms.
- If you are listening on headphones, you might notice some sophisticated aspects of the mix. Do you hear the guitar, whose strumming pattern pulses along in eighth notes, phases from left to right channels and back?
- In popular music, we typically speak of "melody," which is the sort of primary vocal line, and "harmony," which refers to any number of added vocal tracks that are subsidiary to the melody. (Typically, but not always, harmony lines are above the melody; often the two voices move in parallel thirds.) Is one line here, the upper or the lower, primary, and the other secondary? Or does this perhaps change somewhere in the middle of the verse?

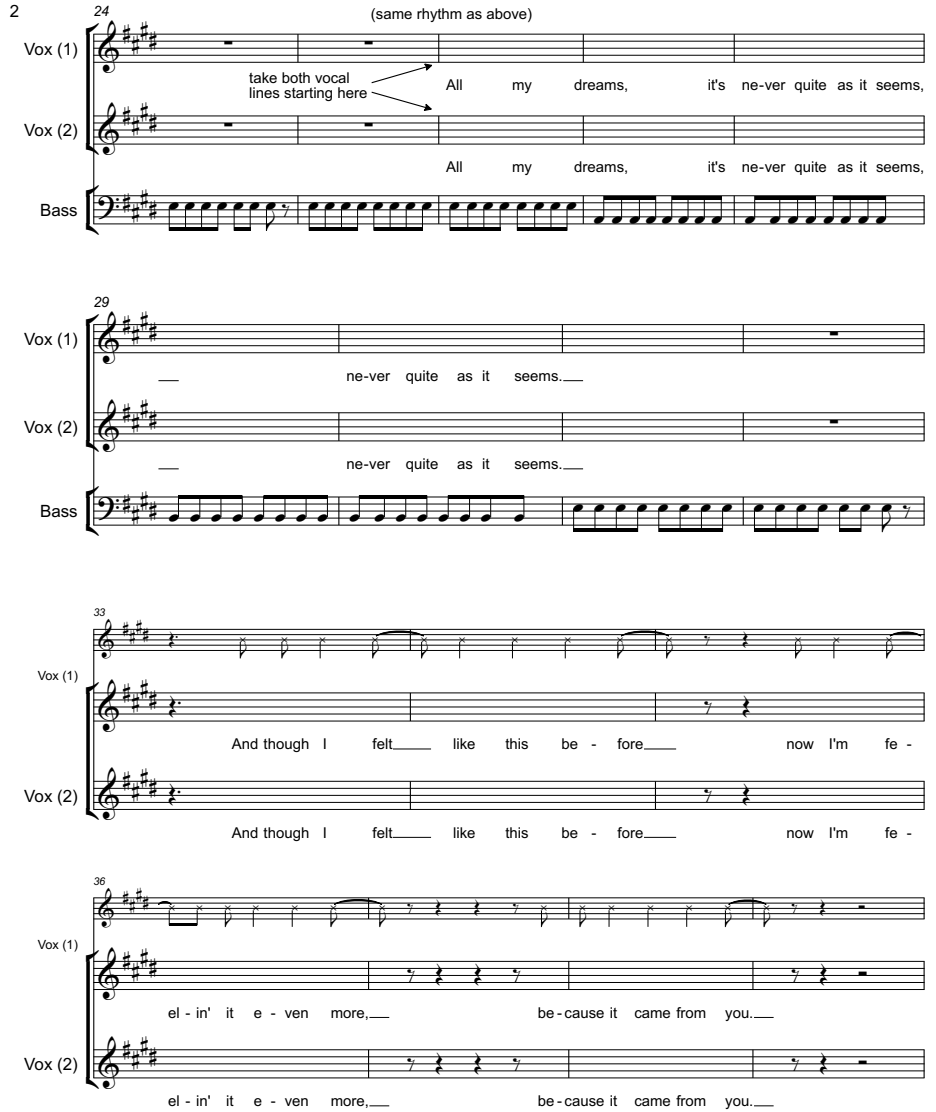
Optional analytic tasks:

- Add Roman numerals. (You may not have a good label for what is going on in mm. 11–12; use prose to describe it.)
- Add interval labels between the two vocal lines. Circle any dissonant intervals and be able to account for them.

Template 14: Cover Sheet
The Cranberries – "Dreams" (1992)



Template 14: Score
The Cranberries – "Dreams" (1992).



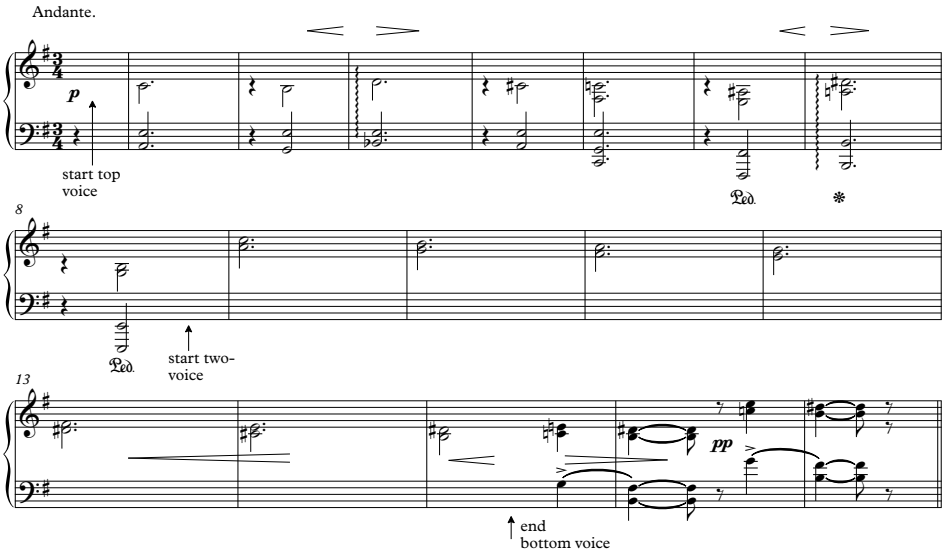
Template 14: Score (cont'd)
The Cranberries – "Dreams" (1992)

16. One- and then Two-Voice Dictation Template
Grieg – "Hjemve" ("Heimweh"; "Homesickness"), Op. 57, No. 6, from the 66 *Lyric Pieces*

In mm. 0-8, notate the top line only. At the pickup to m. 9, notate outer voices.

Identify the following:

- a melodic reprise
- a point of imitation
- a harmonic arrival on V
- a small-scale octave echo (e.g., of a cadence)
- a larger-scale octave repetition. Is there a registral connection to the opening melody?
- an unresolved leading tone (very Grieg!)



Template 16
Grieg – "Hjemve" ("Heimweh"; "Homesickness"), Op. 57, No. 6, from the 66 *Lyric Pieces*

Nonwestern Music and Decolonial Pedagogy in the Music Theory Classroom

BY MOLLY REID

Many scholars have called for North American music theory curricula to include music beyond the western classical canon. First, I show the benefit of situating such discussions within the "decolonial option" (Mignolo 2011). Then, I offer decolonial pedagogical techniques for integrating nonwestern music into the theory classroom. Drawing on Mohanty (2003) and Hess (2015), I explore three curricular models in which "Other" subject material is engaged. I then adapt the models to the music theory classroom, showing three vignettes centering around music for the Chinese *guzheng*. Decolonial pedagogy aligns most with the Comparative Musics Model in which all musics are understood relationally. The other two models are more tokenistic, yet easier to implement. I conclude by offering decolonial pedagogical strategies derived from the Comparative Musics Model and from recent anti-oppression music scholarship (Attas 2019, Chavannes and Ryan 2018/2022, Hisama 2018, Kim 2021, Lumsden 2018, Reed 2021) that can guide ethical and nonviolent musical engagement in music theory classrooms.

I am currently a graduate student and graduate assistant at Florida State University (FSU), a public "Doctoral University: Highest Research Activity" or R1 according to the Carnegie Commission Classification, which is located on the colonized ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of Indigenous people including the Seminole, Miccosukee, Apalachee, and Muscogee. I presented paper versions of this article in 2022 at the Music Theory Southeast conference at FSU and the Pedagogy into Practice conference at Michigan State University, which is located on the colonized ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of Indigenous people including the Anishinaabeg-Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwa, Odawa, and Potawatomi. Before beginning my studies at FSU in 2021, I was a graduate student and worked as a graduate assistant at Appalachian State University, the CUNY Graduate Center, and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and I held a one-year adjunct teaching position at Appalachian State University.

I am also a white, settler, cisgender woman. I am still working to uncover and counteract my role in upholding colonial, white supremacist, and other harmful power structures in the spaces in which I live and work. As I am relatively new to scholarship regarding settler-colonialism and decolonization, and given that I have operated almost exclusively within spaces steeped in western classical music culture for most of my

life in music, I have revised this paper several times as a result of ongoing reflection, discomfort, and (re)education. Ultimately, this paper does nothing to return any land to Indigenous people. Land repatriation is only a passing mention, rather than an integral aim of my argument. In this way, it is inherently flawed. This paper is a starting point of engagement with the impactful work already being done towards the goals of decolonization and towards disentangling music theory from violent power structures. Music theory instructors—especially those with dominant group privilege, who also hold more institutional power—have significant potential to dismantle systems of oppression. I invite the reader to view the article in this light.

Introduction

What should we teach in a music theory classroom? Whose music, whose theories, to whom, and for whom? These questions hold central importance in current curricular reform discussions. Many reform-minded pedagogues are scrutinizing a pedagogical canon entrenched by years of music theory pedagogy and research. From the number of semesters in the undergraduate curriculum devoted to part-writing to the musical examples or activities chosen to introduce rhythm, how do our pedagogical practices reinforce a core repertory of music and an unequal system that excludes based on identity? Efforts to improve existing curricula by including compositions beyond those created by members of the dominant white-European-cisgender-male group increase diversity, but also reinforce a "white racial frame" when the underlying analytical approach remains the same as that developed to analyze and teach western European art music.[1] If efforts to make music theory and pedagogy more inclusive reinforce the white racial frame, other approaches must be considered.[2]

This spurs a deeper look at some of the foundational assumptions of the field. Some collegiate music programs across the United States are moving towards the incorporation of nonwestern music and theories in their music theory curricula. These can be roughly divided into two approaches. One approach makes room within the existing undergraduate curriculum for nonwestern music. This might take the shape of a unit or a semester devoted to nonwestern music somewhere within the

1 See Philip A. Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (September 2020): 2.1–3.9.

2 With the acknowledgment that this is not a magic fix, Ewell posits that "music theories of nonwestern cultures—from Asia, South America, or Africa, for instance—can and should be part of basic required music-theory curricula, from freshmen music theory classes to doctoral history of theory seminars." Ibid., 3.5.

undergraduate sequence.[3] Another approach is to redesign the curriculum from the bottom up. Advocates of this approach argue that this is the only way to counter the bias of western constructions of knowledge that naturalize or prioritize western art music.[4]

The main goal of this article is to illuminate the potential for deep and lasting change that may occur by integrating decolonial thinking and curricular reform—specifically, those reform approaches that involve incorporating nonwestern music into North American music theory curricula. I focus on undergraduate music theory curricula for the sake of simplicity, but acknowledge that pre-college and graduate curricula comprise equally important parts of the powerfully lurking North American Music Academy. I use the term "nonwestern music" to refer to music from places and cultures outside of the western European art music tradition.[5] This problematic dichotomy is a product of the colonial mentality to be discussed below; using it, even critically, creates and upholds a binary opposition between the conceptual entities of the "west" and the "rest."[6]

3 See Jane Clendinning, "Teaching World Music in the Music Theory Core," in *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory,* ed. Rachel Lumsden and Jeffrey Swinkin (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2018): 267–284. Clendinning notes that, practically speaking, "over time the world music materials could be integrated more fully, as teachers become familiar with them, and as textbooks and other curricular materials are developed with this approach" (270).

4 See Cora S. Palfy and Eric Gilson, "The Hidden Curriculum in the Music Theory Classroom," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 32 (2018): 79–110. Within western music theory's pedagogical canon, there is an implicit message is that "one necessarily needs to fit a set of very specific demographics (a majority are white, cisgender male, of Western-European, often German or Austrian descent, Christian, and heterosexual)" (84) in order for one's music to be worthy of study in the theory classroom.

5 In this article, I use "western" to refer to music, music theories, and systems of music notation that can be traced to the practices of musicians from western European countries and to North American music, music theories, and systems of music notation that are derived from or based upon western European practices. I use "nonwestern" to denote music, music theories, and systems of music notation outside those practices. These terms are inherently problematic and harmful. They are not only unnervingly broad (especially "nonwestern"), but they are implicitly racially coded ("western" implies "white," and therefore "nonwestern" implies "nonwhite") and exist in an inherent hierarchical relationship as part of a binary opposition. I do not capitalize "nonwestern" or "western" in order to avoid showing priority of the latter over the former. As I discuss later in the article, this western/nonwestern dichotomy (along with its common, but nonequivalent, manifestation "western/world") is itself a byproduct of the colonial mentality. As Robin Attas states: "Understanding and acknowledging the ways in which a discipline is colonial and Eurocentric is a complicated endeavour. However, there is a danger of spending so much time on this first task that decolonizing action and change never happen." Robin Attas, "Strategies for Settler Decolonization: Decolonial Pedagogies in a Popular Music Analysis Course," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 49, no. 1 (2019): 128.

6 Some scholars use "world" instead of "nonwestern" to participate in the same unequal power

First, I explore relevant literature related to decoloniality with an emphasis on the philosophical and pedagogical benefits that can be afforded to music theory through decolonial thinking. I then turn to Juliet Hess's (2015) three models for incorporating nonwestern music into elementary music education, based on Chandra M. Mohanty's (2003) models operating in western-focused women's studies curricula. I then adapt the models in three pedagogical vignettes in the undergraduate music theory classroom centering around music for the Chinese *guzheng*. Finally, I reflect on my process of creating the vignettes and discuss decolonial and other anti-oppression pedagogical techniques that may be adopted in music theory classrooms writ large.

The Decolonial Option

The relevance of decolonial thinking to current curricular reform issues is most apparent when considering what literary theorist Walter Mignolo calls the colonial mentality. This mentality originally emerged in tandem with western modernity during the Renaissance and still acts as the glue that binds together a celebratory historical narrative of western civilizations and their achievements. At the same time, the west's destructive actions and ideologies are frequently obscured, ignored, or denied.[7]

Mignolo argues that the colonial mentality is a byproduct of the colonial matrix of power, a concept invoked by sociologist Anibal Quijano to describe a world order which consolidates its power through control of four domains: the economy, authority (broadly construed), gender and sexuality, and knowledge and subjectivity. A white supremacist and patriarchal foundation of knowledge underlies these four domains. Woven into the fabric of this power structure is an aesthetic hierarchy that decides what is beautiful and worthy of attention—what is art and what is not.[8] Combined

dynamic with "western." In fact, the title of this paper was originally "World Musics and Decolonial Pedagogy in the Music Theory Classroom," then was changed to "World Music…" before I finally shifted to "Nonwestern Music. . ." Although all of the terms at hand are problematic, I decided to use "nonwestern" and "western" because it makes clear the unequal power relationship that exists between the terms without the addition of other concepts. "World" suggests a counterpart—"non-world." As a synonym for "western," this is deeply troubling. It serves as a reminder of a narrative where the musical achievements of a handful of white, male, cisgender, western European composers are not only prized, but considered transcendent—above their own cultural circumstances, above the rest of humanity, and above the natural world. This encodes a message of white racial and patriarchal superiority. Author practices regarding capitalization and terminology of these terms and concepts vary. I have retained the conventions of the cited authors where applicable.

7 Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011): 19.

8 Ibid., xv.

with a higher-education system that privileges western knowledge over nonwestern knowledge, we find the landscape in which North American music theory and its pedagogical canon reside.

Decolonial thinking requires a willingness to critically analyze power dynamics within institutions and systems. It encourages holistic consideration of how music theory and music theorists uphold philosophical assumptions that may be decades or even centuries old and how these assumptions perpetuate cultural values from the context in which they originated. When we cultivate greater awareness of the institutional systems in which we work and teach, we begin to realize how the most foundational bases of knowledge that define a field of study are not as stable and objective as they may appear. This realization carries the great power to disturb, disrupt, and shift.

Questioning objectivity, embracing pluralism, attending to local context, and rejecting unequal power structures are several core facets of decolonial pedagogy. Many theory pedagogues already utilize decolonial techniques in their classroom. Every time a teacher leaves room for multiple student interpretations of the same musical excerpt, they make the classroom a more equitable place by embracing pluralism and relinquishing some of their control as the instructor. Field-shifting changes arise when these techniques are combined with the introspective, decolonial thinking—when we are willing to look critically at how we know what we think we know and how we fit into the colonial matrix of power.

While the sort of epistemic decoloniality discussed above can lead to change, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang assert that decolonization in settler colonial nation-states such as the United States "must involve the repatriation of land. . . that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically." They go on to state,

> [W]hen we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym.[9]

Tuck and Yang argue that decolonization is not synonymous with antiracism or efforts to improve our curricula. This is critical because it causes us to reckon with music theory's physical and geographical landscape, in addition to the figurative one described above. Like a hypothetical instructor assigning students Price's sonata to analyze with the same tools used to analyze Brahms (and changing nothing else about their curriculum), land acknowledgments draw attention to destruction brought on

9 Ibid., 3.

by violent power structures but carry the danger of reinforcing those very structures when actions stop there.

While bringing in Price's sonata does increase the diversity of composers represented in the classroom, simply working to diversify the repertoire and absolving oneself of further responsibility to dismantle power structures can be seen as what Tuck and Yang call "moves to innocence."[10] These virtue-signaling actions are often met with professional accolades or praise for being inclusive, but end up working against the goals of decolonization by upholding the systems that created inequality in the first place. Can the inclusion of nonwestern music in the music theory curriculum fit within the framework of decoloniality, or is this precisely what Tuck and Yang argue against? It is essential for those considering incorporating nonwestern repertoires in the music theory classroom to consider reasons for doing so. It is easy for such attempts to end up reinscribing western music and systems as dominant.

The Three Models

Juliet Hess has explicated three models for engaging nonwestern music in the general music classroom, drawing on work by Chandra M. Mohanty that describes the "manner in which 'Other' subject material" is engaged within western-focused women's studies curricula.[11] Here, I briefly summarize Hess's three models before turning to specific examples of how they could be adapted in the music theory classroom.

The "Musician-as-Tourist" model is the most overtly tokenistic of the three. In the general music classroom, it might look like a short unit on African drumming that is devoid of any specific cultural context or any discussion of Africa, its countries, or power relations. This is an example of "musical tourism" that creates an Other through the lack of cultural specificity as well as through the contrast it provides the main Eurocentric curriculum.

The "Musician-as-Explorer" model delves slightly deeper into the cultural or social contexts of the music it engages. In the class on African drumming, the Musician-as-Explorer would discuss the specific country or region of origin of the musical tradition, and how it functions in context. Still, students move from place to place studying music

10 Ibid., 9. Drawing on Janet Mawhinney's 1998 Master's thesis, Tuck and Yang describe "settler moves to innocence" formulated to deal with settlers' reality of "[d]irectly and indirectly benefitting from the erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples."

11 Juliet Hess, "Decolonizing music education: Moving beyond tokenism," *International Journal of Music Education* 33, no. 3 (2015): 1.

of "exotic elsewheres" and do not get the opportunity to draw connections between genres and traditions.[12] The musician explores cultures and music outside of the main Eurocentric curriculum. For those who wish to include nonwestern music within the western-focused curriculum they already have, this model will most likely be the result.

Finally, the "Comparative Musics Model'' is based on Mohanty's assertion that the local and global are not defined in terms of physical geography or territory, but exist simultaneously and constitute each other. This model focuses on connections and relationships between "local" and "global"—as well as how they are inherently entwined with one another—and examines how these links may be conceptual, material, temporal, contextual, and so on.[13]

This means emphasizing the connections between music and its contexts, as well as the connections *between* musical contexts. In the general music classroom, Hess imagines that this model will allow for exploration of how the categories of race, class, gender, disability, and nation intersect with each other and with the music.[14] Comparative teaching allows students to grasp how various musical traditions inform one another. It emphasizes interconnectedness and calls into question the usefulness of erecting strict categories and boundaries.

On the level of curricular reform in music theory, this may look like moving away from a curriculum based on a teleological narrative of western European art music and moving instead into a curriculum that centralizes various parameters of music—rhythm, timbre, melody, or harmony, for example.[15] Here, musical knowledges are in dialogue with and inform each other, instead of existing as separate entities marked by geographic boundaries.

The Comparative Musics Model can certainly help guide theory curriculum overhauls. Could it also be helpful on a smaller scale, in situations where instructors may not have the option to redesign the entire curriculum? And what are some specific ways that these three models might operate in the context of the music theory classroom? In what follows, I use classroom vignettes based around the three

12 Ibid., 5–6.

13 Chandra M. Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (London: Duke University Press, 2003): 242.

14 Hess, "Decolonizing music education," 6.

15 For more on the "institutionalization of a teleological narrative assuming European musical superiority," see Margaret E. Walker, "Towards a Decolonized Music History Curriculum," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (2020): 1–19. Walker writes that "[teaching] a history of music dating from late nineteenth century Europe without examining its origins is indeed to deliver a covert message of white superiority" (13).

pedagogical models to explore these questions. These examples center around music for the Chinese *guzheng*, to which I had been briefly introduced in a graduate seminar on analytic approaches to nonwestern music.[16] The vignettes show the range of tokenism and unexamined colonial attitudes that can exist in different pedagogical approaches to music beyond the western classical canon. Finally, I reflect on the process of creating them, my levels of satisfaction and discomfort with the results, and questions for continued reflection.

First Vignette: "Musician-as-Tourist"

This vignette serves as the sole instructional day that students receive to become acquainted with the music of China. One of the hallmarks of the Musician-as-Tourist model is appropriative overgeneralization. First, students are introduced to traditional Chinese instruments through diagrams and instructional YouTube videos. Then, they listen to and compare three performances of "Fisherman's Song at Dusk," "Lao Liuban," and "Dance of the Golden Snake'' after being prompted to think about the musical parameters they have studied in class thus far.[17] The main analytic activity is transcribing the piece "Fishermen's Song at Dusk" in five-line staff notation.

From a decolonial perspective, there is much room for improvement here. The lack of cultural context and musical detail, and the minuscule weight the activity receives in the curriculum, contribute to tokenism. Why were these performances picked? What exactly is the purpose of listening to this music, other than to experience the "Other"? The three performances comprise three very different musical contexts, but the historical and social contexts of the pieces are not discussed.[18] Although western notation is used in China, the music in this brief class is consumed using

16 The course was Jane Clendinning's fall 2021 seminar for music theory doctoral students at Florida State University. I am grateful for the learning opportunities this course provided.

17 For a performance of "Fisherman's Song at Dusk," see Qian Jun, "Traditional Chinese Music: 'Fisherman's Song at Dusk," Chinese Zither Performance, April 1, 2013, YouTube video, 4:08. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfgqHwBdsXw&t=1s.
For a performance of "Lao Liuban," see Chinese Performing Arts of North America 北美中乐团(纽约), "江南丝竹《老六板》 北美中乐团 演奏 'Lao Liu Ban' Chinese Performing Arts of North America Performance," July 19, 2020, YouTube video, 0:00-7:11, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hCTUeqOWlA.
For a performance of "Dance of the Golden Snake," see China Symphony Orchestra 中国交响乐团, "Dance of the Golden Snake 金蛇狂舞," September 21, 2009, YouTube video, 5:01, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKiBCKUxAMw.

18 "Fishermen's Song at Dusk" is a composed piece for the *guzheng* dating back to the Tang dynasty, "*Lao Liuban*" is a *qupai* (named tune) associated with *sizhu* (silk-bamboo) ensembles in Central-eastern to south China, and "Dance of the Golden Snake" is an example of modernized traditional music (*guoyue*) arranged for orchestra.

only the language and tools of western European art music. This reinforces it as the dominant repertoire and marks the quick and incomplete tour of "Chinese music" as an excursion to the periphery. The epistemic frame of western music theory lingers unacknowledged in the shadows.

Second Vignette: "Musician-as-Explorer"

The Musician-as-Explorer model solves some of the problems with the previous model while retaining others. This vignette is centered more specifically around the *guzheng*. This single class period begins with viewings of two short videos by world-class *guzheng* players Wu Fei and Haiqiong Deng. The first clip provides an orientation to the instrument's layout, its 2500–3000-year history, and tuning. The second provides a brief overview of the six different schools of Chinese traditional music and demonstrations of the basic techniques for each hand, including the left-hand pitch-bending practice, *huayin*. The rest of class is devoted to a quick overview of *jianpu* cipher notation, guided by another informal video by Wu Fei that provides students with the answers to the next set of guided questions. Students conclude class by watching the performance recording of "Fishermen's Song at Dusk" with the score.

From the perspective of decolonial pedagogy, this lesson is perhaps slightly preferable to the Musician-as-Tourist model. The use of videos from expert, culture-bearing musicians decenters the instructor as the locus of knowledge. The class discussion includes the *guzheng*'s historical and present-day contexts, specific techniques used in playing the *guzheng*, and the basics of how to read *jianpu* notation.

For as many improvements as this plan makes, the relative curricular weight given to this music still places it on the periphery. The introduction to the music is more specific, but still comprises only a single class meeting. This time constraint also means that in the context of the unit, the students hop around the world one day at a time without going into nearly as much depth in any repertoire as western European art music. Students also miss the chance to think critically about connections between musical traditions, which reinforces the idea that musical knowledges are neatly separated by geographic boundaries.

Third Vignette: "Comparative Musics Model"

The final vignette follows the Comparative Musics Model, using only two class periods. This vignette still centers around the *guzheng* and assumes basic knowledge about the instrument. Class begins with a discussion of the social, cultural, and historical importance of *huayin* for the *guzheng* repertoire, based on Haiqiong Deng's work which traces changes in *guzheng* music culture over time through the use of

huayin.[19] There is also a brief discussion of the history of notation and oral teaching among *guzheng* musicians, which allowed space for the development of a versatile and expressive *huayin* practice that varied across the six different regional schools.

After considering contrasts in *huayin* and right-hand techniques in several traditional songs, the second class period considers modern examples of compositions for the *guzheng*, such as "Mackay" by Taiwanese composer Chihchun Chi-sun Lee.[20] "Mackay" blends traditional *guzheng* techniques with whole-tone and chromatic scales, showing how alternate tunings and extended techniques can dramatically influence music written for the instrument. Students watch a lecture recital of the piece by Haiqiong Deng on YouTube and consider the meaning of the dialogue between the disparate musical elements, giving them an opportunity to discuss the role of *huayin*.[21] This activity leads students to think critically about modern-day relations between Taiwan and mainland China, religion and the effects of western Christian missions through history, and how Lee uses *huayin* and compositional techniques associated with western music to navigate narrative issues of identity and difference.

A discussion of the *guzheng*'s history of oral teaching methods can also lead to a comparison of other music grounded in oral traditions, such as North American old-time music. Between multiple class periods dedicated to the *guzheng* and old-time music, students are prepared for an assignment that considers the interaction of Chinese and American folk traditions in analyses of collaborative songs by Wu Fei and banjo player Abigail Washburn. In analyzing "Wusuli Boat Song/Water Is Wide," students are asked to consider the form of the song, the overlap between the two folk song texts and their harmonies and melodies, and *guzheng* techniques used by Wu Fei including sparing use of *huayin* (only during an instrumental verse). Much more could be discussed in terms of gender, class, race, and nationality; but even this brief foray into a comparative style of teaching affirms Mohanty's integral point that the local and global constitute each other.

19 Haiqiong Deng, "Musical Change and Continuity of Huayin: The Essence of Chinese Zheng Music" (MM thesis, Florida State University, 2006).

20 The title "Mackay" references the first western-style medical hospital in Taiwan, which was named after a Canadian missionary.

21 Haiqiong Deng, "'Mackay': for the 21-string guzheng, composed by Chihchun Chi-sun Lee, lecture/performance by Haiqiong Deng," March 23, 2021, YouTube Video, 17:02, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D84tfxmQ9IM&t=0s.

Decolonial Pedagogy in Music Theory

These vignettes range from more to less tokenistic. Because the Comparative Musics Model is the most aligned with decolonial pedagogy, I assumed that the third vignette would be the most successful when I set out to write it. Perhaps due to a subconscious move to innocence, I imagined that I would feel satisfied and accomplished after completing the last vignette. Instead, I felt unsatisfied and guilty. Although I have been playing music for decades and writing about music in academic spaces for nearly my entire adult life, I have not pursued long-term study of music outside of the western art music tradition nor do I have expertise in music for the Chinese *guzheng*. I had only a brief exposure to the *guzheng* and its repertoire in one graduate seminar, and I included content on the *guzheng* in order to illustrate the different pedagogical models presented above. I felt that I had used music that has been deeply meaningful to many people as part of a pedagogical experiment. Creating and subsequently presenting these class materials in public settings based on my limited experience felt like an act of colonization—even when attempting to follow tenets of the Comparative Musics Model.

In addition to using the Comparative Musics Model as a guide for incorporating nonwestern music into an existing music theory curriculum, instructors can ensure more ethical results by also engaging in continued and constructive self-critique, reflection, and education. Alissandra Reed (2021) has detailed five "compassionate and practical" strategies for music theorists interested in nonviolent music theory scholarship—strategies that are equally applicable to music theory pedagogy.[22] In Reed's words,

> [i]t is imperative that we continually learn antiracist, anti colonial, and feminist practices and continually interrogate our personal values and commitments with respect to violent systems. This (re)education is challenging work, and sometimes we may feel a range of emotions: helplessness, guilt, defensiveness, anger, despair, and more. [23]

22 Alissandra Reed, "A Guide to Nonviolent Scholarship in Music Theory," *Theory and Practice* 46 (2021): 97–104. Reed provides actionable advice for each of her five strategies, which follow: Write about marginalized music—Cite marginalized scholars—Confront the impact of violent power structures and personal agency—Make your work accessible—Pursue nonviolent ideals all the time.

23 Ibid., 102. Reed goes on to note that "scholars with the most institutional power have the greatest responsibility and urgency to learn, critique, and eliminate any potential violent impacts of their actions."

While not easy, the willingness to accept these uncomfortable emotions is essential if we are to contribute to Hisama's and Lumsden's hope of "[reshaping] music theory with principles of racial and gender justice at its core."[24] Catrina Kim (2021) imparts realistic and encouraging guidance for this process in the same volume:

> The personal work of self-education is urgent, but it is not easy and cannot be done overnight. I encourage readers to respect this process, acknowledge their own abilities and limitations, and be wary of underestimating the time and energy it will require.[25]

While the larger curricular reform required of the Comparative Musics Model may be out of reach for some pedagogues, there are decolonial pedagogical techniques that can be implemented in theory classrooms regardless of curricular design. One strategy pays homage to the ethnomusicology "study group" in which students learn experientially in small groups.[26] Engaging with music through hands-on experience rather than through traditional written work provides students more than one Eurocentric "way of knowing."[27] When the study group experience forms the bulk of students' engagement with music, this discourages a need to conquer knowledge through traditional written tests and quizzes. Study groups and experiential learning may also serve to disrupt classroom power relations by decentering the teacher as the locus of control and knowledge, instead refocusing the learning process as a community effort. An increase in participatory music-making with classmates allows students to conceptualize the participatory nature of much music outside of the narrow slice of presentational music often studied in music theory classrooms and to understand all music as part of a social practice.[28]

Decolonial pedagogy also involves a softening of the rigid and often impersonal educational system in which music theory resides. One way to push back against the aesthetic hierarchy in music studies is to emphasize the equal importance of local music and student-created music by including them in the course design. Including students in decisions about the course and creating space for individuals to share their

24 Ellie M. Hisama and Rachel Lumsden, "Guest Editors' Note. Diversifying Music Theory: From Theory to Practice," *Theory and Practice* 46 (2021): ix.

25 Catrina Kim, "Issues in Teaching Music Theory Ethically: Reframing University Directives of Antiracist and Decolonized Curricula," *Theory and Practice* 46 (2021): 29.

26 See Hess, "Decolonizing music education" and Michael A. Figueroa, "Decolonizing 'Intro to World Music'?," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (2020): 39–57 for detailed examples of the use of study groups and experiential learning in the music classroom.

27 Including room for multiple "ways of knowing" is one of the central techniques utilized by Attas, "Strategies for Settler Decolonization," 134.

28 See Thomas Turino, Music as Social Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 26–29.

analytical ideas, as well as more personal reactions to course content, paves the way for interpersonal connection.

Rachel Lumsden details multiple ways that instructors can incorporate feminist pedagogy in the music theory classroom, including small-group work, collaborative discussion leading, and strategies for cultivating an "ethic of care."[29] As Lumsden demonstrates, feminist pedagogy's "focus on how structures of power operate, both within and outside the classroom" and teaching strategies that resist a "solely hierarchical model with the professor as 'the sage on the stage'" aim to actively dismantle systems of oppression—leading to classroom experiences that can be truly empowering or transformative for students.[30]

In their 2018 manifesto on decolonizing the music survey class, Maria Ryan and David Chavannes propose multiple decolonial techniques including the idea of compassionate listening:

> What if, along with our students, we practiced listening with an empathetic curiosity, one that invites us to try describing something of what we hear and how it makes us feel? What if we listened with a compassionate desire to be present, both with others who have listened to this music before us, and with those who are listening to it alongside us?[31]

Compassionate listening allows pedagogues to contextualize their classrooms within a specific time and place in a way that creates awareness of the intersection of local and global. By relinquishing some control, pedagogues can guide students to learn through this empathetic desire to listen.

Whether instructors ultimately choose to incorporate nonwestern music in the music theory classroom, we can still engage in decolonial pedagogy by naming our epistemological frames.[32] Robin Attas describes the process of uncovering

29 See Rachel Lumsden, "Enriching Classroom Discussions: Some Strategies from Feminist Pedagogy," in *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory*, ed. Rachel Lumsden and Jeffrey Swinkin (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2018): 313–330.

30 Ibid., 315.

31 Chavannes and Ryan, "Decolonizing the Music Survey: A Manifesto for Action." June 15, 2018. http://www.dchavannes.com/read/2018/6/15/decolonizing-music-survey.

32 Ryan and Chavannes include "Nam[ing] your epistemological frames" among their actionable items for decolonizing the music survey class: "Your teaching, along with the teaching materials you use, is inevitably based upon certain theoretical, ideological, and ontological assumptions. Be sure that you know what these are, and that you bring these to the foreground of your teaching." Chavannes goes on to note, "naming your epistemological frames might have a tremendous impact on the learning of everyone in the room, including you. Of course, this demands humility." See also Palfy and Gilson, "The Hidden Curriculum in the Music Theory Classroom," 2018.

the Eurocentric elements of music theory for her students in her work towards decolonizing a popular music analysis course:

> I thus increased Indigenous content in terms of repertoire, but this still left the second half of music theory course content: analytical approach. Given the historical orientation of the discipline as described previously, it is no surprise that Eurocentric analytical methods and ways of thinking about music (including the definition of what it means to analyze music in the first place) are the often-unspoken norm in the discipline. I paired six different analytical methods with each of my artist-focused units, and all but one method was based on standard analytical practices in my field. In remaining mostly true to Eurocentric analytical practice and epistemology, I did not escape a Eurocentric focus, but I was able to expose this colonial focus to students through critical discussions at the end of each unit.[33]

Naming our epistemological frames may also look like renaming a course to more accurately reflect the course content. Catrina Kim describes a hypothetical class with a unit titled "world music,"

> in which students sample two or three different non-Western musical cultures, and another unit titled "form," which focuses on eighteenth-century sonata form in German-speaking lands. The former topic is extremely broad, whereas the latter topic is extremely focused with a misleadingly broad title.[34]

In the case of a semester-long course on the latter topic, perhaps an instructor would consider the course title "18th-Century Sonatas Forms: Germany and Austria." Another familiar yet misleadingly broad title is "Music Theory I." Whose music, whose theories, to whom, and for whom? While many instructors lack the institutional power to change course names such as this, they can name their frames by being honest with students about the theoretical or analytic assumptions of the course that might otherwise appear as objective fact. Ellie Hisama writes that "[m]usic theory as a field is often regarded as neutral, technical, and formalist, a foundational part of an undergraduate curriculum that is exempt from discussions of issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, citizenship, economics, politics, and so forth."[35] Questioning the seemingly objective bases of our fields of knowledge is decolonial thinking. Humberto Maturana's phrase "objectivity in parentheses" highlights the contingent nature of objectivity itself. Acknowledging the absence of a singular, objective truth can be daunting—or it can lead to greater compassion. In Maturana's words,

33 Robin Attas, "Strategies for Settler Decolonization," 133.

34 Kim, "Issues in Teaching Music Theory Ethically," 35–36.

35 Ellie M. Hisama, "Considering Race and Ethnicity in the Music Theory Classroom," in *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory*, ed. Rachel Lumsden and Jeffrey Swinkin (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2018): 252.

> When one puts objectivity in parentheses, all views, all verses in the multiverse are equally valid. Understanding this, you lose the passion for changing the other.[36]

The decolonial option privileges pluralism, multiculturalism, and importantly, more than one Eurocentric base of knowledge.

> In a critical reflection on their 2018 manifesto, Chavannes and Ryan acknowledge that: living in the US and participating in North Atlantic academic discourse largely means contending with Western thought. It is possible to bend, stretch, and even break parts of this tradition in pursuit of truth, and this can be done from within the tradition itself or by constellating truths from Western and non-Western traditions.[37]

Conclusion

It is not necessary to eschew western art music or theories in music theory classroom. Rather, by treating them as some of many "equally valid" musical traditions and knowledges, instructors interested in decolonial pedagogy may create in their classrooms a space for eliciting personal transformative experiences for students and instructor alike.

Bottom-up curricular changes that incorporate aspects of the Comparative Musics Model are already happening in some music programs across North America. But many individual instructors may not have the individual or institutional power to enact radical changes in their curricula. In lieu of these broader changes, decolonial thinking encourages instructors and students alike to make space in their classrooms for pluralistic ways of experiencing music. The decolonial option requires us to continuously rethink ourselves and our relation to land, culture, and music. When we are able to see beyond the acultural, objective guise that has been afforded to western art music, we are better equipped to shift our pedagogy to incorporate a greater range of music and perspectives. Decolonial pedagogy encourages us to engage with all music in an ethical and empathetic way and emboldens us to embrace the discomfort of accepting objectivity in parentheses.

36 Mignolo, T*he Darker Side of Western Modernity*, 28 (translated from Maturana, "Biologie der Sozialität").

37 Chavannes and Ryan, "A Critical Reflection on 'Decolonizing the Music Survey.'" August 26, 2022. http://www.dchavannes.com/read/2022/8/26/a-critical-reflection-on-decolonizing-the-music-survey.

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Facilitating Group Composition for Large Ensembles through a Building Blocks Curriculum

BY ALEXIS C. LAMB

When I was a sixth- through twelfth-grade band director in Illinois, I was continually searching for ways to bring composition and improvisation into our classroom. As a composer myself, it was important to incorporate compositional activities into my lessons in addition to engaging with music through performance, getting the students more involved with the music they were studying and rehearsing for concerts. As a result, I developed a composition curriculum for my large ensembles with the goal of going beyond the classroom and performing a collectively-composed work for our community. The curriculum allowed for a fluid and natural expansion from individual composing to small group performance, discussion, and voting, and then to large ensemble performance, discussion, voting, and workshopping. This procedure applied to every musical building block we focused on for the project, including rhythm, harmony, melody, countermelody, form, and orchestration. Students were naturally engaged in discussion about topics such as melodic contour, harmonic development, rhythmic variation, and structure, but they were also asked to consider what it means to be a composer, all while creating a new composition as a collective team. The resulting work was a composition and performance rooted in collaboration, respect, and theoretical understanding of musical structures. This article discusses the curriculum in greater detail, including its relationship to state and national standards, background knowledge and class climate, approaches to each musical building block, and how to differentiate this curriculum to meet the needs and abilities of your ensemble.

Introduction

When I was a sixth- through twelfth-grade band director in Illinois, I was continually searching for ways to bring composition and improvisation into our classroom. As a composer myself, it was important to incorporate compositional activities into my lessons in addition to engaging with music through performance, getting the students more involved with the music they were studying and rehearsing for concerts. As a result, I developed a composition curriculum for my large ensembles with the goal of going beyond the classroom and performing a collectively-composed work for our community. This curriculum was piloted with three middle school concert bands (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) in Spring 2018 over the course of eight weeks. Each ensemble's resulting composition proved the highlight of their performances at the end of the semester.

The curriculum allowed for a fluid and natural expansion from individual composing to small group performance, discussion, and voting, and then to large ensemble performance, discussion, voting, and workshopping. This procedure applied to every musical building block we focused on for the project, including rhythm, harmony, melody, countermelody, form, and orchestration. Students were naturally engaged in discussion about topics such as melodic contour, harmonic development, rhythmic variation, and structure, but they were also asked to consider what it means to be a composer, all while creating a new composition as a collective team. These elements were adapted for both traditional and non-traditional notation practices to remove limitations on students' imaginations as well as to increase accessibility. After each layer was established, we workshopped the materials as an ensemble and explored dynamics, articulation, and phrasing possibilities. The resulting work was a composition and performance rooted in collaboration, respect, and theoretical understanding of musical structures.

In this article, I discuss this group composition curriculum in greater detail. Part 1 discusses a broad overview of the learning objective "create" within national and state standards and how this applies to my composition curriculum. Part 2 covers the foundational skills and class climate that were established for this project to be successful. Part 3 lays out the process of the curriculum from initial creation to final performance. Part 4 posits alternative means of scaffolding and implementing this curriculum with any large ensemble of any age and/or ability level.

PART 1: "Create" as a Music Education Standard

What does it mean to be a composer? Are all pieces of music considered compositions? Is there a difference between a composition, song, tune, musical creation, piece, or work? According to the most recent (2014) version of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, a "composer" is defined as "one who creates music compositions," whereas a "creator" is "one who originates a music composition, arrangement, or improvisation." A "composition" is defined as an "original piece of music that can be repeated, typically developed over time, and preserved either in notation or in a sound recording." "Create" is defined as to "conceive and develop new artistic ideas, such as an improvisation, composition, or arrangement, into a work."[1]

1 "2014 Music Standards," NAfME, April 1, 2021, https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/.

While these definitions are subjective, my pedagogical experience has revealed that students often feel uncomfortable adopting the word "composer" to describe themselves as creators of music. One of the goals with this curriculum was to begin with open discussions in class about the language we use to describe creating and music-making to empower students as well as legitimize their work and to confirm the value of their work as equal to any other music that we study or play in class. Through this introductory process, the students were able to offer their own definitions, which happened to expand on the definitions provided by the National Coalition of Core Arts Standards, and also reflect on their own creative processes in our class and beyond.

"Create" is also one of the pillars of music standards within the National Association for Music Education, along with "Perform" and "Respond."[2] However, many examples of creation projects within an ensemble setting I have experienced have been limited to short-term projects that only work at the individual or small group level, such as writing a short model composition (or even just a melody) or collaborating with others on rhythmic improvisation games.[3] My school district was also an advocate for the Danielson Framework for Teaching, with particular emphasis on the rubric titled, "Engaging Students in Learning." The Danielson approach requires students to take initiative with their own teaching through collaboration with other students, self-advocacy, and self-reflection.[4] This building blocks composition curriculum attempted to fill a void by creating a project for students to engage in the materials on an individual, small group, and full ensemble level, as well as give the students the opportunity to lead their learning and expand their creative work into a quarter-long process that resulted in a performance for our community.

2 "Connect" is still a listed pillar in the National Coalition of Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), but it has been embedded into the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) standards, even though NAfME is a part of NCCAS. At the time that this curriculum was piloted, "Connect" was still a separated pillar in the NAfME standards.

3 My students also engaged in similar creative projects that only lasted 1–3 lessons, and I believe these shorter projects significantly contributed to the positive and open class climate we developed for this longer-term project to be as successful as it was. Grant (2022) also offers a variety of lessons that engage on a creative front and lead to a longer-term final project for a theory class.

4 "3C: Engaging Students in Learning," Danielson Group, August 9, 2022, https://danielsongroup.org/the-framework-for-teaching/.

PART 2: The Foundation for Successful Building Blocks

Rhythm

All of my pedagogical work begins with rhythm as the core foundation of musical knowledge and communication. Perhaps this is due to my bias as a percussionist, but I found that, when given something with a steady pulse (listening to a song, playing along to a groove in a digital audio workstation (DAW), working with a metronome, etc.), students intuitively know how to align with that pulse, either through movement, body percussion, or their voice. Because my students were fairly new to exploring pitch on their instruments (and in the case of my sixth graders, it was only their second semester ever playing their band instruments), we could always return to rhythm. Rhythm also served as our constant when other variables, such as learning new notes on our instruments, were less consistent—even if they were still working on pitch accuracy with new notes, they were confident in the rhythms and could keep up with the material. When vocalizing our rhythms, we spoke with either basic "solkattu" vocalizations (ta, ta-ka, ta-ki-ta, ta-ka-di-mi) or with a standard, "1e+a" system to work on our notation literacy.[5]

While there are many approaches to engaging with rhythm in large ensembles, such as rhythmic call and response activities, two of my core activities included improvising a rhythmic idea over an ostinato pattern and sight reading rhythms notated on a staff. For the improvisation activity, students would work in either small groups or full ensemble. One student would create an ostinato pattern that everyone would replicate, and then individuals would each take a solo over the top of the ongoing ostinato. Not only did this activity aid in rhythmic fluency and groove, but we began developing a trusting class climate where students felt free to explore their musical creativity without judgment. As we developed the other foundations for our building blocks composition, we began to discuss this activity in a similar hierarchical relationship of balancing melody, countermelody, and harmony. For the sight reading activities, I used a combination of the online programs Sight Reading Factory and

5 Solkattu is a South Indian rhythmic language comprised of phonemes often used with Karnatak music. As a percussionist, my collegiate pedagogy focused primarily on solkattu as a means of rhythmic subdivision that is idiomatic for the voice. I found that the use of solkattu syllables in this composition unit allowed more rhythmic freedom for the students in our improvisations because they were less focused on how the rhythms aligned to our meter. Because of that, students were playing more naturally with syncopations and advanced rhythmic material that they otherwise would not see in their pedagogical repertoire and method books.

Groove Pizza. Sight Reading Factory offers randomized rhythmic and pitch sight reading excerpts that can be customized to meet ability level and other pedagogical interests, such as meter, length of excerpt, difficulty of rhythm, and range of pitch.[6] Groove Pizza is another fun resource that can create and manipulate rhythmic, metronome-style patterns using a grid-based, DAW foundation.[7] The combination of improvised and notated rhythmic exercises set the tone for our future work on creating our own through-composed ostinati for the ensemble composition.

Pitch

When working with a large ensemble of any kind, it is useful to develop universal methods of talking about pitched material, especially when the ensemble involves a variety of transposing instruments, various clefs, etc., as a concert band does. As someone who was also eager to incorporate theoretical knowledge into my middle school band classes, I opted to teach our diatonic material with scale degrees rather than note names. Even though each transposing family of instruments (C, B♭, E♭, and F, in this case) would be asked to verify their note names for their own knowledge and understanding, we were able to improvise as well as build melodies, harmonies, and countermelodies as a collective unit by speaking in scale degrees.

Scale degree fluency became a regular component of our daily classroom activities. One activity we used as a tuning warm-up involved splitting the band into three or four groups and asking each group to play the same scale in ascending and descending order (not repeating the octave), where each pitch would be played as a long tone before moving on to the next. Students would be told their group could enter on scale degree 1 as another group played another odd-numbered scale degree, and then each following group could begin on scale degree 1 in the same way. The resulting pattern would be consecutive thirds, building triads and seventh chords. Later, this warm-up became a catalyst for teaching the students how to build diatonic triads.

Students learned that to build any diatonic triad, they could play any scale degree, skip the next, play the following scale degree, skip again, and play the final scale degree. For example, the diatonic triad beginning on scale degree 1 would result in playing scale degrees 1, 3, and 5. This "play-skip-play-skip-play" approach also allowed for fluency of performing diatonic harmonies in any scale without confusion of the function of the same pitch in different scales (such as B♭ in a B♭-major scale

6 Sight Reading Factory, accessed August 14, 2022, https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/.

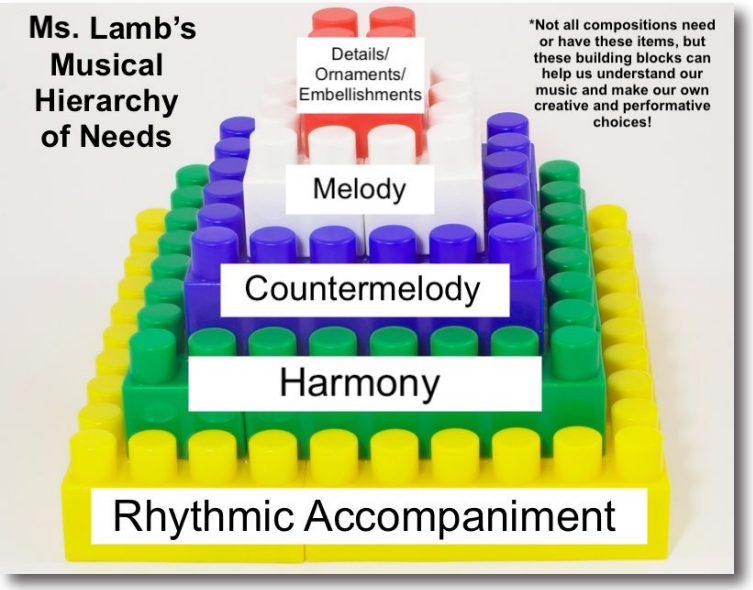
7 Groove Pizza, accessed August 14, 2022, https://apps.musedlab.org/groovepizza/?museid=LhPu19bTo&.

versus in an E♭-major scale), and it relieved any reason to speak note names to the ensemble, which avoided complications with transposing instruments.

One final pitch activity involved a student leading the ensemble with an improvised order of scale degrees that they would show to the ensemble by holding up the number of fingers that matched the scale degree. While this initially began as a quick way to get students directing the ensemble, we were able to have conversations about how the pitches could connect to each other to make a melody, even if the students could choose any order of scale degrees they wanted. All three of these activities naturally connected to our compositional process exploring the other pitch-based building blocks of melody, countermelody, and harmony.

Orchestration and Form

Most of our class discussions around orchestration and form were based on the other repertoire we were working on in class. One of the goals I wanted for each student was to go beyond learning the notes on the page and instead become aware of how their individual part fit into the entire piece. To do so, we began talking about the music in terms of its melodies, countermelodies, and harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. From these discussions came the use of what I called "Ms. Lamb's Musical Hierarchy of Needs," shown in Example 1.

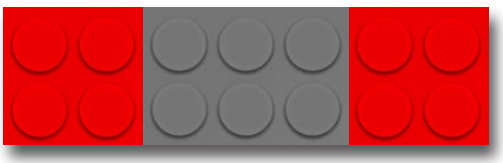


Example 1.

Ms. Lamb's Musical Hierarchy of Needs.

The intention of Example 1 was to create clarity of vertical elements in the music that could be happening at the same time. This directly influenced our expressive performance choices of balance and phrasing as well as gave students an opportunity to explore how various instruments could be paired together through the examples of music we were already playing. In this way, students were analyzing the music in real time throughout our rehearsals, which would later serve as insight into their own performance of that work and our composition project.

It was important for me to include LEGO building blocks in the above visual, because we also used LEGOs as an analogy for discussing form, only on the horizontal plane instead of vertical. For example, in a ternary form piece, we could demonstrate it visually by color and number of connectors on the LEGO, as shown in Example 2.



Example 2.
A Model of Ternary Form using Legos

The students began to independently recognize patterns within their music, such as when they repeated a melody or when the music contrasted with what we had performed so far. Through these approaches to orchestration and form, students learned about how they could organize their own compositional material both vertically and horizontally.

Class Climate/Democratic Approaches in Full Ensemble Setting

The intention with this curriculum was not only to allow students to explore their creative potential in writing and designing each building block of the composition, but there was an attempt to make it as limitless as possible while still keeping the final composition at an appropriate difficulty level. This work began with the aforementioned, shorter-term activities leading up to the main composition project. As we built our background skills and knowledge, students knew they were valued and their ideas would be heard without judgment. Throughout these activities, students had experience working individually, in small groups, and as a full ensemble. There was a mutual understanding that all collaborations, feedback, and critiques would come from a place of compassion and respect. Students also knew that they were

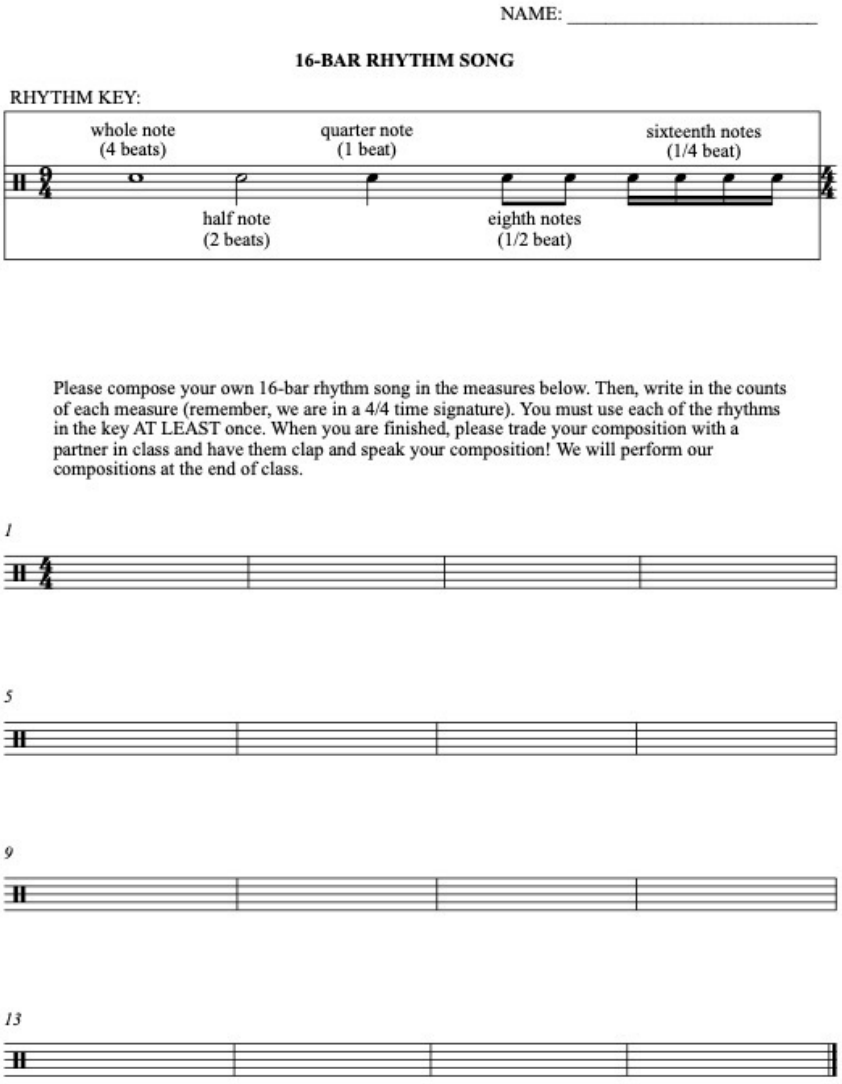
welcome to offer ideas on how we interpreted our music in class, and my job was to serve as a guide in their creative, democratic process. All these contributions to our class climate were essential in completing the building blocks curriculum and made it a rewarding experience for all.

PART 3: Building our Ensemble Composition, One Block at a Time

Rhythm Building Block

We began our compositional process for the large ensemble work with our rhythm building block, parallel to the foundation shown in Example 1. Since my students were at a more rudimentary ability level, this element served as both an introduction to writing a through-composed idea without pitch as well as a source for different rhythmic ostinato patterns that we could implement with our harmonic material later in the compositional process. Students were encouraged to begin with one to two motivic phrases that they could expand into the complete composition. Students were also tasked with a few requirements in their rhythm compositions, such as including at least one use of a whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth note in 16 measures of music. An example of our rhythm workshopping can be seen in Example 3.

This was also the first opportunity in the ensemble composition project for students to share their individual creative work with another student in class and receive feedback. After all students finished their own 16-bar rhythm compositions, they exchanged compositions with a partner in class, who then had to perform their work. Not only did this begin to alleviate any anxieties around sharing one's own creative ideas, but this also helped mitigate issues of writing something beyond the ability level of our class because the students were directly involved with workshopping their composed materials. In the first iteration of performance, students would clap and speak the rhythm compositions. But in the second iteration, they performed them on a single pitch on their instruments. By offering this second run-through of the rhythm compositions on the students' instruments, they were able to workshop any concerns regarding articulating shorter rhythms for extended periods of time (for example, if a student wrote constant sixteenth notes for multiple measures at a time). Students also had a chance to hear their music performed by their peers with their instruments, which again seemed to offer legitimacy to their writing skills. At the end of the partner activity, students selected their favorite measure from their own compositions that could work as the rhythmic ostinato for our harmonic building block.



Example 3.
Rhythm Building Block Sample Activity

Once their rhythm compositions were complete, the small group work began. Students offered their selected ostinato measure to a group of five to six peers. Each student would teach their ostinato pattern to the group, and then the group would collectively repeat the pattern on their own instruments for about eight measures. The group would then discuss the patterns and vote on their preferred ostinato option after hearing everyone's contributions. Again, it was crucial to establish a positive classroom environment prior to this curriculum in order for our process to be successful. Students knew from the beginning of this curriculum that they would have to vote on their favorite choices from their small group work for each of the building blocks, but it was never a popularity contest. Collaboration, respect, and value of each person's creative work was prioritized.

A similar workshopping and voting process took place with the entire ensemble. Small groups would collectively share their chosen ostinato pattern, the ensemble would play and repeat the pattern for about eight measures, and then we would discuss it. The discussion component to this curriculum after each new presentation was also critical because I wanted the students to analyze the music and ask questions as it was being created: "What stood out about this particular option?" "Would this choice offer any curious possibilities with other building blocks as we get further along in the compositional process?" As a result of this group analysis, for example, my 8th grade band selected an ostinato pattern with syncopated rhythms, so the harmonic accompaniment created a welcome break from the downbeat-driven melodies and countermelodies they later wrote.

Harmony Building Block

Because of our work with building triads using the aforementioned "play-skip-play-skip-play" method, all ensembles went into the composition project knowing how to create diatonic triads in any key. In the case of testing the success of this curriculum in its pilot stage and meeting the abilities of my students, our compositions for all three ensembles were in the tried-and-true band key of B♭ major. The first part of our harmony building block included developing a "chord bank" of all diatonic triad possibilities as well as a general overview of common harmonic progressions. I wanted students to feel as free to explore their own harmonic patterns as possible. However, we did use our warmups and other repertoire to demonstrate the importance and function of certain triads, particularly I, IV, and V.

Since this composition is built with looped patterns, similarly to working in a DAW, students were asked to create a repeatable harmonic progression in the key of B♭ major that included between four and eight chords in the progression. Because our

school had the technological resources for each student to use a Chromebook in our class, students were able to work in the cloud-based notation software, Noteflight, to input their harmonic progressions and listen back via MIDI as they were constructed.[8] However, students were also asked to write their harmonic progressions out in scale degrees so the chords could be played by their peers, regardless of instrument.

Once students created their individual harmonic progressions, they moved back into small groups and offered their work to everyone for discussion and voting.[9] At this stage, the students interacted with each other's work in two different ways. They were first able to listen to the MIDI playback to get a general idea of the progression. Then, students were asked to play through the harmonic progressions with their groups by playing one horizontal line of scale degrees through the progression. For example, if an individual's harmonic progression was vi-ii-V-I, students would determine a horizontal path that aligns with the vertical harmonies through the scale degrees, such as 1-2-2-3, 3-4-5-5, or 6-6-7-1. This approach also paid dividends with students' theoretical knowledge of the construction of each chord as well as served as an introduction to voice leading.

Finally, the chosen harmonic progression from each small group would be brought to the complete ensemble for the same process of listening, performing, discussing, and voting. While some of the harmonic patterns were unconventional in their function (as shown below), I wanted to respect the students' choices and value their creativity without requiring it to follow any particular guidelines. The three harmonic loop patterns for each ensemble are listed below:

- 6th Grade Band: I - ii - IV - V
- 7th Grade Band: I - IV - V - vi - vi (re-voiced) - IV - ii - I
- 8th Grade Band: I - iii - V - V (re-voiced) - ii - IV - vi - vi (re-voiced)

Melody and Countermelody Building Blocks

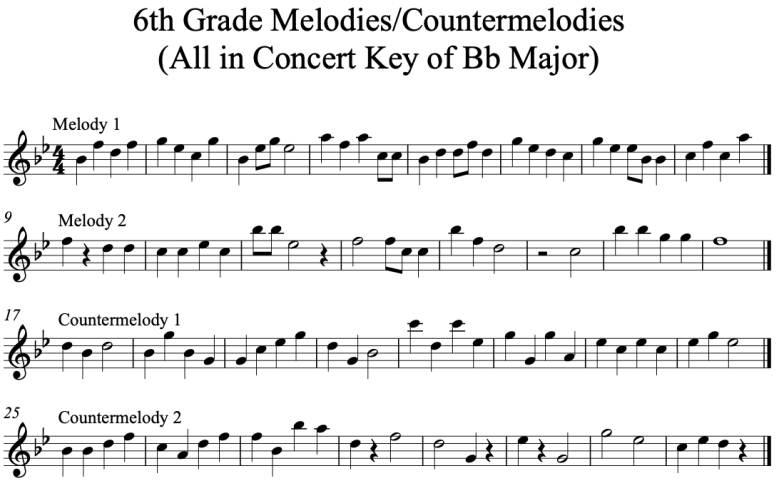
Now that we had our harmonic progression and ostinato rhythm in place, we combined those two blocks together to serve as the foundation for our melodies and countermelodies. Students individually returned to their notation software and

8 I opted to use Noteflight because our students only had access to Chromebooks as their computer, so we needed to find a cloud-based software rather than an app-based one. However, one can use any other notation software available for your students. Finding a notation software that will allow exported files as .xml will also save time later as the final score comes together.

9 I also found it helpful to vary the small group personnel so students were able to interact with most of their peers and their individual, creative ideas.

constructed one melody that fit the length of the harmonic accompaniment. Because of the students' understanding of how each harmony was constructed, that knowledge directly influenced how their melodies were created. After the individual work was done, students once again shared their melodies in small groups to test, discuss, and vote. In this case, however, I asked small groups to choose their two favorite melodies rather than just one.

The full ensemble setting was where a majority of the melody and countermelody work occurred. Since we knew we wanted to create two layers, the performance and discussion quickly turned to a deeper analysis of how one melodic idea may be more of a supporting role, may highlight particular harmonies, or simply may be more interesting as a melody than countermelody. Combinations of melodies were exhausted, and then students voted on their two favorite melodies and two favorite countermelodies. Despite our introductory work discussing characteristics of a good melody, the student creations were certainly unconventional in their construction, with many of them having incomplete leaps, odd places for rests, and some non-chord tones. While the students all had creative freedom to write anything they deemed a "melody," my work in this stage of the curriculum proves that in future iterations of this unit, we will spend more time analyzing examples of idiomatic melodies in hopes of creating something with more standard melodic patterns and characteristics. Examples of the melodies and countermelodies from the sixth grade band are shown in Example 4.



Example 4.
Sixth Grade Band's Selected Melodies and Countermelodies

Form and Orchestration Building Blocks

For the sake of time, students defined their orchestrations only by instrument families, specifically woodwinds, brass, and percussion. While this is a rudimentary approach to orchestration, it was the most straightforward approach given the time constraints. Students were given a worksheet to lead them through creating their own orchestrations and form for all of our building blocks up to this point. I arranged the orchestration choices in such a way that everyone could have an opportunity to play the melody, countermelodies, or harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. This became a direct application of our work using "Ms. Lamb's Musical Hierarchy of Needs," where students had to consider how their individual performance would impact the entire ensemble, so teamwork was necessary to keep all levels of our balance in place.

After creating their own orchestrations, students organized those into a combined form. They were also asked to consider other formal structures, such as intros/outros, repeated sections, points of unison, and changes in density and texture. An example of our form and orchestration worksheet appears in Example 5. The small group work for these building blocks was all based on analysis of each individual's form and orchestration choices. How many orchestration building blocks did they use in their form? How were they organized? Did they include other form and orchestration considerations?

The performance of these last two building blocks really occurred in the large ensemble step, similarly to the melody and countermelody. Small groups presented their selection, we would perform the form and orchestration in their entirety, and students would get a chance to discuss and offer additional ideas, such as how to end the music. At this point in the creative process, students were openly offering "what if" ideas to the entire ensemble, since they knew these were the final building blocks in our project. Even as we moved into the workshopping phase of rehearsals with a newly-formed composition, students felt welcome to ask questions and contribute new observations about and suggestions for the music. The result was a composition that we continued to adjust, workshop, rehearse, and prepare for our community concert.

NAME: _____

FORM/ORCHESTRATION FOR BAND COMPOSITION

Fill in the blanks for the tables below to create your own orchestrations for the melodies (for example: who will play melody 1? Who will play harmony? Will countermelody 1 or 2 accompany the first melody?

WOODWINDS (A1)	Melody 1		
BRASS (A2)		Melody 1	
PERCUSSION (A3)			Melody 1

WOODWINDS (B1)			Melody 2
BRASS (B2)		Melody 2	
PERCUSSION (B3)	Melody 2		

Now that you have your orchestrations, **combine them in any order below to build your form**! Use the structures of our other band pieces that we played as references for how to create your form with the building blocks above. Use the letter-number identifiers in parenthesis (A1, A2, B3, etc.) to write your form.

Example: A1, B2, B3, A3, A2, B1, A1

Other items to consider: do you want an introduction (if so, what would that be?); do you want all instruments to play all the time, or do you want to build the orchestration (for example: start with harmony only, then add countermelody, then melody for a total of three repeats on one section). Do you want repeats? Do you ever want everybody playing in unison (for example: should there be a point where everyone plays the melody at the same time?) How will you end the piece? Write these notes down below or on the back of the page:

Minimum 4 building blocks for form, maximum 8.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Example 5.
Sample Worksheet for Form and Orchestration Building Blocks

Reflecting on the Individual, to Small Group, to Large Ensemble Creative Process

This composition project succeeded because of its structure, a structure that allowed all students to demonstrate their creativity and respectfully collaborate with each other. Every student had an opportunity along the way to express their creative decisions to a small group of their peers, and each student's work was listened to and discussed in small groups and with the full ensemble. When the choices were brought

to the full ensemble for consideration, another discussion would take place after each performance through the material, and adequate rehearsal time was allowed to ensure each students' ideas were given every opportunity to be included in the final product before any voting occurred.

Students were given the freedom to create anything they wanted. However, there was a mutual understanding that what they created individually needed to be playable by our ensemble, and they could "check their work" by playing it on their own instrument and in small groups. This allowed for some of the compositions to break the confines of standard ranges, etc. of ability-appropriate pedagogical repertoire for these students. But I also wanted the students to take pride in their work, and their commitment to this project directly influenced how they practiced and prepared their materials in order to be successful at the final performance. There was absolutely never a "right" or "wrong" compositional choice throughout this project, and the final composition was not "Melody by ___. Harmony by ___." Instead, the entire class was featured as one cohesive composition collective.

Preparing the Final Score

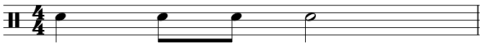
Because of the traditional and non-traditional notations we used to write this music, the final score was only two pages. The first page included our key signature, time signature, harmony (written in scale degrees), rhythmic ostinato, and form. The second page included all four melodies and countermelodies, at this point written in each student's correct transposition for their instrument (see Example 4 for complete example of page two of the score). The combination of traditional and non-traditional notation practices allowed students to be able to compose, workshop, critique, and develop their own group work in an accessible and efficient manner. They also always had access to the score, so they always had a complete idea of what they were playing. The sixth grade band's first page to their final score is shown in Example 6.

6th Grade Band Original Composition (2018)

KEY SIGNATURE: Concert Bb Major

TIME SIGNATURE: 4/4

RHYTHM FOR HARMONIC ACCOMPANIMENT:



HARMONY:

	I	ii	IV	V
S1	3	2	1	2
S2	1	4	4	5
S3	5	6	6	5
S4	1	2	1	7

FORM:

WW	HAR	CM 2	CM 2	MEL 2	MEL 1	CM 1
BRASS	CM 1	HAR	MEL 2	CM 2	HAR	MEL 1
PERC	MEL 2	MEL 1	HAR	HAR	CM 2	HAR

"STUDIO FADE"

Example 6.
Sixth Grade Band's First Page to Their Final Score

Students were assigned either S1, S2, S3, or S4 during our rehearsals in order to perform one line of scale degrees from their vertical harmonies. The form block then told the students which order they needed to play their melodies, countermelodies, and harmonies. In this case, the sixth grade band collectively decided to begin the piece without an introduction, but they opted for a "studio fade" on the last section of our form, where the entire ensemble faded to silence at the end.

PART 4: Meeting the Needs and Abilities of Your Ensemble Through This Composition Curriculum

These specific examples of the curriculum's process and final product are based on the abilities and pedagogical needs of my students when this project was piloted in 2018. However, I truly believe this composition model is flexible enough in its structure to work for any age, ability, and style of large ensemble, from elementary band, to high school choir, to university orchestra. Each building block can also be structured as rudimentary or as advanced as you want, depending on what is pedagogically necessary for your students. Below are some additional suggestions for each building block to cater this curriculum to your ensemble. Hopefully these additional hypothetical questions conjure ideas for how this curriculum could meet the needs of your students.

Rhythm

Would your ensemble benefit from another short-term rhythm composition project to build on the positive class climate before diving into the small group/large ensemble voting process? Could the rhythm building block include more advanced material, such as triplets, accent patterns, and syncopations? How many different ostinato patterns might your ensemble want to use for their harmonic material? Perhaps there could be one rhythmic pattern for each section of the form. What if the students created a different rhythmic pattern for each family of instruments that plays the harmony? In the case of my seventh-grade band who piloted this curriculum, I had a particularly advanced percussion section. The percussionists decided not only to write their own parts for the percussion section (separating snare drum, bass drum, and keyboard orchestration on their own), but they also wrote their own eight-measure rhythm pattern for their "Harmony" orchestration in order to add variety to the large ensemble's ostinato.

Another component to the rhythm building block could include exploring changes in time signature. Could meters change for each part of the form? Could we assign one group of melodies and countermelodies to be in a triple-based meter and the other set in a duple-based meter? What if students composed the entire piece in a complex meter, such as 5/8 or 7/8?

Pitch

Could your students benefit from including key changes within the form, such as writing different sections in parallel major and minor key signatures, for example?

Are they studying seventh chords and other advanced harmonies or modes that could be included as they build their harmonic progressions? To what extent do you want students to consider voice leading? What are the elements of a melody that you want your students to include in their creative process? Can the students use pitch material as both color and function? How could the pitch material be influenced by the addition of dynamics and articulation?

Form and Orchestration

The next time I implement this curriculum, I plan to dedicate more time to developing the form and orchestration. In the case of form, consider what other examples have students performed in their ensemble repertoire. What if students created their own form based on popular music styles that included verses, choruses, and a bridge? How could this curriculum develop if we started the project as a theme-and-variations form, where each small group contributed one of the variations to the ensemble-selected theme?

One way to play with orchestration is for our ensemble to survey all our other repertoire being prepared for the same concert and look for patterns with how the instruments are organized. What common combinations could be implemented in our own writing? In the case of writing for a concert band, what if the orchestration options were by common chamber ensembles instead, such as woodwind trio, brass quartet, reed quintet, percussion ensemble, etc.? Is there space in the form for a solo, and if so, is the solo something new that differs from the other pitched material we have heard thus far? Could the orchestration be organized by range instead of by instrument family?

While this may seem like an endless series of questions about how to cater the building blocks to your ensemble, my sincere hope is that this group composition project serves the students and their creative and pedagogical needs. Even though this curriculum may contain the same set of considerations, each composition product will be unique in style and reflective of your students.

Conclusion

Each student comes to the classroom with a diverse background of experiences and perspectives. This building blocks composition curriculum was developed to empower students and cultivate spaces for them to engage holistically with the creative process. This project also directly influenced how students engaged in our rehearsals for other repertoire beyond our group composition because they were able to analyze from

both the composer and performer perspectives. Students also not only learned about the theory behind their music, but this curriculum allowed direct application of their theoretical knowledge. Most importantly, my students felt heard, valued, and proud of their collaborative composition. Their performance for the community was well-received, and their excitement for music increased.

Any apprehension around calling themselves composers was in the past. Composition was redefined in the students' eyes as any musical creative output, and many of them continued to write music beyond this project. In fact, students began sharing additional composition projects with me that they were working on outside of our class, including music for DAWs, music for their rock bands, singer-songwriter songs, solos on their own instruments, and chamber pieces for their friends.

I hope this curriculum enables students to explore new possibilities through the creative process at the individual, small group, and full ensemble levels. For more information about this curriculum and how to implement it with your large ensemble, please visit my website at www.alexislamb.com.

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A Critical Review of Current Aural Skills Materials and Pedagogical Practices

BY TIMOTHY CHENETTE, STACEY DAVIS, AND STANLEY V. KLEPPINGER

Editors' Note: *Many books and software programs are discussed in the following article, and these materials are listed in four examples in the article: Example 2 shows books focused on listening skills alone along with those that integrate listening and sight singing; the four books presented in Example 4 include aural skills along with other topics; Example 5 covers anthologies of melodies and rhythms; and Example 7 lists aural skills software. A set of discussions among the authors that grew out of their collaboration on this article is available on YouTube. In these videos, titled "Five Conversations about Aural Skills: Present and Future," the authors talk with one another and with Melissa Hoag, the reviews editor of* JMTP*, about aural skills pedagogy as it currently stands and offer ideas about its future.*

The past 25 years have seen a surge of scholarship on aural skills pedagogy. Among other trends, this scholarship has brought together cognitive science and pedagogy; advocated for activities such as improvisation, Eurythmics, and error detection; introduced new teaching techniques; urged new goals and approaches; and asked us to consider how aural skills teaching and ideologies impact diversity, equity, and inclusion.

And yet, evidence suggests that mainstream aural skills teaching has not changed all that much in this time. In 1997, David Butler complained that the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*'s articles on aural training "could have been written a century ago" because of their focus on the tasks of sight singing and dictation (39). Two surveys published in 2020 indicated that these still dominate: Chenette et al. found that the most common activities in aural skills classes were still sight singing and melodic dictation, while Beavers and Davis found that college faculty estimated that they spend more than 73% of their aural skills class time on singing, dictation, and transcription (41). In aural skills textbook reviews in the late twentieth century, Gary Karpinski criticized the use of acontextual interval identification tasks (1989, 129 and 1993, 243); many current textbooks still include such drills.

Activity	Percentage of instructors
Sight singing	99%
Melodic dictation	97%
Transcription	94%
Harmonic dictation	92%
Bass dictation	76%

Example 1.
The five most common assessed activities reported by respondents in Chenette et al. 2020.

One way for new findings, suggestions, and directions in aural skills pedagogy to make their way into mainstream classrooms is through textbooks. After all, there is a difference between developing the foundation of a new pedagogical technique in a research article, and developing it into a set of materials designed to support a multi-semester course of study. In addition, aural skills classes are taught by a wide range of instructors: music theorists and applied teachers, tenure-stream and contingent instructors, high-school teachers and graduate students and faculty, experienced and inexperienced. Since many, perhaps most, of these do not have the time or motivation to read the latest aural skills pedagogy research, they rely on some combination of their experience and a textbook.

This article synthesizes a review of current aural skills teaching materials with a critical survey of the field. As in a traditional review, our focus will be on current textbooks, apps, and websites. But as we consider the strengths and weaknesses of each of these, we will evaluate current practices in aural skills pedagogy. These practices, many of which have not changed much in a generation (or longer), certainly have benefits for students. Yet new goals, activities, and techniques are also worth exploring. We will note where these have been incorporated into current materials, and—in light of scholarship that has not yet been effectively implemented—we will identify particularly important or promising directions for future editions or new materials.

Our review proceeds in two parts. First, we address the current state of aural skills materials in three categories: listening-focused textbooks, sight-reading anthologies, and digital platforms. We th en consider future directions and possibilities for aural skills, considering both the repertoire we teach and the activities we use to do so.

Listening/Integrated Textbooks

The thread that ties together this category of texts is a focus on listening. Benward and Kolosick write: "Intelligent listening is the most important thing a musician does" (2010,x).

These texts (Example 2) fall into two categories: "listening" and "integrated." The "listening" texts focus on the quintessential listening-based skill of dictation (melodic, harmonic, and/or rhythmic), often accompanied by interval or chord identification drills. Such identification drills are typically framed as necessary or helpful preparation for dictation, despite longstanding questions about whether this is actually true.[1] Many of these books have relatively little instructional text. Several, however, focus on listening skills more broadly, such as arpeggiations, keyboard progressions, and sing-and-play exercises (Karpinski), or "contextual listening" for many different aspects of music (Phillips/Murphy/Clendinning/Marvin, hereafter Phillips/Murphy).[2] These are commonly used alongside a sight-singing anthology. "Integrated" texts, on the other hand, provide materials to support study of both listening skills and sight-singing skills. Compared to sight-singing anthologies (reviewed below), they tend to have more instructional text and fewer melodies.

Building listening skills requires (1) application of concepts/knowledge, implying a necessary connection to music theory, and (2) development of habits/strategies, which would ideally draw on findings in cognitive science. Of these two foundations, cognitive science is most often neglected, but is explicitly evoked in two texts. Jones/Shaftel/Chattah (hereafter Jones/Shaftel) emphasizes "statistical learning" of patterns, "segmentation into meaningful groups" (chunking), using harmonic context to activate holistic knowledge structures, and "*targeted or deliberate practice*" with SmartMusic (xvi–xvii). Karpinski states, "The structure and content of this book have been shaped in large part by recent research in music cognition and perception," and lists as examples "knowledge about pulse perception," "studies on tonic inference," "research on short-term musical memory," "concepts of holistic perception," and "discoveries about perceptual streaming" (xiii-xiv).

1 For example, Telesco asks, "Do students need to be proficient at identifying random intervals before they can move on to something else? No, I don't believe so. Do they need to be proficient at hearing scale degrees and relationships within the context of a key? Most certainly" (1991, 179). Karpinski asks, "Should we train listeners to calculate lists of intervals between successive pitches? [. . .] Such inventories would be true and eminently knowable, but would they be worthwhile and meaningful?" (2000, 53).

2 Several texts are not integrated but are intended to be used alongside co-branded anthologies, including notably Karpinski and Phillips/Murphy.

Author(s)	Title	Ed.	Year	Publisher	Price	Etext	Type	Additional Materials
Evan Jones and Matthew Shaftel, with Juan Chattah	*Aural Skills in Context: A Comprehensive Approach to Sight Singing, Ear Training, Harmony, and Improvisation*	—	2014	Oxford	145	—	Integrated	auralskillsincontext.com provides audio for contextual listening; SmartMusic integration.
Justin Merritt and David Castro	*Comprehensive Aural Skills: A Flexible Approach to Rhythm, Melody, and Harmony*	2nd	2020	Routledge	145	130.5	Integrated	www.routledge.com/cw/merritt hosts audio for dictations, answer keys, and sight-singing hearing sheets.
Kent D. Cleland and Mary Dobrea-Grindah	*Developing Musicianship through Aural Skills: A Holistic Approach to Sight Singing and Ear Training*	3rd	2021	Routledge	120	108	Integrated	www.routledge.com/cw/cleland provides practice quizzes, exercises, and audio for dictations.
Daniel McCarthy and Ralph Turek	*Singing and Dictation* for Today's Musician	—	2020	Routledge	89.95	80.95	Integrated	www.routledge.com/cw/mccarthy hosts answer keys.
Paul Murphy, Joel Phillips, Elizabeth West Marvin, and Jane Piper Clendinning	*The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills: Ear Training*	4th	2021	Norton	101.3	50	Listening	Norton InQuizitive integrates with LMS; Playlists give audio for "Try It" and Contextual Listening excerpts.
Gary S. Karpinski	*Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing*	2nd	2017	Norton	106.3	—	Listening	Norton InQuizitive integrates with LMS; Playlists give audio for dictation/ transcription excerpts.
Rudy Marcozzi	*Strategies and Patterns for Ear Training*	—	2009	Routledge	125	112.5	Listening	2 CDs: recordings of even-numbered exercises and Naxos recordings of examples
Michael Horvit, Timothy Koozin, and Robert Nelson	*Music for Ear Training*	4th	2020	Cengage	125	85	Listening	musicforeartraining.com provides audio for workbook exercises.
Benward and Kolosick	*Ear Training: A Technique for Listening*	7th	2010	McGraw Hill	114.8	—	Listening	http://www.mhhe.com/et7 provides drills, as well as audio for selected workbook exercises.

Example 2.
Listening/Integrated textbooks.

Almost all of these texts, on the other hand, are designed to mirror the order and content of standard music theory curricula—reflecting the fact that music theory and aural skills instruction is often either integrated or coordinated.[3] These curricula typically begin with a semester of "fundamentals," followed by a sequence of classes that cover diatonic harmony, chromatic harmony, modulation, form, and perhaps "post-tonal" music.[4] The parallels are most obvious in textbooks that are co-branded with music theory texts: *Singing and Dictation for Today's Musician* (*Theory for Today's Musician*), and *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* (*The Musician's Guide to Music Theory*). The main outlier in terms of organization is Merritt/Castro, which is divided into three separate parts devoted to rhythm, melody, and harmony, but even here, the chapter titles within the section labeled "Part 3: Harmony" could just as easily be used in a music theory text.

A number of scholars have questioned the tight coupling of music theory and aural skills. Michael Rogers claims that "intellectual comprehension and hearing abilities develop at completely different rates—the ear, generally, lagging behind the eye and mind" (Rogers 2004, 16–17); similar statements appear in Klonoski 2000 and Lovell 2021. Timothy Chenette goes even further, arguing that aural skills classes should "move out of their current state of curricular dependency on music theory and into a new position of prominence as the foundation of all music study" (2021c, 4.10). The only textbook that explicitly urges a looser relationship between music theory and aural skills is the Karpinski, which notes that "the difference [in learning sequences between these fields] is most significant at the early stages of development" (xviii). As such, early chapters in this text avoid notation. Yet even many of Karpinski's chapters map rather neatly onto those of theory textbooks—including, for example, chapters on such core theory topics as "The Augmented Sixth Chords."[5] There may

3 Chenette et al. found that 17% of aural skills teacher survey respondents reported that they taught theory and aural skills in the same class; 14% reported that these subjects were in separate classes but covered the same material at the same time; 42% reported "some coordination" between the classes. Only the remaining 27% reported no explicit link between the classes (2020).

4 While the general organization is still apparent, this ordering is least clear in Jones/Shaftel. This text also has the most difficult-to-follow organization, in part because it is challenging to find topics using the table of contents. For example, "Compound Meter" is listed in the table of contents as the second item under the Chapter 3 heading, but does not have a specific page number listed. Unhelpfully, Chapter 3 is listed as starting on page 103, but actually starts on page 83; Compound Meter is buried as a small heading near the bottom of page 91.

5 Kleppinger asks, "Is hearing the difference between French and German augmented sixths a lifelong listening habit that we want to spotlight? Does its priority represent the amount of time and reinforcement required to become proficient at mastering and later reinforcing this skill?" (2017, 158).

be an opportunity here for a textbook author to strike out in a different, even more perceptually oriented direction, and to establish a more independent version of aural skills, though such an author will likely need to contend with market realities that favor a more integrated approach.

Most of these textbooks hew to the traditional tasks of interval/chord identification, sight singing, and dictation—tasks that have long dominated aural skills instruction. Those that stick closest to these classic activities are Benward/Kolosick, Merritt/Castro, McCarthy/Turek, and Marcozzi. These textbooks will be the most straightforward for instructors who prefer—or are required—to teach in this traditional model. Among these, instructors may want to choose a text in part based on whether they prefer to have sight singing integrated into a single text, or to use a separate (perhaps more comprehensive) anthology alongside a more dictation-focused text. Other deciding factors might relate to unique features of a given book's pedagogy: McCarthy/Turek uses a "Schenkerian/voice-leading approach" to draw melodic connections among structural tones and is closely correlated with a music theory text, Merritt/Castro incorporates a significant amount of real music by composers of diverse identities (though centered around "classical" music), and Marcozzi includes the most significant error-detection exercises.

At the same time, other texts make significant strides in new directions. Horvit/Koozin/Nelson (hereafter Horvit/Koozin) still focuses on traditional activities like identification and dictation, but alongside contextual listening and error detection. Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl notably emphasizes improvisation and includes intriguing text-based interludes on other aspects of musicianship, such as professionalism and musicality. Karpinski includes vocal chord arpeggiation, keyboard exercises such as progressions and sing-and-plays, patterns to internalize, and suggestions of familiar tunes to analyze. Karpinski also goes to the greatest lengths to incorporate insights from cognitive science, particularly evidenced by the care with which examples are planned to clearly convey tonic and meter while staying within the bounds of short-term memory. While these texts still have a significant dictation/sight-singing focus, these additional exercises may place these activities in a richer context.

Two textbooks go even further in de-emphasizing dictation. Jones/Shaftel focuses heavily on improvisation and the use of real music: acontextual identification is entirely absent, and dictation is given less space than examples of "real music." Phillips/Murphy centers entirely around contextual listening of real music, with more abstract ("Try It") exercises that are framed as preparation to sensitize students to salient aspects of the music. For instructors who wish to focus on holistic listening to

Author(s)	Title	Melvodic Dictation	Harmonic Dictation	Rhythmic Dictation	Interval ID	Triad ID	Contextual Listening	Form	Post-Tonal	Keyboard/Sing-and-Play	Error Detection	Improvisation	Notes
Phillips/Murphy/ Marvin/Clendinning	*The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills: Ear Training*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑				Improvisation is in Sight Singing volume.
Benward/Kolosick	*Ear Training: A Technique for Listening*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑			☑		
McCarthy/Turek	*Singing and Dictation for Today's Musician*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑			Sing and plays in select chapters.
Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl	*Developing Musicianship Through Aural Skills: A Holistic Approach to Sight Singing and Ear Training*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑			☑			☑	
Marcozzi	*Strategies and Patterns for Ear Training*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑				☑		
Jones/Shaftel/Chattah	*Aural Skills in Context: A Comprehensive Approach to Sight Singing, Ear Training, Harmony, and Improvisation*	☑	☑		☑		☑	☑		☑		☑	All examples are presented with harmonic context.
Karpinski	*Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing*	☑	☑				☑		☑	☑			First ten chapters use pulse graphs and solfège (replacing notation)
Horvit/Koozin/Nelson	*Music for Ear Training*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑						
Merritt/Castro	*Comprehensive Aural Skills: A Flexible Approach to Rhythm, Melody, and Harmony*	☑	☑	☑	☑								

Example 3.
Listening/Integrated textbook exercise types.

real music, Phillips/Murphy is the more methodical and scaffolded of these two, and hews closely to the order and goals of a music theory curriculum. While Jones/Shaftel is less clearly organized, it also provides the most robust improvisational activities and is more clearly grounded in music-making.

Given the focus on listening, it is not surprising that these textbooks all come with access to online audio or, in one case, a CD. Of course, while the move to online/streaming means students and instructors can now access audio anywhere with an internet connection, this reliance on web-based materials comes with downsides. Fully half of these textbooks have online materials that were inaccessible at the time of this review.[6] (Instructors frustrated by missing recordings may appreciate the public-domain excerpts for sight singing or dictation hosted at the open-access site trainedear.net, Mount 2020.) Where these materials work, they are mostly computer-generated piano sound files for interval/chord identification or dictation, either for students to use in outside-of-class practice, or for instructors who wish to use sound files instead of live performance in class. A few texts helpfully include a decent number of recordings in addition to computer-generated files (particularly Merritt/Castro, Karpinski, Phillips/Murphy, and Marcozzi), though the piano and to some extent voice and strings are still over-represented.

The most robust and diverse (operational) online materials are on Norton's InQuizitive platform, which is available in two different versions for Phillips/Murphy and Karpinski. These versions, both by Brent Yorgason, share some exercises, but are rearranged and customized to fit the organizations and emphases of these two very different texts. The platform uses a responsive model: students must receive a certain score to "pass" a level, and the number of points they gain or lose for each question is based on the level of confidence they report in their answer. As such, students with low confidence or lots of wrong answers will end up answering more questions than students with high confidence and right answers. The platform also tracks which kinds of questions students are having difficulty with. InQuizitive was not originally designed for music instruction, so certain exercises can feel awkward: for example,

6 These details are kept to a footnote in hopes that the materials will be fixed and this information will no longer be necessary. Jones/Shaftel's auralskillsincontext.com did not appear to exist, and the exercises tested on a mirror site required the unsupported Flash plugin. Horvit/Koozin's musicforeartraining.com led to an empty page. Benward/Kolosick's mhhe.com/et7 required the out-of-date Shockwave plugin, which cannot load on modern devices. Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl's routledge.com/cw/Cleland stated that online materials intended to accompany the latest edition are "coming soon" in November 2021; the previous edition's materials were mostly operational at that link, but one tab required the Flash plugin.

some visual interfaces are picky, and individual questions sometimes vary widely in the amount of effort required. In addition, Norton's site only gives students a certain number of years to access online materials, which can cause problems for students who take longer to complete a curriculum. Nevertheless, the responsiveness to users' needs and LMS integration are attractive, and the fact that the platform is used by a major publisher for numerous textbooks in fields of study outside of music gives some confidence that it will not go defunct in short order.

These textbooks signal clear signs of a disconnect between aural skills pedagogy scholarship and teaching practice. In particular, Gary Karpinski made several proposals in the foundational pedagogy book *Aural Skills Acquisition* (2000) that have still not become mainstream. The first is to de-emphasize acontextual interval identification, since scale degrees are more closely tied to function, and "a preponderance of the evidence shows little connection between the ability to identify intervals acontextually and the ability to do so in a tonal context" (2000, 52). Yet as shown in Example 3, such drills are still common. Karpinski's second proposal is to give only a clef, the letter name of the key, and the bottom number of the time signature—and no aural clues—as prompts before dictations, so that students learn to find tonic, mode, and meter aurally (see Karpinski 2000, 92–98). Yet only Karpinski's own textbook and Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl do so.

Scholarship on activities beyond the traditional identification, dictation, and sight singing also has yet to be fully incorporated. For example, contrasting error detection with dictation, Davis 2010 pointed out that "error detection is not just a preliminary skill. [. . .] Instead, error detection is an end goal in and of itself," suggesting that we should be spending significantly more time on this task (60). In the intervening years, no textbooks have added error detection, and those few with such activities (Benward/Kolosick and Marcozzi) have not made them more pedagogically sound or realistic.[7] Similarly, Covington 1997 called improvisation an "imperative" for its value in synthesizing other skills—and because it is required by the National Association of Schools of Music. And yet, despite the value of improvisation in developing close listening, harmonic hearing, and more, only two listening textbooks (Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl and Jones/Shaftel) include substantial improvisational activities.

7 Davis identifies three textbooks with error-detection exercises; this review only identifies two, since Kraft 1999 is no longer generally available. Davis's suggestions include more carefully considering the role of harmonic and tonal context, contour vs. scale degree, and type of error (naturally occurring vs. planned and introduced by the instructor), as well as identifying errors in audio rather than in notation (since in rehearsals notated scores are typically considered the "correct" point of reference).

One particularly promising avenue for future textbook innovation would be to more explicitly teach the mechanisms and component skills that are foundational for aural skills. Dictation has long been criticized for its shortcomings as an instructional tool: both Klonoski 2006 and Karpinski 2000 pointed out that if we do not explicitly teach the many skills that are involved in dictation, some students will do well while others will flounder.[8] For example, while McCarthy/Turek emphasizes the importance of being able to "hear the music you are reading in your head" (xxi), the text gives no advice on how to do so. Although Karpinski emphasizes that his textbook is "not simply a collection of items for mere testing" and instead conveys "*methods* by which students—through study and practice—will be able to improve their listening, reading, and performing skills" (xiv), there is limited advice on certain fundamental skills such as finding tonic, internal auditory imagery, and how to approach memory-related tasks. Future textbooks might facilitate success for more students if they focus even more on what Chenette 2021c calls "truly aural skills" and Klonoski 2000 calls "perceptual fundamentals."

While the textbooks reviewed here claim to be about "aural skills," they are arguably narrower, with a focus specifically on the concerns and priorities of the field of music theory. As such, these materials have many of the same priorities—and the same blind spots—as the field of music theory. These include an overwhelming focus on details of melody and harmony at the expense of rhythm, timbre, and form; and a clear basis in "Western Art Music" or "classical" repertoire and skills.

Yet music theorists do not have a monopoly on close listening, and there are other textbooks that approach aural skills from other perspectives. These tend to be smaller in scope and much more explicit about their subdisciplinary orientation, so they are unlikely to replace textbooks used in multi-semester, ostensibly subdiscipline-neutral aural skills sequences. Yet these "alternative aural skills" textbooks, listed in Example 4, may be appropriate to certain schools and programs, and they suggest the kinds of skills that a less music-theory-oriented curriculum might embrace.

While extensive reviews of each "alternative" book are outside the scope of this review, they are described here in brief. Radley, focused on learning to hear chord progressions, will likely look the most familiar to music theorists and is closest to the scope of the mainstream textbooks. It includes dictation and uses moveable-

8 For Klonoski, these skills are subvocalization, meter identification, key context (identifying tonic), hearing harmonic function in different textures in the context of progressions, tonal memory/chunking, and "extractive listening" (2006). Karpinski groups these skills into four "phases"—hearing, memory, understanding, and notation—though memory and understanding include multiple skills (2000, 64–91).

Author(s)	Title	Ed.	Year	Publisher	Price	Etext	Additional Materials
Ron Gorow	*Hearing and Writing Music: Professional Training for Today's Musician*	—	2006	September Publishing	36	unknown	None
Jerry Coker, Bob Knapp, and Larry Vincent	*Hearin' the Changes: Dealing with Unknown Tunes by Ear*	—	1997	Advance Music	28.95	130.5	None
Thom Mason	*Jazz Ears: Aural Skills for the Improvising Musician*	—	2021	Hal Leonard	24.99	108	www.halleonard.com/mylibrary has audio for practice and dictation.
Roberta Radley	*The "Real Easy" Ear Training Book: A Beginning/Intermediate Guide to Hearing the Chord Changes*	—	2008	Sher Music	34	80.95	Two accompanying CDs of audio of lesson examples and dictations.
Jason Corey	*Audio Production and Critical Listening: Technical Ear Training*	2nd	2017	Routledge	55.96	50	www.routledge.com/cw/corey links to software by David H. Benson to practice skills relevant to audio processing.

Example 4.
Alternative listening textbooks.

do solfège, though there are also "listen and look" exercises and "Stump the Band" group work that would work well as in-class activities. Coker/Knapp/Vincent shares this focus but avoids dictation, instead describing different approaches to harmonic progression in jazz and giving plenty of examples from real music. Mason includes dictation alongside many other exercises as it leads readers through hearing rhythms, articulations, melodies, intervals, chords, and structures to aid improvisation. Gorow assumes that the reader is pursuing a creative career but not necessarily a formal education, so it takes a holistic perspective on everything from solfège and the sounds of different intervals to copyright advice and writing lyrics; it also avoids notation altogether for the first half of the book. Corey focuses on skills needed by audio engineers, from timbre to effects and processing, and includes specialized software for students to experiment with these parameters.

Several of these books embrace the use of instruments, something largely absent from mainstream texts. Radley, for example, explicitly tells students that it is "not cheating" to use their instrument. Instructions often urge students to listen, imitate on their instruments, and then finally notate, though at certain points the student is urged to try tasks without their instruments. Gorow agrees that "if you are an instrumentalist, it is natural to mentally 'play' your instrument while listening, fingering each interval (in an arbitrary key)" (35). Though the Coker/Knapp/Vincent does not provide a lot of exercises, nearly all of them involve playing on either one's

primary instrument or a keyboard. While some instructors incorporate instruments into their teaching, it is notable that the mainstream textbooks reviewed here do not explicitly provide exercises for instruments beyond the voice and occasionally the keyboard.[9] A thoughtful incorporation of instruments and/or instrument-based kinesthetic imagery into the classroom might give mainstream students more effective tools for visualization while inviting application outside of the classroom.

Anthologies of Melodies and Rhythms

Alongside integrated singing and ear training texts, many textbooks are devoted exclusively to singing and essentially serve as anthologies of melodies and rhythms (see Example 5). The titles of these books suggest a focus on sight singing, thus reflecting the way that skill has been paired with dictation to serve as the pillars of a conventional aural skills curriculum.

The authors of these texts propose that sight singing is essential to musicianship and suggest two main benefits of this skill. First, there is the skill itself, which Benjamin/Horvit/Koozin/Nelson (hereafter Benjamin/Horvit) describes as translating "symbol into sound with speed and precision" (xii). Second, some authors suggest that sight singing is valuable in developing internal hearing, as when Carr/Benward state that "sight singing is one of the most practical means that students have of demonstrating to their instructors the progress they are making in 'hearing' the notation they are 'seeing'" (xi). While these two purposes are often conflated, they may call for different pedagogical approaches. For example, building internal hearing may require multiple passes through a passage, though as Nancy Rogers points out, "we can truly sight sing a melody only once" (x).

Just as with dictation, we must more fully examine and articulate why sight singing is treated as the essential performance-related aural skill, which specific skills are developed and demonstrated through that activity, and how those skills are indicative of or transfer to related performance/listening skills. For instance, sight singing requires reading music notation fluently, developing good eye movement habits, assigning solfège syllables to interpret tonal context, decoding patterns of rhythmic durations within the context of a given metric structure, and simultaneously processing pitch, rhythm, tempo, and other expressive features as the melody progresses in the moment of performance. Students' fundamental vocal production

9 Even keyboard exercises are surprisingly rare in the mainstream texts, given that keyboard skills are a standard component of music curricula. They are prominent only in Jones/Shaftel, McCarthy/Turek, and Karpinski.

Author(s)	Title	Ed.	Year	Publisher	Price	Etext	Additional Materials
Thomas Benjamin, Michael Horvit, Timothy Koozin, and Robert Nelson	*Music for Sight Singing*	7th	2022	Cengage	65.99	40.99	None
Sol Berkowitz, Gabriel Frontrier, Leo Kraft, Perry Goldstein, and Edward Smaldone	*A New Approach to Sight Singing*	6th	2017	Norton	111.87	—	None
Maureen Carr, Bruce Benward, Taylor Greer, Eric McKee, and Phillip Torbert	*Sight Singing Complete*	8th	2015	McGraw Hill	c. 20.00–123.00*	—	None
Gary S. Karpinski and Richard Kram	*Anthology for Sight Singing*	2nd	2017	Norton	110.62	—	Companion online index for searching all melodies within anthology by specific characteristics or topics.
Carol Krueger	*Progressive Sight Singing*	3rd	2017	Oxford	149.99	—	Companion website with exercises, flashcards, worksheets, audio recordings, etc.
Joel Phillips, Paul Murphy, Elizabeth West Marvin, and Jane Piper Clendinning	The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills: Sight-Singing	4th	2021	Norton	101.25	—	None
Nancy Rogers and Robert Ottman	Music for Sight Singing	10th	2019	Pearson	90.66	9.99/ month, with minimum 4-month subscription	Online rhythm generator software allows students to set various parameters to produce new notated rhythmic patterns.
Anne Carothers Hall and Timothy Paul Urban	Studying Rhythm	4th	2019	Pearson	69.32	9.99/ month, with minimum 4-month subscription	None
Daniel Kazez	Rhythm Reading	2nd	1997	Norton	51.83	—	None

*Sight Singing Complete is not currently available from its publisher. This price range reflects resale values at amazon.com.

Example 5.
Anthologies of melodies and rhythms.

skills are also an important factor, whether that singing is prepared or unprepared. Although it might indeed be "practical" to use sight singing to demonstrate inner hearing, errors in a sight-sung melody often reflect vocal production weaknesses relative to pitch matching or the vocal mechanism, rather than an inability to audiate a melody and/or develop a "hearing eye." It is therefore crucial to consider the benefits and drawbacks of using assessments of sight singing as the only (or main) indicator of internal hearing abilities.

Many textbooks and instructors seem to conflate sight singing and prepared singing. Book titles tend only to reference sight singing, but their contents often include recommendations for practicing and activities that require preparation. This suggests that "sight singing" is sometimes stripped of its specific reference to singing a melody for the first time and instead used more generally to refer to all performance-related aspects of the aural skills class. It would therefore be helpful to use this term more carefully in both our textbooks and our classes as we identify specific desired pedagogical outcomes and recognize the ways in which different types of activities aid skill development.

Within this context of multiple performance-related skills, anthologies give instructors flexibility to not only incorporate melodies and rhythms into their classes in diverse ways, but also vary how student skills are assessed, depending on the intended learning objectives. For instance, prepared singing could be effective in helping students recognize and internalize characteristic pitch and rhythmic patterns ("chunks") that build a musical vocabulary. True sight reading then assesses their ability to recognize those chunks and fluently sing a new melody on the first attempt. Sight singing might also assess students' development of specific sight-reading skills, like eye movements.[10]

It is common for singing anthologies to consist entirely of collections of melodies and rhythms, without much explanatory text or instruction. Prefaces provide information about the purpose, content, and organization of the book, and some authors include general suggestions for singing and practice. Otherwise, text tends to be limited to brief comments at the beginning of chapters that introduce new skills. Examples of such texts are Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft/Goldstein/Smaldone (hereafter Berkowitz/Fontrier), Benjamin/Horvit, Krueger, and Rogers/Ottman. The Karpinski/Kram anthology is also mostly devoid of text, other than occasional questions posed before melodies to draw students' attention to certain characteristics. Explanations are instead found in Karpinski's *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing*, which coordinates with the singing anthology and contains the guidance and step-by-step instructions that should be applied to its melodies.

Other singing textbooks combine the spirit of a melody/rhythm anthology with a variety of performance activities, thus reinforcing the notion that these books are not actually intended just for sight singing (see Example 6 for a comparison of activities across textbooks). These texts also tend to contain more explanatory

10 Shaffer 2013, on "improving sight singing without sight singing," provides interesting insights about the relationship between prepared singing and sight singing.

Author(s)	Title	Preparatory exercises	Rhythmic patterns	Melodies	Duets and other ensembles	Keyboard exercises	Sing and play	Improvisation
Phillips/Murphy/Marvin/Clendinning	*The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills: Ear Training*	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Carr/Benward/Greer/McKee/Torbert	*Sight Singing Complete*	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑
Benjamin/Horvit/Koozin/Nelson	*Music for Sight Singing*	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	
Rogers/Ottman	*Music for Sight Singing*		☑	☑	☑			☑
Berkowitz/Frontrier/Kraft/Goldstein/Smaldone	*A New Approach to Sight Singing*		☑	☑	☑		☑	
Krueger	*Progressive Sight Singing*	☑	☑	☑	☑			
Karpinski/Kram	*Anthology for Sight Singing*		☑	☑	☑			
Hall/Urban	*Studying Rhythm*	☑	☑		☑			☑
Kazez	*Rhythm Reading*		☑		☑			

Example 6.
Types of activities in singing anthologies.

text. For example, the Phillips/Murphy weaves melodies for sight singing among other activities that emphasize "skills integration," which the authors describe as "the ability to imagine and perform the sounds of printed music; to recall music by singing, playing, and writing it; and to improvise and create new music in a variety of styles" (viii). Brief instructions are provided throughout the text to introduce singing, conducting, keyboard playing, improvisation, and composition activities, which either isolate individual skills or combine multiple skills in the same activity (e.g., "sing and play" and "point and play"). This text also emphasizes the importance of collaboration by providing opportunities to perform multi-part works and offering instructions for evaluating peer performances and compositions.

"Sing and play" activities are also found in Benjamin/Horvit and Berkowitz/Fontrier. Such activities invite students to sing melodies while simultaneously playing bass lines, block chords, complementary melodies, or other accompanimental parts at the piano. Chenette 2021b suggests three possible purposes for incorporating the

keyboard into aural skills: "learning the general 'sound' of the harmony paradigms (and perhaps linking this to a kinesthetic 'feel'), understanding/hearing/visualizing the relationship between melody and harmony, and requiring the student to think in independent musical 'streams.'" Berkowitz/Fontrier highlights that the "sing and play" activities in their text model a "real" musical context by having students "hear and demonstrate an understanding of coordinated rhythmic and harmonic relationships" (331). In addition, they propose that the harmonic context provided by keyboard accompaniments can improve vocal intonation.

Although keyboard-related tasks are useful in developing a variety of performance-related skills, they rely on substantial coordination between aural skills and keyboard curricula. Without such alignment, students might encounter aspects of melodic singing in aural skills prior to acquiring the necessary skills to accompany that singing at the keyboard. Although Benjamin/Horvit accommodates this by suggesting that accompaniments could be provided by the instructor or a classmate, that produces a different experience and set of benefits, since each student is not simultaneously singing and playing.

Improvisation is also featured in several anthologies, notably to a greater degree than in the listening-focused texts. For instance, the "art of improvisation" is one of the three main principles in the Carr/Benward anthology, where focus is placed on improvising both within the context of previously learned rhythmic/melodic patterns and along with provided bass lines/harmonic progressions. This type of "structured improvisation" is also included in nearly every chapter of Rogers/Ottman and in Urban/Hall's rhythm-only text. Rogers points out that, unlike sight singing, improvisation activities benefit from repetition, since the same melodic or rhythmic prompts can yield multiple effective and imaginative "solutions" (24). Improvisation is also a significant component of Phillips/Murphy, which includes a variety of activities geared toward improvisation in solo singing, ensemble singing, and keyboard playing.

While the very nature of an anthology foregrounds notation, embracing improvisation is a good start towards placing greater emphasis on purely aural skills. For instance, improvisation could more frequently be performed in response to an aural stimulus rather than always from a notated prompt. Other aural-only activities could also be incorporated into these textbooks. Krueger, for example, begins many chapters with a section titled "Building Aural/Oral Skills" that introduces terms/concepts and provides instructions for aural activities, which typically center around tapping/conducting the beat while listening or echoing/continuing examples performed by the instructor using rhythm syllables, solfège, and/or hand signs. The elements are then

shown in music notation in the subsequent "Symbolic Association" sections.

Organization of these singing anthologies parallels that of the ear-training texts, with the sequence of topics following a typical four-semester music theory curriculum. This is particularly evident in singing texts that are coordinated with a written theory and/or ear training text (Benjamin/Horvit and Phillips/Murphy), but is also true of those that have no specified companion. As mentioned in the review of ear-training textbooks, this structural approach is advantageous when written theory and aural skills curricula are aligned across separate courses or taught within the same classes. As with the listening/dictation texts, coordinating the pacing and organization of theory and aural skills can be problematic.

In general, melodies in the anthologies are categorized and sequenced according to a relatively consistent set of criteria. These include mode (major vs. minor), interval size (conjunct vs. disjunct), harmonic context of interval skips (tonic triad, dominant triad, other diatonic chords, etc.), diatonic melodies preceding chromatic and modulating melodies, and a predominance of tonal melodies with limited inclusion of modal, pentatonic, octatonic, and atonal melodies. Most texts contain a substantially greater number of major melodies than minor. In addition, most begin with stepwise major melodies, then introduce skips within the tonic triad. Only after that are minor melodies introduced, typically immediately including skips. The implicit assumption is that facility with singing in major automatically translates to minor, without needing the focus and time on scalar fundamentals. Berkowitz/Fontrier and Carr/Benward differ by including major and minor melodies together from the opening chapters. Phillips/Murphy is also distinct in that it introduces modal melodies in Part 1, rather than adopting the more typical approach of waiting until later chapters for post-tonal and atonal melodies.

Rhythm-only exercises are usually sequenced according to meter type (simple before compound), time signature (quarter and dotted-quarter note beats before other beat units), rhythmic complexity (moving from beat, to division, to subdivision), then syncopation, borrowed divisions, asymmetrical meters, mixed meters, and other more advanced characteristics. Within his rhythm-only text, Kazez provides extensive suggestions for both teaching and practice within his preface. For example, he emphasizes the concept of sound before sight (borrowed from Carl Orff and Zoltàn Kodàly) to encourage echoing activities that focus on performing rhythms prior to reading them in notation. He also provides numerous performing options, including singing on a neutral syllable, singing the alphabet, using speech cues, conducting, partner and whole-class activities, guided pitch improvisations while performing rhythms, and combinations of singing and kinesthetic activities (walking, hopping, moving hands, etc.).

Another consideration with any anthology is the origin of its rhythms and melodies. It is most common for rhythm-only exercises to be composed for that text rather than drawn from the literature. One exception is Karpinski/Kram, whose rhythm examples are all taken from previously composed pieces. But as with the pedagogically composed rhythm exercises in other texts, all of those examples are notated without pitch. While both rhythm-only books include examples from literature, Kazez is the only text that fully notates them, with pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulations, etc.

The melodies in each text are also either newly composed or drawn from the literature. Benjamin/Horvit predominantly contains melodies composed by the authors that "isolate the particular musical devices under study" and are "carefully graded and cumulative" (viii). Only 3 of the 26 units of the book (approximately 20% of its total pages) contain music from literature.[11] In contrast, Karpinski/Kram exclusively contains melodies from various repertoires. All other anthologies favor melodies from existing pieces along with a smaller number of pedagogically composed melodies that introduce new melodic characteristics. In advocating for this approach, Nancy Rogers argues that "not only is 'real music' more enjoyable and interesting to sing than dry exercises, but genuine repertoire naturally introduces a host of important musical considerations beyond pitch and rhythm (including dynamics, accents, articulations, slurs, repeat signs, and tempo markings" (x). Students should therefore be encouraged to sing all aspects of a melody, thereby creating experiences in the aural skills classroom that more closely mimic those of other music performance settings. In addition, instructors should remain mindful of the value of designing assessment rubrics that account for more than just correct pitches and rhythmic durations, in which "emphasis should be placed on both accuracy and musicality of performance" (Benjamin/Horvit, xi).

Approaching both prepared and unprepared singing as real performing experiences also reinforces the importance of how melodies are notated within these textbooks, where most are careful to include markings for tempo, dynamics, articulation, etc. Phillips/Murphy is noteworthy in that it also includes expressive markings in its preparatory exercises, etudes, and rhythm-only examples. Karpinski/Kram extends this even further by having an emphasis on the original "look" of each melody as one of their guiding principles. In order to expose students to the variety of music they will encounter in other performance settings, "all excerpts retain their original tempo marks, dynamics, articulation, phrasing, beaming (where possible), lyrics, and so

11 Although the overall number of literature examples is smaller in Benjamin/Horvit, they tend to be longer excerpts than in other books and are sometimes complete short pieces.

forth).” This also includes maintaining the original key of a melody (thereby requiring students to sometimes encounter music with extensive ledger lines), preserving the different beaming conventions that occur in instrumental and vocal music, and including grace notes, trills, and other ornaments (even if instructors recommend that students omit them when singing). As the authors summarize, “no attempt has been made to standardize” notational conventions, and “every excerpt appears as it does in its original context” (xii).

Another notational consideration is the extent to which melodies are annotated with analytical information. Of the textbooks under consideration, Berkowitz/Fontrier is the only one that frequently labels melodies with Roman numerals to indicate underlying harmonic implications. This could draw students’ attention to larger-scale characteristics that aid in chunking and sight reading (e.g., harmonic rhythm, chord arpeggiations, decorative non-harmonic tones, etc.). In addition, the authors recommend that students play those harmonies as block chords at the keyboard while singing (or at least play roots of the indicated triads to have a harmonic reference point, if keyboard skills are limited). This provides an effective introduction to the “sing and play” exercises included in this text, reinforces the author’s “conviction that the piano is essential in developing musicianship,” and provides students with opportunities to “improve musical independence while also developing good intonation and sharpening rhythmic skills” (viii). Other instructors might prefer to guide students in developing similar skills by inviting them to analyze harmonic implications themselves, rather than having them already provided in the textbook.

Authors of anthologies should also consider issues of attribution when incorporating excerpts from the literature into their texts. Within singing anthologies, it is common for folk melodies to be identified solely by country, without even song title (Rogers/Ottman, Krueger, Berkowitz/Fontrier). Other texts provide both country and title for folk songs (Karpinski/Kram, Phillips/Murphy) and most provide composer, title, and movement for pieces drawn from the literature. Karpinski/Kram provides the greatest amount of information about each melody, and their preface reflects this prioritization of attribution by including extensive comments about their choice of source scores and their approach to indicating composer, title, movement, section, measure numbers, completion/revision dates, opus/catalog numbers, and countries of origin.

Although singing anthologies tend to include less explanatory text than ear-training texts, they still often include guidance relative to practice approaches and singing strategies. For instance, Benjamin/Horvit strongly recommends that students

conduct all exercises as a means of orienting toward meter, and to eventually "go beyond mere 'time-beating' to introduce, model, and practice the more contextual aspects of conducting, as this will ensure more accurate and musical performances" (xi). Conducting can also play an important role in the sight-singing experience, since it encourages students to select an appropriate tempo and maintain a steady beat as they learn to sight read with continuity and resist the urge to stop and correct errors. Instructors and students must also consider the range and register of each melody, particularly when the included melodies are notated in a variety of clefs and keys. Some authors explicitly instruct students to transpose as necessary so that they can perform in a comfortable register, thereby emphasizing relationships between pitches in a key (reinforced with the use of a moveable solfège system) rather than the absolute pitch or key of a notated melody. Although the singing textbooks under review tend not to advocate for the use of any particular pitch labeling system, all highlight the importance of choosing a solfège/number system and using it consistently in order to develop the ability to immediately interpret the tonal context of each pitch.

Like the ear-training texts, some of the singing anthologies have companion websites. The most recent edition of Rogers/Ottman offers an online resource called the *Rhythm Generator*, which allows students to vary parameters like beat note, time signature, length, number of parts, and difficulty level in order to generate endless notated rhythmic patterns for practice and performance. Karpinski/Kram's accompanying website is searchable by various criteria (e.g., clef, range, mode, rhythmic durations, skips from certain diatonic chords, etc.), allowing instructors the flexibility to locate melodies within the anthology that might accompany a course organization that differs from the layout of the chapters within the book. Krueger's anthology has a companion website that includes additional exercises, flash cards, worksheets, audio recordings of melodies/rhythms, and solutions to certain exercises from the printed textbook.

Commercial Software

In contrast to printed materials discussed in the previous sections, the commercial aural skills software surveyed here is—for the most part—designed to supplement classroom curricula. Standing alongside these packages are largely-free online aural skills activities offered at numerous web sites such as teoria.com and musictheory.net.

The market for commercial aural skills software is more crowded with robust options than ever before. Recent surveys by Chenette et al. (2020) and Murphy and

Software	Publisher	Web Address	Pedagogical Focus
Auralia	Rising Software	www.risingsoftware.com/auralia	Aural skills only
Artusi/MacGAMUT*	Artusi	artusimusic.com	Aural skills and music theory instruction
EarMaster	EarMaster ApS	earmaster.com	Aural skills only
Picardy	Picardy Learning	picardylearning.com	Aural skills and music theory instruction
Practica Musica	Ars Nova Software	www.ars-nova.com/practica7.html	Aural skills and music theory instruction

*Artusi absorbed the content of the venerable MacGAMUT in 2022.

Example 7.
Popular commercial aural skills software.

McConville (2017) suggest that popular options include those shown in Example 7. This healthy set of choices will form the focus of the discussion below, but the internet is studded with other options: a search using the phrase "aural skills practice" brings up over 2.4 million results; offerings near the top of the list include sites like tonegym.co, thetamusic.com, tonedear.com, earbeater.com, etc.—to say nothing of the numerous instructional videos available on sites like YouTube. The mere existence of this enormous number of options testifies to the explosion of innovation in this area.[12]

The question that every instructor considering any of these packages for their students must ask is what benefit a particular package provides, and whether that benefit is worth the cost as measured in students' time, effort, and money. This survey of available products, therefore, keenly encourages readers to ask that question as they weigh these options against each other and against the option of not using any of them. By embracing one of these programs as an essential part of a larger curriculum, the instructor is declaring that *these* aural skills activities, configured and delivered in this way, will be better for students' inner-ear development than other activities outside the classroom to which they could reasonably be expected to devote their limited time and energy.

With this perspective in mind, there are two significant issues to consider:

1. What aural skills should students take away from the aural skills curriculum

12 Adjacent to all these electronic resources is *other* software with possible applications to aural skills pedagogy, such as Harmonia (which is chiefly designed for assessing part-writing, figured bass, and harmonic analysis, but can also be reverse-engineered to create dictation exercises) or SmartMusic (which can be configured to record and assess students' efforts to sing melodies, whether prepared or at sight). Notably, SmartMusic has responded to interest from music theory instructors by adding to their library a graded collection of aural skills exercises by Cynthia Gonzales.

and the aural skills course in question, and to what extent do the activities provided in this package encourage the development of those skills; and

2. In what ways does a given technological interface enhance or interfere with the development of these skills?

This section is structured around those two questions: how the activities provided by this software promote the skills we want students to have, and how the presentation of those activities as software affects their impact.

One might begin to address the first question by noting that all five of the commercial options named above reflect the kinds of aural-stimulus-based activities commonly emphasized in classrooms: identifying isolated intervals and chords, melodic and harmonic dictation, and so on. In addition, EarMaster and Auralia use internal microphones that are now ubiquitous in computers and tablets to assess performances of melodic intervals, rhythms, melodies, and the like.

The ways in which these typical aural skills activities manifest in each package vary widely, to the point where it is impossible to explore them all in the context of this omnibus review. Instead, this section will focus on one type of activity—melodic dictation. As noted above, melodic dictation is easily one of the most common activities in current aural skills curricula, so it is no surprise to find it represented across the entire spectrum of software offerings. Tracking the details of its manifestations across that spectrum allows for a broad perspective of the current aural skills software market, and its connections to the state of aural skills pedagogy, to emerge.[13]

Simply cataloging the melodic-dictation contents of the five packages of Example 7 demonstrates a variety of approaches. Artusi's "Introduction to Melodic Dictation" is organized into four levels of difficulty, each of which begins with multiple-choice, error-detection, and error-correction exercises before graduating to full-blown transcriptions.[14] Practica Musica features "Melodic pitch" and "Melodic pitch + rhythm" modules that also begin with error detection and emphasize randomly generated pitch patterns that can be constrained in various ways (length, range, diatonic vs. chromatic, etc.) to limit difficulty. EarMaster also uses randomly generated melodies of increasing length and complexity, with the option for libraries of pre-composed melodies to be added by instructors. Auralia presents 25 "levels" of melodic dictation that range from two-bar, C-major "melodies" using only B, C, and D to eight-measure minor-mode tunes

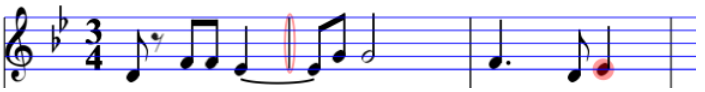
13 This is to say nothing about questioning the centrality of melodic dictation itself in aural skills pedagogy. As noted elsewhere in this review, that position is worth questioning.

14 MacGAMUT's dictation materials, which exist alongside Artusi's, follow their own progressive design.

"largely drawn from well-known repertoire" that make use of "stepwise motion and leaps, some chromaticism, and moderate rhythmic complexity." Finally, Picardy uses a library of several hundred melodies, composed specifically for dictation, organized into twelve sequential "courses" that gradually increase in difficulty.

Each package offers opportunities for instructors to customize the content and ordering of activities presented to students. With that in mind, weighing these programs against one another should include consideration of each option's "defaults." Do I want the main sources of melodic content to be randomly generated, composed for dictation, or derived from real-world music? Will I want to import my own dictation materials into the program's ecosystem for students to use, and how much work will it be to do so? Do melodic-dictation-adjacent activities (like error detection and correction) support the outcomes I want for my students, and if so, how robustly are they represented here? Teachers should be at least as familiar with the dictation materials used outside the classroom as inside—perhaps more so, since there is no opportunity to provide strategies or point out the professional relevance of these activities as students attempt them. Assigning any component from these programs without exploring it first, and then customizing it as necessary to best reflect outcomes that component is meant to encourage, is to court students' frustration and cynicism about the program's value.

To observe how crucial it is to get into the weeds of specific exercises offered by these programs, consider the capability offered by Practica Musica and EarMaster to generate melodies randomly for dictation. The potential for infinitely varied practice is attractive, perhaps, but without interventions by the instructor, a given random melody may not necessarily project a sense of traditional tonality or the specified time signature. Example 8 shows a typical melody created by Practica Musica in the "syncopation, keys, ledgers" level of melodic dictation.



Example 8.
A "syncopated" melody "in B♭" generated by Practica Musica.

Practica Musica does not provide key-establishing or meter-establishing cues before playing dictation exercises, and in fact starts the first hearing the moment a window opens for a dictation. In this sense, it follows the advice of Karpinski 2000 in placing the onus on the student for building tonal and metrical contexts. Such a

lack of context cues prior to the dictation is another factor that demands instructors' consideration—if this approach does not reflect common classroom practice, they should expect some befuddlement or consternation from students. Even so, in no scenario would we expect (or desire) a student to hear this stimulus and, absent any context, place it in either triple meter or in B♭ major—yet both assumptions are required in order to complete this dictation correctly.[15]

Both Practica Musica and EarMaster include effective options for generating melodies that are more tonally idiomatic. Practica Musica's settings include "attempt to imply harmony," "start on tonic," and, contrarily, "use unfocused randomness." EarMaster offers the choice to require melodies to end on a member of the tonic triad or on Î exclusively, and to specify the exercise's largest melodic interval size or overall ambitus. Similarly, instructors can skip the module of Practica Musica that created this non-contextualized syncopation if they find it problematic. But this vignette illustrates how essential it is for aural skills teachers to delve deeply into any activity from any software package before expecting students to attempt it, and to be willing to negotiate the distances between the perspectives represented in the software and their own.

The above focus upon melodic dictation highlights just one facet of the potential for friction between what we might want students to take away from aural skills and what aural skills software emphasizes. Others might not share the quibbles suggested in the narrative above, or may deliberately choose to look past such shortcomings, or strive to overcome them by customizing the settings and the melodies (as allowed in particular applications) experienced by their students. There are also educational contexts in which a teacher may not want to integrate one of these pieces of software as a required component for a course, but instead point a struggling student to selected material for additional practice—in that case, pedagogical or philosophical differences with the program's presuppositions matter much less. But in every situation, instructors must be aware that any aural skills software (and any implementation of it) espouses pedagogical values, however tacitly. Recognizing and responding to them must inform the decision to direct students to that software.

Aspects of each program's pedagogical perspectives can be gleaned by surveying the kinds of activities (aside from melodic dictation) it provides. Auralia offers the

15 It is worth emphasizing that this melody was generated in a dictation level that explicitly makes use of syncopation. But there is a crucial difference between the identification and experience of syncopation (i.e., phenomenal accent in weak metrical positions) and notating music in a time signature that is simply at odds with its perceived metrical structure. This distinction is both essential and elementary for students to learn, and should inform the pedagogy of rhythm and meter. See Kleppinger 2020 and Cohn 2015.

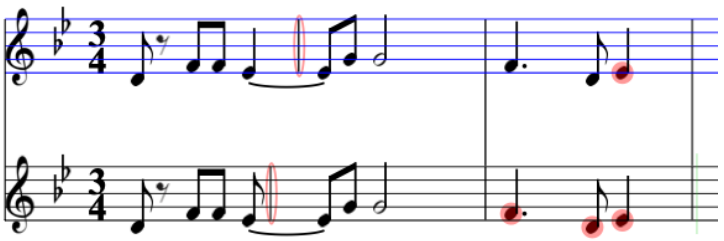
greatest variety of exercises, from two-part dictations and singing in counterpoint with a given melody to identification (in separate modules) of meter, contour, dynamics, cadences, composers (from a library of canonical works), simple forms, and many more. EarMaster is a distant second in this regard, though it stands out in its emphasis on jazz, demonstrated by its units devoted to jazz harmony and to melodic and rhythmic dictation in that idiom. EarMaster and Auralia both feature modules that ask users to sing melodies or clap rhythms after hearing them performed (without notating them). By contrast, Artusi, Picardy, and Practica Musica are more conservative in their offerings, focusing on aural identification of intervals and chords, and on rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic dictation. This difference is perhaps related to these packages' offerings of instruction and drill in traditional music theory topics alongside the aural skills content—which in turn reflects the common linkage in post-secondary music curricula between "written" music theory and aural skills courses.

Even if some packages present more kinds of exercises overall than others, variety abounds across them all. Auralia and Practica Musica include practice in identifying isolated, single tones, purportedly to develop absolute pitch. Practica Musica also features multiple-choice problems in which a melody is played and students select the notation that uses the correct *rhythm*. In EarMaster, users can practice rhythmic error detection by clicking on notation where it does not match the played rhythm. Picardy offers drills in which students aurally identify, from multiple-choice options, the (moveable-do) solfège of short, unmeasured melodic segments. Artusi's "Same or different melodies" challenges listeners, without access to notation, to decide whether successive performances of a given tune are identical or not. And so on: the myriad methods for getting students to think about and identify what they hear, across all these platforms, are inspiring when considered in their totality.

Perhaps inevitably, the interfaces for each of these products offer friction that stands between the student and the mastery of the skill being practiced and assessed—or, at the least, between the student and their demonstration of that mastery. Sometimes that resistance is negligible or easy to ignore, but every interface occasionally inflicts momentary confusion about how to provide on-screen responses. Take melodic dictation: do I click a line or space on the staff and then select a rhythmic value, or do I drag a rhythm to its position on the staff? How do I add (or remove) an augmentation dot or a tie? Can I replace a note in the middle of a measure I've otherwise completed without deleting and re-entering all the other notes after it? These questions fade somewhat as students become entrained to a particular interface, but even then, the background frustration of "what an awkward way to enter this note" can linger as a

distraction from the musical task at hand. Even navigation is sometimes mysterious in frustrating ways. In Artusi, clicking to see the software's instructions for entering roman numerals in harmonic dictation leaves your exercise unfinished with no return. Exiting a particular training mode in Practica Musica (in the Mac version, at least) requires clicking on the red button in the upper left corner that, in any other standard context, instead closes the entire application.

Example 9 illustrates the problem of interface friction in Practica Musica (though the issue is in no way unique to this package). On the top is the melody of Example 8; on the bottom is a response. The response has only a single incorrect rhythmic value, at the end of m. 1 (caused by fussing around with Practica Musica's interface to figure out how to notate a tie across a bar line). Yet the red markings indicate that Practica Musica has flagged the first bar line and the final three notes—all of which are correct according to pitch, rhythm, and notated metrical placement—as errors. This distance between a student's level of mastery of a particular exercise and the assessment of it is a pernicious problem, as described by Karpinski 2000 and Kleppinger 2017.



Example 9.
A notated response to the melody in Example 8, showing Practica Musica's assessment.

The *order* in which elements of a dictation must be entered into the graphical interface is at odds with commonly taught strategies for dictation (and, at a more fundamental level, with structural listening). Every piece of software reviewed here that asks users to click or drag the pitches they hear onto a staff on a screen requires them to do so in sequence—from the first note of the dictation to the last, or (at best) from the first note of a given measure to the last. Contrast that requirement with the valuable strategies students typically receive for such dictations in the classroom, which favor locating and notating structural tones, long rhythmic values, melodic apexes, etc., and then stitching those events together (perhaps with protonotation) by decoding faster scalar or arpeggiating passages. Working from beginning to end, one note at a time, is both inefficient and disconnected from typical musical experience. It is also, maddeningly,

a habit that generations of aural-skills teachers have worked to excise. In light of these circumstances, it is somewhat jarring to think that students might be directed, by those very instructors, to an interface that all but demands this unproductive, front-to-back thinking.

Picardy uniquely dodges many of these interface issues by asking users to complete their work on a piece of staff paper. When they're done listening, Picardy asks a series of multiple-choice prose questions about the melody's solfège content and harmonic underpinnings at particular moments, rhythm in specific measures, and so on—questions that all but demand an accurate transcription of the melody to answer correctly.

Anyone intending to consider students' work in these applications as part of a larger course grade has to deal with the issue of assessment integrity. This is perhaps a "meta-interface" issue, in that it manifests the moment students interact with aural skills software on their own time and devices—at that point, the instructor relinquishes much awareness and control of the methods by which students complete an exercise.

Placing this problem in the context of melodic dictation (once more) is illustrative. Most software does not limit the number of hearings provided or the time between them, and in no case is a user prevented from using a keyboard (or another instrument) while working. EarMaster even includes a playable keyboard on the screen during dictation work. Of course, when melodic dictation is practiced or assessed in classroom settings, hearings are limited (by necessity, if nothing else) and resources like keyboards are unavailable. This is not necessarily a bad thing, and in fact such experience with *transcription* is potentially useful, with meaningful transfer to other skills (including dictation). But transcription activities are not identical to dictation activities, and they train different (if overlapping) skill sets.[16]

To be sure, there are legitimate pedagogical frameworks in which this is not a real concern. If a struggling student is simply using the software for additional practice at the teacher's suggestion, or if the curricular philosophy surrounding melodic dictation doesn't hinge on transcription's distinctiveness as carved out above, then there is nothing to worry about. However, in the common context wherein work done using aural skills software is scored and integrated into students' overall class grades, it is simply naïve to assume that "melodic dictation" activities assigned in that software

16 Karpinski 2000 points out that "numerous or unlimited playings take dictation into the realm of *transcription*, which—although similar to dictation—does not require listeners to develop musical memory in the same ways or to the same level that dictation does" (98). Karpinski's discussion of transcription's benefits is also relevant (2000, 128–29).

are completed under the same constraints as melodic dictation in an exam setting. This essential observation holds for many other traditional kinds of dictation (harmonic, rhythmic, contrapuntal, etc.) and for chord, scale, and interval identification. It also applies to singing activities: clever students can connect headphones to a keyboard instrument and play along with themselves while singing, thus staying on pitch without any ambient sound from the keyboard.[17] If we choose to ascribe weight to the scores earned, or the number of modules completed, in such unsupervised settings, then we must acknowledge the potential for differences among the kinds of aids our students employ while completing the activities—and also for divergence from how those same kinds of activities happen in the classroom.

Perhaps the best advice to offer in this sweeping, high-altitude review of current aural skills products is this: before expecting students to work with any particular module or activity in any particular package, take the time to try several exercises yourself. While doing so, be cognizant of both the relevance of your own mental processing of the exercises to the kinds of musical thinking you want to encourage in students, and of the level of distraction from that processing offered by your engagement with the software's interface. Keep in mind, of course, that students naturally are less adept at the skills being built and tested, and are therefore more vulnerable to feelings of frustration and futility when they do not recognize the musical utility of a challenging exercise, or have to wrestle too strenuously with the technology itself in order to improve and demonstrate their abilities. Curricular goals should be measured according to the development of carefully selected, musically relevant aural skills rather than through completion of particular units or modules in any software. That software (and the ways in which it is used) may at times align helpfully with the outcomes we desire for our students, but as curricular designers we must take care that the cart not be allowed to drive the horse.

Repertoire

Aural skills pedagogy is plagued by the same legacies of Eurocentrism, white supremacy, and patriarchy found in music theory (and many other fields). Music by

17 To be clear, this is not meant to assume aural skills students have nefarious intent. We are generally optimistic about our students' desire to be successful and honorable in their musical studies (our pedagogical introspections, reflected in this very essay, testify to that posture). At the same time, it is crucial to recognize that students who struggle with aural skills, or are otherwise personally situated in such a way that shortcuts to higher scores in these courses become attractive, will sometimes seek out those shortcuts.

white, male, European composers is overrepresented in textbooks and anthologies. Skills associated with white music-making, and particularly skills that involve staff notation, are prioritized over other skills like improvisation. While this clearly will not solve all of these problems, it is laudable that many textbook authors and publishers have begun more fully considering the importance of diversity among the examples represented in their textbooks. These goals have been achieved to differing extents.

Several authors have tried in recent years to increase the amount of music by women in their texts.[18] The second edition of Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl (published 2015), for example, included no such examples, but the third edition (published 2021) now includes five examples total by four female composers. The current editions of Jones/Shaftel, Merritt/Castro, and Phillips/Murphy are all notable for including more than a handful of examples of music by women: in Phillips/Murphy, in particular, roughly 20% of the Ear Training volume's examples and 25% of the Sight Singing anthology's examples are by female composers.[19] On the other end of the spectrum, McCarthy/Turek, Marcozzi, and Horvit/Koozin include only music by male composers, as do several of the singing anthologies. While other forms of diversity are less apparent on a simple scan through an index, it is likely that white composers are overrepresented in all textbooks.

The extent to which mainstream textbooks do not reflect the diversity of the students they serve (much less North America, or the world) is a result, in part, of being situated within a tradition that is focused on a specific historical repertoire associated with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. As such, the "alternative" textbooks that deal with contemporary, mostly American music are significantly more diverse. Radley, in particular, avoids many of the blind spots of mainstream texts' repertoire choices: it is not piano-centric, it is full of real music, and on any given page with multiple examples, one is likely to find music by women and people of color. While cost is often cited as a barrier to incorporating more contemporary,

18 This review relies on the conventional, binary marker of gendered names in this discussion. The full spectra of gender identity and sexual orientation are thus not reflected. Nevertheless, examples in aural skills textbooks are typically presented simply as a few measures of music, a name, and perhaps a date, so gendered names are also the data most obvious to students.

19 In addition, roughly 5% (ear training) and 8% (sight singing) of examples in Phillips/Murphy are by composers who meet the authors' definition of "BIPoC" (Elizabeth West Marvin, private communication, 6/23/2022). Perhaps ironically, given the efforts to which the authors have gone to incorporate music by marginalized composers, very few of the examples in the ear training textbook are identified or attributed, to keep students from looking up answers online. As such, this diversity may not be apparent to students—though it will be much more obvious in the accompanying sight-singing volume (and the correlated textbook *The Musician's Guide to Music Theory*).

diverse music into mainstream texts, the Radley is less than half the cost of the least-expensive mainstream text (though it is also less comprehensive).

So-called "atonal" music has long occupied an awkward place in aural skills instruction. Karpinski's pedagogy text *Aural Skills Acquisition* omits atonal skills altogether, as do many of the listening-focused texts reviewed here. On the other hand, almost all singing anthologies contain at least a limited number of atonal melodies. But even in the textbooks that include atonal music, it can seem discontinuous with the rest of the text. For example, Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl states, "Hearing tonally is the basis for the method of this text up to the point of studying post-tonal music. Once this study begins, one must adjust his or her methodology to deal with the unique characteristics of the musical system" (xiv). Presumably, this repertoire is included because it is traditionally addressed in music theory curricula.[20] Yet while Michael Rogers justified the place of twentieth-century music in curricula by calling it "the music of our own century and times" (2004, 71), the music of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, and Debussy that often forms the core of such chapters no longer fits this description.[21]

It seems worth articulating two possible purposes for studying atonal music in aural skills. On the one hand, it is important to study recent music and musical practices. On the other, students who have experience with music that is not diatonic and functionally tonal will be able to engage with a wide variety of music, including different musics of the world. At one point, the music of 20th-century Modernist composers fit both of these goals fairly well; arguably, this is no longer the case. Both reasons offer opportunities for new forms of pedagogy that might help future textbooks and editions stand out. A close engagement with recent and current music—whether popular, experimental, electronic, or something else—has the potential to give curricula greater relevance and inspire new activities. And an exploration of different kinds of music-making, listening, and reading that are relevant to a variety of traditions around the world would both be incredibly valuable and represent a sea-change in how we teach aural skills.

20 The extent to which this connection is made clear varies. Phillips/Murphy and McCarthy/Turek are both closely modeled on music theory texts: as such, they each devote around 70 pages to covering the typical core content of music theory courses on nondiatonic music from pentatonic scales to 12-tone serialism. Karpinski and Cleland/Dobrea-Grindahl, on the other hand, are more independent from theory curricula. As such, these each give atonal music briefer treatment, but also take more care to make connections with already-developed aural skills, including suggesting that atonal melodies be understood as concatenations of short, tonal fragments.

21 The styles of these composers also dominate the two main textbooks dedicated to aural skills and atonal music, Friedmann 1990 and Edlund 1964.

Activities

The hegemony of sight singing and dictation among tasks represented in the reviewed textbooks has related ethical implications. As Rosa Abrahams has written, "foregrounding notation and music-reading as a gateway to advanced music study strengthens the implicit message many students already receive in college: that notated music is worth studying, while music from non-notated traditions is just 'entertainment'" (2021, 83–84). These tasks also require pre-existing music: you cannot dictate or sight read something unless it already exists. When foregrounded, such activities may reinforce the sense that music worth studying comes from a canon that is already written and whose boundaries have already been set. Why, then, are sight singing and dictation seemingly synonymous with "aural skills," while other tasks, such as improvisation, keyboard exercises, and even instrumental sight reading, are seemingly optional?

Michael Rogers argues that "dictation and sight reading should be thought of as opposite sides of the same coin," useful for developing what he calls "the understanding ear and the hearing mind" (2004, 100; italics removed). This suggests that neither sight reading nor dictation are goals in and of themselves; indeed, in a discussion of the purpose of sight reading, Rogers states, "If we had some way of crawling into a student's brain to observe, like a mouse in the corner, what mental processes were going on, then singing would not be necessary" (2004, 128). Yet Gates 2021 found no improvement in students' "internal auditory imagery" from a year of aural skills instruction.[22] Similarly, Karpinski argues that dictation is primarily useful because it "can help to develop some very important musical skills such as musical attention, extractive listening, short-term musical memory, musical understanding, and notation." Yet Karpinski also points to the "inadequacies" of melodic dictation as a diagnostic tool: as a complex task with many components, identifying the source of student difficulties can be extremely difficult, and it is an inefficient way to practice each of its individual components (musical memory, tonal and metric understanding, notation, etc.; 2000, 62).

22 Counterintuitively, Gates found that students exempted from the aural skills curriculum *did* show improvement over the year. Gates speculates that "students whose imagery abilities are already developed enough to permit their exemption from first-year aural skills may already be able to actively recruit their imagery in other musical endeavors, resulting in improved imagery ability over the seven months of first year, general training. Those with more limited imaging abilities are less likely to use imagery in complex musical tasks, resulting in less growth over the same time period" (2021, 4.7).

If the true purpose of aural skills classes goes beyond dictation and sight singing themselves, then we should clearly define what the outcome(s) might be. For example, is the purpose of sight reading to make students better sight-readers? If so, then why are sight-reading exercises intended for students' primary instruments virtually absent from textbooks? If, on the other hand, the true purpose is to build students' internal auditory imagery abilities, then why are suggestions from Klonoski 1998 largely ignored? If one purpose of dictation is to build focused listening skills such as a conductor might use as they lead their ensemble, why do we not have students practice their listening skills in small, interactive ensembles rather than sitting at desks listening to an engineered recording or piano? If our purpose is for students to develop into what we might think of as "native speakers" of a musical language, why do our primary activities focus on transcribing and reading but not interaction and creativity?

One cynical answer to this question is that, as Michael Rogers writes, "we are always attracted to teaching situations, in both ear training and analysis, that favor absolute right or wrong answers" (2004, 101). Of course, a student's notated dictation (or performance) often gives no clues as to the origin of its mistakes: did the student misread the clef, forget the melody, ignore scale degrees in favor of basic contour, or simply get so nervous that they could not apply the strategies they have been studying? But both dictations and performances of notated music have clear right and wrong answers, and grading keys tend to focus on these.[23]

Focusing on activities that are easy to grade may seem helpful to the instructor, but it has negative consequences—even beyond the question of whether the simple comparison of a student product and an answer key can truly do justice to the complex processes the student has completed. It tends to focus on product rather than process, making students nervous and encouraging fixed mindsets ("I'm just bad at aural skills"). It discourages difficult-to-grade ensemble work, limiting our ability to be relevant to students' collaborative music making and skills. And in the end, it may not even be as helpful to the instructor as it might at first seem. Focusing on objectively right or wrong answers forces us to adopt a strategic and often unmusical mindset, agonizing over exactly how many points should be deducted for (for example) a series of correct pitches written starting on the downbeat instead of with an anacrusis. If we adopt more creative, collaborative, and complex activities, we may find that letting

23 The importance of "objectively" right and wrong answers is even more important when instructors are chosen without regard to pedagogical training and given little credit. Anecdotally, we suspect this is unfortunately common in aural skills teaching.

go of an imagined objectivity allows us to assess and give feedback in more holistic, process-oriented ways.

In the end, however, it is our sense—after perusing the textbooks and apps reviewed here—that terms such as "aural skills" and "ear training" are too often simply synonymous with "identification, sight singing, and dictation." In 1997, David Butler identified a "general lack of focus in defining educational objectives in aural training" (1997, 40), while in a 2020 aural skills instructor survey, respondents' statements about the purpose of aural skills classes tended to either give broad, philosophical goals (often emphasizing phrases like "seeing ear" and "hearing eye") or specify specific tasks (sight singing, dictation, notation, etc.; Chenette et al. 2020). Such vague definitions—which typically avoid mention of concrete, observable outcomes—do not give much direction to those who might want to seek new activities. In this context, Rogers's definition of the term "ear training" as "both of these traditional skills" (sight singing and dictation) feels a bit like the bartender in *The Blues Brothers* explaining that the bar hosts "both kinds" of music–"country *and* western!" These activities may seem like they encompass all aural skills, but if we are willing to look beyond them, there is a vast array of new activities that would enrich our students' learning by making it more collaborative, creative, holistic, and applied.[24] Of course, there is a chicken-or-egg problem here: to the extent that schools define their aural skills curricula as consisting of sight singing and dictation, textbook authors and publishers will continue to create content in this model, and as long as the majority of textbooks follow this model, it will continue to be the most convenient one for instructors to follow. (Graduate placement exams and AP Music Theory also contribute to this cycle.) It may take a careful balance between serving these "traditional" needs and introducing new activities for a textbook to start helping instructors move in new directions, a balance already sought in some of the more innovative texts reviewed here.

Conclusion

What, then, is the current state of aural skills instructional materials?

In general, the reviewed materials suggest that aural skills instruction is dominated by a few activities: identification drills, sight singing, and dictation. These activities define the types of materials available (listening-based vs. sight-singing anthologies) and occupy the vast majority of textbook pages. They are typically applied to musical

24 A starting point for such a curriculum might be Example 15 in Chenette 2021c, which imagines activities supported by aural training that are relevant to a wide variety of musical fields and practices.

materials derived from music theory curricula, and as a result they have many of the same concerns and priorities as these curricula, including prioritizing musical materials and practices of the European eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These aspects of aural skills instruction have not changed much in a long time, beyond the development of new technological tools put to old ends.

And yet, there is movement in new directions, some of which responds to recent developments in aural skills pedagogy research. Several texts have heeded calls for more improvisation, error detection, diverse repertoire, focus on real music, and more. Some technological tools, too, move in new directions by asking more creative questions and engaging with more directly musical tasks, sometimes without notation. Findings in cognitive science, too, have been considered in the creation of several texts.

In the course of this review and survey, we have noted a number of possible future directions for textbooks and technologies. These include integrating even more diverse tasks and repertoire, embracing creativity as well as reproduction, considering musicality, using instruments, teaching aural fundamentals more thoroughly, and exploring applications of aural skills to fields outside of music theory.

The biggest need that we found across types of texts and apps, however, is for our field to more thoroughly consider learning objectives. What should students be able to do at the end of their aural skills training? We suspect that the answer is likely not "notate eight-bar melodies without any context in four hearings." We are probably more interested in skills like the following:

- Identify errors in an ensemble rehearsal.
- Improvise an accompaniment to a requested song for a music therapy client.
- Identify and "lean into" expressive moments such as chromatic chords in performance.
- Imagine the sound of notated music.
- Transcribe a jazz solo to better understand an improviser's approach.
- Listen holistically to performed music.

These answers might differ among institutions and degree programs: for example, certain musicians would benefit from being able to walk into a recording session and sight-read a nearly accurate version of a score, while others might benefit more from improvisation skills. Contrary to the practice of contemporary texts in other disciplines, aural skills textbooks seldom begin each chapter with specific learning objectives.[25]

25 One notable exception is Phillips/Murphy. Yet even here, objectives often do not reference "real

Anecdotally, we know that many instructors do hope that their instruction leads to these kinds of outcomes. Nevertheless, we should be careful in assuming that sight singing or dictation will automatically lead to improvement in these goals. For example, as mentioned above, Gates 2021 found that first-year aural skills students showed no improvement on measures of internal auditory imagery. Considering the centrality of this skill to justifications of sight-singing textbooks, we should be thinking about how to alter our activities to do better here.

Naming such objectives would likely diversify our field and assist in the evaluation of materials. For example, if "identifying errors in an ensemble rehearsal" is important, then error detection exercises that focus on repeated listenings to single-line, out-of-context melodies might be replaced with activities that invite students to recognize naturally occurring errors in actual performances of both solo and ensemble music (Davis 2010). If internal auditory imagery is important, then we need to incorporate exercises designed to encourage such thinking (Gates 2021, Klonoski 1998). While sight singing is often assessed in individual, high-stakes hearings, we might better foster transfer to ensemble music-making if we organized students into small groups and had them sight-read ensemble music for ten minutes at a time (Chenette 2021a). Such thinking would help us better evaluate whether apps/websites fit our priorities, consider the curricular place of different repertoires, and design new, non-canonical activities that are appropriate to those outcomes. We can imagine a day when materials are planned and evaluated according to the degree to which they prepare students for these real-world outcomes, rather than the degree to which they train students to perform identification, sight singing, and dictation applied to music theory topics.

Whatever specific learning outcomes we desire for students, this survey of the aural-skills landscape suggests that more—and more careful—attention to our assessment methods will also be crucial. As documented by Gillespie 2001, assessment methods homogeneously tend to focus on the minutiae of the task at hand (e.g., the number of notes right or wrong in a dictation)—strongly implying a need for innovation in this regard. In this light, it is striking that most aural skills texts do not even specify how their activities should be assessed.[26] This omission (whatever the reasons behind it) leaves a helpful space for instructors to build new evaluative strategies. Rather

world" outcomes or skills, but rather traditional components of aural skills curricula, such as "Identify intervals in major- and minor-key music" (Ear Training volume, 37).

26 When providing assessment for dictation or singing exercises, the software packages surveyed here tend to reflect the common "one-point-per-note" perspective. Kleppinger 2017 questions the value of this approach with regard to in-class assessment.

than fussing over whether every note of each assigned melody was sung correctly, teachers are free to develop a broader rubric that tracks students' progress across many melodies and toward larger curricular goals.[27] When we consider the role of each activity in a trajectory of learning that is directed towards a specific outcome, better assessment methods can emerge.

It is our sense that aural skills pedagogy is on the cusp of large and exciting changes in the student outcomes it stresses, the curricular approaches used to achieve them, and the assessment methods that track students' progress. Those trends are apparent in current research, and are just beginning to break through to the texts and software that support this teaching. We expect that ongoing innovation in the classroom and in those supporting materials will invigorate one another and move our instruction forward—perhaps in ways we cannot imagine. The ultimate obsolescence of this essay will serve as a marker of that progress.

27 One option is found in the Phillips/Murphy singing anthology, where students are advised to evaluate each other based on a holistic scale (2=excellent, 1=fair, 0=weak). Instructors could adopt a similar approach in assessing overall quality rather than grading the accuracy of every pitch (particularly during a sight-reading task).

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Bending the Rules of Music Theory: Lessons from Great Composers

By Timothy Cutler
New York: Routledge Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781138478244. Paperback, 328 pages. $65.

Reviewed by MICHAEL BAKER

Timothy Cutler begins the preface to *Bending the Rules of Music Theory: Lessons from Great Composers* with a reference to a common joke among music students: that Bach kills a kitten every time someone writes parallel fifths. While this saying may be a darkly humorous way for music students to collectively acknowledge the strictures of voice-leading practices typically taught in music theory classes, it also acknowledges the unquestionable wrongness of writing parallel fifths, at least on voice-leading assignments that explicitly require one to avoid doing so. This time-honored rule is taught for a reason, usually explained as a way of maintaining independence of contrapuntal voices; however, there are occasional moments when apparent parallel fifths do occur in classical art music, and not only in Mozart's *Ein musikalischer Spaß*. Cutler's *Bending the Rules of Music Theory* studies the wide range of rules as commonly taught in music theory classes, showing that for every cut-and-dried rule espoused by a textbook or instructor, there is frequently a good illustration of its violation in actual music, and by some fairly well-known and well-respected composers.

The Author

Cutler was head of the music theory department at the Cleveland Institute of Music from 2017 until 2022. In addition to his articles and his recently published *Anthology of Music for Analysis* (Norton, 2018), Cutler is also the creator of the Internet Music Theory Database (Cutler, n.d.), the first large-scale anthology of music theory examples maintained on the internet. Cutler's experience with building anthologies of musical excerpts for various harmonic and tonal techniques informs his knowledge of the repertoire for *Bending the Rules of Music Theory*. The excerpts housed at the Internet Music Theory Database are intended as textbook examples of harmonic usage; however, Cutler's search for examples must have also occasionally unearthed examples of rule-bending. While Cutler may not have wished to include these examples in his Internet Music Theory Database or *Anthology of Music for Analysis*, they are thought-provoking for teacher and student alike, and worthy of a

more considered discussion.

An expanded version of *Octaven und Quinten*

In the preface, Cutler makes an indirect reference to Brahms's *Octaven und Quinten*, a collection of examples Brahms had maintained in which he identified many cases of apparent consecutive fifths and octaves in music from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.[1] (Cutler returns to *Octaven und Quinten* later in Chapters 4–5, drawing more direct parallels between his project and Brahms's essay.) Cutler recalls a story from his student days at Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music in which he noticed a set of parallel fifths in a keyboard composition by Edvard Grieg. As he was under the impression that all parallel fifths were "bad," Cutler was perplexed to find them in a published score; he was even more surprised that, far from being offensive, these fifths sounded idiomatic to the music at hand. Cutler mentions that he began keeping a notebook of instances where composers disobeyed what he understood to be the "laws" of music theory (vii). One may regard *Bending the Rules of Music Theory* as an updated and greatly expanded version of Brahms's *Octaven und Quinten*, with examples of many other violations of common rules taught in modern music theory courses.

"Rules"

Chapter 1, entitled "Rules," surveys several quotations from composers and musicians on the purpose of rules, and their attitudes toward them. The attitudes displayed in these quotations run the gamut from "rules are for fools," to "all rules are rules of thumb" to "rules for thee, not for me," to "it sounds good, even if it is wrong," and many other attitudes. For instance, John Coltrane's "damn the rules, it's the feeling that counts" (Cutler 3, citing Marsalis 2005, 32) views music theory and its rules as irrelevant—perhaps helpful to getting started, but not much more than that. The same sentiment comes through in an oft-cited quote from Debussy: "There is no theory. You have merely to listen. Pleasure is the law" (Cutler 3, citing Austin 1970, 131). When questioned about a set of parallel fifths in his music, Beethoven is reported to have asked "well, who has forbidden them?" Upon citations from Fux, Marpurg, Kirnberger, and others, he then replied, "well, I allow them!" (Cutler 4, citing Wegler and Ries 1987, 76). The entire chapter illustrates a range of attitudes about rules from a number of composers, musicians, artists, authors, and others. To these quotes, I would add one more, commonly attributed to Pablo Picasso: "Learn the rules like a

1 For an English translation of this notebook, see Mast (1980).

pro, so you can break them like an artist." I believe this quote captures the tensions between music theory's focus on rules as ways of learning common practices, and on the artist's inexorable drive toward originality and innovation.

In the preface Cutler mentions that, while he frequently refers to "the textbooks," this is intended as a generalization; he is not interested in censuring any particular theory primer (viii). That being said, nearly all of the deviations from commonly-held rules he studies are *generally* understood to be deviations from the norms of typical common-practice tonal music theory, and, for anyone who has taught a typical music theory course from one of the commonly available manuals, this perspective rings true.

Chapter Summaries and Highlights

Following this survey of rules, the book proceeds with chapters on a variety of concepts. Chapter 2, concerning "Consonance and Dissonance," surveys several instances where intervals we may automatically and instinctively consider consonant can occasionally sound dissonant in a given musical context. In particular, Cutler's study of dissonant perfect fifths surveys many cases where this interval may occasionally occur in a dissonant context, as in a pedal point. For example, in Schubert's "Der Leiermann," the tonic pitch (i.e., the bottom pitch of the pedal's perfect fifth interval) clashes with the dominant triad in the piano's right hand. In other cases, a perfect fifth interval may occur between the third and seventh of a minor seventh chord, with one of the pitches being a chordal seventh, thus in need of resolution. Cutler illustrates other seemingly paradoxical cases of dissonant perfect octaves and dissonant perfect unisons as well as stable and unstable root-position triads, with illustrations from canonic composers. Rather than illustrations of true rule-bending (compositional decisions that students—or composers—can make), the topics in this chapter promote a more nuanced consideration of the nature of intervals, which, under some circumstances, may take on the characteristics of dissonances.

Chapter 3 highlights many instances of rule-bending in chordal construction. Following a brief explanation and illustration of typical chordal construction, Cutler surveys examples of doubled chordal thirds, doubled tendency tones, incomplete chords, chords with missing thirds, incomplete inverted chords, chords with missing roots, chords with wide spacing between voices, and other transgressions. Whereas Chapter 2 seems more obliquely aligned to Cutler's thesis, the examples in Chapter 3 go right at it, with several clear examples of the concepts for discussion.

Several subsequent chapters in the text pair together into themes. Chapter 4, titled

"Voice Leading I," focuses directly on instances of parallel fifths. Cutler begins with a brief elucidation of "good" and "bad" parallel fifths, then proceeds with examples arising from the inclusion of nonharmonic tones, parallel fifths at deeper levels of musical structure, illusory parallel fifths, parallel fifths that arise through octave transfer, enharmonic parallel fifths, parallel fifths that occur between phrase endings and beginnings, and other concepts. Two topics of interest in this chapter are his discussion of so-called "Mozart fifths" (proceeding directly from a German augmented sixth chord to the dominant) and a more thorough consideration of Brahms's *Octaven und Quinten*.

Chapter 5, titled "Voice Leading II," considers further instances of rule bending in the domain of voice leading, including parallel octaves, octaves by contrary motion, motion from a diminished fifth to a perfect fifth, ascending chordal sevenths, unresolved leading tones in the soprano, and other contraventions. Cutler also examines instances where two voice-leading principles collide, focusing on voicings and irregular resolutions of the cadential six-four chord.

Chapters 6–7 focus on harmonic syntax, and chord-to-chord progressions. Topics in these chapters include harmonic retrogressions, such as V–IV or V–ii, where the dominant harmony proceeds to a pre-dominant harmony; motion between two predominant harmonies, for instance, the progression ii–IV; and direct ii–I harmonic motions, among many others.2 These chapters are again filled with numerous examples of harmonic progressions that, while idiomatic in their setting, might run afoul of rules in a music theory course.

Chapters 8–9 deal with "deviant" harmonies, those that music theory textbooks recommend avoiding. Chapter 8 discusses root-position and second-inversion diminished triads, half cadences involving V^7 chords, iii^6 and vi^6 harmonies, and other topics. Chapter 9 deals exclusively with unusual treatment of six-four chords, including examples of consonant six-four chords, arpeggiated six-four chords, and other topics. Among the most interesting parts of this chapter is Cutler's examination of "inverted" six-four chords. This topic is clearly a special interest for Cutler, who devotes twelve pages to the subject.

Chapters 10–11 focus on aberrant nonharmonic tones. Among the topics in these chapters are ornamented ornaments, nonharmonic tones with dual interpretations, nonharmonic tones that are the product of registral displacement, and textbook deviations of passing tones, escape tones, and other typical nonharmonic tones. Much attention is given to suspensions, including irregular resolution treatment and

2 Cutler uses all upper-case Roman numerals for triads, irrespective of quality.

irregular metric positions, as well as suspending an entire chord.

Chapters 12–13 focus on tonal transgressions, and unusual beginnings and endings in compositions. Cutler provides examples of compositions that begin in a variety of atypical ways: on a non-tonic harmony, a tonicized non-tonic harmony, a non-tonic key area, and with modal ambiguity. In terms of uncommon ending strategies in music, Cutler reviews examples that end on a I^6 chord, on a vi^6 chord, and other possibilities. Cutler also addresses the reverse Picardy ending technique (that is, concluding a major-key work with a minor tonic harmony). In Chapter 13, Cutler discusses key-shifting compositions—those that begin and end in two different keys—and distinguishes them from off-tonic openings. He highlights the role of the text in songs involving key shifting, illustrated with an analysis of Schubert's "Klage an der Mond," D. 436.

Chapter 14 posits the question: How much dissonance is too much dissonance? Whereas extended dissonance is a regular feature of twentieth-century music, Cutler illustrates that densely dissonant music occasionally occurred in tonal compositions, such as Jean-Féry Rebel's "Le chaos" from *Le élémens* (1737), which begins with a seven-note cluster chord. Cutler also discusses examples of atypical chromatic dyads, as well as the use of all-chromatic trichords, tetrachords, and pentachords in typical tonal music.

The Title, Repertoire, and Other Matters

The book's subtitle, "Lessons from Great Composers," will undoubtedly raise eyebrows for some readers, especially given the ongoing efforts among many music academics to diversify the music curriculum at their institutions. Much attention has been paid in recent years toward widening the range of musical examples and repertoire taught in modern music theory courses. Several online databases of musical excerpts, such as Music by Women (Murdock, n.d.), Diverse Music Theory Examples (Maust, n.d.), and Expanding the Music Theory Canon (Mendoza, n.d.), have given music teachers a range of new musical excerpts to use in theory classes to teach common topics in the curriculum, alongside those from more familiar composers. (Many of these online databases are modeled on Cutler's own Internet Music Theory Database [Cutler, n.d.], mentioned above.) Reading the words "great composers" in the year 2022, and seeing a book with music examples drawn exclusively from music by white European men, may seem jarringly anachronistic, given the amount of effort paid toward diversifying the repertoire in music curricula.

In the preface, Cutler mentions that the kinds of music-theoretical transgressions

he is interested in are not as exceptional as one might be led to believe from reading music theory textbooks, and are a regular aspect of the tonal repertoire. Cutler writes,

> These departures from the status quo are not incomprehensible acts of artistic fancy; seldom do composers flippantly disregard a rule. Nor should we portray digressions from musical law as the exclusive right of geniuses who composed unshackled from the restrictive tethers of music theory. Additionally, we needn't mine the esoteric fringes of tonality to witness occurrences of rule-bending. Deviations from standard practice are a *regular* feature of tonal works and can be explained rationally and musically as extension of textbook regulations (viii).

This last statement—that rule-bending is common in lots of tonal music, and by composers few would hesitate to claim as the canonic composers that otherwise fill the pages of music theory books—is central to Cutler's thesis, and informs his choice of repertoire. In some ways this *is* the thesis, that one needn't look hard to find examples from under-studied music to illustrate deviations from the rules as taught in theory courses. Whereas individual instructors may work to include a greater representation of music by women composers, music from historically under-represented minority composers, pop music, film and video game music, and music from vernacular cultural traditions to illustrate concepts in their courses, one is free to do so, *while also* acknowledging that composers from the European classical tradition occasionally bent some of the rules, often for artistic effect.

One small production issue involves the sizing of some graphics in the text. The great majority of musical score excerpts are well-produced and legible; however, there are a number of shorter musical figures that seem far larger than expected. For instance, Cutler's Example 2.2 (p. 14) displays enharmonic spellings of a perfect fifth interval. The sizing of this graphic is such that the annotations on it appear far larger than the font used for the text in the book. The same can be said for many other shorter graphics in the text, which seem far larger than needed for their context. If pressed to provide other critiques of this text, I would suggest a more careful attention to graphic sizing throughout the book for subsequent editions.

Another consideration involves a question over the intended market for the text. Cutler's purpose is clear, well argued, and generously illustrated with carefully chosen musical examples. I believe that many music theory instructors may benefit from having it on their shelves for reference, and at $65 for a 300-page text, I believe it is fairly priced. While I believe students may also benefit from studying from it, I believe it would make a better reference book than a required purchase for the general undergraduate music student, who already is overloaded with many required texts for

their courses. If instructors were to require students to purchase this text for their courses, it should be regarded as a supplementary text, in addition to their regular music theory textbook(s).

Summary and Conclusion

These critiques notwithstanding, I believe Cutler's *Bending the Rules of Music Theory* will be a welcome addition to the range of teaching materials related to the undergraduate core music theory curriculum. It provides a unique perspective on the purpose of rules in music instruction, rule-bending, and the inherent flexibility with which composers viewed seeming transgressions in their own music. This book will be of interest for many students who have wondered whether the rules they are learning in their theory courses are ever bent in actual practice, and in what contexts these digressions may occur. It will also be of benefit for many music theory instructors, if for no other reason than to temper their instruction on a variety of concepts, and perhaps their attitudes toward the music of "great" composers. As Cutler shows, nearly every conceivable rule that teachers usually would say "always" or "never do this," could be amended to "most of the time" or "only in certain circumstances should you do this," and he illustrates cases where such flexibility is allowed. By way of conclusion, we might consider Cutler's own rejoinder to the famous saying: Every time someone writes *good* parallel fifths, Bach *pets* a kitten.

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Understanding Post-Tonal Music

Miguel A. Roig-Francolí
Second edition. New York: Routledge, 2021. 431 + xxiii. ISBN: 0367355353

The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis: Thirty-Three Graphic Music Analyses

Joseph N. Straus
New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. 227 + ix. ISBN: 0197543987

Reviewed by ALLISON WENTE[1]

Introduction

It would be difficult to begin a text centered on post-tonal without first defining tonal. And so, Miguel A. Roig-Francolí's *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* begins with a brief definition of tonality. *Brief* is important, as tonal music is likely thoroughly and exhaustively covered for most music students over three to five semesters of music theory and aural skills courses. Often, students emerge from these courses with a deep allegiance to tonality as a system; after all, they have spent countless hours raising and resolving leading tones and dutifully following the rules only to learn how to skillfully and appropriately break them, as they progress from strict first-species counterpoint, to the murky depths of four-part harmony, and the ultimate freedom of colorful chromatic harmony. Once they master the last level of tonal analysis, from note to gesture to form, history comes along and emancipates the dissonance, fracturing the carefully structured system in which they have finally become comfortable.

By contrast, Joseph N. Straus's *The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis: Thirty-Three Graphic Music Analyses*, its name a nod to Heinrich Schenker's *Five Graphic Music Analyses*, begins with a quick preface and then gets right into the content, establishing the book's purpose from the outset. Rather than a progressive textbook to guide students through a particular analytical method, Straus's text is "not designed to be read through: there is no narrative arc (the organization is strictly chronological) and no graduation of difficulty. Rather, each analysis is designed to be self-contained" (Straus vii).

1 I would like to thank Melissa Hoag, reviews editor for the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, for soliciting this review.

In this review, I discuss Roig-Francolí's *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* and Joseph N. Straus's *The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis: Thirty-Three Graphic Music Analyses*. For each, I consider subject matter, audience, organization, accessibility, instructional usability, and musical examples as they relay priorities around intention and representation. Because the Roig-Francolí is meant to be a comprehensive standalone text while Straus's would supplement other materials, Roig-Francolí's text will occupy more text space in this review.

Subject Matter

Understanding Post-Tonal Music

Chronologically organized into fifteen chapters, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* uses the metaphor of mosaic art wherein each piece comprises individual tiles, or compositional trends. Roig-Francolí first identifies some of the "tiles" of earlier decades of the twentieth century: "tonal music, post-tonal pitch-centered music, atonal music, serialism, and neoclassical music," while some of the tiles for the later twentieth century include "serialism, aleatory composition, sound mass, collage and quotation, minimalism, and electronic computer music" (3). Roig-Francolí contrasts his mosaic view of twentieth-century music with the more common linear model, which would instead follow "a mainstream, dominant line . . . that implies other secondary or subordinate lines . . . and which results from a linear conception of music history" (4). Roig-Francolí describes twentieth century music history as "fragmented," and deems the subjects covered in this text as the "most significant": "post-tonal pitch centricity and composition with motivic and intervallic cells, neoclassicism, the theory and analysis of atonal music, serialism, aspects of time, rhythm, and meter, and some of the major developments in post-World War II composition, including aleatory music, sound masses, electronic music, borrowing from the past, neotonality, and minimalism" (4).

The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis

As mentioned in the Introduction, Straus's *The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis* is not meant to be a standalone text, and its contents are chronological by date of composition. Each analysis may deal with aspects of "character, affect, text setting, rhythm, and form, [but] the primary focus of these analyses is pitch, including intervals, motives, collections, melody, harmony, and voice leading" (viii). That said, including the "post-tonal primer" at the back of the book does give insight into how Straus would progress through these analytical tools.

Straus's "Post-Tonal Primer" outlines each of the following topics: pitch and pitch class, pitch and pitch-class intervals (ordered and unordered), pitch-class sets, transposition (T_n), inversion (I_n), inversion ($I\frac{x}{y}$), inversional symmetry, set class, transpositional combination (TC), referential collections, triadic transformations, fuzzy transposition ($*T_n$) and inversion ($*I_n$), atonal voice leading, twelve-tone series and order operations, invariance, motives and intervallic cells (serial ordering), contour, and composing-out. For a graduate course where students are expected to have covered basic post-tonal theory in their undergraduate coursework, this primer is ideal.

Audience

Roig-Francolí describes his book as a "student-centered textbook on the analysis, theory, and composition of twentieth-century post-tonal music" (xii). The book is intended for one-semester undergraduate or general graduate courses on twentieth-century music. Because each chapter includes composition exercises, he states it may also function as a composition textbook (xii). The goal of this text is to "help the student become a better listener and hence a better performer, composer, or teacher of post-tonal music" (xiii).

Straus's text is meant to supplement or augment a traditional post-tonal theory text. He writes, "This book is aimed at advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and music professionals." He continues, "some basic grasp of post-tonal theory will be useful." He includes a post-tonal primer at the back of the book to provide a "quick and dirty introduction to the relevant theoretical concepts" (Straus vii). Thus, the Roig-Francolí could function as a sort of one-and-done option for post-tonal theory courses; the Straus is not meant to function as a stand-alone text, at least not for introductory courses.

Organization

Understanding Post-Tonal Music includes a preface, introduction (which provides an overview of twentieth-century compositional styles), fifteen chapters of content, and an epilogue. The end of the book includes an appendix, bibliography, and musical example and subject indexes. Chapters range in length from eleven (chapter 6) to thirty-seven pages (chapters 3 and 10). The average (mean) chapter length is 25 pages.

The book is organized in a "roughly chronological plan, and within that, by general topics." (xiii). The first eight chapters of the book cover music from before 1945. It begins with an overview of pitch centricity in chapters 1 and 2. These chapters also introduce pitch-class sets, which leads into a section on atonal music in chapters 3

and 4. The text moves to neoclassicism in chapter 5, followed by ultramodernism in chapter 6. Next is a formal study of twelve-tone music in chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 9 forms a bridge between pre- and post-war sections of the book and discusses serialism. All content after chapter 9 focuses on music composed after 1945. Chapter 10 discusses temporality, chapter 11 aleatory music, and chapter 12 electronic, computer, and spectral musics. Chapter 13 combines collage quotation and new approaches to harmony; chapter 14 engages minimalism. Finally, chapter 15 covers recent compositional trends, and while the chapter is titled "into the Twenty-First Century," the examples discussed are from 1987, 1995, 1997, and 2000.[2]

The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis is organized chronologically and is not divided into sections or parts. It includes thirty-three analyses of works dating from 1909 to 2016. Analyses range in length from 3–12 pages. The book includes a companion website and analytical videos, which are extremely helpful. The videos include visual walk-throughs of each analysis, with voice overs that include performed musical snippets, as well as explanations of the analysis. I would absolutely use these videos in class or as a pedagogical aid as students work through analyses on their own.

Accessibility

Understanding Post-Tonal Music

Visually, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* is well laid out. Black and grey boxes clearly label examples, and the music notation is large enough to read without strain. Primary headings are underlined, with bold and capitalized text, secondary subheadings are set aside and bold, and tertiary subheadings are capitalized but not set in bold text. Important vocabulary words are bolded in the text itself, such as "Ionian," "Dorian," "Phrygian," "Lydian," "Mixolydian," "Aeolian," and "Locrian," in the primary section entitled "Diatonic Collections" (7). This makes it easy for students to scan and review the text after a closer reading or lecture.

Chapters may include a "note" set aside in a box within the text. This may add more information for review, such as in Chapter 8 where a "note" gives a review for how to determine the T_n or T_nI operations, which is relevant to the subsequent section on "Inversionally Symmetrical Segments That Map onto Themselves" (187). Or, a "note" may include an extra analytical point, such as to mark the Golden Section on an A–A dyad in support of an analytical passage that privileges symmetry around A in Webern's *Piano Variations* op. 27, II (197).

2 This is acknowledged in the Preface on page xiv.

Understanding Post-Tonal Music is not overly large or cumbersome, and the paperback cover makes it less heavy than many standard theory texts. In addition, as all exercises are worked into the text itself, there is no workbook to cart along with the text. There is, however, the *Anthology of Post-Tonal Music*, which is conveniently spiral bound, primed for students' analytical scribblings. The *Anthology* is larger and thinner than the text, and as is to be expected with most full-orchestral score renderings, the musical font is occasionally quite small. For example, the Introduction to Part I from Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (1913) may be difficult for some students to read. Luciano Berio's Sinfonia, III ("In Ruhig Fliessender Bewegung"), mm. 1–96 (to Reh. E), example 31 in the *Anthology*, and Thomas Adés's *Asyla*, II, mm. 1–43, example 40 in the *Anthology*, are unfortunately very difficult to read.

There is an e-book version of the text available. If ordering directly from the publisher, the paperback and eBook are the same price, $92.00, while a hardback is $128.00. The *Anthology* is also available as an eBook for the same price as paperback ($47.96); hardback is $128.00.

The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis

Each analysis in *The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis* includes many musical examples. The book uses various colors to mark different features in the analysis, and each example is annotated to make the analyses easier to follow. The book also includes numerous visual depictions for analytical topics, such as circle diagrams to illustrate cycles of pitches and trichords in Béla Bartók's String Quartet No. 3, *Prima parte* (1927) (31, 32), or color-coded arches and carets to mark symmetrical melodic gestures in Milton Babbitt's "The Widow's Lament in Springtime" (1951) (56).

The book is thin and comfortable to hold. In addition, there are several blank spaces where a student can add notes or questions. There are no suggested exercises or assignments, which may be a hindrance to some teachers; however, it is not meant to function as a stand-alone text. In addition, the excellent online analyses make it easy to follow an example in the text.

To purchase directly from Oxford University publishing, the hardcover text is $99 and the paperback $39.95. There is an eBook version as well, which one must purchase from an alternative vendor. The Kindle version is $29.49 on Amazon, and alternate versions of the eBook are similarly priced.

Instructional Usability

Understanding Post-Tonal Music

A strength of *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* and its anthology is that the textbook contains short examples that clearly illustrate concepts explained in the prose, while the *Anthology* contains full scores for more in-depth study. This gives the instructor flexibility to cater the text to their own teaching style, and to use the text either as a base for larger contextual study of the score or to stick to the essentials presented in the text. For instructors who do not specialize in twentieth-century music, relying on the text would suit well. Moreover, that the text incorporates assignments makes this an appealing option for theory departments within larger schools of music that may want to coordinate curriculum across sections, or in smaller schools where twentieth-century theory is one part of a larger sequence taught by one or two instructors.

Helpfully, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* includes exercises at the end of each chapter. Roig-Francolí explains:

> Exercises are of three types: (1) theoretical, in which particular theoretical concepts or methods are practiced; (2) analytical, in which pieces or fragments of pieces are analyzed; and (3) compositional, in which suggestions and models for brief compositions are provided. Analytical exercises are of two types. Some exercises include a 'guided analysis' of pieces, with very specific and focused questions on particular aspects of the composition. Other exercises are more open and require a freer analysis of a piece, which the student will then articulate in the form of an essay or a brief paper (xiv).

Finally, in addition to text explanations, anthology examples, and exercises and assignments, each chapter includes topics for class discussion, suggested additional listening, and a summary of terms to review. The topics for class discussion and additional listening provide practical material for the instructor. Putting key terms together at the end of each chapter (and bolding those terms in the text itself) helps students review without searching through the book. Moreover, if a student gets to this point and fails to define or recognize one of these terms, it is a good indication to them that they need to go back and review.

The Art of Post-Tonal Analysis

This text is perfect for the seasoned twentieth-century music instructor who wants more control over a course's direction than a textbook model provides. Or, this book works well for upper-level graduate courses that delve deeper into the subject matter. As previously discussed, the online tools are excellent and would allow

students to dissect these examples outside of class. I would use this book in an upper-level undergraduate seminar on analysis. I would ask students to work in groups, read an assigned analysis, look up terms as they encounter them, and then teach it to their peers in a presentation. Students could incorporate analytical methods and historical information as it suits the given work.

Musical Examples, Intention and Representation, and Concluding Thoughts

Both of these textbooks begin with the music, not with the theory. The analytical methods addressed in each of these books are broad, and each text presents several ways to approach each given example. As Roig-Francolí writes, "analyses and discussions do not focus only or mainly on pitch organization but also on issues of meter, rhythm, and temporality (both throughout the book and, in particular, in Chapters 10 and 14), form, texture, relationships between text and music, and a variety of aesthetic issues that affect listeners and performers of post-tonal music" (xiii).

Understanding Post-Tonal Music defines its repertoire and limitations immediately. Roig-Francolí writes, "the title establishes a clear limit to the scope of the repertoire studied in this book: only post-tonal music is covered. Thus, while a lot of tonal music (that is, music based on functional harmonic tonality or on its extensions) was composed in the twentieth century (and is still being composed in the twenty-first century), twentieth-century tonal music is not studied here" (xiii). He continues, "The coverage of composers and repertoire in this book is as broad as allowed by the constraints of in-depth analysis of complete pieces or large fragments" (xiii). While the book does feature repertoire by four women composers, it does privilege the established canon of primarily white composers, even though several BIPOC composers have written in these styles.[3] (Roig-Francolí does mention other diverse composers in the text, but for the purposes of this review I consider only those with musical examples.) Further, Roig-Francolí writes that "although all chapters should be considered important, the modular organization of the book allows instructors to skip some of the chapters with no detriment to the general progress of the course should a slower pedagogical pace be desired to ensure better assimilation by the students" (xv). Roig-Francolí lists the "essential" chapters as 1–4 and 7–8. The instructor should be aware that cutting the book down to these chapters limits the featured repertoire

3 For example, Adolphus Hailstork, Tania León, Dorothy Rudd Moore, Julia Perry, Howard Swanson, and George Walker all composed some atonal, serial, or minimalist music.

to only the music of white males.[4]

Future editions of *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* might feature more works by diverse composers. For now, it would be beneficial for instructors to expose students to more diverse repertoire in order to avoid an entire semester focused primarily on the music of one group, perhaps through the use of assignments or analyses that improve representation and are more inclusive of diverse populations. Straus's text, which clearly goes to great pains to include music by composers of a variety of positionalities, is meant to be used as a supplement, thus leaving room for instructors to include even more repertoire from marginalized populations as they see fit. Then, these texts can provide a valuable resource for instructors and students into the compositional styles of myriad groups of musicians during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

4 Featured examples in the chapters deemed "essential" are composed by Bartók, Dallapiccola, Debussy, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Webern.

The Routledge Companion to Aural Skills Pedagogy

Ed. by Kent D. Cleland and Paul Fleet
New York: Routledge Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-367-22689-3. 493 pages + xxi.

Reviewed by DAVID CASTRO

Resources for those who take music theory pedagogy seriously have begun to blossom in recent years. Following the standard set by Michael Rogers (1984, 2004) and Gary Karpinski (2000), and in addition to this journal, we now have the online journal *Engaging Students, The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory* (Lumsden and Swinkin, 2018), and *Teaching Music Theory* (Snodgrass, 2020), to name just a few resources. Further, Routledge has recently published two companions relevant to readers of this journal: *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy* (VanHandel, 2021), and the subject of this review. It would seem as though we are living in a golden age of scholarship regarding music theory pedagogy.

The *Routledge Companion to Aural Skills Pedagogy* (RCASP) stems originally from a 2017 conference hosted by the Royal Academy of Music, London, titled, "Aural Skills Pedagogy: What is to be done?" This volume includes five of the eight papers presented that day, but also goes well beyond them. Twenty-nine chapters form the body of this volume, representing scholarship from around the world. The editors deliberately sought contributions from an international community of teachers, hailing from the United Kingdom, South Africa, Hong Kong, Australia, Portugal, Canada, and the United States. In addition, although this volume is aimed primarily at those who teach aural skills to undergraduates, the editors solicited contributions that addressed aural skills as a part of musicianship training before, during, and after undergraduate study.

Every chapter includes a bibliography, and the list of sources drawn on by contributors is rich, to say the least. One could spend a lifetime just reading everything referenced in this volume, or so it seems. My point in sharing this is to warn the reader that this volume, like all excellent scholarship, will have the effect of greatly expanding your list of "books and articles to read."

The Routledge Companion to Aural Skills Pedagogy invites the reader to consider everything, from "What are we doing when we say we are doing 'aural skills'?" to "How can I help my student match pitch?" As such, this volume is an essential resource for anyone who wants to become a better, more thoughtful teacher. This review will begin with an overview of the volume, detailing its organization, followed

by a consideration of the topics covered within each chapter. I will then provide a few thoughts on the state of aural skills instruction generally (as I see it) and on the volume as a whole.

I. Overview

The editors have organized the 29 chapters in this volume into six sections, as follows.

1. Terrain
2. Theory and Curriculum: Methodologies for the Learning Space
3. Teaching: Activities within the Learning Space
4. Transferring: Application outside of the Learning Space
5. Techniques [subdivided into]
   a. Tonal
   b. Post-Tonal
6. Technology

An "Intermezzo" introduces each of the six sections, the volume begins with an "Overture" that surveys the collection as a whole, and the editors conclude with a "Coda," subtitled "The Future of Aural Training: *Clausula Vera* (True Cadence)." More on the Coda, in particular, will be shared below.

The chapter groupings provide meaningful waypoints as one makes one's way through the book. That said, it is not clear to me what is meant by "the Learning Space" in the titles of sections 2, 3, and 4. For example, the title of the fourth section refers presumably to skills and/or benefits that apply outside of the immediate classroom environment, but Chapter 21 (details below) focuses on classroom activities and assignments. The Intermezzo for this section includes a rationale for grouping these chapters together, which is based on a rather abstract deployment of the term "incorporate," but it still is not clear how that concept connects with "outside the Learning Space." That said, I hasten to add that this quibble is of little consequence, because it takes nothing away from the quality of the chapters, whether they are taken individually or are considered within their respective sections.

II. The Conceptual/Philosophical Chapters

In contrast with the six sections given by the editors, in my overview I will divide the chapters into just two groups. The first group includes those chapters that are broadly informational, ones that advance a philosophy of aural skills and/or musicianship, and ones that address curricular design. The second, and much larger, of the two groups includes chapters that speak to the practical, day-to-day life of an aural skills instructor. Many of these include detailed lesson plans, assignments, and, in one case, a syllabus.

Beginning with the first group, Chapter 1 opens the doors of perception onto the world of aural skills in the broadest sense. Paul Fleet begins with an introduction that rests heavily on the conversations had at the conference that spawned this book, noting two items in particular. This chapter presents a test of the following two positions, both of which were generally agreed upon during those conversations: "that ear training does not get the space it requires in a curriculum, and it is unhelpfully compartmentalized by educational qualification levels that do not match the differing entry points of the students" (10). The author details his process of data collection and analysis, with the ultimate result supporting those anecdotal claims made by aural skills pedagogues in conversation. Within formal music education, the results of this study show that ear training is emphasized during undergraduate years, but not before or after. The results also show that ear training courses are compartmentalized; that is, in most schools they are likely either taught as stand-alone classes (as opposed to being integrated with theory courses), or "not taught" at all.[1] In short, the results of the study support the claims made by those aural skills pedagogues who attended the 2017 conference. In light of these results, the author writes, "We can find solidarity in this data and take stock of the current situation in general. We can understand the terrain we find ourselves working within, and work toward setting the ear-training learning events we value within a mutually agreed collective framework of understanding within our respective institutions across the globe" (24).

1 The data are based on curricular offerings as observed on institution websites. "It was decided that if an institution had a learning event that specifically mentioned words that represented aural or ear training as the primary activity, that would count as 'taught alone'; if they mentioned those words alongside others that included theory, musicianship, and so on, it would count as 'taught within'; and if no mention of those words featured within the learning events for that state of learning at that institution, it would count as 'not taught.'" (14) No specific institutions are named in any category, but Tables 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 show the data on which my statement is based.

Chapter 2, by Simon Parkin, is something of a manifesto, in which basic skills of "aural" (which is how aural skills courses are referred to "across the pond," as I learned via this chapter)[2] are laid out, after which the claim is made that "aural" is prior to and unites theory, improvisation, and performance. In other words, this chapter makes the case that adequate training in aural skills is foundational to success in all areas of musicianship. The constraints inherent to teaching within an institution of higher learning are addressed, including the divide in the author's home institution between instructors who specialize in written theory and those who specialize in aural skills. The value of integrating these two aspects of the curriculum is asserted. The author also muses on the potential benefit of having aural skills instructors attend studio instruction, to see how students realize skills gained in class within a different context, and of having studio teachers attend aural skills classes, so they can gain an awareness of, and hopefully begin to employ, terms and skills taught in the classroom. This is an idealistic goal, as the author admits, but one that seems all but guaranteed to benefit students.

In Chapter 3, Gary Karpinski mounts a rationale for dictation exercises, which shows how the skills involved in taking dictation translate into skills that are broadly desirable in a variety of musical situations. It is important to note that "dictation skills" is taken rather broadly. For example, one potential exercise mentioned has students identify the meter of a heard piece, according to beat class (i.e., compound duple, simple triple, etc.).

In Chapter 6, Jeffrey Lovell argues *against* the complete and total integration of written theory and aural skills courses. He advocates instead for a modified integration: "I hope to illustrate that it is still possible to achieve the spirit of integration while allowing the skills-based courses to follow their own curriculum and proceed at a pace that is more appropriate for meaningful musicianship development—and not merely to exist in the service of the topics covered in music theory" (80). It is intuitively true that aural skills are acquired more slowly than written skills, so they must lag behind, if the aural skills learned are to be sufficiently meaningful. However, another emerging theme in this book is the variety of skill levels with which students arrive at undergraduate institutions. The differences within an institution and between institutions can impact how integrated the theory and aural skills can and should be. Since every institution draws on a slightly different student body, there can be

2 It is not coincidental that this book is where I learned about referring to such coursework in the UK as "aural." One of this volume's central missions is to gather perspectives from around the globe, so something as simple as this was an element of discovery for me.

no one best approach to anything in music instruction, including the integration of theory and aural skills. The author makes excellent points that take these variables into account and that acknowledge his local context.

In Chapter 12, Bryden Stillie and Zack Moir discuss aural skills in popular music education. They make the case that the praxis of popular musicianship is different, so the education must also be different. Two points of difference that they advance are utility and notation. Utility refers to the relationship between that which is practiced in the aural skills classroom and that which is done in the process of creating and performing popular musics: "The assessment of aural skills is predicated on measuring recognition or identification of quantifiable elements of certain music theories rather than examining, what is arguably more important, the sound itself" (184). The issue of notation could be regarded as a subtopic under the rubric of utility, because the argument is that musicians who work primarily in popular styles simply do not use notation, thus they should not have to practice dictation/transcription in the aural skills classroom. This chapter suffers a bit from an opening claim that we as educators need to break down the "arguably false" dichotomy between popular and classical, yet goes on to rely on that dichotomy to support many of its central claims; for example, "[t]he contexts in which popular musicians deploy their aural skills are typically very different than those of classical musician, and we need to acknowledge this in the pedagogic approaches we implement to teach and assess such skills. This is an unfortunate dichotomy, but. . ." (181). Nevertheless, this chapter truly forces an open consideration of what counts as "aural skills," and of what appropriate goals (learning outcomes) are, considering the immediate goals of the students in the class and in the program as a whole.

In Chapter 16, Colin Wright begins with "an exploration of what we understand by 'aural' and the wide range of those associated inner skills that underpin and form the basis of what constitutes musical performance" (270). This chapter engages the theoretical and philosophical questions of aural skills training, with particular focus on assessment. This chapter is particularly useful for anyone planning to revamp their aural skills courses, as it gives the reader a lot to think about regarding things that we simply take for granted more often than not.

James Cuskelley presents the Kodály method in Chapter 17, including its origins and influence, and elaborates on its guiding principles. This volume is focused primarily on aural skills in higher education but is nevertheless valuable for those who teach at the secondary and higher levels to be aware of the philosophy and methods of Kodály, both because it is one of the three main methods in the field of early music education

(as I understand it), and because the guiding principles can be implemented at all levels of music instruction.

Chapter 18, by Robin Harrison, serves as an excellent and somewhat more practical companion to Chapter 17 in that it also concerns the Kodály method, but includes some applications to music education beyond primary school.

In Chapter 19, John Robert Stevenson does for Dalcroze Eurhythmics what Chapter 17 did for the Kodály method. As with Chapter 17, it would take some time and effort to discover just how to apply the methods of Dalcroze Eurhythmics to the aural skills classroom in secondary or higher education, but that could be valuable, nevertheless.

Nathan L. Lam revisits the debate surrounding *do*- and *la*-based solmization in minor keys in Chapter 23. The author makes a case that, rather than having to choose one or the other, instructors can be sensitive to the pros and cons of either approach and might even use both, depending on immediate musical context.

Chapter 25, by David John Baker, walks the reader through data-driven, statistical analysis of the factors that predict success or failure in melodic dictation. Rather than making concrete claims regarding melodic dictation, the author details the variety of factors, both individual and musical, that are in play when students attempt to dictate a melody. The author then walks the reader through the myriad details to consider if one wishes to study melodic dictation empirically, i.e., via data-driven analysis. No findings are detailed, so the last section can be thought of as a primer for anyone seeking to study the cognition of melody empirically.

Chapter 28 is the first of two dedicated to the role of and our relationship to technology. In this chapter, Nathan Fleshner and Trevor de Clercq consider aural skills technology broadly, situating various technologies inside, outside, and as (i.e., in place of) the aural skills classroom. Gamification is discussed, as is the divide between a computer's ability to assess notated dictation vs. its ability to assess a real-time musical performance. The authors take an even-handed approach, not advocating for or against technology, but summarizing the current state of affairs. The authors are ultimately ambivalent about the value of technological innovations, making this chapter a contribution that is both thorough and honest.

Chapter 29 concerns a specific task given to students at the RCM in aural classes, which is identifying and singing an individual member of a given SATB or 5-note chord (depending on the level). Jonathan Pitkin developed and implemented a piece of software called "Audit" that allows students to practice this skill outside of class. Data regarding student success before and after the implementation of Audit were inconclusive, but this chapter would be useful to anyone considering writing software

of their own, or even those thinking about implementing existing software in their classes, because the author provides a thoughtful discussion of the value of computer aided instruction, including the types of practice possible in the digital environment.

Because it does more than summarize the 29 preceding chapters, and because it is largely theoretical/philosophical, I include the Coda here. In this numberless chapter, the editors not only comment on the collection, but also present two devices intended to compel readers into more creative and intentional thinking about aural skills instruction. The first is a section titled "Toward a Methodology for the Future of Aural Training," in which the editors present a spiral curriculum that moves students from "theoretical aurality," through "technological aurality," and on to "practical aurality," then repeats that sequence. In addition, the following "pedagogical actions" are listed: integrate, connect, incorporate, apply, and interconnect. Their model, explained in depth, treats aural skills as a "lifelong journey" (476), rather than as a series of courses to be satisfied in college. The second device is "A Manifesto for Aural Skill Education (aMASE)," which is exactly what it sounds like. Readers considering their own aural skills courses might want to consider each of the eight points in this credo.

III. The Practical Chapters

Turning now to the practical chapters, Timothy Chenette focuses on the first stage in Karpinski's model of dictation: attentive hearing, in Chapter 4. Attentional control is defined, and barriers to attentional control are enumerated. The author then provides examples of how this information can provide valuable perspective to what we do in the classroom. This chapter highlights the fact that we are teaching humans whose brains have limitations, and that how we engage and train them to hear music precisely is important.

In Chapter 5, Martin Scheuregger presents an aural approach to music analysis, with the goal of getting students' attention out of the score and into their ears and the aural experience of a piece. Students use time stamps and basic terminology to create graphic analyses, which can be freely artistic or created in a spreadsheet. Several examples of student work are included, and a few pieces are suggested for classroom use, including some discussion of what lessons might be learned by studying them. One benefit of this method is that once an instructor is no longer beholden to a score (which can be expensive, if it can be found at all), any piece of recorded music is available for analysis and discussion. From the most basic minuet to Tuvan throat singing to film scores to popular musics, all are available for analysis.

Samantha M. Inman advocates for sing-and-play exercises in Chapter 7. The author begins with a review of current textbooks and the degree to which they include sing-and-play exercises, if at all, then details the results of a survey the author conducted regarding "the range of approaches to sing-and-play assignments in current use" (103). She also shares personal and best practices in detail, including sample exercises and methods for assessment. A list of considerations, questions that must be answered before creating a sing-and-play curriculum, is included, and at the end of the paragraph Inman states, "The answers to these questions vary according to resources, student population, and the inclination of individual instructors" (103). This highlights a major problem facing those who wish to try out the activities in this volume: although we are experts, we are not always given free rein over our content. Another point is that aural skills instructors have limited time in which to teach, meaning that the adoption of sing-and-play exercises, for those of us who do not already do them, likely means giving up some other instruction we currently provide.

Chapter 8, by Christopher Atkinson, concerns undergraduate aural skills and the teaching of pitch function, in the service of teaching students how to "understand" music they perform. The author admits that his notion of "understanding" is somewhat ineffable—it is something we as experienced musicians can hear, but would be hard-pressed to define. Nevertheless, he does a commendable job of defining his terms, making his goals clear, and providing a rationale for the second half of the chapter, in which he presents a novel proto-notation that gets students to recognize precisely how any given note is participating in an underlying harmony, thereby encouraging them to hear and sing each note in a more meaningful way. As a side note, this chapter offers a lot of definitions, including one of aural skills itself, and I cannot help but wonder if the need to offer such a definition is an indicator of the lack of a shared understanding, even among experts. I am not sure that a collection of essays regarding the pedagogy of organic chemistry would include a definition of the topic.

In Chapter 9, Justin Mariner and Peter Schubert focus on the keyboard, as such, making a case for integrating keyboard skills into aural skills and written theory courses. Even though it is about pedagogy and thus tangentially relates to the aural skills classroom, I am not sure how this chapter belongs in this collection. Even so, readers who come to this volume to learn about aural skills pedagogy might delight in the unexpected joy of learning something about keyboard skills pedagogy.

Jennifer Beavers and Susan Olson address pitch-matching issues in aural skills students in Chapter 10, which begins with a review of literature concerning pitch cognition. The authors then provide best practices for assessing the root cause of

any difficulties observed in students, and for setting up one's classroom to maximize successful learning and singing. The chapter concludes with a section titled, "Four Common Problems and Solutions," an excellent concise guide for working with students who need extra help with the vocal production aspect of aural skills.

Chapter 11, by Chi Ying Lam, relates an innovative musical pedagogy developed for use in a primary school in Hong Kong, where aural skills are not typically taught (evidently). The innovation presented in this chapter was the grafting of techniques from the pedagogy of drama onto those of aural skills (herein called "aural awareness"). The experiment detailed in this chapter asked students to identify individual pitches, *à la* absolute pitch. In the end, it is shown that the drama exercises did, in fact, help students recognize pitches. In addition to the novel pedagogy, this chapter offers a unique perspective in which absolute pitch is valued. Elsewhere in this volume, the widely agreed-upon value favors functional hearing as opposed to absolute pitch, so this chapter serves as a reminder that all values can be questioned.

In Chapter 13, Anri Herbst introduces the concept of a "ghost score," which is, simply put, one presented to students incomplete. The student's task is to complete the score, working from a recording. Students can dictate a four-measure melody outside of any context other than melodic dictation practice, or they can transcribe four measures of a melody while being given a more complete musical context for that melody, in the form of a professional recording and the notation for the other instruments sounding during those measures—not to mention the music leading into and out of those four measures. Even if a melodic dictation curriculum consists entirely of melodies from existing literature, those melodies are typically presented in isolation from their original context. The author makes the secondary point that scores can comprise any music, including popular and non-Western musics. Indeed, the chapter's example is a transcription "of Miriam Makeba's 1960 (remixed in 2008 and 2012) rendition of the Indonesian lullaby 'Suliram' [. . .]" This chapter suffers from some errors regarding identification and content of examples (detailed below), but it nevertheless advances a compelling pedagogy.

Chapter 14, by Miranda Francis, recounts a new aural skills course designed after students with absolute pitch (AP) complained that the standard course was boring and/or a waste of time. The new course was designed to engage "real-world aural skills of direct relevance to their working lives as professional musicians" (211). The course is thoroughly conceived and seems to be well designed, a judgment I base on the course syllabus and several excellent assignments in the chapter. Although the course described in this chapter does not do this, I could not help but dream

about a course that ignores pitch, or takes it for granted, and focuses on rhythm and meter, or one that tries to teach the recognition of scale degrees, as such. This latter skill is one that musicians with AP struggle with yet is integral to the way we wish our students to listen to music. One curiosity is the following statement: "A recent survey of professional musicians . . . found little agreement as to the specific aural skills necessary for practitioners, 'nor the extent or level of those skills necessary to undertake professional work'" (214). Those who argue that what we do in aural skills courses ought to relate directly to what professional musicians actually do should take note.

Christopher Price laments the decline of music literacy among students in popular music courses in Chapter 15, and advances singing as the most effective means for teaching literacy. The author recommends the old genres of the glee and the catch as ways to engage students in both singing and reading music. Wordplay is the great delight of the catch, although the lyrics are often of a "scurrilous or salacious" nature (243), so the author helpfully provides some examples that are innocent and therefore appropriate for use in the classroom yet retain the wit and fun inherent to the genre. In addition, five complete examples from the glee repertoire are provided at the end of the chapter for immediate use. A secondary concern within this chapter is that of "a musical legacy." The author explains this by pointing out the importance of verbal literacy: "[T]he issue is profoundly political. Illiteracy disenfranchises; it disempowers. And beyond the political is the cultural: literacy confers access to the soul and the heritage of a civilization" (226). Therein lies the point of connection with music literacy, since music is a powerful contributor to the construction of a cultural identity.

In Chapter 20, Crystal Peebles provides samples of practical exercises aimed at helping students appreciate harmonic underpinnings of common melodic fragments. The methodology is grounded in "schema" theory, in that the author begins with a small set of stock harmonic progressions and has students sing arpeggiations of each, thereby internalizing the progression. The arpeggiations are called "mantras." Students build on these mantras "to facilitate sight singing, improvisation, and dictation activities" (326). Assignments and activities are detailed.

Chapter 21 pairs well with Chapter 13, in that it concerns the use of real music in the aural skills classroom, as opposed to music composed for didactic purposes. Daniel B. Stevens, Philip Duker, and Jennifer Shafer write, "When we had previously asked our students to notate outer voices, Roman numerals, and figures, they often focused exclusively on the correctness of their notated lines and chord symbols, becoming mired

in atomistic elements rather than holistic qualities of the music and their experience of it" (334–5). The solution presented in this chapter is to employ real music from literature and to have students engage with such pieces holistically. "Encountering excerpts from a variety of genres (both popular and classical) dramatically increases students' perception of the relevance of these activities to their everyday lives" (335). The authors include in-class activities that build toward and then focus on the guide-tone method detailed in Rahn & McKay, 1988. This chapter is an excellent and practical guide to teaching aural skills beyond sight-singing and dictation.

Jorge Alexandre Costa begins Chapter 22 by advancing a pedagogical theory, but the second half of this chapter includes eight examples of the pedagogical theory in practice. The idealistic opening puts this article squarely in the group of chapters that see aural skills as a corollary to music analysis. The author defines the musical *habitus* (a socially generated cognitive construct), which operates within a social *field* (a defined social space, such as an academic discipline), thereby establishing a context in which meaningful aural skills can take place. In the second half, eight examples demonstrate the pedagogical theory that stems from *habitus* and *field* in practice. One quibble I had with this chapter is that the term *habitus* is used in a technical sense a few times before it is defined for the reader, so I had to reread an earlier section after learning what the term meant. I advise reading the definitions on pp. 353–54 before reading the article in full.

In Chapter 24, Jena Root presents a practical guide for introducing improvisation into college-level aural skills courses. She makes it easy to see how improvisation can be part of the classroom experience, even for those for whom music exists almost primarily "on the page." In addition to a clear rationale and instructions, the author also includes an URL that takes the reader to a website containing supplementary material.

After a summary of three seminal works in atonal aural skills, Kent D. Cleland presents a novel process for teaching students how to sing atonal melodies *at sight* in Chapter 26. Due to the author's institutional expectations (limitations?), the method is designed to be presented/learned over the course of just one semester, so the author measures student performance with equal emphases on process and product.

Jenine Brown presents a method for guiding students through 12-tone analysis without a score in Chapter 27. After a brief literature review, the author provides lesson plans and suggestions for how to adapt the lessons to slightly different contexts. This chapter is a must-read for anyone hoping to get students to *listen* to post-tonal music, as opposed to "understanding" it by labeling tone-rows in the score. It should

be noted that not all programs offer an entire semester of post-tonal aural skills, one of the various ways in which this book implicitly draws attention to differences among music programs.

IV. General comments

As I made my way through this book, I was struck by the vast number of skills and activities that count as "aural skills." Beyond sight-singing and dictation, the voice can be integrated with the keyboard, the ear can be employed in score reading and interpretation, and both can create music in real time in the form of improvisation, to name just a few of the directions in which aural skills might be extended. Furthermore, for those who teach it, understanding this subfield of a subfield leads down myriad interdisciplinary paths. In addition to being experts in music theory and analysis, aural skills pedagogy also calls on us to be vocal coaches (Chapter 10), to be proficient in both diatonic and chromatic spaces (Chapters 23 through 27), to explore musics beyond the canon of Western art music (Chapter 13), to be philosophers of music (Chapters 2, 17, and 19), and to be at least conversant in issues of music cognition (Chapters 4, 10, and 25), to name just a few paths that intersect with aural skills. To do what we do well is truly a labor of love.

I also realized that a bit of a divide regarding intended outcomes exists among aural skills pedagogues. For some, aural skills should enhance students' thinking in music. In this view, aural skills are a natural companion to the analysis and interpretation of music, which is to say, music theory. For others, aural skills exist to enhance the practical, day-to-day musicianship of the professional performer and/or composer. In this view, skills of transcription (written or mental), performance, and improvisation are the goals of aural skills, and what we do in the classroom needs to be relevant to students' futures in "the real world." This divide bears mentioning, because each chapter rests comfortably within one of these two camps, and readers would do well to be aware of their own bias(es) as they read the volume.

Chapter 5 exemplifies one problem facing those of us hoping to implement a teaching technique or module developed by another, which is that our local context can differ greatly from the context in which that attractive teaching technique was developed. Every institution imposes a unique set of constraints and expectations upon aural skills courses, so a fair amount of adaptation has to take place before we can try something that has been successful elsewhere. Readers should not expect anything in this book to be easy to implement.

I also wonder: where are the good, solid theories and pedagogies of melody? Who is willing to talk about scale degree without relating it to harmony? Chapters 8, 20, and 21 invoke scale degree in the service of harmony, but this book lacks discussion of melodic contour, perception of scale degree, and so on. Pedagogy of scale degree and melody seem to be wide-open avenues for further research.

A few chapters in this volume highlight one current and significant trend in aural skills pedagogy in that they juxtapose common-practice aural skills against pop/rock aural skills. The walled garden of college-level musicianship is opening up not just to novel pedagogical methods, but also to an increasingly wide variety of musical styles; our pedagogy is adapting accordingly. This volume might end up serving as some sort of time capsule that teachers of the future will read to remember this moment in the evolution of our profession.

Turning now to specific features of the book, I do wish that the material in the final chapter, the Coda, would have been at the beginning. As much as I truly appreciate the book's musical metaphors, including the Overture, Intermezzi, and Coda (subtitled *clausula vera*), the information and ideas contained in this final chapter reveal a lot about the editors' thinking regarding the book's six sections. Some of this information is available in the body of the book as Intermezzi, but including it at the outset establishes a mindset and context for absorbing the broad range of topics. The first chapter, written by one of the editors, suggests reading the Coda after Chapter 1, although only "if time is tight and you plan to dip in and out of this book over a period of time." I would recommend this to all readers, regardless of your intentions.

Readers should know that RCASP was conceived independently of the similarly titled *Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*, and therefore has some differences. For example, RCASP does not come with lesson plans for each chapter. Some authors include such details, but lesson plans were not integral to the purpose of this collection. Any idea that these two volumes are companions to one another would be mistaken.

And finally, this book needed another round or two of editing. There are so many misspelled terms that it can become distracting. To provide just a few examples, Graph 1.8 misspells "within" as "wothin" (23); "unpinning" should have been "underpinning," and "paritmenti" should have been "partimenti" (320). Perhaps most egregiously, my name is misspelled in Chapter 12 (179, 188). In addition to misspellings, Chapter 13 includes errors in the prose when referring to examples. Be advised that example numbers in the second complete paragraph on p. 197 are off by one and seem to refer to a graphic that is not there. In addition, the prose at the top of p. 198 guides

the reader to Example 13.4, which "presents a Ghost Score of 'Suliram' [. . .]" but it is clearly referring to Example 13.5 on p. 199, which is captioned "Ghost Score of 'Suliram.'" Errors of these types are not enough to render the content unintelligible, but they do occur with regularity.

The range of topics found in the *Routledge Companion to Aural Skills Pedagogy* reflects the dizzying array of activities possible within aural skills courses and addresses each topic thoughtfully and carefully. This book is an invaluable resource for those who want to teach aural skills well, and my guess is that every reader will find something fresh and exciting within its pages that will carry forward into a new assignment, a revised syllabus, or even a refreshed curriculum. The variety of perspectives—geographical, philosophical, and musical—will challenge even the most seasoned teachers to think more deeply about the assumptions they carry into the classroom.

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Contributors

Michael Baker is Professor of Music Theory at the University of Kentucky, where he teaches courses on music theory and aural skills, counterpoint, musical analysis, and musical interpretation. He has served as faculty teaching fellow within the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence, and is affiliate faculty within the Lewis Honors College, where he teaches courses on music and interdisciplinary studies. In addition to his work as a professor, Michael is also an avid horn player and performs in local and civic ensembles.

Patricia Burt is Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Delaware. Her research in the field of pedagogy includes theory games, approaches to large-scale design at the outset of the theory core, and ungrading the theory classroom. She has developed an approach to registral analysis to study how use of registral space contributes to a composition's musical design. She has published articles in *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* and *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy* and has presented at Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic, national and regional conferences of College Music Society, and Pedagogy into Practice.

David Castro is Associate Professor of Music Theory at St. Olaf College. His Ph.D. is from the University of Oregon and his research interests include the music of Dmitri Shostakovich and music theory pedagogy. His scholarship appears in the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* and in the *Journal of Mathematics and Music*. In addition, he is co-author of *Comprehensive Aural Skills*. David is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* and was a member of the Society for Music Theory's Committee on Diversity.

Timothy Chenette is Associate Professor of Music at Utah State University, where he was named the Honors Outstanding Professor of the Year in 2021. His research seeks to improve aural skills instruction through a better understanding of the brain and a quest for broader accessibility and greater applicability. These values are put into practice in the textbook *Foundations of Aural Skills*, which is freely available at uen.pressbooks.pub/auralskills.

Stacey Davis is Acting Director of the School of Music and Professor of Music Theory at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a 2019 recipient of the University of Texas System Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. Her research is centered around making connections between the analysis of musical structure, empirical research in music cognition and perception, studies of expressive performance, and music theory pedagogy. Published articles appear in *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, *Music Perception, Psychology of Music*, *Musicae Scientiae*, *Music Theory Online*, *BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute*, and *Understanding Bach*.

Philip Duker is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Delaware. His research focuses on pedagogy, analytical systems, and repetition in Twentieth-Century music. He has published articles in *Perspectives of New Music*, *Music Theory Online*, *Engaging Students*, *GAMUT*, and chapters in *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy* and *The Routledge Companion to Aural Skills Pedagogy*. In addition to being the chair of the Networking committee for the Society for Music Theory, he is the director of the Institute for Transforming University Education at the University of Delaware.

Aaron Grant is Assistant Professor of Music Theory at Missouri Western State University. His research engages issues of form, narrative, and meaning in 19th-century music as well as music theory pedagogy. He is currently working on a forthcoming textbook under contract with W.W. Norton tentatively titled *The Engaged Musician: Theory and Analysis for the 21st Century* co-authored with Rosa Abrahams, Philip Ewell, and Cora Palfy. His work can be seen in *Music Theory Spectrum*, the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, and *Engaging Students*.

Jonathan Guez is Visiting Assistant Professor at the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. His work appears in the *Journal of Schenkerian Studies*, *Music Theory Spectrum*, *Music Theory Online*, the *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Pedagogy Online*, *Music Analysis*, and elsewhere. His article "Toward a Theory of Recapitulatory Tonal Alterations," published in the *Journal of Music Theory*, was a finalist for the Society of Music Theory's Emerging Scholar Award.

Joan Huguet is Associate Professor and Chair of Music at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, where she teaches music theory and musicology. Her research interests include Classical and Romantic form, semiotics, musical theater, and music theory pedagogy in a liberal arts context. She has presented at national and international conferences including the Society for Music Theory, EuroMAC, and Pedagogy into Practice. Her translation of Jean-Jacques Nattiez's book *Musical Analyses and Musical Exegesis* was published by the University of Rochester Press in May 2021.

Stanley V. Kleppinger is Associate Professor of Music Theory in the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. His writings about the teaching of music theory appear in the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* and *Indiana Theory Review*. The University of Nebraska has recognized Dr. Kleppinger's teaching with its College Distinguished Teaching Award, the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts's Leadership Award in Curriculum or Programmatic Development, and the college's Junior Faculty Achievement Award in Teaching. He has served as president of Music Theory Midwest and secretary of the Society for Music Theory.

Alexis C. Lamb is a composer, percussionist, and educator whose work seeks to highlight our natural, historical, and societal relationships. Her recent commissions and collaborations include Third Coast Percussion, Albany (NY) Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, and Opera Omaha. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Michigan and has previously earned degrees from the Yale School of Music and Northern Illinois University. Lamb's compositions can be found on Innova Recordings, National Sawdust Tracks, Evan Chapman's Caustics, and Third Coast Percussion's Currents, Volume 1. Her works are self-published and available at https://alexislamb.com/.

Molly Reid teaches undergraduate music theory and aural skills at Florida State University, where she is pursuing a Ph.D. in music theory and a D.M. in piano performance. She holds degrees from Appalachian State University and the University of Cincinnati. Her current research interests revolve around music (theory) pedagogy and feminist music analysis. She is interested in the relationship between playing, listening to, feeling, and thinking in music; in this regard, she is working on a project that considers the performing body as the starting point for analyzing the music of Luise Adolpha Le Beau.

Allison Wente is Associate Professor of Music at Elon University. Her work focuses on mechanical instruments and recording technologies, specifically the player piano in early twentieth-century America. Her book, entitled *The Player Piano and Musical Labor: The Ghost in the Machine* (Routledge, 2022) is an exploration into the displacement of labor, technological mediation, and the differences between analog and digital technologies as they materialize in early recording media.