



Incorporating Theory into the Traditional Band Rehearsal

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What is music?

Sound or sounds that one perceives to be organized.

What is music theory?

Studying the possibilities of music?

Learning an objective language for speaking about music.

Intervals

Key Sigs

Scales

Harmony

Melody

Secondary
Function

Gr+6

(0, 1, 4)

What is music theory?

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This is not music theory.

This is probably best called “pre-theory”.

**This is our
problem!**

The Problem

We spend our entire time teaching a language we never get to actually use.

So...what do we do then?

There is no shortcut here. You must teach the language.

It is not fast, or cool, or sexy.

It takes time and seems like work to the students.

Because it is.

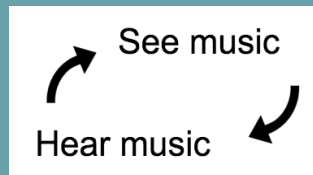
Some meta points, an example or two, and discussion.

Meta thoughts

Simple concepts to complex concepts.
(This really isn't that complicated!)
Like any language, it is tons of small rules over and over.

Use your ear. We have been hearing these sounds our entire lives.

Simple concepts to complex concepts.



Thinking and listening.

For example...Scales.

How do you teach students scales?

What are scales?

Collections of pitches, experienced linearly.

Major/minor (and forms?) WWHWWWH?

For example...Scales

Be more reductive.

What are scales?

Representation of key signatures, organized linearly.

Hierarchy. Centricity.

THAT IS WHAT WE HEAR!

So we should teach them that way 😊



For example...Scales

Key signatures.

Not hard at all.

Memorize them.

For example...Scales

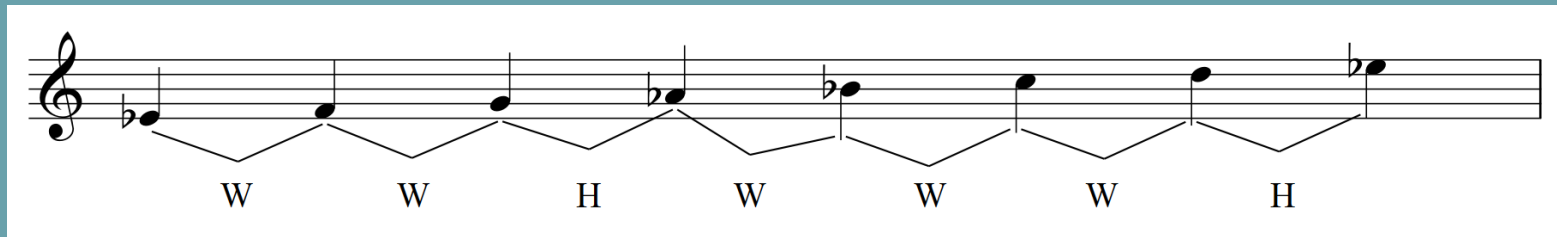
This is our periodic table.

C Major or A Minor G Major or E Minor D Major or B Minor A Major or F# Minor E Major or C# Minor B Major or G# Minor F# Major or D# Minor C# Major or A# Minor

F Major or D Minor Bb Major or G Minor Eb Major or C Minor Ab Major or F Minor Db Major or Bb Minor Gb Major or Eb Minor Cb Major or Ab Minor

Can you **imagine** studying chemistry and not memorizing the periodic table?

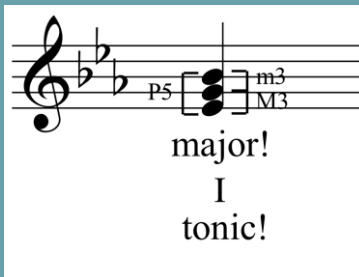
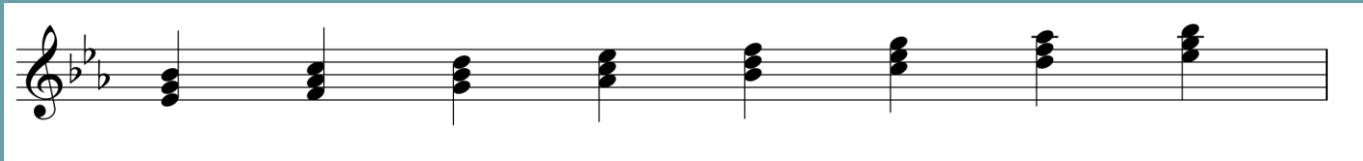
For example...Scales



For example...Scales



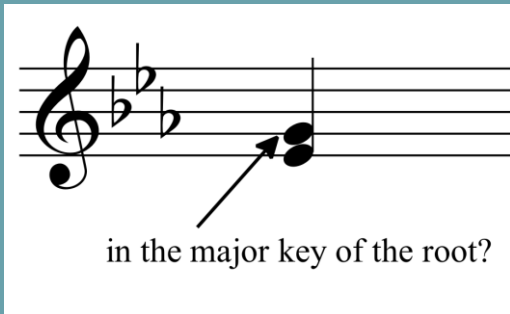
For example...Intervals and Chords



A musical staff in G minor showing the interval between G (the tonic) and Bb. The interval is labeled as a perfect fifth (p5) and a minor third (m3). The text below the staff reads: "major!", "I", and "tonic!".



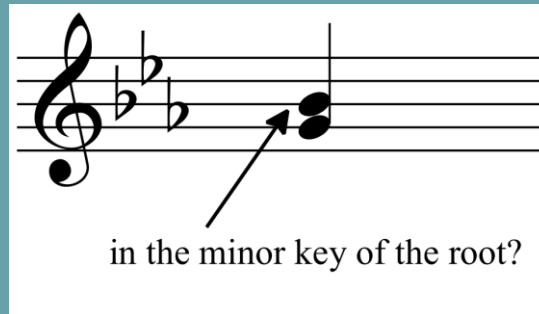
For example...Intervals and Chords



A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The notes are G3 (first space), B-flat3 (second space), and D4 (third space). An arrow points from the root note G3 to the third note D4.

in the major key of the root?

Major Third



A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The notes are G3 (first space), A-flat3 (second space), and B-flat3 (second space). An arrow points from the root note G3 to the third note A-flat3.

in the minor key of the root?

Minor Third

If you know your major and minor key signatures and can count to eight
then you know your intervals.

(other than
aug/dim!)

For example...Part-Writing

Just don't teach it.

Reverse engineer music by copying music.

Micro-composition assignments.

Reading sessions of these!

Lots of limitations!

MUS 220: Modal Composition: Chunking!

Here is the opening two bars of a (pretty) famous piano piece.



Explain this to me. What do you see, and what does it mean?:

This is the third and fifth measures of the piece. What do you believe is the fourth measure? Please write it on the enclosed manuscript below.



Here are measures seven through nine (top line is treble clef, bottom is bass clef!):



Note any motivic unity from the first section (circle and label!)

How has the pitch material been altered?:

Finally, this piece is eighteen measures long. Below, please write measures seventeen and eighteen (as you would imagine them!):



Meta thoughts

Students *rarely* willingly sign up to study theory.

Not a distraction from performance.

Overcome insecurities in knowledge.



Meta thoughts

Do not be afraid to literally copy music.
This is how theory was absorbed for centuries.

Meta thoughts

Be honest with your limitations, both to yourself
and to your students.

That will be the death of your curriculum.

Meta thoughts

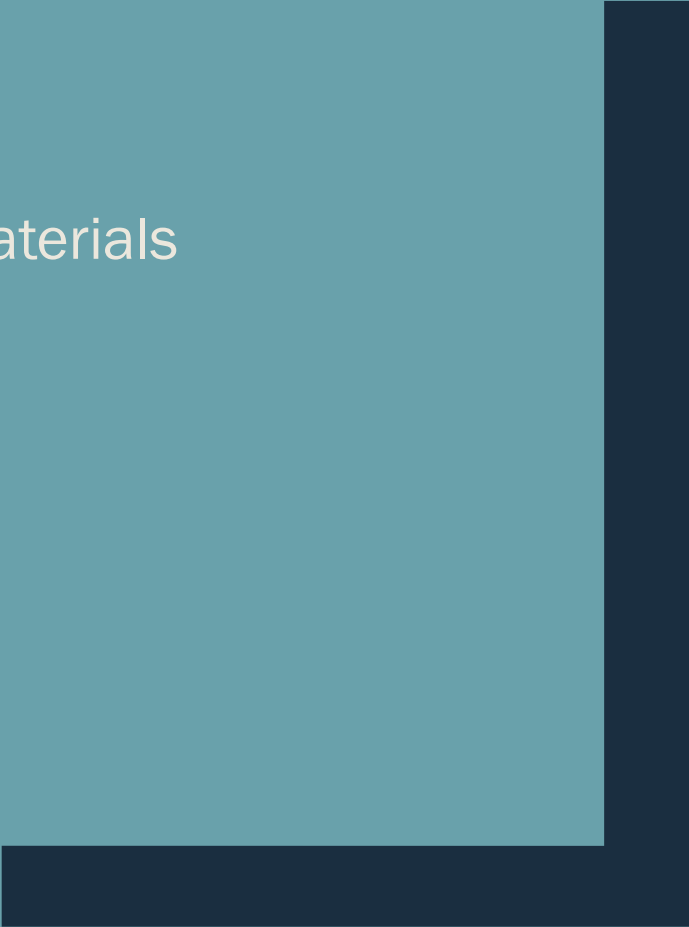
Resist the urge to think you are merely teaching testable material.

That will be the death of your curriculum.



Meta thoughts

If you want objective plans, syllabi, materials
just ask!





Meta thoughts

Questions?

