

**AP Music Theory & Composition**  
**Montgomery Blair High School**  
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Music Theory & Composition is a year long course designed to provide the student with a thorough and in-depth study of the practice of Western music from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. “Tonal Harmony” by Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne” will be our primary text and workbook with supplemental work from “Music in Theory & Practice” by Benward and Saker. Both texts are used in universities throughout the country and provide excellent groundwork for preparing for the AP Exam given in May.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To learn basic musical language and grammar including note reading, musical notation, harmonic analysis, and part writing which will lead to a thorough understanding of music composition and music theory.
2. To obtain and practice ear training skills and skills required for sight reading musical literature.
3. To recognize the development of music from a historical and cultural perspective and extend musical awareness beyond music currently familiar to the student.
4. To prepare for the AP Music Theory Exam, May 2016.

Daily assignments are given in the “Tonal Harmony” workbook. You may borrow a workbook and write out all the assignments on your own staff paper (8 1/2 X 11) or may purchase one for \$30 which is below the school’s purchase cost. ALL WORK MUST BE DONE IN PENCIL – WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IF DONE IN PEN! Mechanical pencils work best but are not required. You are not required to purchase music notation software such as Sibelius or Finale.

You are expected to participate actively in classroom discussions, exercises and demonstrations. You need to bring workbooks, staff paper, and pencils to class each day. You should also have a notebook section for music theory to keep returned workbook assignments, class notes and other handouts for later review. Reading assignments are to be done at home in preparation for class and you do not need to bring the textbook to class. There will be homework given each class and the information posted on Edline. A general outline of topics for each week is listed at the end of this handout. Please keep the weekly list in your notebook for reference.

in order to meet the objectives of the course you are expected to be in class and on time. There is much material to be covered and practiced on a daily basis and missing work and sight-singing/dictation practice makes it difficult to keep on pace with the rest of the class. Absences will be handled according to school policy. Work/tests/quizzes completed in class cannot be made up if an absence is unexcused.

Your work will be assessed as follows: Tests (50%); Classwork (40%), and homework (10%). Your homework is usually graded for correctness. Reteaching and reassessment is ongoing and assignments that may not be reassessed will be clearly identified. Students are expected to take the AP Music Theory Exam in May, 2016.

AP Music Theory requires time spent listening to music in order to gain understanding of how published (and also improvised) compositions sound and to help the student

develop his/her ear. Students are required to attend one live concert each semester and to complete a critique (a summative assessment) based on the announced rubric for that semester. We are very lucky in the Washington DC area to have many opportunities to attend concerts, many of them free to students. The National Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus which are based at Strathmore Hall in Bethesda is one such venue. Please see their website [www.nationalphilharmonic.org](http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org) for the full 2015-2016 listing. Suggested concerts at Strathmore include:

September 19 & 20 – Symphonic Dances from West Side Story  
October 31, 2015 -- Bach Favorites  
December 19 & 20, 2015 – “Messiah” by Handel  
February 20 & 21 – Vivaldi’s Gloria  
April 2 & 3 – Haydn’s Lord Nelson Mass

You need to be careful with the keyboards, headsets, and other equipment in the classroom. If you damage equipment you will be assessed a damage fee (\$20 for a headset; \$39 for adapters/hubs; and up to \$500 for a keyboard).

AP Music Theory involves a lot of hands-on application and practice of presented material and is a very rewarding course that gives you a life-long appreciation for what makes music “tick”. **Please make every effort to keep up with the work in this course – procrastination can be disasterous!** Remember, if you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up work, get class notes, etc. Feel free to come see me if you don’t understand the material presented. I look forward to working with you this year!

Sara M. Josey  
Piano Keyboard Teacher  
AP Music Theory & Composition Teacher  
Fine Arts Resource Teacher  
Montgomery Blair High School

## AP MUSIC THEORY COURSE PLANNER

This schedule is approximate as classes may move slower or faster through a given chapter depending on holidays, other school-wide periodic disruptions and overall class understanding of the given material. The chapter references are from "Tonal Harmony". Writing good melodies is especially stressed in the first semester with short compositions added during second semester. Reading assignments and written homework are given in class.

### FIRST NINE WEEKS

#### Week 1

##### Chapter 1 - Elements of Pitch –

Keyboard and octave registers; notation of the staff; major scale; major key signatures; minor scales; minor key signatures; scale degree names; intervals; perfect, major, and minor intervals; augmented and diminished intervals; inversion of intervals; consonant and dissonant intervals.

*Ear Training and Dictation:* Intervals and scales

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm - Simple meters; the beat and its division into two parts.

#### Weeks 2 and 3

##### Chapter 2 - Elements of Rhythm –

Rhythm; durational symbols; beat and tempo; meter; division of the beat; simple time signatures; compound time signatures.

*Ear Training and Dictation:* Intervals and scales

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm - Simple meters; the beat and its division into two parts.

#### Weeks 4 and 5

##### Chapter 3 - Introduction to Triads and Seventh Chords –

Triads; Seventh Chords, Inversions of Chords; Inversion Symbols and Figured Bass; Lead Sheet Symbols; Recognizing Chords in Various Textures.

*Ear Training:* Triad recognition;

*Rhythmic Dictation* - Simple meters, seconds, thirds, and fourths.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - stepwise melodies, major keys; Rhythm - simple meters; the beat and its division into two parts.

#### Weeks 6 and 7

##### Chapter 4 - Diatonic Chords in Major and Minor Keys –

Minor scale; diatonic triads in major; diatonic triads in minor; diatonic seventh chords in major; diatonic seventh chords in minor.

*Ear Training:* Melodic Dictation - fifths, sixths, and octaves;

*Harmonic dictation* - four part settings of the tonic triad.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - Intervals from the tonic triad, major keys; Rhythm - simple meters.

#### Weeks 8 and 9

##### Chapter 5 - Principles of Voice Leading –

the melodic line; notating chords, voicing a single triad; parallel motion.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - beat subdivision by 2; Melodic dictation - the tonic triad and dominant seventh; Harmonic dictation - the tonic triad and dominant seventh.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - intervals from the tonic triad, major keys; Rhythm - compound meters; the beat and its division into three parts.

## **SECOND NINE WEEKS**

### **Weeks 1 and 2**

#### **Chapter 6 - Root Position Part Writing –**

Root position part writing with repeated roots; root position part writing with roots a 4<sup>th</sup> (5<sup>th</sup>) apart; root position part writing with roots a 3<sup>rd</sup> (6<sup>th</sup>) apart; root position part writing with roots a 2<sup>nd</sup> (7<sup>th</sup>) apart; instrumental ranges and transpositions.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - beat subdivision by 4, anacrusis; Melodic dictation - primary triads and the dominant seventh; Harmonic dictation - primary triads and the dominant seventh, cadential tonic six-four.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - minor keys, intervals from the tonic triad; Rhythm - simple and compound meters.

### **Weeks 3 and 4**

#### **Chapter 7 - Harmonic Progression –**

Sequences and the circle of fifths; the I and V chords; the II chord; the VI chord; the III chord; the VII chord; the IV chord; common exceptions; differences in the minor mode; progressions involving seventh chords, harmonizing a simple melody.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - dots and ties; Melodic dictation - minor mode; Harmonic dictation – minor mode, first inversion of triads.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - intervals from the dominant (V) triad, major and minor keys; Rhythm - simple and compound meters.

### **Weeks 5 and 6**

#### **Chapter 8 - Triads in First Inversion –**

bass arpeggiation; substituted first inversion triads; parallel sixth chords; part writing first inversion triads; soprano-bass counterpoint.

*Ear Training:* Melodic dictation - the supertonic triad; Harmonic dictation - the supertonic triad, inversions of V7.

*Sight Singing:* The C Clefs - alto and tenor clefs.

### **Weeks 7 and 8**

#### **Chapter 9 - Triads in Second Inversion –**

bass arpeggiation and the melodic bass; the cadential six-four; the passing six-four; the pedal six-four; part-writing for second inversion triads.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - compound meter; Melodic dictation - all diatonic triads; Harmonic dictation - all diatonic triads.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - further use of diatonic intervals; Rhythm - simple and compound meters.

### **Week 9**

Review Chapters 1 through 9 to **prepare for Semester One Exam**

## **SEMESTER TWO –THIRD NINE WEEKS**

### **Week 1 and 2**

**Chapter 10 - Cadences, Phrases, and Periods –**

Musical form; cadences; cadences and harmonic rhythm, motives and phrases; period forms.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - triplets; Melodic dictation - supertonic and leading tone sevenths; Harmonic dictation - supertonic and leading tone sevenths.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - intervals from the dominant seventh chord (V7), other diatonic intervals of the seventh; Rhythm - simple and compound meters.

### **Week 3**

**Chapter 11 - Non-Chord Tones 1** - Classification of Non-Chord Tones; passing tones; neighboring tones; suspensions and retardations; figured bass and lead sheet symbols; embellishing a simple texture.

*Ear Training:* Examples from music literature.

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm - subdivision of beat, simple beat into four parts, compound beat into six parts.

### **Week 4**

**Chapter 12 - Non-Chord Tones 2** –

Appoggiaturas; escape tones; the neighbor group; anticipations; the pedal point; special problems in the analysis of non-chord tones.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - syncopation; Melodic dictation - non-dominant seventh chords; Harmonic dictation - non-dominant seventh chords.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - intervals from the tonic and dominant triads; Rhythm - subdivision in simple and compound meters.

### **Week 5**

**Chapter 13 - The V7 Chord** –

General voice-leading considerations; the V7 in root position; the V7 in three parts; other resolutions of the V7; the inverted V7 chord; the V6/5 Chord; the V4/3 Chord; the V4/2 Chord; the approach to the 7<sup>th</sup>.

*Ear Training:* Melodic dictation - scalar variants, modal borrowing, and decorative chromaticism; Harmonic dictation - scalar variants, modal borrowing.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - further use of diatonic intervals; Rhythm - subdivision in simple and compound meters.

### **Week 6**

**Chapter 14 - The II7 and VII7 Chords** –

The II7 chord; the VII7 chord in Major; the VII7 chord in Minor.

*Ear Training:* Melodic and Harmonic dictation - secondary dominants.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - chromaticism (I) - chromatic nonharmonic tones, the dominant of the dominant (V/V) harmony, modulation to the key of the dominant.

### **Week 7**

**Chapter 15 - Other Diatonic Seventh Chords** –

The IV7 chord; the VI7 chord; the 17 chord; the III7 chord; seventh chords and the Circle-of-Fifths progression.

*Ear Training:* Examples from music literature.

*Sight Singing:* Melody - chromaticism (II) - modulation to closely related keys, additional secondary dominant harmonies.

### **Week 8 and 9**

**Chapter 16 and 17 - Secondary Functions 1 and 2** –

Chromaticism and altered chords; secondary functions; secondary dominant chords; spelling secondary dominants; recognizing secondary dominants; secondary dominants in context, secondary leading tone chords; spelling secondary leading-tone chords; recognizing secondary leading-tone chords; sequences involving secondary functions; deceptive resolutions of secondary functions.

*Ear Training:* Melodic and Harmonic dictation - modulation to closely related keys

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm and Melody - syncopation

## **FOURTH NINE WEEKS**

### **Weeks 1 and 2**

**Chapter 18 and 19 - Modulations using diatonic common chords –**

modulation and change of key; modulation and tonicization; key relationships; common-chord modulation; analyzing common-chord modulation; altered chords as common chords; sequential modulation; modulation by common tone; monophonic modulation; direct modulation.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation; Melodic dictation - modulation to distantly related keys;

*Harmonic dictation –* two-part dictations, enharmonic modulation.

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm and Melody - triplet division of undotted note values, duplet division of dotted note values.

### **Week 3**

**Chapter 20 - Binary and Ternary Forms –**

Formal terminology; binary forms; ternary forms; rounded binary forms; 12-bar blues; other formal designs.

*Ear Training:* Examples from music literature.

*Harmonic Dictation:* two-part dictation

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm and Melody - changing meter signatures: the Hemiola; less common meter signatures.

### **Week 4**

**Chapters 21 and 22 - Mode Mixture and the Neapolitan Chord –**

Borrowed chords in minor; the use of b6 in Major; modulations involving mode mixture; the Neapolitan chord.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - irregular meters; Melodic and Harmonic dictation - diatonic modes.

*Sight Singing:* Rhythm and Melody - further subdivision of the beat; notation in slow tempi.

### **Week 5**

**Chapters 23 and 24 - Augmented Sixth Chords –**

The interval of the augmented 6<sup>th</sup>; the Italian augmented 6<sup>th</sup> chord; the French augmented 6<sup>th</sup>; the German augmented 6<sup>th</sup>; resolutions to other scale degrees and other chord members.

*Ear Training:* Rhythmic dictation - changing meters;

*Harmonic Dictation:* two-part dictation

*Sight Singing:* past AP exam examples

### **Week 6,7, and continuing to AP Exam date**

*Review for AP Music Theory Exam*

## Post-AP Exam

### Chapter 28 - Art Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music –

Impressionism; scales; the diatonic church modes; pentatonic scales; synthetic scales; tertian harmony and lead sheet symbols; quartal and secundal harmony; parallelism; pandiatonicism; atonal theory; the 12-tone serialism; total serialism. Aleatory or chance music.

Project: 12-tone row composition

- **Semester two final exam for both seniors and underclassmen will be an announced final project, peer review and presentation.**
- Practice AP examples (both aural and multiple choice) will be given as appropriate throughout the year so that students will be familiar with the format, kinds of music literature, and expectations for students on the exam.
- Students are expected to use online sites for ear-training practice regularly. Sites and assignments will be announced in class throughout the year.
- Summative tests on individual chapters, individual sight-singing, listening response and dictation will be given throughout the year and will be announced.

**PLEASE SIGN (AND HAVE YOUR PARENTS READ AND SIGN) & RETURN THIS PAGE. YOU WILL KEEP IT WITH YOUR SYLLABUS IN YOUR NOTEBOOK AFTER SHOWING IT TO ME.**

I have read and understand the course overview, objectives, material requirements, and expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_

student PRINTED name

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student SIGNATURE

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parent PRINTED name

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parent SIGNATURE

I understand that I may either borrow a course workbook and write out all the assignments on my own staff paper or that I may purchase a workbook for \$30 and complete the work in it.

\_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE

Parent Contact information (email preferred): \_\_\_\_\_

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