

Advanced Placement Music Theory
Syllabus and Course Description
Fairfax Choral Society
2012 – 2013 School Year

Instructor

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Primary Textbook and Course Materials

Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide To Theory and Analysis – 2nd Edition*, W.W. Norton & Co. (2010)

Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide Workbook – 2nd Edition*, W.W. Norton & Co. (2010)

These materials are available on Amazon.com and other online book sites and are described more fully at <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?id=17156>.

Prerequisites

Students registering for the course will be expected to have acquired at least basic performance skills in voice or on an instrument

Course Schedule

Class will be held weekly on Tuesday evenings from 6 – 7:30 at Annandale United Methodist Church, located at 6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003, from September – May. In addition, students will be expected to participate in an additional 90-minute on-line class session each week. Weekly homework will also be assigned.

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide students with the major components common to a first year course in a college music program. AP Music Theory integrates aspects of melody, harmony, texture, rhythm, form, musical analysis, elementary composition, history and style. Musicianship skills such as dictation aural skills, sight-singing and keyboard harmony are considered important parts of the course. This course is taught through the extensive use of movable-do solfege. Students are required to sing every class in various groupings: full-class, small groups, and individually. All melodic and harmonic concepts will be taught and reinforced through solfege. Students are prepared to take the AP Music Theory Exam when they have completed this course.

Course Objectives

The ultimate goal of an AP music theory course is to develop a student's ability to recognize, organize, understand and describe the basic materials and processes of music heard or presented in a score. This goal is best achieved by integrated approaches to the student's development of:

- Aural skills through listening exercises
- Sight singing skills through performance exercises
- Written skills through written exercises
- Compositional skills through creative musical exercises
- Analytical skills through analysis of musical compositions drawn from the body of great musical literature from a variety of styles.

Course Content

The course seeks student mastery of the rudiments and terminology of music, including:

- Notation
- Intervals
- Scales and keys
- Chords
- Metric organization
- Rhythmic patterns

We address these basic concepts through listening to a wide variety of music, including European classical, folk, jazz, and popular music. We focus primarily on the system of major-minor tonality, but also incorporate a study of the church modes, pentatonic, whole tone and other scales and twentieth-century techniques and terminology. We give serious attention to the acquisition of correct notational skills. Speed, accuracy, and fluency with basic music materials will be emphasized.

Building on this foundation, the course progresses to include more sophisticated and creative tasks:

- Composition of a bass line for a given melody, implying appropriate harmony
- Realization of a figured bass
- Realization of a Roman numeral progression
- Composition (fugues, species counterpoint)
- Analysis of musical repertoire including study of motivic treatment, examination of rhythmic and melodic interaction between voices of a composition and harmonic analysis of functional tonal passages.

This course will also emphasize procedures based in common-practice tonality:

- Functional triadic harmony in four-voice texture (including non-harmonic tones and secondary dominants)
- Cadences
- Melodic and harmonic compositional processes
- Standard rhythms and meters
- Phrase structure (e.g. contrasting period, phrase group)
- Small forms (e.g. rounded binary, simple ternary, theme and variation, strophic)
- Large forms (e.g. sonata, symphony, theme and variations)
- Modulation to closely related keys

Aural Skills

Students will spend a considerable amount of time on melodic and harmonic dictation. Examples include: dictation of a melodic line, aural identification of triad and seventh chord quality (major, minor, augmented, diminished) and inversion. Recognition of harmonic patterns and cadences and the ability to correctly identify and notate harmonic sequences are integral parts of the course.

Sight-Singing

Students will practice sight-singing in groups and individually. Students will be expected to sight-sing accurately a four measure melody that includes non-diatonic tones, in simple or compound meter, in major or minor tonality. Additionally, the student should be able to draw harmonic implications from the melody.

Composition

December - Students are introduced to creating a bass line from a given soprano. We start with phrase length examples and analyze given melodies to write good bass lines. Harmonic implications are discussed. Students will analyze “good” bass lines and harmonic motion, and then create their own examples.

January - Students continue to work on creation of an appropriate bass line for a given soprano. We now expand to four phrases, and include altered tones in the soprano line, making the process a bit harder. Students are asked to write out the inner harmonies and copy out parts for a string quartet. This gives us practice in writing in the alto clef.

February - We write our first, short fugue. We continue to refine our harmonic/counterpoint understanding by writing bass lines to given melodies.

March - We write a short piece for mixed instruments using transposition and correct ranges. We copy out the parts from the score, and organize a group to play and record the results. The class discusses each composition after they are recorded.

April - We polish our style, and review compositional techniques used in creating musically interesting, musically appropriate bass and harmonies to a given soprano line.

Class Expectations

- Students are expected to participate actively in classroom discussions and activities.
- Students must complete and turn in all assignments.
- Students must keep a comprehensive notebook with returned tests, quizzes, and homework.

Quarter grade

Assignment points + Quiz points + Test points = Your points earned / Total possible points

Course Planner

Chapters from *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis – 2nd edition* (textbook & workbook)

First Nine Weeks

Week	Class Date	Chapter	Topic
<i>Part I: Building a Musical Vocabulary</i>			
1	9/4	1	Pitch and Pitch Class
2	9/11	2	Beat, Meter, and Rhythm: Simple Meters
3	9/18	10 & 3	Notation & Scoring Pitch Collections, Scales, and Major Keys
4	9/25	3 & 4	Pitch Collections, Scales, and Major Keys Minor Keys and Diatonic Modes, Pentatonic Scales
5	10/2	4 & 5	Minor Keys and Diatonic Modes, Pentatonic Scales Beat, Meter, and Rhythm: Compound Meters
6	10/9	6	Pitch Intervals
7	10/16	7	Triads and Seventh Chords
8	10/23	1-7	Review
9	10/30	1-7	Review

Second Nine Weeks

Week	Class date	Chapter	Topic
<i>Part II: Linking Musical Elements in Time</i>			
1	11/6		Special Topic: Equal Temperament Special Focus: Melodic/Harmonic Dictation
2	11/13	8	Intervals in Action (Two-Voice Composition)
3	11/20	8	Intervals in Action (Two-Voice Composition) Special Focus: Singing SATB
4	11/27	11	Voicing Chords in Multiple Parts: Instrumentation
5	12/4	9	Melodic and Rhythmic Embellishment in Two-Voice Composition Special Focus: Dictation – Canon in Score Form
<i>Part III: The Phrase Model</i>			
6	12/11	12	The Basic Phrase Model: Tonic and Dominant Voice-Leading Special Focus: Dictation – Bach chorale (soprano and bass)
7	12/18	12 13	The Basic Phrase Model: Tonic and Dominant Voice-Leading Embellishing Tones
8	1/8	14	Chorale Harmonization and Figured Bass Special Focus: Dictation – Bach chorale with modulation (soprano and bass)
9	1/15	14	Chorale Harmonization and Figured Bass

Third Nine Weeks

Week	Class date	Chapter	Topic
<i>Part III: The Phrase Model (continued)</i>			
1	1/22	15	Expanding the Basic Phrase: Leading-Tone, Predominant, and 6/4 Chords
2	1/29	16	Further Expansions of the Basic Phrase: Tonic Expansions, Root Progressions, and the Mediant Triad
3	2/5	17	The Interaction of Melody and Harmony: More on Cadence, Phrase, and Melody
4	2/12	18	Diatonic Sequences
5	2/19	19	Intensifying the Dominant: Secondary Dominants and Secondary Leading-Tone Chords; New Voice-Leading Chords
6	2/26	20	Phrase Rhythm and Motivic Analysis
<i>Part IV: Further Expansion of the Harmonic Vocabulary and Part V: Musical Form and Interpretation</i>			
7	3/5	21	Tonicizing Scale Degrees Other Than V
8	3/12	23	Binary and Ternary Forms
9	3/19	26	Popular Song and Art Song

Final Six Weeks

Week	Class date	Chapter	Topic
<i>Part IV: Further Expansion of the Harmonic Vocabulary and Part V: Musical Form and Interpretation (continued)</i>			
1	4/2	27	Variation and Rondo
2	4/9	28	Sonata-Form Movements
3	4/16	22	Modulation to Closely Related Keys
4	4/23		Exam Review & practice AP Exams
5	4/30		Exam Review & practice AP Exams
6	5/7		Exam Review & practice AP Exams

Web Resources

www.wwnorton.com - website for *Musician's Guide* texts (each textbook has a log-in code)

www.makemusic.com - free download of Finale NotePad software

<http://www.dolmetsch.com/index.htm> - music theory and history text

<http://www.emusictheory.com/drillNoteReading.html> - theory drills

<http://www.earpower.com/download.php> - theory drills

<http://www.good-ear.com/servlet/EarTrainer> - free ear training program

<http://www.msu.edu/user/spangle9> - ear training program listings

<http://musictheory.net> - theory drills

<http://www.top20musictheory.com/> - list and links of music and music theory resources

<http://music.theory.home.att.net/> - Solomon's Music Theory and Composition Resources

www.metronomeonline.com - online metronome

www.dlib.indiana.edu/variations/scores - classical scores printable online

www.sheetmusicarchive.net - classical scores printable online

www.looknohands.com/chordhouse/piano - chord charts