

Advanced Topics in Music Theory Course Syllabus

2008-2009

Greenville Fine Arts Center

Dr. Jon Grier, 355-2561

Prerequisites and Auditioning Standards

As this is intrinsically advanced material, the successful completion of FAC Advanced Placement Music Theory is required as preparation for this course. Very rare exceptions may be granted by permission of the instructor to students who come to the Fine Arts Center with equivalent experience.

The course will deal with 4 distinct areas of study, one covered each 9-weeks, as follows:

Module I: Advanced Techniques in 4-part Writing

I. Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Primary Text: A loose-leaf anthology of charts, drills, and part-writing exercises written and produced in-house by Drs. Gary Robinson and Jon Grier. This book is the one used for AP Music Theory, and all the students will already own a copy; it is the result of 12 years of custom design of materials for the FAC Theory curriculum. There are invariably some exercises concerned with part-writing that are left incomplete at the end of the AP course; these will be used and more generated by the instructor. The textbook *Techniques and Materials of Tonal Music* (Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson: Houghton Mifflin Co.), will also be used for exercises and for reference.

Ancillary Materials: Scores of various chorale harmonizations, fugues, and other compositions by J. S. Bach will be used for analysis; recordings of many of these works will also be used. Works of other 18th-and 19th-century composers will also be considered.

II. Module Description

Analytical & Writing skills: This module will develop analytical and writing techniques that are continuations of skills begun in AP Theory. While none of the skills are new to these students, their vocabulary will be greatly expanded to include more complicated harmonic devices employed by composers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Non-harmonic tones will also be considered. Students will analyze examples of these devices from the literature, and then write their own examples. As with AP Theory, exercises will be assigned nightly.

Aural skills: Harmonic dictation and dictation in two parts will also be drilled and tested in this module. These skills are also direct extensions of skills begun in AP Theory.

III. Module Objectives and Outline

At the conclusion of this module, the student will demonstrate:

- an ability to analyze tonal harmony of increasing sophistication and difficulty;
- an ability to employ devices of increasing sophistication and difficulty in part writing;
- an ability to compose basic 2-part counterpoint; and,
- a beginning ability to recognize these devices and 2-part counterpoint by ear.

Approximate syllabus for this Module:

- WEEK 1 Drills & exercises designed to review part writing techniques from AP Theory
- WEEK 2 Borrowed (secondary, applied) dominant functions
- WEEK 3 Other chromatic alterations: augmented 6th chords, Neapolitan 6th, and others
- WEEKS 4 use and notation of these functions in figured bass
- WEEK 5 Modulation; instruments & transpositions
- WEEK 6 Introduction to species counterpoint; instruments & transpositions
- WEEK 7 Analysis of Bach 2-part inventions #4 (d minor) and #14 (Bb major)
- WEEKS 8 Imitative composition of a 2-part invention in the style of Bach
- WEEK 9 Mop-up and final project

IV. Evaluation & Assessment

Aural skills: Dictation quizzes similar in difficulty and identical in format to drills used in class. Students are also required to keep a listening log, in which they will emphasize the literature discussed in class.

Analytical skills and Writing skills: Generally 1-page quizzes identical in format to the worksheets; the composition of a 2-part invention will be given more weight (2 or 3 quiz grades). The final project is an 8-measure 4-part harmonization which the student will arrange for 8 instruments.

Module II: Form Analysis

I. Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Primary Text: Same as Module I.

Ancillary Materials: Scores and recordings of works from the FAC Music Library that embody the various forms considered. Some scores will be analyzed in great depth.

II. Module Description

Analytical skills: In this unit, students will learn the organization of the classical musical forms (binary, rondo, sonata, etc.), including their typical tonal schemes and their occurrence in the literature; they will also study phrase structuring (parallel, contrasting, compound, etc.). Much time will be spent analyzing and listening to examples from the 18th-20th centuries; many of these analyses will be group efforts. This is an advanced skill that will exercise all of the students' past training in theory.

Aural skills: This will be continued from the previous module.

III. Module Objectives and Outline

At the conclusion of this module, the student will demonstrate:

- an ability to recognize basic phrase and period structure
- an ability to recognize the essential components of sonata-allegro form in a Mozart string quartet movement

Approximate syllabus for this Module:

- WEEK 1 the terminology of phrase structure and form
- WEEK 2 period structure
- WEEK 3 period structure
- WEEKS 4 binary forms, minuet & trio, other small forms
- WEEK 5 theme & variations, rondo
- WEEK 6 sonata
- WEEK 7 sonata cont'd
- WEEKS 8 20th-century variants
- WEEK 9 Mop-up and final project

IV. Evaluation & Assessment

Analytical skills: This module will be graded on the basis of quizzes and 2 large-scale analysis projects, analyzing works of the Classical and early Romantic styles. The final project is an in-depth analysis of the Beethoven Sonata op.27, #2, third movement.

Module III: A Survey of 20th-Century Literature and Techniques

I. Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Primary Text: *Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction*, by Eric Salzman.

Ancillary Materials: *Introduction to Modern Music*, by Joseph Machlis; Scores and recordings of various 20th-century works from the FAC library.

II. Module Description

Analytical & Writing skills: This module will be primarily concerned with acquiring some familiarity with musical literature of the 20th Century, and the composers and ideas behind it. It is essentially a history/literature unit with several in-depth analyses included. The curriculum will chronicle the evolution of Western musical style beginning with the dissolution of tonality at the end of the 19th century.

III. Module Objectives and Outline

At the conclusion of this module, the student will demonstrate:

- a familiarity with a number of 20th-century composers and their place in the development of 20th-century music
- an understanding of the most important currents of thought in 20th century composition

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Approximate syllabus for this Module:

- WEEK 1 Impressionism; Debussy (esp. *Preludes pour le Piano*);
- WEEK 2 Debussy cont'd
- WEEK 3 Debussy cont'd
- WEEKS 4 Serialism: Schönberg, Berg, Webern
- WEEK 5 Serialism cont'd
- WEEK 6 Charles Ives; Bela Bartok
- WEEK 7 Dmitri Shostakovich; Sergei Prokofiev
- WEEKS 8 Gustav Holst: The Planets; chance music; total serialism
- WEEK 9 Miscellaneous later composers and 20th-century -isms

IV. Evaluation & Assessment

Analytical skills and Writing skills: Comprehension of these concepts are generally evaluated with detailed form analyses of shorter pieces. Brief vocabulary quizzes are also given.

Module IV: A Survey of Jazz History, Literature and Techniques

I. Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Primary Text: *Jazz, a History*, 2nd Ed., by Frank Tirro (Norton: 1993); anthology to accompany.

Ancillary Materials: *Introduction to Modern Music*, by Joseph Machlis; scores and recordings of various jazz artists from the FAC library; the Ken Burns *Jazz* video series

II. Module Description

Analytical & Writing skills: This is a chronological survey of the most important milestones in the development of jazz, from its birth in New Orleans in the early 20th century to the present. In addition to the lecture-demo format presenting the important musicians and evolution of the style, the students will also do numerous worksheets concerning the jazz chording system and some of the typical song forms. Evaluative testing would include aural recognition of styles and direct testing of the students' understanding of jazz history and theory. Extensive use is made of the Ken Burns *Jazz* series, broadcast on PBS in January of 2001, and study guides are issued for each episode.

III. Module Objectives and Outline

At the conclusion of this module, the student will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the elements and origins of the most important styles of jazz
- a working knowledge of the most important figures in the history of jazz
- a working knowledge of the jazz-pop chording system

Approximate syllabus for this Module:

- WEEK 1 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 1; harmony- 7th chords; jazz rhythm
- WEEK 2 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 2; harmony- 9th-13th chords, altered chords
- WEEK 3 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 3; large-scale harmonic motion; the turnaround; mode-mixing
- WEEKS 4 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 4; analysis of song forms
- WEEK 5 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 5; analysis of song forms
- WEEK 6 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 6; intro to the blues; 12-bar blues
- WEEK 7 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 7; jazz influences on classical composers
- WEEKS 8 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 8; recent styles- bebop, cool, latin
- WEEK 9 Ken Burns *Jazz*, Episode 9; recent styles- fusion, post-bop, etc

IV. Evaluation & Assessment

Analytical skills and Writing skills: Generally 1- or 2-page quizzes that directly test the harmonic, stylistic, and historical concepts recently discussed. Format of the harmony and form quizzes generally identical to the worksheets.