

Music 003, Section 2 – Basic Musicianship Level 2

Spring 2010, Mon/Wed/Fri 9:00 – 9:50

Instructor: Chris Brasseur cebrasseur@gmail.com (814)222-2398

Office hour: Wednesday 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM or by appointment (feel free to grab me after class anytime as well)

Course website: www.professionalpenguin.com/musicianship.html

Class Coordinator: Elizabeth Eshleman, leshlma@mills.edu (510)710-8643

Textbooks:

- Ottman, Robert W. and Nancy Rogers. *Music for Sight Singing*, 7th ed.
- Palmer, Manus, Vick Lethco. *The Basic Book of Scales, Chords, Arpeggios and Cadences*.
- Staff paper (see the helpful links section for directions to free staff paper printouts)

Course description:

Musicianship level 2 (Music 003-2) is designed for students who already have a basic knowledge of music. The class will cover intermediate aspects of music theory, notation, conducting, keyboard skills, sight singing and ear training.

Course Objectives:

Melody

- Identify, notate and sing major, minor and perfect intervals
- Sing diatonic intervals using solfège, major/minor up to four sharps and flats (treble and bass clef)
- Identify and notate the circle of fifths, major/minor
- Melodic dictation in simple and compound meters; major/minor scales up to four sharps/flats

Rhythm/Conducting

- Identify, perform and notate rhythmic figures in simple and compound meters
- Perform rhythms containing dotted and tied notes
- Conduct while singing in simple and compound meters

Keyboard

- Play major and minor scales and arpeggios up to four sharps/flats
- Play and identify major, minor, diminished and augmented triads
- Play and identify simple chord progressions (I-IV-V7) in major scales up to four sharps and flats

Grades and Exams:

The semester will include daily performance of prepared exercises, out-of-class transcription exercises, weekly quizzes (including in-class dictation), a midterm, and a final exam both of which include written and performance sections.

Prepared assignments will be graded using the following criteria:

- Rhythm (performance at a reasonable and steady speed with notated rhythm observed)
- Pitch (accuracy of notes and intervals)
- Conducting (fluid conducting which does not disrupt the performance)
- Musicality (demonstration of a grasp of the overall shape of the music)
- Demonstration of effort (evidence of appropriate preparation and good faith effort to attain proficiency)

Transcription assignments will be graded using the following criteria:

- Completion (the assignment should be finished even if it is necessary to consult an instrument)
- Accuracy (correctness of notated pitches and rhythms)
- Notation (neatness and legibility of written work)
- Performance (ability to perform transcription as a prepared assignment)

Dictations will be graded using the following criteria:

- Completion (a good faith effort has been made to fill in all of the allotted measures)
- Accuracy (correctness of notated pitches and rhythms as well as the overall shape of the melody line or rhythmic phrase)

Sight singing will be graded using the following criteria:

- Completion (perseverance through mistakes and obstacles)
- Accuracy (correctness of sung pitches and intervals)
- Rhythm (a steady pulse has been established and maintained)

Your grade will be broken down as follows:

Prepared assignments: 20%

Transcription assignments: 20%

Piano: 10%

Quizzes: 10%

Midterm: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

Participation: 5%

The paper midterm will be administered on Monday 11 March, 9-9:50 AM.

Midterm individual appointments will occur Wednesday 13 March 9-9:50 AM.

The final will be administered on Saturday 8 May 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Prepared assignments

Purpose

The purpose of the prepared melodies and rhythms is to develop your sight singing ability and the connection between notation and performance.

Method

There is no one right way to do this, however there are some basic points that should be covered.

- Always practice at the piano or with some other instrument that can be used to correct yourself.
- Be sure to check yourself often so that you do not learn the melodies wrong and cement intervallic connections that are incorrect.
- Practice difficult sections separately from the melody as a whole. Often it is useful to practice the melody without any rhythm, all on whole notes for example (but do keep a steady beat even in this type of practice). It is likewise helpful to practice the rhythm separately from the melody.
- If solfège is difficult for you, begin learning the notes on “la” but do add solfège as soon as possible, both to facilitate your comfort with the syllables and so that you can recognize the relations of the pitches more readily.
- Use a metronome to make sure that you keep a steady beat.
- Practice exercises slowly enough that you can keep to the written rhythm and gradually work up to tempo. It is better to perform an exercise under tempo and keep a steady pulse than to sing/clap it at tempo and slow down for the hard parts.
- As soon as you are singing without your instrument begin to conduct while you sing.

Transcription assignments*

Purpose

The purpose of the transcription assignments is to develop your inner ear and inner voice: the ability to hear a tune and sing a tune in your head. The ability to recognize, analyze, and understand music heard depends very much on the ability to hear and sing a tune in your head, and if done correctly these assignments will help greatly in developing this ability. For these assignments you will be learning tunes by ear and analyzing them in your head. This basic skill is the complement to reading music, each of which strengthens the other. Note that there is a bad short-cut that leads quickly to a dead-end: do not do these at the piano (or other instrument), clunking out one or two notes at a time. This reduces the benefit of the assignments immensely; and while in the short-term it may get you the “right answer,” it will do little to help you develop your ear. The development of your ear (your “inner ear” and “inner voice”) will be tested in dictation quizzes and exams, and these assignments are in a sense as practice dictation exercises in which you have an unlimited number of playings to determine in your head what you are hearing.

Method

There's more than one good way to go about this, and your own method is likely to change as the term goes along, but begin with this general method:

1. Learn the tune by ear (until you can sing it in your head as you walk around campus) and practice singing it aloud (without solfège) with and without the recording.
2. Analyze the tune in your head, use the given starting pitch and key signature to determine the tonic and fit solfège to the notes in your head. Learn the entire tune of solfège before writing it down.
3. Write out the tune, now that you know the tonic and the solfège, this should be relatively easy.
4. Check your work. Once you have written it out, play what you've written on an instrument to hear if it matches the recording and correct any mistakes (what you turn in should be perfect). Re-learn the correct version of the tune in your head so that you can sing it in class.

If, after giving an honest effort to analyze something and you still haven't solved it, go ahead and turn to an instrument.

Quizzes

The quizzes are designed to practice sight singing and on the spot rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation. Limited repetitions will be allowed. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes can be made up in the case of excused absences, however arriving late and missing the start of a quiz does not constitute grounds for making it up later.

Once again, there is no one method for dictation and sight singing, however there are some useful points to keep in mind:

Dictation:

- On the first repetition listen for overall shape and rhythmic sense, do not write anything down.
- Always keep the pulse in your head so that you need not fill in all the notes in order.
- As you listen try to hear the intervals between notes you know and ones you don't.
- Write something down every repetition following the first, even if you aren't sure that it is right, you can always go back and change it later (and be sure not to get locked into thinking something must be right just because you wrote it down).

Sight Singing

- Take your time and study the melody before beginning.
- Determine the key and work out the solfège in your head, this will help you determine the intervals and orient you within the key.
- Pick a slow enough tempo that you can stick to it and keep to that tempo even if you miss notes.
- Most importantly, KEEP GOING no matter what. If you miss a note just forget about it and concentrate on the next one, part of sight singing is being able to make the piece flow even when performing it imperfectly.

Why Solfège?

We hear musical tones in groups, with hierarchical structures. Some musicians do this very well intuitively, and some need more practice. Movable do solfège identifies the position of a note in relation to the tonic and in relation to other tones around it, and so helps us hear these structural relationships.

Participation

Students are expected to attend class (see attendance policy) and fully engage with class activities. This means listening actively when other students are performing, singing along in your head, and conducting with them. This sort of participation is crucial and much learning takes place through this kind of “mimetic” participation. When you watch someone perform, imagine that YOU are the one performing and you will gain a lot from the experience of listening.

Attendance Policy:

Due to the performance nature of class, attendance is crucial!

Each student is allowed three absences

Three tardies = one absence

Each additional absence will result in the lowering of your final grade by ½ letter.

Excused absences are considered family/personal emergencies, in which case the instructor must officially be notified by Mills College.

Homework Policy:

There will be no late homework. The three lowest homework grades will be dropped at the end of the semester – therefore in the case of three excused absences, there is no penalty for work not turned in.

Testing Policy:

Tests and exams must be taken at the time and on the day they are administered. If you are late for a test, you may choose to complete the exam in the remaining time, but no additional time will be allotted.

Useful links:

- Metronome: <http://www.metronomeonline.com/>
- Staff paper: <http://www.blanksheetmusic.net/>
- Online ear-training: <http://www.good-ear.com/>
- Online music theory lessons: <http://www.musictheory.net/>

*Thanks to Professor Arnie Cox at Oberlin Conservatory for the transcription exercises and techniques.

Week 1

Wednesday 20 January – Placement Exam

Friday 22 January – Introduction to the class.

Week 2

Monday 25 January – Introduction to the class continued.

HW: Rhythm – 1.41, 1.44

Melody – 2.21, 2.30

Wednesday 27 January – Introduction to transcriptions and rhythm review.

HW: Transcription 2 [Brahms Symphony no. 1, *Finale*, first theme]

Rhythm – 1.27 1.56

Melody – 2.39, 2.43

Friday 29 January – Conducting

Introduction to scales, cadences, arpeggios, and chord progressions.

HW: Practice C major and a minor scales and cadences paying special attention to fluidity and hand position.

Week 3

Monday 1 February – Transcription 2 due.

Introduction to chapter 3.

HW: Transcription 3 [Copeland, *Appalachian Spring*]

Melody – 3.3, 3.10

Wednesday 3 February – Chapter 3.

HW: Melody – 3.17, 3.29, 3.32

Friday 5 February – Quiz on review material and beginning of chapter 3.

Piano work

HW: G major/e minor.

Week 4

Monday 8 February – Transcription 3 due.

Chapter 3

HW: Transcription 4 [Brahms, *Variations on a Theme by Joseph Hayden*]

Melody – 3.39, 3.46, 3.52

Wednesday 10 February – Introduction to chapter 4.

HW: Rhythm – 4.3, 4.6, 4.10

Melody – 4.25

Friday 12 February – Quiz on chapter 3.

Piano work

HW: D major/ b minor.

Week 5

Monday 15 February – No class, president's day

Wednesday 17 February – Transcription 4 due.

Chapter 4.

HW: 5 [Cat Stevens, *Morning Has Broken*]

Melody – 4.25, 4.31, 4.42

Rhythm – 4.3, 4.10, 4.15

Friday 19 February – Quiz on chapter 4.

Piano work

HW: A major/f# minor.

Week 6

Monday 22 February – Transcription 5 due.

Chapter 4.

HW: Transcription 6 [Vivaldi, “Spring” from *The Four Seasons*]

Rhythm – 4.21

Melody – 4.50, 4.54

Wednesday 24 February – Chapter 4.

HW: Rhythm – 4.61, 4.65, 4.70

Melody – 4.52, 4.76, 4.78

Friday 26 February – Quiz on chapter 4

Piano work

HW: E major/c# minor.

Week 7

Monday 1 March – Transcription 6 due.

Repertoire related to chapter 4.

HW: Transcription 7 [Haydn, Trumpet Concerto in E-flat, *Andante*, first theme]

Wednesday 3 March – Introduction to chapter 5.

HW: Melody – 5.1, 5.4, 5.6

Rhythm – On handout

Friday 5 March – Quiz on chapter 4

Piano work

HW: Review scales and arpeggios.

Week 8

Monday 8 March – Transcription 7 due.

Chapter 5.

HW: Melody – 5.14, 5.18

Wednesday 10 March – Review for midterm

HW: Review homework

Melodies for midterm (handed out)

Friday 12 March – Review quiz
Piano work
HW: Review cadences and chord progressions.

Week 9

Monday 11 March – Paper midterm.
Wednesday 13 March – Individual appointments.
Friday 15 March – Go over the midterm.

Week 10

Monday 29 March – No class, spring break.
Wednesday 31 March – No class, spring break.
Friday 2 April – No class, spring break.

Week 11

Monday 29 March – Chapter 5.
HW: Transcription 8 [Dvorak, *Largo* from the “New World” Symphony]
Melody – 5.23
Rhythm – On handout
Wednesday 31 March – Chapter 5
HW: Melody – 5.26, 5.27, 5.31
Rhythm – On handout
Friday 2 April – Quiz on chapter 5
Piano work
HW: F major/d minor.

Week 12

Monday 4 April – Transcription 8 due
Repertoire related to chapter 5.
HW: Transcription 9 [Holst, *Adagio* from the Second Suite in F]
Melody – 5.33, 5.9
Wednesday 7 April – Chapter 5.
HW: Melody – 5.9, 5.33, 6.1, 6.2
Rhythm – On handout
Friday 9 April – Quiz
Piano work
HW: Bb major/g minor.

Week 13

Monday 12 April – Transcription 9 due.
Introduction to chapter 6.
HW: Transcription 10 [The Beatles, *Girl*]
Melody – 6.11, 6.14

Wednesday 14 April – Chapter 6.

HW: Melody – 6.12, 6.18, 6.22, 6.33

Rhythm – On handout

Friday 16 April – Quiz on chapter 6.

Piano work

HW: Eb major/ c minor.

Week 14

Monday 19 April – Transcription 10 due.

Chapter 6.

HW: Transcription 11 [Beethoven, *Marche Funebre* from Symphony no. 3]

Melody –

Rhythm – On handout

Wednesday 21 April – Chapter 6.

HW: Melody – 6.40, 6.44, 6.49

Rhythm – On handout 8.c

Friday 23 April – Quiz on chapter 6.

Piano work

HW: Ab major/f minor.

Week 15

Monday 26 April– Transcription 11 due.

Repertoire related to chapter 6

HW: Transcription 12 [Schubert, “Das Wandern,” from *Die Schöne Müllerin*]

Wednesday 28 April – Chapter 6.

Discuss review.

Friday 30 April – Quiz on chapter 6.

Review scales and arpeggios.

Week 16

Monday 3 May – Transcription 12 due.

Review.

Wednesday 5 May – Review.

Friday 30 April – Review quiz

Piano work

HW: Review cadences and chord progressions.

Week 16

Monday 3 May – Review

Wednesday 5 May – Optional review class/extra office hour