

# THEORY SYLLABUS

## **PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS**

### Resources:

1. Bastien Wipe-off Keyboard & Staff
2. Bastien Wipe-off Notespeller
3. Bea Carney's Magnet Board of the Staff (includes flat and sharp magnets)
4. Bea's Keys
5. Chalk board
6. Flashcards (note, key signature, chords, intervals, rhythm)  
Galaxy (Music Encounters Inc.)  
Pace, Alfred, Bastien, Schaum, Glover
7. FJH Achievement Skill Sheets (5-finger scales, chords, arpeggios, major and minor)  
one and two octave scales, arpeggios, chords and inversions, cadences.

## **CATEGORIES**

1. Keyboard geography (levels A, B, 1)  
Bean-bag toss - saying steps and skips up and down  
Flashcards of musical alphabet -- steps and skips  
Identify alphabet names of notes on picture of keyboard
2. Notation (levels A through 10)  
Flashcards identifying notes, rests, dynamics, symbols at each level  
Match symbol with name  
Matching Quiz  
Identify symbols in printed music (various levels)

3. Notes on staff (levels A through 4)
  - Flashcard drills
    - Arrange cards according to five-finger positions
    - Drill on lines names and space names
  - Notespeller sheets or workbooks
  - Keynotes of G (G-clef) and F (F-clef)
  - Locations of low, bass, middle, treble, and high C's
  
4. Intervals (levels A through 10)
  - (at keyboard) In 5-finger position or given key, play given note and intervals up & down, harmonic and melodic (if applicable)
  - (on staff) Group according to visual appearance (3, 5, 7 all line/space, etc.)
  - Flashcards
    - Form interval on magnet board for identification.
    - Give note, have student form given interval.
    - Then play interval at piano, listening to sound of interval.
  - Relate given interval to familiar melodies, such as, a 5th is Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, and a 2nd is the first notes of "Chopsticks."
  
5. Rhythm/meter (levels A through 10)
  - (at keyboard) Have student play single note/chord in given rhythm
    - Play with metronome.
    - Play and say: quarter, half note.
    - Make chart with whole note at top, then two half notes, through 16th notes and have student play notes/chords according to rhythm and/or with metronome (at a SLOW speed).
  - (written) Write counting under given examples.
    - Supply missing beats within measures.
    - Math addition with note values ( a half note + quarter note = 3 counts) or (a half note + quarter note = dotted half note).
  - Physical activities
    - Rhythm instruments - teacher taps rhythm, student repeats it.
    - Walking in step with beats.
    - Walk one rhythm (like quarter notes) while tapping another (eight notes)
  
6. Key signatures (levels B through 10)
  - Identify key signature from one on printed page.
  - Be able to write key signature on staff.
  - Be familiar with sharp rule and flat rule.
  - Flashcard drills.
  - Drill on order of sharps and flats
    - Magnet boards are helpful.
    - Have students make up their own memory aid.
  - Minor key signatures

Have student play minor i chord showing finger 3 on relative major  
Identify at keyboard relative minor, 3 half-steps down from major.  
Show and listen to examples of use of minor keys in literature.  
Identify minor chords in literature, both melodic and harmonic.  
Explore use of natural, harmonic, melodic minor keys in literature.

7. Triads (levels A through 10)

Practice writing on staff and playing on keyboard.  
Have student spell triad, and identify intervals.  
Playing root position arpeggios, major and minor are helpful in teaching triads.  
Movement of intervals between I and V7 chords ( bottom and middle notes of I chord ,each move 1/2 step down/up to form V7 chord).  
Inversion: Write, play, memorize fingering.  
Identify root of triad inversion (top of interval of a 4th in tonic, top of 2nd in V7 chord).

8. Terminology (levels A through 10)

Matching quiz, fill in blank tests, flashcard drills.  
Identify symbols on music  
Have student illustrate on keyboard given symbol, like intervals, dynamics, touch, sharps and flats, arpeggio, tempo, etc.

9. Form (levels 2 through 9)

From beginning lessons, identify questions and answers, contrasting melodies.  
repeated sections, patterns of steps and skips.  
Listen to recording and have student raise hand to identify different sections.  
Outline form of piece from printed music, be able to write down form.  
In level 2 and above, identify sections using measure numbers.

10. Scales (levels 3 through 7)

Write scale in letter names without the staff.  
Write scale on staff using accidentals.  
Memorize and identify whole and half-step pattern of scales.  
Play with metronome, one octave using quarter notes, two, using 8th, etc.

11. Circle of fifths (level 6 through 10) and modes

Play on keyboard, beginning with C up a fifth (adds a sharp), etc., with special attention given to three enharmonic overlapping keys, switching to flats (drops a flat, as you progress up a fifth).  
Practice writing away from keyboard, major, enharmonic, and minor.  
Modes: Identify on keyboard, using white notes; transpose into other positions.  
Have students compose simple melodies in various modes.  
Select familiar tune, play in each mode.

## KEYBOARD THEORY AND TECHNIQUE ABBREVIATION KEY

HS	Hands separately	RP	Root position
HT	Hands together	inv.	Inversion(s)
RH	Right hand	oct	Octave(s)
LH	Left hand	M.	Major (Major keys indicated by upper case letters)
Nat.	Natural minor scale	m.	minor (Minor keys indicated by lower case letters)
Harm	Harmonic minor scale	Pentasc.	The first 5 notes of a scale (5-finger position)
Mel	Melodic minor scale		

### MISCELLANEOUS EXPLANATIONS

Scales	Beginning with Level 1, different touches are suggested in order to develop coordination and to make scale practice a little more interesting. Because the test will only require legato, the use of other touches will be entirely at the discretion of the teacher.
Chord Progressions	In order to save room, only Major key Roman numerals are listed. Minor key chord progressions must also be played where indicated by key. In chord progressions including the V7 chord, a V may be substituted in place of the V7.

### EXAMPLES

3A

5A (Whole tone scale from C to C)

5B (Whole tone scale from D<sub>6</sub> to D<sub>6</sub>)

Musical notation for exercise 5B, showing a whole tone scale from D<sub>6</sub> to D<sub>6</sub> in both treble and bass clefs. Fingerings are indicated above and below the notes.

7A (C Major Scale)

Musical notation for exercise 7A, showing a C Major scale in both treble and bass clefs. Slurs are used to indicate phrasing.

(LH Legato)

7B

Musical notation for exercise 7B, showing chords in both treble and bass clefs.

Maj Aug Maj min dim Maj Aug Maj min dim

7C C7 Arpeggio

Musical notation for exercise 7C, showing a C7 arpeggio in both treble and bass clefs. Fingerings are indicated above and below the notes.

9A

Musical notation for exercise 9A, showing a Phrygian mode scale in both treble and bass clefs.

Phrygian Mode

9B

**C<sup>°</sup>7 Arpeggio**

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5  
5 4 3 2 1

10A

**Mixolydian Mode**

10B

**C Augmented Arpeggio**

## Written Theory/Ear Training

The theory curriculum provided here has been designed to enable beginners of any age to enter the testing process of the ASMTA Festival and to move upward at an accessible rate. Primary A is designed for the **very young beginner**. Primary B and level 1 are designed for first year students of varying ages. The levels are graduated at a pace which should allow for reinforcement and understanding, and every effort has been made to include concise, accurate definitions and explanations to help prepare for the tests.

### **Please note and follow the following reminders and suggestions:**

1. Mastery of preceding levels is assumed throughout the theory tests, although testing will primarily center around new keys and new concepts.
2. Capital letters consistently indicate Major; small letters indicate minor.
3. In chord progressions including  $V_7$  chord, a V may be substituted.
4. Stem rules which will be followed in the grading of tests: notes above the 3rd line of the staff have stems which go **down**; notes below the 3rd line of the staff have stems which go **up**; notes on the 3rd line of the staff have stems which may go either up or down.
5. Ear training testing: All intervals and triads, at all levels, will be played **both** melodically and harmonically.  
All testing examples will be played for the students three times.  
**Concepts mastered in preceding levels are eligible for inclusion in the ear training portion of the test.**
6. Remind students to read carefully directions and all clef signs! Tests will ask for information in a variety of ways.

Several texts have proven invaluable in preparation of this curriculum guide:

Apel, Willi. Harvard Dictionary of Music. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1972.

Sadie, Stanley, ed. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. New York: Groves Dictionary of Music., 1995 20 Vols.

Hinson, Maurice, and June Montgomery. Meet the Great Composers. Sherman Oaks, CA Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1995

# SIGHT READING

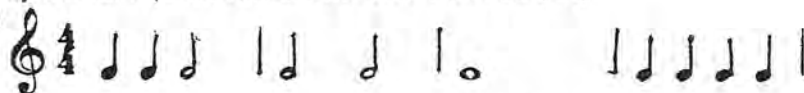
Pedagogically speaking, a student's sight reading level should be at approximately 2 levels below his playing level. The examples used for the ASMTA Festival will be selected from the Four Star Sight Reading and Ear Tests Books 1-9 by Boris Berlin published by Frederick Harris Music Co., Limited, Oakville, Ontario, Canada. We are indebted to Frederick Harris Music Company for granting permission to reproduce these examples.

In scoring Sight Reading, rhythmic errors will be scored most heavily with a stop/restart being penalized 2 points each instance, an incorrect rhythm 1 point, a missed or omitted note 1/2 point.

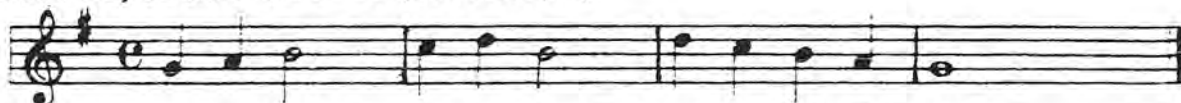
**Primary A** There will be no sight reading required at this level.

**Primary B** The student will be asked to count out loud one measure (to set the tempo) and then clap a rhythm in 4/4 that may contain quarter, half and whole notes. (any counting system is acceptable)

one - two - three - four



**Level I** Sight reading will be hands separately using either the C or G pentascale. Notation concepts may include quarter, half, dotted-half & whole notes. Meter may be either 3/4 or 4/4. (See example)



**Level II** Sight reading will be hands together (and be hands together in all subsequent levels) using C, G, D, or F pentascale. Notation concepts may additionally include quarter, half or whole rests as well as eighth notes. Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4.

**Level III** Sight reading may use C, G, D, A, E & c, g, d, a, e pentascales. Notation concepts may include dotted quarter, eighth rest or an upbeat. Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/4.

**Level IV** Sight reading may use all major or minor pentascales as well as move out of the pentascale position in the 1 octave scales of C, G, D. Left hand may include chordal harmonization. Notation concepts may include eighth note triplets and dotted rests. Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4.

**Level V** Sight reading may use any of these keys: C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, Db & a minor. A more independent L. H. may be required, similar to a standard cadence figure with an octave descent. (see example)



Notation concepts may include any 6/8 rhythm longer than but not including sixteenth notes. Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 6/8.



# SIGHT READING

**Level VI** Sight reading may use any of these additional keys: e, d minor. Two voice polyphony may be used. (see example)



Notation concepts may include simple sixteenth notes and rests.  
Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 6/8, 3/8.

**Level VII** Sight reading may use any of these additional keys: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, & c, g, f, b minor. Four part hymn texture may be used, two voices in each hand. Notation concepts may include all sixteenth note combinations, double sharp and double flat.  
Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 6/8, 3/8, 9/8, 3/2, 4/2.

**Level VIII** Sight reading may use any of these additional keys: b-flat, e-flat minor. Notation concepts may include sixteenth note combinations with rests.  
Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 6/8, 3/8, 9/8, 3/2, 4/2, 12/8.

**Level IX** Sight reading may use any major or minor key. Notation concepts may include 32nd notes.  
Meter may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 6/8, 3/8, 9/8, 3/2, 4/2, 12/8, 5/8, 7/8.

**Level X** Sight reading may use any major or minor key. There may be jumps in either hand.  
Notation concepts may include 32nd note triplets.

Note: Further examples can be found in the sight reading texts. I would envision the teacher purchasing a set of the books with the student reading an example at each lesson. Each book contains between 60-90 examples. The examples do not exceed 16 measures at the highest level.

## ADDITIONS AND NOTES