

## **Music Theory and Aural Skills Preparation**

All entering music majors and minors begin their required sequence of music theory and aural skills courses in the Fall semester of their freshman year with MU 151 (Music Theory I) and MU 161 (Aural Skills I). The syllabus for Music Theory I assumes a basic music theory foundation acquired in high school classes or as part of private music theory. Students need not have taken Aural Skills classes before arriving to Keene State College, but they are expected to display basic ability in the areas of pitch matching and simple rhythms.

To assess students' likelihood of success in the areas of theory and aural skills, the Department of Music's audition includes a written theory exam as well as a short aural skills assessment. The following summary will help students to prepare for the theory and aural skills portions of the audition. This will also serve as a guideline for students who need to review or begin instruction to reach the preparatory level expected for success in MU 151 and MU 161. Upon acceptance into one of the BA, BM, or music minor programs, prospective students should seek the guidance of high school music personnel or a private music teacher for assistance in mastering the fundamentals of music theory and the basic vocabulary of traditional music.

### **1. Fundamentals of Rhythm**

Preparation for MU 151 (Music Theory I):

- ✓ Notes, rests, and time values
- ✓ Meter signatures and counting in simple and compound meters
- ✓ Borrowed divisions (triplets, duplets)

Preparation for MU 161 (Aural Skills I):

- ✓ Be able to tap a steady beat
- ✓ Practice saying simple rhythms on "ta"

### **2. Fundamentals of Pitch**

Preparation for MU 151:

- ✓ The grand staff (treble and bass clefs)
- ✓ Sharp, flat, and natural accidentals
- ✓ Whole steps and half steps
- ✓ Enharmonic pitches

Preparation for MU 161:

- ✓ Sing pitches accurately and be able to match pitch

### **3. Fundamentals of Melody**

Preparation for MU 151:

- ✓ Scales (major, natural minor, harmonic minor, melodic minor, and chromatic)
- ✓ Key signatures in treble and bass clefs
- ✓ Identify the key of a melody

Preparation for MU 161:

- ✓ Be able to sing a major scale

### **4. Fundamentals of Harmony**

Preparation for MU 151:

- ✓ Intervals (major, minor, augmented, and diminished)
- ✓ Triads in root position (major, minor, diminished, and augmented)
- ✓ Inversions of triads

Preparation for MU 161: no harmonic preparation is required.