

Music Theory Courses - Piano Program

I was first introduced to the concept of flipped classroom learning when my son was in 5th grade. His math teacher, instead of assigning typical math worksheets as homework, would send the children home to watch videos of the math concepts. He had personally taken on the project of creating instructional videos of the entire 5th grade math curriculum. When the children returned to class the next day, they did their worksheets in class with the teacher, and discussed the concepts that they had learned in the videos. At first, I was skeptical of this type of educational approach. However, the growth that my son experienced that year in math was exponential. He was able to watch the videos as many times as he needed, with a focused mind in his own home. For him, the classroom was transformed into a place to explore ideas with his teacher instead of listening to lectures. As an individual, he gained a sense of pride in taking control of his own learning. It was truly a magical year of growth for him as a student.

As I began thinking of how I could apply this concept of learning in the music studio, my focus immediately shifted to music theory. I have previously taught music theory in the undergraduate university classroom, so I am aware of the music theory curriculum that exists in the early undergraduate years. Before the university setting, there is a sequence of music theory learning that needs to take place in the pre-college years, and the educational responsibility often falls on the shoulders of the private music teacher. One issue facing the private music teacher is that of time. I can certainly attest to as a private teacher myself! Spending only 30, or 45, or even 60 minutes a week with a child is not enough to cover teaching repertoire, technique, improvisation, performance skills, *and* music theory. When integrated into the whole lesson structure, music theory is a collection of concepts that indeed can be taught within the piano repertoire, but it can also be isolated in a separate learning sequence. Therefore, music theory is the perfect 'candidate' for a flipped classroom learning approach.

I began creating the outline of my music theory courses using the state music theory curriculum set by the Texas Music Teachers' Association. This curriculum follows 12 years of progress, leading nicely into the college years if a child should so desire to study music after high school. The curriculum also naturally builds on itself, getting subsequently harder every year. I took the curriculum, divided it up into manageable concepts, and created videos explaining each of these concepts. After the creation of the videos, I created worksheets that followed the concepts and used embedded music theory files so that students could practice what they learned in real time.

I hope that you are as pleased with the results as I am. This sequential model of instruction allows us, as teachers and parents, to assign our students instructional music theory videos to watch in the home or during the private lesson. Some concepts are naturally trickier than others, so of course the videos can be watched and re-watched at will. After watching a video, the student completes worksheets associated with the concepts that they just learned. The early levels (grades 1-5) include 5 larger lessons with approximately 15 sub-lessons, and the upper levels (grades 6-above) include a minimum of 15 lessons. At the completion of a level, students are given a written practice test to make sure that they completely learned the concepts covered in the lessons. The videos move at a natural pace, and are child-friendly without being overly simplistic. Each level includes a complete understanding of all of the music theory skills needed for that particular grade level. This gives teachers and parents confidence knowing that the children are being taught skills that are necessary for their level of instruction.

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Thank you for taking an interest in my program. My wish is that teachers and parents can use this program to not only strengthen the music theory skills of pre-college students, but to also open up the lesson setting in music studios to a place of exploration and discussion.

Dr. Kathy Rabago

Levels 1-7 Curriculum

Level 1

Lesson 1

- The Musical Alphabet. Learn about the 7 letters that make up the musical alphabet. 1:53
- The Piano Keyboard. Name the keys of the piano keyboard according to the musical alphabet. 5:11
- The Staff; Treble & Bass Clef. Learn about the parts of the staff, including the treble clef & bass clef. 3:26

Lesson 2

- Notes on the Treble Clef Staff. Learn how to read all of the notes on the treble clef staff. 1:49
- Notes on the Bass Clef Staff. Learn how to read all of the notes on the bass clef staff. 1:07
- Notes on the Grand Staff. Learn how to read all of the notes on the grand staff. 4:32

Lesson 3

- Parts of notes {the head and stem}. Learn about the parts of a note, and how to draw notes. 2:11
- Bar lines and Measures. Learn all about bar lines and measures on the grand staff. 0:47
- Rhythm. Learn about notes and rests in the following rhythms: quarter, half, and whole. 2:41

Lesson 4

- Time Signatures. How many beats per measure? 1:48
- Counting. Learn how to count notes and rests in music according to the rhythms we've learned so far. 1:12
- Steps & Skips; Dynamics. Learn about a step vs. a skip and the dynamic markings of forte and piano. 2:25

Lesson 5

- High or Low? Identify notes as high or low on the piano just by listening. 2:01
- Up or Down? Listen to 5 notes. Are they moving up or down? 2:00
- Same or Different? Listen to 2 notes. Are they the same or different? 1:10
- Bonus: Learn the finger numbers on your hands. 0:38

Level 2

Lesson 1

- The Musical Alphabet. Review the musical alphabet and see what happens when you repeat it. 1:08
- Keyboard. Review the musical alphabet on the piano keyboard. 3:23
- Quarter, Half, Whole, & Dotted Half Notes. Review the rhythms: quarter, half, and whole notes and learn about the dotted half note. 1:42

Lesson 2

- Intervals. Learn to identify if the interval is a second or a 3rd, and if it is ascending or descending. 2:15
- Half Steps & Whole Steps. What is the difference? 1:31
- Sharps & Flats. A sharp raises a note a half step; a flat lowers a note a half step. 2:03

Lesson 3

- Rhythm. Review the following notes and rests: quarter, half, whole, and dotted half. 1:16

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- Writing in Counts. Learn how to write in counts in 3/4 or 4/4 time signatures. 1:41
- Adding Bar Lines. Can you add bar lines in 3/4 and 4/4 time signatures using the rhythm we've learned so far? 2:32

Lesson 4

- Dynamic Signs & Repeat Sign. Learn about mezzo forte and mezzo piano and the repeat sign. 1:29
- Review of Notes on the Staff. Identify the notes on the staff. Have fun spelling the words! 3:30
- How Many Beats? Let's take a little quiz—can you figure out how many beats are in each of these measures? 1:14

Lesson 5

- Up or Down? Listen to some musical examples and determine if the notes are moving up or down. 2:02
- Same or Different? Listen to a measure that I'm playing. Is it the same as the one on your screen, or different? 2:22
- Find the Missing Note. I'll play 3 notes for you. You can see the first 2 notes. Can you identify the 3rd note? 1:58

Lesson 6

- NFMCC Bonus Lesson. 3:29

Level 3

Lesson 1

- The Musical Alphabet. Review the musical alphabet both ascending and descending. 1:22
- Staff/Note Identification. Draw and identify notes in both the treble clef staff and bass clef staff. 4:01
- Notation. Review and draw quarter, half, dotted half, and whole notes and rests. 1:38

Lesson 2

- Intervals. Learn about a 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th. 2:57
- Whole Step & Half Step Review. Can you identify whole and half steps on the piano keyboard? 1:41
- Rhythm & Time Signatures. Learn to write in counts, draw bar lines, and identify the correct time signature. 4:21

Lesson 3

- Scales. Learn about the 8 notes in a major scale, and the pattern of whole steps and half steps. Learn about the tonic, or keynote. 1:35
- C Major Scale. Take what you know about scales and build a C Major scale. Mark the half steps with slurs. 1:38
- G and F Scale. Take what you know about scales and build G and F Major scales. Mark the half steps with slurs. 4:02

Lesson 4

- Key Signatures of C, G, and F. Learn about the key signatures of these 3 keys. 3:00
- Slur, Tie, Legato, and Staccato. Learn about these four terms and how to recognize them in music. 1:56
- Natural & Term Review. Learn about the natural sign and review the following terms: treble clef, bass clef, brace, bar line, double bar line, flat, sharp, piano, forte, key signature, and time signature. 3:10

Lesson 5

- Rhythmic Dictation. Listen to a two-measure rhythm, and fill in the missing measure. 2:51
- Identify the missing note. Listen to 3 notes. Two notes will be given to you, and you have to identify the missing 3rd note. 2:53
- Steps or Skips? Identify if the notes you are hearing are stepping or skipping. 2:48
- Bonus: Learn about a 5th up and down from C. 1:33

Lesson 6

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- NFMC Bonus Lesson. Learn about ritardando, crescendo, diminuendo, and 8va. Explore the C, F, and G Major Triads. 4:53

Level 4

Lesson 1

- The Staff. Review the parts of the staff: bass and treble clef signs, brace, bar line, and double bar line. 1:33
- Eighth note and rest. Learn about the eighth note and the eighth rest. 1:37
- Notes on the Staff. Draw and identify notes on the treble and bass clef staves. 5:35
- Vocabulary: New & Review. Learn and review the following terms: slur, tie, legato, staccato, piano forte, pianissimo, fortissimo, mezzo forte, mezzo piano, tonic, natural, sharp, flat, interval, time signature. 3:39

Lesson 2

- Whole & Half Steps. Identify notes on the staff as whole steps or half steps. 3:44
- Intervals. Review the intervals of a 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th, and learn about an 8ve. 3:12
- Major and Minor Thirds. Learn the difference between a major and a minor third. 2:46
- Vocabulary. Learn about: tempo, ritardando, crescendo, decrescendo (diminuendo), and ornament. 3:06

Lesson 3

- Rhythm. Fill in the missing note or rest in a measure. 2:09
- Counting. Write in counts in 3/4 or 4/4 meter. 1:35
- Time Signatures & Bar lines. Identify the correct time signature for each measure. Draw in missing bar lines for a 4-measure example. 3:40

Lesson 4

- Scales. Review the scales C, G, and F Major. Learn about the major scales of D, A, and E. Draw slurs between the half steps. 5:45
- Key Signature. Learn the order of sharps. Identify the key signatures for C, G, D, A, E, and F Major. 2:33
- Major Triad and Primary Chords. Learn how to construct a major triad. Learn about the primary chords in a major scale. Learn the vocabulary: chord, triad, tonic triad, and major triad. 5:04

Lesson 5

- Rhythmic Dictation. Listen to a musical example and fill in the missing measures. 3:41
- Compare. Listen. Circle the measure that matches the one that you heard. 2:21
- Identify & Bonus. Identify a major triad by listening to two different triads. Bonus: Can you go up and down a 5th from C through 4 sharps and 4 flats? 4:50

Level 5

Lesson 1

- The Staff. Review the parts of the staff: bass and treble clef signs, brace, bar line, and double bar lines. 1:26
- Notation. Draw notes and rests on the treble and bass clef staff, using sharps and flat signs if directed. 4:33
- Intervals. Identify whole steps, half steps, and no steps (enharmonic notes). Learn about the interval of a 6th and 7th. Identify all intervals up to an 8ve on the staff. Draw notes one octave higher or lower. Identify major 3rds and minor 3rds on the piano keyboard. 9:29

Lesson 2

- Rhythm. Learn about the dotted quarter note, 16th note, and 16th rest. 3:43
- Rhythm – missing note/rest; Time Signatures. Draw a missing note or rest in measures of different meter. Identify the correct time signature for a measure using the meters 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4. 4:10
- Rhythm – counting. Write counts in rhythmic examples in 3/4, 4/4, or 5/4 meter. Draw in missing bar lines in

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four measures of 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, or 6/4 meter. 4:29

Lesson 3

- Scales. Review the scales of C, G, D, A, E, and F. Learn the scales of Bb, Eb, and Ab Major. Draw slurs between half steps in the scales. Learn about the tonic and dominant note of each scale. Draw the tonic triad of each scale. 8:42
- Order of Flats; Key Signatures. Review the order of sharps and learn the order of flats. Review the key signatures of C, G, D, A, E, and F Major, and learn about the key signatures + tonic triads for Bb, Eb, and Ab Major. Draw the tonic triad in the treble clef staff and the root of the tonic triad in the bass clef staff. 5:32
- Dominant Triads. Learn about the dominant Triad. Quiz! Can you identify all of the Major key signatures? 4:26

Lesson 4

- Vocabulary {new}. Learn the following new vocabulary terms: Ledger Lines, Chromatic Sign, Accidental, Enharmonic Spelling, Cadence, Authentic Cadence. 4:32
- Vocabulary {new + review}. Quiz! Can you correctly identify the vocabulary terms? Accidental, Andante, Cadence, Chromatic Sign, Da Capo, Dal Segno, Dominant, Enharmonic Spelling, Ledger Lines, Moderato, Motive/Motif, Pentatonic Scale, Subdominant, Syncopation. 4:38
- Musical Example. Look at a few musical examples. Identify a tonic or dominant triad. Identify slurs, ties, staccato, legato, intervals, and dynamic signs. 3:29

Lesson 5

- Rhythmic Dictation. Fill in the missing measures in 3/4 or 4/4 meter using eighth, quarter, half, dotted half, or whole notes. 4:20
- Melodic Dictation. Fill in the missing measures in 4/4 meter using steps or skips within a major pentascale. 3:39
- Interval & Triad Identification; Bonus. Listen to and identify ascending or descending Major 2nds and Perfect 5ths. Identify the Major Triad by listening to two different triads. 5:12
- Bonus: Can you identify the notes up and down a 5th from C through all of the sharps and flats? 3:14

Level 6

Lesson 1, 5:19

- Whole and Half Steps: Learn to identify two notes as whole steps, half steps, whole + half steps, or enharmonic notes.

Lesson 2, 9:24

- Rhythm: Review 8th notes and 16th notes.
- Rhythm – missing note/rest: Draw a missing note or rest in measures of different meter.
- Rhythms covered in level 6: Sixteenth (flagged and beamed), eighth (flagged and beamed), dotted eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, half, dotted half, and whole notes and corresponding rests. Sharps, flats, and natural signs are all used in level 6.

Lesson 3, 4:24

- Notation: Draw notes as indicated on the treble or bass staff using the rhythms covered in level 6.

Lesson 4, 10:22

- Time signatures: Learn how to identify the following simple and compound time signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 3/8, or 6/8.
- Practice drawing bar lines in 6/8
- When you are given the lower number, can you identify the upper number to complete the time signature?

Lesson 5, 11:49

- Review the order of sharps and flats.

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- Draw the Major circle of 5ths using Capital Letter.
- Identify all major key signatures.
- Draw the key signature of each Major key on the grand staff.

Lesson 6, 6:44

- Major Scales: Review and learn all of the major scales.
- Constructing Major Scales: Draw sharps or flats before the notes on the given scale to make a major scale in any major key.

Lesson 7, 7:27

- Review the following vocabulary terms: Syncopation, Cadence, Ledger Line.
- Learn the new vocabulary terms: Adagio, Allegro, al Fine, Binary Form, Con Moto, Consonant, Dissonant, Dominant Triad, Major Third, Meter, Minor Third, Minor Triad, Octave, Poco a Poco, Primary Triads, Rallentando, Subdominant Triad, Ternary Form, Triad Root, Unison.

Lesson 8, 3:15

- Intervals: Identify all of the intervals up to an octave. Practicing drawing intervals up and down from a given note.

Lesson 9, 3:43

- Major and Minor Thirds: Learn how to identify major thirds (MAJ 3rd) or minor thirds (min 3rd) drawn on the treble or bass staff.

Lesson 10, 2:42

- Triads: Identify the designated note of a root position triad as the root (R), third (3rd) or fifth (5th).

Lesson 11, 11:08

- Primary Triads: Construct the I (tonic), IV (subdominant), and V (dominant) triads in root position on the treble staff in any given major key. Draw the root of the chord in the bass staff.
- Identify: Can you name the key signature and identify if the chord given is I, IV, or V?

Lesson 12, 5:03

- Analysis: Let's look at an excerpt of music together. Learn how to identify the key, identify primary triads, find a major and/or minor 3rd, and label intervals.

Lesson 13, 4:45

- Intervallic Ear Training: Identify Perfect 5ths, Major 2nds, or Major 7ths played ascending or descending as melodic intervals, then as harmonic intervals.
- Triad Ear Training: identify Major or Minor triads

Lesson 14, 8:16

- Rhythm Dictation: Fill in the missing measures of a four-measure rhythm in 3/4 or 4/4 meter. Missing notes for the blank measures may include eighth, quarter, half, dotted half, or whole notes.
- Melodic Dictation: Fill in the missing measures of a four-measure melodic example in 3/4 or 4/4 meter. Blank measures will be steps or skips within a major scale. Note values for the blank measures will be eighth, quarter, half, dotted half, or whole notes.

Lesson 15, 3:28

- Bonus: Learn how to complete the minor circle of 5ths.

Level 7

Lesson 1, 8:26

- *Diatonic Whole and Half Steps.* Draw a note on the next line or space (diatonic) that is a half or whole step lower or higher than the given note.

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Lesson 2, 9:25

- *Rhythm, new:* Learn about eighth note triplets.
- Rhythm – missing note/rest: Draw one note or rest that has been left out of the measure. Time signatures may be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, or 6/8
- Rhythms covered in level 7: Sixteenth (flagged and beamed), eighth (flagged and beamed), eighth note triplets, dotted eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, half, dotted half, and whole notes and corresponding rests.

Lesson 3, 7:26

- *Notation and Ledger Lines.* Rewrite the given note on the other staff. Use the same pitch as the given note.
- Circle the higher sounding notes of each pair of notes.
- New: Double flats and double sharps.

Lesson 4, 6:56

- *Time Signatures.* Identify time signatures as simple, asymmetrical, or compound.
- Write the correct time signature in each measure below. Choices can be 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 3/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8 or 12/8.

Lesson 5, 8:45

- *Circle of 5ths.* Complete the major circle of fifths.
- Complete the minor circle of fifths.
- No sharps or flats are pre-preprinted for students at this level.

Lesson 6, 8:50

- *Key Signatures.* Identify the minor key represented by each key signature.
- Name the relative minor keys of the major keys named.

Lesson 7, 12:41

- *Major and Minor Scales.* Draw the sharps and flats needed to make the named major scale.
- Draw sharps or flats needed to make the natural minor scale; mark the half steps with a slur; draw the key signature of the scale in the last measure of the staff.

Lesson 8, 6:26

- *Vocabulary:* Triad fifth, Asymmetrical Meter, Piu Mosso, Dolce, Animato, Sempre, Rallentando, Compound meter, Double Sharp, Poco a Poco.

Lesson 9, 5:07

- *Intervals.* Identify each interval by type and size within a major scale.

Lesson 10, 6:30

- *Major Triads.* Identify Major Triads, and write inversions as slash chords.
- Build any major triad on a given root.

Lesson 11, 8:10

- *Primary Triads:* Name the Major key, identify the primary triad by Roman numeral, & identify the note in the bass clef as the root, 3rd, or 5th.
- Draw the key signature, construct the primary triad in root position in the treble staff. Draw the root note of each chord in the bass staff.

Lesson 12, 9:14

- *Analysis.* Identify the key of each example, and circle notes that are not in the key signature.

Lesson 13, 6:25

- *Ear Training:* Identify triads as Major, Minor, or Neither.
- Identify intervals within a major scale.
- Identify scales as Major or Natural Minor.

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Lesson 14, 7:31

- *Dictation.* Fill in 3 empty measures of a 4-measure rhythmic dictation. Fill in 3 empty measures of a 4-measure melodic dictation.

Lesson 15, 3:22

- *Bonus:* Spell Major Triads up from a given root.