

Preparing for College Level Music Theory | The Music Theory Placement Exam | 2017-2018

Music Theory IA (MUCT 111), and the accompanying *Aural Skills Lab* (MUCT 111L), are the first of six quarters of formal theory and musicianship studies required of all music majors. Because the opening weeks of the course move very quickly through a review of fundamentals, it is extremely important for you to be fluent in the elements of music *before you arrive on campus* in the fall. This means being at ease in recognizing written and aural pitch in melodic and harmonic configurations, as well as in metric and rhythmic contexts.

Freshmen come to La Sierra with differing levels of knowledge about music. Many know the major and minor scales, key signatures, clefs, intervals, and chord types, which they have learned through private lessons or music theory study in high school. Many others, however, possess only a rudimentary understanding of the subject.

This range in knowledge of music fundamentals presents a difficult challenge to both students and their teachers. Therefore, all incoming music majors and minors are required to take the **Music Theory Placement Test**, a diagnostic exam that will determine which course of study you will take the freshman year. It consists of timed *written and aural* questions dealing with pitch fundamentals (naming pitches in different clefs, major and minor key signatures and scales, generic and specific interval size and quality, and triad and seventh types) basic roman numeral analytical symbols with figured bass, and the recognition and notation of rhythms in simple and compound meters. The test is administered on Monday at 10 AM on the first day of classes of Fall Quarter, Hole memorial Auditorium, Room 233. For fall quarter 2017, the date is September 25, 2017.

To help you in preparing for this test, please consider which of the options below aligns best with your background. Save valuable time later by making time now to follow through with one of these options.

Option 1. Enroll in your school's AP Music Theory course, which covers the necessary fundamentals and more. The following link is to a widely used textbook for AP Music Theory:

http://www.amazon.com/Barrons-Music-Theory-MP3-2nd/dp/1438073895/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1455563344&sr=1-1&keywords=ap+music+theory

Option 2. Enroll in a web-based fundamentals course that will help keep you on track:

1. At La Sierra, we use *Music Theory Skill Builders*:

<http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/umbrella/mtsb/mtsb.html>

2. Another possibility is *Breezin' Through Theory*:

<http://breezinthru.com>

3. Another good (free) site for exercises can be found at:

<http://www.musictheory.net>

Option 3. If you have had AP music theory courses or something similar (e.g., Certificate of Merit in private study), you may challenge the above options by successfully passing the department's Music Theory Placement Test. Please be advised that you should prepare for the exam with a thorough review of your studies.

MUCT 105-106 *Fundamentals of Music I and II and Labs.*

If you perform poorly on the placement test in the fall, you must take this course sequence which is offered during winter and spring quarters. This is La Sierra's theory prep course, a two-quarter fundamentals sequence that does not apply toward the music major. You must complete this sequence with at least a grade of C. Also, be aware that because these classes run winter and spring quarters of the freshman year, you will not be able to enroll in MUCT 111 until fall quarter *the following year*.

For more information regarding preparation for your theory and musicianship studies, please contact:

Dr. Kenneth Narducci, DMA
Director, Theory and Musicianship Studies
knarducc@lasierra.edu