

ECMS Theory Program Overview

Entering the Theory Courses

1st-5th grade should ALL go to Theory in Motion. 5th graders go to Theory in Motion D.

6th graders must take a placement exam with Dr. Foley and will be placed in D or E.

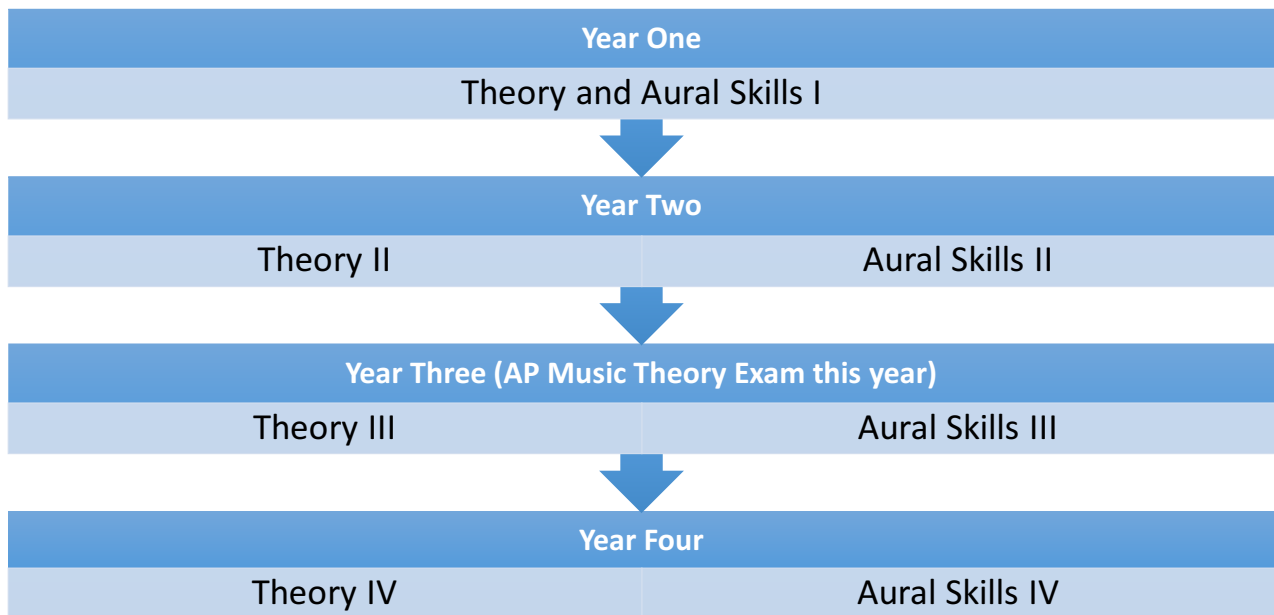
7th-8th graders should take Piano Class or Music Rudiments for Middle Schoolers. Students with theory background are encouraged to take the placement exam – they may test into Theory and Aural Skills I in eighth grade. This age group may not take Theory in Motion.

9th graders are advised to begin with Theory and Aural Skills I. Students with theory background may take the placement exam. Those students who appear to have passed out of Theory and Aural Skills I will go to Margaret Henry for an interview.

10th-12th grade should take the placement exam.

Adults will want to begin with Theory and Aural Skills I, especially if they have no history of theory classes. Any adult wondering where they should go ought to take the placement exam.

Recommended Course of Study for High School Students



For diploma track students: After Theory II, pianists can take Keyboard Theory and after Theory III all students can take the Counterpoint elective and do a Theory Project.

Description of ECMS Theory Courses:

Theory in Motion is a five-level program focusing on aural and kinesthetic musical understanding, basic music literacy, and musicianship. Terminology and musical analysis is also introduced. Students grow in their ability to: internalize melody, rhythm, and meter; sing with independence, good intonation and expression; improvise melodically, rhythmically, and through movement; move with expression; and communicate through music.

Music Rudiments for Middle Schoolers: The Dalcroze Approach Understanding of rhythm, structure and musical expression are honed through movement, while sensitivity to pitch, scales and tonality are developed through singing. Students channel kinesthetic, musical and spatial learning in this class to study rhythm, phrase structure, and musical form; scales and intervals, fixed-Do solfege, note-reading (in 3 clefs), dictation, improvisation/composition, and basic harmony are all covered.

Music Rudiments for High Schoolers and Adults: The Dalcroze Approach See description above – this is a separate section for the older student.

Theory and Aural Skills I is an introductory course that assumes little or no theory knowledge. Beginning with clef reading (treble, alto, tenor, bass) students progress through a study of pitch, rhythm, keys, modes, intervals and a brief introduction to chords. Relevant Aural Skills are used to introduce each topic.

Aural Skills II builds on the vocabulary established in Theory and Aural Skills I and focuses solely on ear training. Students learn fixed Do solfege and scale degree numbers. They sing, perform rhythm, identify intervals and chords as well as taking dictation. Subject matter is coordinated with the material in Theory II. Prerequisite: Theory and Aural Skills I

Theory II focuses on the traditional discipline of two and four-voice part writing. After completing species counterpoint, students learn cadence formulas and tonic expansions. Relevant repertoire is examined throughout the course. Prerequisite: Aural Skills II (Theory II and Aural Skills II may be taken concurrently)

Aural Skills III is the aural skills complement to Theory III. It focuses on more advanced performance and dictation skills, with an emphasis on identifying small forms, harmonic sequences, contrapuntal expansions, applied chords and modulation. Sight singing will focus on fluency in treble, bass, alto, tenor and soprano clefs. Prerequisite: Aural Skills II and Theory II (Theory III and Aural Skills III may be taken concurrently)

Theory III covers more advanced diatonic harmony and voice leading, including harmonic sequences, more contrapuntal expansions, applied chords and modulation,

leading to the Advanced Placement Examination in May of that year Prerequisite: Theory II (Theory III and Aural Skills III may be taken concurrently)

Aural Skills IV is the aural skills complement to Theory IV. Students learn to aurally recognize chromatic harmony and form; subjects also include clef reading, improvisation and transposition. Prerequisite: Theory IV (Theory IV and Aural Skills IV may be taken concurrently)

Theory IV is a course in 19th century harmonic practices including mixture, the Neapolitan Chord, augmented sixth chords and common tone chords; 19th century processes of musical ambiguity; larger forms, including Ternary, Rondo and Sonata Form Prerequisite: Theory III (Theory IV and Aural Skills IV may be taken concurrently)

Counterpoint explores Renaissance, Baroque, Classical and/or Modern contrapuntal topics – the specific course information varies with the specialties of the instructor. Prerequisite: Theory III or instructor permission

Keyboard Theory for Pianists focuses on practical keyboard skills – realizing figured bass, score reading, improvising, accompaniment styles. Prerequisite: Theory II and the ability to sight-read a chorale

Theory Project is an independent study, in which the student will meet with an instructor for one hour a week for a full academic year. The student will select a piece (or a movement from a piece) that he/she is studying in lessons. Following a detailed analysis, the student will write up his/her findings in a paper and then present the paper in the form of a lecture recital in May of that year. Prerequisite: Aural Skills II and Theory II

Honors Theory Project is a more advanced theory project in which the students will meet with an instructor for an hour a week for two full academic years. The student will present his/her findings in front of a jury. Prerequisites Theory III and Aural Skills III

Contact Information:

For Theory in Motion: Dr. Adam Foley, afoley@esm.rochester.edu

For Music Rudiments: Howard Spindler, hspindler@esm.rochester.edu

For all other theory courses: Margaret Henry, mahenry@esm.rochester.edu