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**Teaching Philosophy**

The instruction of young adults is an important vocation, one that I take seriously and enjoy greatly. I am committed to providing an environment where individuals can achieve their full potential. I encourage excellence in all aspects of learning; I strive to provide the students with the tools to become competent musicians as well as well-rounded and informed individuals. To this end, I offer students a setting that is conducive to learning: one where questioning, the sharing of information and ideas is valued and encouraged, where tolerance and mutual respect for our similarities and differences prevail.

To aid students in their educational endeavors, I draw upon my own experiences as a composer, music theorist, researcher, and teacher to foster students' artistic awareness, perspective, and creativity. I encourage students to pursue further exploration independently, while always offering my guidance. I find my own research into the interdisciplinary and intertextual nature of music to be a great means of illustrating concepts. For example, when discussing the importance of cadence as a form-defining event in classical music, I draw the parallel to jazz and the importance of the turnaround in pieces based on blues.

My teaching approach involves learning through a challenging "hands-on" study of music. Each course begins with a clear presentation of the goals and expectations. Courses center on a series of well thought-out lessons and lectures. I use a variety of teaching strategies including the traditional lecture, assigned readings, discussions, projects, and computer-aided instruction where warranted, while using assignments and examinations as needed. The studies expose the students to the compositions of the masters and to important critical work. For example, when teaching about the interaction between sonata form and harmony, I illustrate these relationships with works such as the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in G Major, Op. 49, no. 2. In this piece, Beethoven uses harmony as the means to clearly delineate the boundaries of sonata form. The brevity of this movement allows students to easily grasp these concepts, which in turn become templates for further, more involved explorations of sonata form. While serving multiple purposes, evaluating students' progress is achieved on a continuous basis and in numerous ways. Always knowing their strengths and weaknesses helps me define how my teaching strategies answer their needs and also guides me in the choice of, and adjustments to, my lesson plans. Along with the students' needs, the course content and class setting must be considered when selecting effective methods of evaluation. For example, in courses that emphasize writing skills, I use a blend of higher-stakes (e.g., examinations) and lower-stakes grading (e.g., weekly assignments and quizzes). Additionally, I allow students to resubmit harmony and voice-leading exercises. It enables and motivates students to go over their errors, consider my suggestions, and incorporate them into their revisions, similar to submitting a draft of a paper for comments. In adopting this approach, I have found that students are not only less

inhibited by the grading process, but also develop a better understanding of the concepts as they are given the opportunity to individually improve their writing skills under my guidance.

Looking at the larger picture, I strongly believe that music theory comprises a cornerstone of the undergraduate and graduate curriculum, having both immediate and long-term benefits for the students—performers, composers, and academics alike. Music theory teaches students about the language of music, how to listen to music, and how to develop a critical, educated ear. It demonstrates how performances are invested with a sense of harmonic goals, and how a sensitivity to voice leading can communicate the deeper fabric conceived by the composer. As a result, students acquire a greater appreciation for the composer's use of form, planning, and invention, while developing their aural intuitions. In the long term, I believe that music theory instruction serves as a springboard for a life in music. It encourages students to add to their knowledge and enjoyment of these great works, and explore other genres and types of music, such as jazz, contemporary, and world music.