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An Internet Music Theory Database — Final Report
<http://www.colleges.org/~music/theory/index.html>

The purpose of this project is to provide the music community with an online database of tonal music theory examples taken from the classical repertoire. Presently, music theory teachers and students have little access to well-organized examples of theoretical techniques beyond the few excerpts contained in music theory textbooks. Consequently, music theory researchers, teachers, and students spend countless hours looking for appropriate examples of music theory techniques. The purpose of this project is to remedy this situation.

During the spring and summer of 2005 I continued work on the first phase of the database project. With the assistance of Patricia Gray, we completed six new chapters, bringing our total to nineteen out of a project twenty-five chapters, each devoted to a specific theoretical topic. The new chapters contain between thirty-six and sixty-five examples (the largest chapters so far), and presently there are approximately 700 examples available online. For each example there is a printable .pdf file of the score excerpt, an audio excerpt in .mov or .mp3 format (we believe that it is essential to have sound recordings available), and a single web page in .swf format that includes both the score and the audio recording.

Once the first phase of this project is complete (and we anticipate completing roughly twenty-five chapters and 1,000 examples—perhaps by fall of 2006), we will then ask the music community to recommend their own examples for us to include in the database. Thus, we envision the Internet Music Theory Database as an ever-growing resource for musicians.

In most cases we have attached no analysis to the examples. First, I do not want my interpretations to influence anyone else's thinking. It is not important that we all interpret these passages similarly as long as they are available to those who want to use them. And, second, score examples without analysis will allow teachers to create assignments directly from the database. Some teachers have combined the database with Blackboard to create weekly online quizzes and assignments. I have used the database in various ways in both my undergraduate music theory and ear training courses. On our webpage we have included a link for "suggested ways to use the database."

Both Patricia and I have given talks on the database in numerous places. Thus far, feedback has been extremely positive. Music theory instructors agree that the database saves them a great deal of time preparing their courses. We have been complimented on the quality of the musical examples and the elegant simplicity of the website design. Musicians are eager to have their own favorite examples included in the database. The Society for Music Theory has approached us about making our project an official database of the SMT. Thus, I believe that my objective of creating something useful for the music theory community is being achieved.

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