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A Study of Music Theory Teaching in the Arkansas Foundation of Associated Colleges

Janis Nutt Watkins
Ouachita Baptist University

A STUDY OF MUSIC THEORY TEACHING IN THE ARKANSAS FOUNDATION OF ASSOCIATED COLLEGES

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Janis Nutt Watkins

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In recent years there has been increased concern about the value of music theory as it is presented in the training of professional musicians. Many theorists have expressed a desire to see a revision of the teaching of music theory. However, in few instances has there been a comprehensive study and evaluation of present practices to determine to what extent revision is desirable.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the objective of this study to determine the present place and purpose of music theory in the music curricula of selected private colleges in Arkansas, and to compare principles, concepts, aims, methods, and procedures employed by the faculties of these schools during the 1964-1965 school year.

Importance of the study. The present period of re-evaluation of music theory programs was motivated by theorists' desire for improvement in theoretical teaching. While it is realized that a standardized procedure would be neither practical nor desirable, there should be some agreement on two questions: "Why is theory important in

the training of a musician?" and "What is important enough to be included in the study of theory?"

At least one international and two national organizations have recognized the need for an evaluation of the college music theory program. The Music in American Education Committee of the Music Educators' National Conference expressed a need "for a study of the place of music literature, theory, and composition in American music education, and current practices in these fields."[1] The International Society of Music Education recommended a revision of music theory in the training of professional musicians.[2]

This study will be a comparison of the practices, principles, content, and methods of music theory instruction in selected private colleges of Arkansas. Information derived from this study will provide a basis for evaluation and possible revision of courses of study. Results of this study will be made available to participants.

Limitations of the study. This study shall be limited as implied by the definitions of terms used.

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[1]Music Educators National Conference, Music in American Education, Washington, D. C. : Music Educators National Conference, 1955, p. 11.

[2]International Society of Music Education, "Recommendation of ISME Conference, Budapest, 1964," International Music Educator, X (October, 1964), p. 349.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Selected private colleges in Arkansas. The term "selected private colleges in Arkansas" shall be interpreted to mean the colleges with membership in the Arkansas Foundation of Associated Colleges: Arkansas College, Harding College, Hendrix College, John Brown University, Ouachita Baptist University, College of the Ozarks, and Southern Baptist College.

Methods and procedures. "Methods and procedures" shall be defined as the system of teaching music theory, or, the presentation of music theory. The system shall be examined to determine whether presentation is through learning and observance of rules, analysis, exercises, drill, or a combination of these and other methods. The order of presentation and time allowed for various aspects, and material included or omitted shall be taken into consideration.

Principles, concepts, and aims. "Principles" shall be defined as the fundamental foundations of the subject matter as interpreted by the faculties of the colleges involved. "Concepts" shall be interpreted to mean the relation of these principles to the students' training and future needs as a musician. "Aims shall be interpreted as the faculty's expectations or goals for the end result of the students' study.

Music theory curricula. In this report the term "music theory curricula" shall be interpreted to mean the basic music theory courses offered during the students' college study, with a special emphasis on the courses usually designated as "harmony" and "ear training."

Faculty. The term "faculty" shall be defined as those persons teaching the above classes including the chairman of the division of theory where applicable.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Sources of data. The sources of data were the faculties of the selected colleges in Arkansas, published textbooks in the courses involved, and periodicals containing related material. College bulletins describing the music courses offered were also examined.

Method of procedure. The faculties of the selected private colleges were personally interviewed to get a comprehensive view of the theory curricula of these schools (see Appendix for interview topics). Textbooks used by the surveyed schools were examined and compared. Recently published textbooks not in use by these schools were also used as reference material.

Treatment of findings. The information secured through interviews and by comparison of textbooks and bulletins was compiled in statement and table forms. A comparison of philosophy, approach, and materials presented was made. No attempt was made to evaluate the theory program of any school. The study will be available to the participating schools as a basis for their own evaluation and self-improvement as desired.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The traditional theory course, generally defined as a two-year program of study of eighteenth and nineteenth century harmonic techniques, has been commonly accepted as an essential part of the professional training of a musician. This study has often been of questionable value to the musician because it was presented as an isolated, technical field of study; little attempt was made to correlate it to music literature, musical experience, or the musician's own medium of performance. Theorists have been speaking out in an effort to awaken teachers to the value of the study of theory when it is presented in proper relation to other aspects of the training of the musician:

> There has been a growing dissatisfaction with some of the aspects of the so-called "traditional" theory course, and the last few years have brought about a re-evaluation of its aims, procedures, and its proper place in the curriculum.[3]

In the introduction to his theory textbook, Paul Hindemith said, "The study of harmony is being left behind in the race between musical practice and theoretical instruction."[4]

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[3]Charles W. Walton, "Three Trends in the Teaching of Theory," Music Educators Journal, XLVIII (November-December, 1961), 73.

[4]Paul Hindemith, Traditional Harmony (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1943), p. iii.

Janet McGaughey, noted University of Texas theorist, wrote in 1958:

> Theory teaching in the United States has tended to place greatest emphasis on written work confined to a relatively limited style, and students have tended to achieve only acquaintance with, rather than mastery of, musical elements before attempting to use them in functional relationships.5

In the introductory pages of Harmonic Practice--a theory text by Roger Sessions--the author said, "The textbooks which I tried out did not quite suit my needs, and I finally replaced them with mimeographed notes of my own." He stated later, "It has seemed to me that harmony and counterpoint have often been accepted as desirable studies without sufficiently clear definitions of their function."6

There is a definite difference in ideas concerning the purpose of music theory, especially between composers and music historians who are teachers of theory. Sessions also had a comment on this condition:

> The discrepancy between music theory on the one hand and the practices of composers on the other, is not a phenomenon of the last twenty or even fifty years; thoughtful musicians have noted it for more than a century, and there have been an increasing

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5Janet McGaughey, "Current Trends in College Theory," American Music Teacher, VIII (November, 1958), 6.

6Roger Sessions, Harmonic Practice (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, Inc., 1951), pp. ix-xxii.

> number of attempts, by theorists and teachers and even composers, to re-evaluate or reformulate theory in terms more consistent with practice. Meanwhile, except for slight and sporadic changes, the traditional teaching has generally been retained,--and retained far too often, for what seem to be insufficient or obscure reasons.[7]

These statements of dissatisfaction with the conditions existing in the music theory teaching programs of colleges in the United States were not made a half century ago, but in the last two decades.

Ellis Kohs, outstanding composer and teacher, (Pulitzer Prize, 1955; Prix di Rome, 1956) has followed what has become a trend in music theory in the last twenty years. He has written a textbook uniting the teaching knowledge of traditional harmony with the insight he has developed in his experiences in composition. The result is a syllabus entitled Music Theory.[8] This textbook places emphasis on the devices and practices common to the eighteenth and nineteenth century which have practical application today and which can be used with a degree of competency by the student for the enrichment of his musical experience.

In the twentieth century before World War II, few music theory textbooks were written, and few of the ones written had wide acceptance or influence on theoretical

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Ellis B. Kohs, Music Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 106 pp.

pedagogy. Ellis Kohs used three texts as principle references in the formation of his syllabus. He lists no theory text as a reference that was published prior to 1943. The three textbooks mentioned by Kohs were: (1) Walter Piston's Harmony, 1948;[9] (2) Roger Sessions' Harmonic Practice, 1951;[10] and (3) William Mitchell's Elementary Harmony, 1948.[11] Other texts by current theorists were published at approximately the same time as the three just mentioned. Two texts by I. A. McHose were published in 1947 and 1951 respectively. Other texts were written by the contemporary authors Stringham and Murphy, Hindemith, and Bauman--to name a few.

Examination of Roger Sessions' textbook reveals that he also acknowledged influences of earlier authors. The acknowledgements in his book reflect the characteristic gap in the publication of desirable textbooks. He gave credit to Paul Hindemith's Traditional Harmony, 1943,[12] and Iwan Knorr's Aufgaben für den Unterricht in der Harmonielehre (Lesson for the Instruction in the Harmonics), 1894.[13] This is indicative of a period of silence on the part of music

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[9]Ibid., vii.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Sessions, op. cit., p. xxiii.

[13]Ibid.

theory educators that has obviously affected the approaches and practices of teachers and has contributed to the defects in theory teaching mentioned by the theorists quoted above. A textbook published in 1892 (Percy Goetschius' The Theory and Practice of Tone Relations) was used in the school year 1961-62 by one school of music in this section of the country and other schools possibly used this book, also.

According to Janet McGaughey, the recent availability of good music theory texts has helped to bring about improvement in this teaching field, but the improvement is probably not widespread enough to insure satisfactory programs in all schools of music:

> The Julliard School of Music, by establishing the curriculum known as Literature and Materials of Music, has pointed the way to a practical, music-centered approach to all training for the development of insight and skill.
>
> In 1956 Howard Boatwright published Introduction to the Theory of Music in which the pursuit of technical skill is linked with acquiring knowledge of music history. He begins outside the realm of major and minor and equips the student for understanding of music preceding as well as following the common practice period.[14]

Other writers have expressed a desire to see the theoretical study of music broadened to include a course in melody which would have an equal place in the curriculum with courses in harmony and counterpoint.

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[14]Janet McGaughey, "Current Trends in College Theory," American Music Teacher, VIII, (November, 1958), 6.

Miss McGaughey has made several predictions for the future of theory teaching:

1. Musical acoustics will be linked much more thoroughly with the nature of consonance and dissonance and will be a necessary tool in the analysis of music of all periods.

2. Students will be made aware of the historic sources of present day musical phenomena through analytical and experimental study of evolutionary forms.

3. A thorough study of melody will precede the study of counterpoint and harmony.

4. Students will be constantly engaged in the examination and hearing of music of all periods.

5. Much more conscious effort will be made to foster the development of the critical faculty.

6. Creative writing will be stressed.[15]

The above predictions were made in 1958, and some of the practices mentioned have already become more popular. Ross Lee Finney, Composer-in-Residence at the University of Michigan, made a statement concerning creative writing:

> Composition is not a study that should be limited to the talented few in music any more than in English. When the teacher of English asks his students to write poems or essays or short stories, he knows how few will be professional writers. He knows, nevertheless, that something will be gained that cannot be learned by reading literature or studying rhetoric. The very purpose of the study of composition is to re-assert the

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ross Lee Finney, "Employ the Composer," American Music Teacher, XI (November-December, 1961), 8.

> importance of individual expression and to show that all of the systems that make up musical craft have been merely a means to an end. One of the most gratifying moments in the teaching of composition comes when the doubtful student realizes that he can trust his ear and that many of the words that he has talked about music have been devices for escaping the essential act of doing.[17]

A more recent evaluation has been made by a committee of the Music Teachers National Association. Members of the Committee on Music in the Schools and Higher Education have responded to questions concerning the need for revision in the method of theoretical instruction and about the need for a keyboard approach to the subject matter as opposed to using the student's own medium of performance. Archie Jones of the University of Missouri stated that theory should be treated as a "tool" subject rather than a "content" subject. Charlotte Dubois of the University of Texas said that an overhauling of the traditional approach to theory is long overdue in many schools and private studios. That theory should be functional, and that the student must master preceding compositional techniques in order to understand contemporary idioms was the opinion of Ralph Matesky of the University of the Pacific. The noted music educator Charles Leonhard said that theory courses have focused too narrowly on written theory. He further stated that the purpose of theory is to develop listening skill,

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[17]Ibid.

understanding of the structure of music, and understanding of actual music. He advocated the inclusion of all styles and periods for study. Each of the members who were questioned voiced the opinion that theory should be related to the keyboard, to the students' own media of performance, and to as many other media as possible.[18]

This is an era of change for the area of music theory pedagogy, and the serious teacher should be anxious to keep abreast of the new developments and ideas in method, content, and materials in an effort to make this phase of music a living, integral part of the music curriculum.

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[18]Frank Crockett, "Committee on Music in the Schools and Higher Education," American Music Teacher, XIV (March-April, 1965), 27.

CHAPTER III

PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND SEMESTER HOUR REQUIREMENTS OF THE COLLEGES STUDIED

Information about the curricula of the surveyed schools was obtained by study of their current college or university bulletins and from information given to the writer by persons interviewed in each of the departments of music. An attempt was made to interview persons who were vitally concerned with the teaching of music theory in each school of music. In some cases more than one faculty member was interviewed to obtain additional information. Information about some courses was general, but was as accurate as could be obtained.

Persons Interviewed

In this thesis there will be no attempt to make a distinction between the current practices of individual schools, teachers, or administrators.

The following faculty members were interviewed and very graciously cooperated with the writer in giving the desired information in interviews:

1. Assistant Professor Dale A. Millen, Arkansas College
2. Assistant Professor Graydon J. Williams, College of the Ozarks

3. Professor Erle T. Moore, Harding College
4. Associate Professors Hadley Yates and George Mulacek, Hendrix College
5. Associate Professor Joe Zimmerman and Assistant Professor Richard Cooke, John Brown University
6. Associate Professors Helen Lyon, W. F. McBeth, and Virginia Queen, Ouachita Baptist University
7. Professor William J. McDaniel, Southern Baptist College

There are thirty-seven members of music faculties of the schools surveyed. Of this number, seventeen are teaching a course or courses in music theory. Four of those teaching theory hold master's degrees in theory, and one teacher has earned a doctorate in theory. The distribution of teachers with degrees in theory is illustrated in TABLE I. Information about the number of students enrolled in the respective schools is also included in the table.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF TEACHERS ON THE MUSIC FACULTIES, NUMBER TEACHING THEORY, AND NUMBER WITH DEGREES IN THEORY; NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGES AND NUMBER OF MUSIC MAJORS

School	Number teaching theory	Number teaching music	Students currently enrolled	Music majors enrolled	Teachers with degrees in theory
1	1	2	432	11	MA (one)
2	4	14	1400	95	MM (two)
3	2	6	500	35	
4	2	4	425	20	MA (one)
5	2	2	325	15	
6	2	6	600	25	PhD (one)
7	4	6	1200	37	

The length of time that individual theory teachers have held their present positions ranges from two to twenty-two years. The median time in a position is twelve years, and the mean length of time is eleven years.

Only three of the seventeen faculty members teaching theory can be considered as having their primary teaching load in theory. Several indicated that theory courses comprised approximately half of their teaching responsibility.

A candidate for a degree from any of the colleges or universities surveyed must accumulate approximately one hundred twenty-four semester hours credit, with the exception of the junior college which requires sixty semester hours. A comparison of the total number of semester hours required for the music degrees offered by the participating schools, and of the number and nature of music theory courses required for various music degrees are enumerated in TABLE II.

TABLE II

DEGREES OFFERED,
MINIMUM SEMESTER HOURS OF THEORY REQUIRED, AND
MINIMUM SEMESTER HOURS OF MUSIC REQUIRED

School	Degree	Area	Hours required in music	Hours required in theory
1	Assoc. in Arts	Music	21	16
2	BM	Instrumental	77	25
		Vocal	77	25
		Church Music	74	25
		Theory-Composition	75	31
	BME	Instrumental	62	21
		Secondary Choral	59	21
		Elementary Choral	59	19
	BA	Music	44	16
3	BA	Music	42	18
		Music Education (Choral)	48	18
		Music Education (Instrumental)	51	20
		Voice	54	18
		Piano	49	18
4	BA	Music	48	16
		Music Education	47	16
5	BA	Music	40	18
6	BA	Music	51	18
	BM	Instrument or Voice	74	32
		Church Music	66	16
	BME	Instrument or Vpice	69	24
7	BA	Church Music	62	24
		Instrument or Voice	44	16
	BME	Voice or Instrument	57	21

Semester Hour Requirements

Current bulletins of the seven schools show that two schools offer a Bachelor of Music Degree, five schools offer a degree in music education, and that all seven schools offer a Bachelor of Arts in music.

The required courses and total number of required semester hours in music theory for each degree are presented here in table form for more convenient reference.

Bachelor of Music degree in Piano, Organ, Voice, Orchestral or Band Instrument, Church Music, or Theory and Composition

The minimum semester hours of music theory required for a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano, Organ, Voice, Orchestral or Band Instrument, Church Music, or Theory and Composition are listed in TABLE III.

TABLE III

MINIMUM SEMESTER HOURS IN THEORY REQUIRED FOR A BACHELOR OF MUSIC DEGREE

		LOWER LEVEL THEORY		UPPER LEVEL THEORY					
School	Total theory hours	Harmony I and II	Sight singing Ear training and dictation	Orches- tration	Choral arrang- ing	Counter- point	Form and analysis	Compo- sition	Degree
1 Instrumental or Vocal	32	12	4	2		6	——8——		BM
Church Music	16	12	4						BM
2 Instrumental or Vocal	25	8	8	2		4	3		BM
Church Music	25	8	8		2	4	3		BM
Theory and Composition	31	8	8	4		4	3	4	BM

Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education

This degree classification includes all degrees which meet certification requirements for teaching music in Arkansas as indicated by the bulletins of the various colleges. These requirements may be compared in TABLE IV.

Bachelor of Arts degree in Voice, Piano, Orchestral or Band Instrument, or Church Music

The minimum semester hours in theory required for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Voice, Piano, Orchestral or Band Instrument, or Church Music are listed in TABLE V.

TABLE IV

MINIMUM SEMESTER HOURS IN THEORY REQUIRED
FOR A BACHELORS DEGREE IN MUSIC EDUCATION: A. INSTRUMENTAL
B. SECONDARY CHORAL
C. ELEMENTARY CHORAL

	LOWER LEVEL THEORY			UPPER LEVEL THEORY				
School	Total theory hours	Harmony I and II	Sight singing ear training and dictation	Orchestration	Choral arranging	Counterpoint	Form and analysis	Degree
1. A	20	12	4	2			2	BA
B,C	18	12	4				2	BA
2. A	16	4	4	——4——			4	BA
B,C	16	4	4			4	4	BA
3. A	24	12	4	2		6		BME
B,C	24	12	4	2		6		BME
4. A,B, or C	21	16		2	or 2		3	BME
5. A	21	8	8	2			3	BME
B	21	8	8		2		3	BME
C	19	8	8				3	BME

TABLE V

MINIMUM SEMESTER HOURS IN THEORY REQUIRED
FOR A BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE IN MUSIC: A. INSTRUMENTAL
B. VOCAL
C. CHURCH MUSIC

		LOWER LEVEL THEORY		UPPER LEVEL THEORY				
School	Total theory hours	Harmony I and II	Sight singing ear training and dictation	Orchestration	Choral arranging	Counterpoint	Form and analysis	Degree
1	16	12	4					Associate in Arts
2	16	8	8					BA, Music
3	18	12	4				2	BA, Music
4	16	4	4			4	4	BA, Music
5	18	12				6		BA, Music
6 A,B	18	12	4	2 or	2			BA, Music
7 A,B	16	16						BA, Music
C	24	16			2	3	3	BA, Church Music

CHAPTER IV

KEYBOARD HARMONY, SIGHT SINGING, EAR TRAINING AND HARMONY

The principal purpose of faculty interviews was to gain a comprehensive view of the presentation of theory on the freshman and sophomore levels in each music department. Since requirements above the sophomore level not only vary from school to school but also vary according to degrees offered, a comparison of advanced theory will not be made. Within practical limits, questions for interview were designed to show as many aspects of each school's program as possible (see Appendix). The questions were directed toward the following topics in connection with keyboard harmony, sight singing, ear training, or harmony: (1) textbook or textbooks in use, (2) attitude about composition and the creative writing approach, (3) normal class procedure, (4) aims for class achievement, and (5) aims for students' personal development and application of principles learned.

Keyboard Harmony

Several ways of scheduling keyboard harmony were revealed by this study. Two of the schools included it with the harmony section of theory. Three schools had a combined harmony and ear training course, and keyboard in

these cases was one of the aspects of the combined class. Keyboard harmony was included as part of ear training in another school. In the other school, keyboard was not included with harmony or ear training, but was taught in class piano. The time spent per week in the teaching of keyboard varied from one-half hour to an hour, with outside practice required.

A variety of approaches to keyboard harmony was revealed by the study. Two teachers reported that they used textbooks. Only one teacher used the chorale style exclusively for keyboard instruction, staying completely with the strict movement of voices as dictated by the style. Two teachers indicated that they did not use the chorale style, but taught the students to improvise a freer chordal accompaniment to melodies, using basically the primary triads (tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant) in various keys. The other four teachers used a combination of the two approaches, either alternating within a year's study, or using one approach one year and the other the following year.

Several objectives were expressed in relation to purposes for keyboard harmony: (1) to develop facility in accompanying melodies, (2) to employ discipline of using simple chord progressions in several keys, (3) to develop sight reading skills, (4) to demonstrate cadences

of different periods, (5) to teach part-writing, (6) to develop an association of sounds with sight and feel of the keyboard, and (7) to reinforce and illustrate harmony.

Sight Singing and Ear Training

The three schools which had a combination course in harmony and ear training scheduled their classes and awarded credit in the following ways: (1) class met six hours per week of which two hours were lecture and four hours were devoted to laboratory work (two hours were spent in ear training, and one hour was scheduled for sight singing); four hours credit was awarded, (2) class met three hours a week for three hours credit, and students spent approximately two additional hours in a listening laboratory; one hour out of four or five class periods was spent in sight singing and one or two hours per week were devoted to ear training, depending on what material was covered, (3) class met three times per week for two hours credit, and classes alternated periods--harmony met for two consecutive periods and then ear training met for two periods in succession. (More than half of the two hours ear training was devoted to sight singing).

The remaining four schools each scheduled two class hours per week for ear training; two of the schools awarded two hours credit for this work, and two awarded only one

hour credit. The time devoted to sight singing by these schools ranged from thirty minutes per week to ninety minutes. The remainder of the time was spent in ear training and dictation.

Sight Singing. Four teachers used more than one system of syllables for sight singing. One school taught by solfeggio (do, re, mi, etc.) exclusively, and two schools used only neutral syllables (loo or la). The remainder used a combination of numbers, syllables, or letter names.

Textbooks used for sight singing and ear training classes are shown in TABLE VI.

TABLE VI

TEXTBOOKS USED FOR SIGHT SINGING AND EAR TRAINING

Frequency of use	Author	Title
2	Liebermann	Ear Training and Sight Singing
1	Wedge	Ear Training and Sight Singing
1	Berkowitz, Frontrier, and Kraft	New Approach to Sight Singing
2	Ottman	Music for Sight Singing
1	McHose-Tibbs	Sight Singing Manual
1	Fish and Lloyd	Fundamentals of Sight Singing and Ear Training
5	Benward	Workbook in Ear Training
1	Krone	Fundamentals of Musicianship

Ear Training. Five teachers used the Bruce Benward Workbook in Ear Training as a textbook. Two of these used this workbook as a basic textbook, and one indicated that he employed the approach only for intervals and harmonic dictation. The others reported that the book was supplementary to their basic materials. Several indicated that the book contained more material than they could cover in the time allowed, which presented an opportunity to select exercises according to the needs of their classes. (One school, however, is discontinuing its use as one of the primary sources for its classes.) Other books in use were Fundamentals of Sight Singing and Ear Training by Fish and Lloyd and Fundamentals of Musicianship by Smith and Krone. The former was a primary textbook, and the latter was used incidentally.

Recordings were used by four teachers as a method of practice. The recordings accompanying the Benward workbook, the Rutgers University Music Dictation Series, and tape recordings made by the teachers themselves were examples of sources. Other methods of practice suggested to students were group practice with students playing for one another and group work with an outstanding student giving dictation. One teacher said that he asked students not to practice melodic dictation outside of class. In class, analysis of the shape of the melody and harmonic rhythm preceded actual writing of notes.

Aims for levels of accomplishment for the students varied in most cases in proportion to the time allowed for ear training and sight singing. Some of the goals listed by the teachers for freshman ear training and sight singing are given here:

School 1. Take a simple melody in dictation, identify chords in a harmonic progression and write the soprano and bass notes, identify intervals and chord types, (including seventh chords) and identify soprano and bass in isolated chords;

School 2. Recognize simple chord progressions (with dominant sevenths), know chord types and inversions, sing modes, take soprano and bass in dictation with some notes filled in, and write a familiar melody from memory;

School 3. In harmonic dictation, take the soprano and bass with some notes filled in within the inner voices, and sight sing an average part in choral literature;

School 4. Sing melodies half way through the sight singing textbooks;

School 5. Take melodies in dictation, identify chords in simple progressions, and take four-part dictation in basic progressions;

School 6. Hear harmonic progressions, take simple two-part dictation in all clefs, and take rhythmic dictation up to four or six subdivisions of a beat;

School 7. Analyze the source of material in listening (identify the main theme, second theme, etc.), distinguish differences in imitation--a fugue or a canon, sing with rhythmic accuracy, take a melody by dictation from memory, and identify simple chord progressions, taking down the soprano and bass notes.

The aims listed respectively for sophomore ear training classes are given as follows:

School 1. Exposure to sounds of chords and devices of harmony, dictation of two independent voices, and dictation of elementary progressions in four parts;

School 2. Recognition of all chords and inversions including dominant sevenths, dictation of soprano and bass factors, dictation of four parts in eight measure exercises, analyzation of chord progressions aurally, and some facility in keyboard harmony;
School 3. Four-part dictation, singing a part accurately in a Bach chorale, and singing a part in the less-difficult contemporary choral works;
School 4. Information not available;
School 5. Dictation of longer melodies and four-part harmonies with altered chords;
School 6. Four-part dictation including altered chords, (ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, and augmented sixth chords) and sight singing of chromatically altered tones;
School 7. Not offered.

Harmony

Harmony classes are considered to be a basic element of all college music curricula. Importance given to the course or strength of the theory program in each school differs according to the school's scheduling policies and the department's emphasis or lack of emphasis on the subject. The total class time allowed per week for harmony and ear training in the surveyed colleges and universities ranged from three hours to six hours. A majority of the classes met a total of five hours per week for the two courses or in a combined course. The teachers in schools where less time was allotted expressed a desire to increase the time and credit for the courses, indicating that the reduced time was caused by heavy general education requirements rather than lack of interest or emphasis on theory.

See TABLE VII for a breakdown of class hours per week and semester hours credit for theory in the seven schools.

TABLE VII

CLASS HOURS PER WEEK

AND SEMESTER HOURS CREDIT IN THEORY

School	Class Hours Per Week		Semester Hours Credit	
	Harmony	Ear Training	Harmony	Ear Training
1	—— 6 ——		2	2
2	3	2	2	2
3	3	2	3	1
4	—— 3 ——		—— 2 ——	
5	—— 3 ——		—— 3 ——	
6	3	2	3	1
7	3	2	3	2

Entrance examinations. Only two departments reported the use of entrance tests to screen students who planned to enter harmony classes. The tests used were described as tests on fundamentals, including chord building. A third school reported an entrance test for transfers for classification purposes. Another school stated that all prospective music majors were enrolled in harmony and began the course, but that students having difficulty with the work were dropped out of the course into fundamentals class after two weeks. No school reported using standardized tests in harmony classes or after completion of the courses.

Textbooks. There was little duplication in textbooks selected by various teachers of harmony. Books by Piston and Ottman were in use in three and two theory departments respectively. Other textbooks were employed in only one school each. Teachers of theory who were interviewed gave reasons for selecting the textbooks in use at the time. Many of these teachers expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with the textbooks they were using. The books named are listed below with dates of publication and reasons given for their selection:

1. Ottman, Elementary Harmony, 1961. The value of this textbook was questionable in regard to students' needs in this school. The book reportedly contained too much of a fundamental nature which was not needed since an entrance exam screened out those with deficiencies in

fundamental music knowledge. The sophomore textbook in this school was Ottman's Advanced Harmony, 1961. This book was used to complete the study of common practice harmony. The last semester was devoted to styles after the common practice period, and Leon Dallin's Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition, 1957, was used as a basis for study.

2. Walter Piston, Harmony, 1948, was used for harmony classes. Plans for next year included the use of the Ottman textbooks mentioned above to supplement this book.

3. Hindemith, Traditional Harmony, 1943, and Ellis Kohs, Music Theory, 1961. These books were used for freshman and sophomore harmony classes respectively. The Hindemith book was chosen because the author did not "editorialize," and the teacher could fill in with his own ideas and explanations.

4. Carl McKinley, Harmonic Relations, 1944. This book contains basic harmony with no fundamentals and could be more easily adapted to the limited amount of time given to theory in this school.

5. McHose, Contrapuntal Harmonic Techniques, 1947. This book was in use by the predecessor of the teacher interviewed. He expressed a need for a more functional explanation of chords and devices.

6. Laycock and Nordgren, First Year Music Theory, 1962. This book was chosen because the amount of material was satisfactory and the method of presentation was considered good; modulation and secondary dominants were included in the material. Walter Piston's Harmony, 1948, was the text for the second year of study.

7. Walter Piston, Harmony, 1948, and accompanying workbook, Harmony, A Workbook in Fundamentals, Des Marais, 1964. The material in this book was considered fairly satisfactory, but the teacher re-arranged the order of presentation of material.

Content. A comparison of content of theory courses of the seven schools may be found in TABLE VIII, TABLE IX, TABLE X, AND TABLE XI.

TABLE VIII

ELEMENTARY CHORDS AND ELEMENTS*

School	Scales and Intervals	Melody	Triads	Primary Triads (I, IV, V)	Secondary Triads	Sixth Chords	Six-four Chords	Non-harmonic Tones
1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
3			X	X	X	X	X	X
4	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
5				X	X	X	X	X
6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

*Chords and other elements are not necessarily in the order in which they are presented in the various schools.

TABLE VIII (continued)

ELEMENTARY CHORDS AND ELEMENTS

School	Harmonic Texture	Modulation (simple)	Modulation (advanced)	Cadences	Harmonic Phrase Structure	Period Structure	Harmonic Rhythm
1		X	X				X
2		X		X	X		X
3	X	X	X		X	X	X
4		X	X				
5		X	X				
6		X	X	X	X	X	
7		X		X	X		X

TABLE IX

DOMINANT HARMONIES,

SEVENTH, NINTH, ELEVENTH, AND THIRTEENTH CHORDS

School	Dominant Seventh Chord and Inversions	Dominant Ninth and Inversions	Dominant Thirteenth	Supertonic Seventh	Non-dominant Sevenths	Ninth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Chords
1	X				X	X
2	X	X			X	X
3	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	X			X	X	
5	X			X	X	
6	X	X			X	X
7	X	X			X	X

TABLE X

CHROMATICALLY ALTERED CHORDS

School	Secondary Dominant	Chromatic Non-harmonic Tones	Neapolitan Sixth	Augmented Sixth Chords	Secondary Supertonic and Sub-dominant	Raised Supertonic and Sub-mediant
1	X		X	X	X	
2	X		X	X		X
3	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	X			X		
5	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	X		X	X		
7	X		X	X		X

TABLE XI

TECHNIQUES SINCE THE COMMON PRACTICE PERIOD*

School	Fourth Semester Study of Modern Techniques	Classical Romantic	Impressionistic and Whole-tone	Polychordal	Serial	Modal	Quartal
1	X			X	X		
2	X	X X	X	X	X	X	
3	?						
4							
5							
6	X		X				
7	X		X	X	X	X	X

*Only techniques mentioned specifically by teachers interviewed are checked in the columns above. Others were possibly used but were not specified in the interviews.

Class procedures and teaching methods. In order to gain a comprehensive picture of the methods of teaching and attitudes and goals of each school of music as a whole, answers to several questions are given here in succession. In a breakdown by question with each school's answer to the question given, the over-all picture of the individual theory program would be lost. The following information, therefore, was compiled with each specific school's answers to several questions stated consecutively.

Seventeen freshmen were enrolled in the theory course at the first department of music. Class work was conducted as follows: New material was assigned and explained; exercises were selected from previous class assignments, discussed, and compared on the board (an opaque projector was used to save time in copying exercises). At the end of the year, superior students were expected to be able to write eight-measure exercises without error, and average students were expected to write with a minimum of errors.

The sophomore class had nine members. New material was assigned to the class to be read in advance. The material was explained in lecture, and questions were answered; examples were played and assignments were compared, looking and listening for the "best" solution. The final semester was devoted to contemporary techniques. At the end

of the first semester students were expected to be able to handle all of the materials in the common practice textbook. The goals for the last semester were to gain familiarity with twentieth century techniques and rhythms (those presented in Dallin's Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition), and to understand the basic principles of atonality, serial writing, and constructed scales.

In all of the classes the term "secondary dominant" was used by the teachers of this departemnt when it resolved in the regular way. The term "applied dominant" was also used. Freshman students analyzed material in Murphy and Melchor's Music for Study. Students composed chorales as part of the regular work of the theory course. The teacher stated that he considered it a good method of evaluating progress of the students and of demonstrating ability to apply what they learned to performances of their own works. One of the theory teachers composes and has had works performed both at the school and by other groups.

Aims and concepts were also stated by the faculty of this school. Harmony was considered a necessary part of the students' musical training. The students utilized their fundamentals and rhythmic skills in all of their musical experiences. Unconsciously, the principles of harmony were demonstrated in each person's total musical personality.

The freshman harmony class in the second school had forty-seven students in the 1964-65 school year who were divided into two sections according to scores on the entrance test given at the beginning of the first semester. Each class period began with a QTQ (quick-thinking quiz) in which fundamentals, chord building, and other isolated facts were checked in rapid succession with only a few seconds allowed for each answer to be written. A short lecture on a new device (or continuation of study of a previously-introduced device) usually followed, and it was devoted chiefly to explaining the function of the chord or device. Tests often included questions about the functions of chords and devices. Part of each class period was devoted to drill with students working at the board or at their desks. One major part-writing exercise was required per week, with chords and devices specified for the eight measures. At the end of the year freshmen were expected to know fundamentals well, to construct all seventh chords, to be able to part-write using all chords through the dominant seventh, and to know non-harmonic devices with the exception of change of bass suspension and altered non-harmonic tones.

The sophomore class was conducted in a similar manner. The use of QTQ was continued through the first semester. A notebook was kept on devices with examples. There were twenty-five students in this class, also divided into two

sections. The students remained with the same harmony teacher through both years of study. At the end of the sophomore year they were expected to know the Bach style well. Their last semester gave them acquaintance with styles from Classical to Modern. They had some experience in writing in some of the modern styles. They were also expected to know basic acoustics.

In both years of study, the teachers in this department used the term "secondary dominant" because it encompassed thirty-two sonorities that would have to be learned individually. When a student learned the function of the secondary dominant, he also knew the preparation and resolution of these thirty-two sonorities. Students analyzed Bach chorales and materials in Hardy and Fish, Music Literature during their third semester of study. Chorales were written as a regular part of class participation beginning in the freshman year. The teacher who was interviewed expressed satisfaction with this practice, and he stated that it was the easiest approach to basic materials and principles of all styles. He stated further that there was an economy of material in this style which allowed more sonorities to be presented in a short time. Both teachers of harmony in this school compose in their leisure time. One writes one or two pieces each year. The other writes five or six pieces per year, and has had four pieces

published. Groups outside of the school in which he teaches average two thousand performances of his works per year.

Concepts and aims of teachers of this school were stated. Harmony was considered a vital part of the music curriculum because it was the first and most simple introduction to putting music on paper, creating an aural and formal appreciation of composition. It was considered a functional approach instead of an isolated presentation of facts. The faculty member interviewed felt that students made complete use of the fundamentals learned in harmony, but that their part-writing was not put into practical use as musch as the fundamentals or ear training unless the student pursued advanced study.

There were eleven students in freshman harmony in the third school. Examination of examples in class, correction of errors by demonstration at the piano, and examples worked at the board were part of the normal routine of the class. Students were expected to be able to write a good hymn (musically and technically) by the end of the year.

The sophomore class had seven or eight members in the 1964-65 school year. Class was conducted in the same manner, and at the end of the year the class was expected to write a chorale in the style of Bach, write a four-, six- or eight-voice choral work, and to write a solo song.

The term "secondary dominant" was used by the teachers because the chosen textbooks used the term. Analysis was used in the classes; students analyzed hymns and chorales. Chorales were composed by students at the close of the second semester of harmony. Writing gave the students an opportunity to functionally apply what had been learned. Quality and accuracy in writing a chorale determined half of the grade for their final examination. Three of the four teachers compose for their own enjoyment, and two or three of their compositions have been performed each year at the college.

The interviewed teacher considered the understanding of harmony as basic to the pursuit of musicianship, in that it helped the student to translate notes into meaningful sound. These teachers further indicated that students did use their theory in arranging and composing after they finished the basic courses.

The freshman harmony class in the fourth school had ten students enrolled for the same school year. Normal class work consisted of reviewing material in the text, playing examples and answering questions, and harmonizing examples at the board. At the conclusion of the first year students were expected to harmonize a diatonic melody and modulate to any key by using a common chord.

No information was available about the sophomore harmony program of this school.

"Neighbor dominant" was the term used instead of "secondary dominant" to explain the relationship of chords. Hymns were analyzed as part of the course. Students composed chorales during the second year of study. The freshman harmony teacher composes and has had performances both on and off campus.

Practical skills acquired in theory classes were applied in the arranging and composing done by students.

The freshman class in the fifth school had ten students for the same school year. The class periods were chiefly lecture and drill. At the end of the freshman year students were expected to know notation, to be able to analyze chorales (except altered chords), and to play progressions on the piano covering the same material.

The sophomore class of this school had four students, and class procedure included drill at the board and the piano, and work from the papers assigned in previous class sessions. The size of the class allowed time for some individual work with students. The goals for this class were the same as for the freshman class, with the addition of more chords and devices. A higher level of proficiency was expected.

The term "secondary dominant" was used by this teacher as a way of explaining function of chords. Compositions

in the chorale style were analyzed by second-year harmony students. Students began composing chorales late in the first year of study. The teacher felt that their composition experiences were valuable in their total musical experience. At least one of the teachers composes, and has had one publication. His compositions have been performed on campus and in other places.

In stating his concepts and aims, the teacher who was interviewed said that harmony was necessary because a person must understand the structure of music to perform artistically. It was his opinion that students also used their harmony in arranging for groups with which they were working.

Thirteen students composed the freshman theory class in the sixth school. A normal class period consisted of introduction of a new point at the chalkboard and on the piano, drill or review of previous material, with occasional lectures. A student completing two semesters work was expected to understand voice leading, to be aware of effective harmonic progression, and to understand the harmonic function of major and minor chords in a key. The students were required to analyze music with devices as advanced as chromatic harmony, including simple modulation.

The six sophomores in harmony class wrote exercises demonstrating the use of additional chords and devices of

the common practice style during their first semester. The second semester was devoted to more recent styles and techniques with an emphasis on impressionism. The class wrote some original works and the Debussy Preludes were analyzed.

The term "secondary dominant" was used by theory classes in this school. Freshman students analyzed Mozart sonatas and Music for Study by Murphy and Melchor. Sophomores analyzed Chopin preludes and works by Brahms. Chorales and melodies were composed by students at the conclusion of their first and second semesters. Second-year students did not compose chorales, but wrote original pieces in more contemporary idioms. The sophomore theory teacher composes two or three chamber works each year, and most of them are performed by groups outside the college.

In stating his concepts and aims, one teacher indicated that he considered the understanding of harmony a prerequisite to better performance. He said that students did not use their written harmony unless they delved into the study of composition.

In the freshman harmony class of the seventh school there were seven students. The playing of examples from students' papers and from published scores was an important part of class activity in this school. Other examples were examined, and some were sung to establish solid aural

association of all devices and chords. Goals for student accomplishment included development of sensitive, critical listening habits; ability to analyze literature of one's own performance medium; and development of the ability to write a good, singable hymn or a three-part song form for the same medium of performance.

Class activity on the sophomore level was similar to that mentioned above. Additional chords, devices, and techniques were developed. At the end of this study the student was expected to appreciate music literature from the romantic period to World War I. He also was expected to understand the "why" of modulation and chromatics, to be able to use non-harmonic tones, to modulate, and to understand techniques of the more modern styles.

The term "secondary dominant" was used by this teacher. Students analyzed melodies, three-part song form, and listened to sonata-allegro form. Chorales were written during each semester of study. The faculty felt that writing of chorales and pieces in various styles helped the students understand the functions of the material they were using or indicated a lack of understanding. The teacher of theory in this school has written several large-scale compositions each year, and has had approximately twenty compositions performed by groups not connected with the college.

Aims and concepts concerning the teaching of theory included the idea that harmony was considered necessary for its contribution to the understanding of musicianship. He stated further that harmony gave the students a sensitivity to form and devices of their performance medium and made them conscious of the content as well as making them aware of the "affect of music" on their emotions and intellect.

These answers to basic questions about the presentation and purpose of theory in the various schools of music give some indication of the nature of each program of study. Only a longitudinal study of each student presently studying in these schools could result in a complete evaluation of the teaching done. Therefore, no attempt will be made to evaluate the theory programs in this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Music theory teaching in the colleges and universities of the Arkansas Foundation of Associated Colleges is undoubtedly affected by the total aims and purposes of each school. Less than one-third of the faculty members who teach theory have a degree in theory, which indicates that the remainder either studied theory as a secondary field, or had less advanced study in theory. Apparently, music professors are hired for other abilities and are expected also to do an acceptable job teaching theory, whether they have been trained to teach theory or have not. The reverse is seldom true, so in this respect theory has been given a subordinate place in the music curriculum. Another gauge of the importance placed on music theory by the school as a whole is seen in the semester hours credit required in theory in relation to total hours required in music. Requirements in theory ranged from sixteen to thirty-two hours; and in all music courses, the requirements were from forty hours to seventy-seven. This indicates that theory constituted twenty-four to forty-five per cent of the music requirements for various degrees.

Value placed on theory by the teachers differed in some aspects. Most of the faculties expressed the premise

that basic theory training was necessary for good performance as well as for a background for further study. Several expressed the idea that theory was used to teach fundamentals in a functional way.

Basic content of freshman and sophomore harmony courses was the same. Only the amount of material, approach to its use, and presentation were different. More time was devoted to certain topics in some schools, while the emphasis in another school was somewhat different; the individual teacher shaped each course to fit the need of students and to accomplish his aims. These aims or goals and concepts were given in the material from page forty-two to page fifty-two. All of the departments of music utilized analysis as one of the means of accomplishing established goals. Several sources of materials for analysis were given.

Information came to the attention of the writer during this study which was incidental to the project, but which may give additional insight into the problems and trends in theory teaching in Arkansas. The first problem was revealed in discussions concerning textbooks. Several of the teachers interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with textbooks they were using. Some books contained too much detailed information while others did not have enough. Other undesirable deviations were noted. Apparently, there is still a need for textbooks to better meet the needs of the

schools. The second problem which came to the attention of the writer was a seeming lack of co-ordination within individual schools by teachers of related courses; there needs to be enough correlation for freshman harmony teachers to know generally what the sophomore harmony classes are studying at any given time, and for harmony or ear training teachers to be aware of the material being presented in the course concurrent to the one they are teaching. The third factor is apparently a trend in music theory teaching. At least four of the seven schools are presently completing the study of traditional harmony at the end of the third semester or early in the fourth semester. The remainder of the "harmony" time is devoted to the study of modern techniques and creative writing in various styles.

Ten of the seventeen teachers of theory compose regularly, either for their own personal enjoyment, commercially, or both. All of those who compose expressed agreement that composing of chorales and stylistic pieces was valuable in teaching. Only one teacher of the remaining group questioned the value of having students compose chorales. The emphasis being placed on creative work in the surveyed schools seems to be the strongest movement in Arkansas at present toward the trends predicted by Miss McGaughey and listed on page eleven. Three of the other trends appeared in practices of the seven schools.

This study has attempted to present facts and data which describe practices currently employed in teaching music theory in seven schools in Arkansas. Whether these practices will be continued as they are now, or whether there will be a constant re-evaluation is left to the discretion of conscientious theory teachers.

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APPENDIX

Questions for Interview

General Information:

Number of students (approximately) enrolled in the college _____

Number of music majors _____

Number of music faculty _____

Number teaching theory _____

Number with degrees in theory _____

Theory Teacher	Number of Years in the School
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Degree Teacher Holds	College or University
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Other Courses taught by theory teacher:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Number of teachers with primary responsibility in theory: _____

Other theory courses offered or required:

Counterpoint

16th Century _____ hours

17th Century _____ hours

18th Century _____ hours

Form and Analysis _____ hours

Composition _____ hours

Does any theory teacher compose? _____

Number of compositions per year:

1-5 _____, 5-10 _____, more than 10 _____

Publications

Performances per year (on campus) _____

Performances per year (off campus) _____

Keyboard Harmony

Time devoted to keyboard each week _____

Method of scheduling keyboard _____

Purpose for teaching keyboard _____

How is keyboard harmony approached?

Chorale style only _____

Chordal accompaniment _____

Combination of the two

Ear Training

Sight Singing _____ hours per week

Ear Training _____ hours per week

Type of dictation:

For sight singing are syllables, numbers, or neutral syllables used? _____

What textbook is used for sight singing?

What textbook is used for ear training?

Is the book followed closely?

How did you instruct the students to practice?

Harmony

Do students take an entrance test?

Are standardized tests used at any time?

What textbook is used for harmony?

Why was it chosen?

Are harmony and ear training integrated into one course?

Hours credit:

Harmony _____

Ear Training _____

Combination _____

Are all of the chords, devices, etc. in the textbook covered in the course?

What is omitted?

Why is it omitted?

What is added?

Why is it added?

How much of the textbook is covered per semester?

Is only Bach style used?

Is the term "secondary dominant" used?

Why is it used?

Is analysis used?

What is analyzed?

Do students compose chorales, etc.?

When?

Of what value is this?

Describe a normal class routine in freshman harmony.

Describe a normal class routine in sophomore harmony.

How many students are enrolled in freshman harmony? _____

How many students are enrolled in sophomore harmony? _____

What is expected of a student who has completed the following:

freshman harmony

sophomore harmony

freshman ear training

sophomore ear training

Why is harmony necessary?

To what practical use do students put their harmony or written theory?

A STUDY OF MUSIC THEORY TEACHING IN THE ARKANSAS FOUNDATION OF ASSOCIATED COLLEGES

An Abstract of a Thesis

Presented to

the Division of Graduate Studies

Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music Education

---

by

Janis Nutt Watkins

August 1965

Watkins, Janis Nutt, A STUDY OF MUSIC THEORY TEACHING IN THE ARKANSAS FOUNDATION OF ASSOCIATED COLLEGES. Master of Music Education, August, 1965, 63 pp., Bibliography, Appendix.

The purpose of this study is to determine the place of music theory in the curricula of seven selected colleges in Arkansas through a survey of the departments of music of these schools.

This study is approached through comparison of semester hour requirements in theory, content of harmony courses, class procedures, and aims of the faculties.

Requirements in theory ranged from sixteen to thirty-two hours, and in all music courses the requirements ranged from forty hours to seventy-seven. This indicates that theory constituted twenty-four to forty-five per cent of the music requirements for Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, and Bachelor of Music Education degrees.

Basic content of theory courses was similar in all of the schools surveyed. The theory programs differed principally in the depth of study and methods of presentation.

The majority of the faculties interviewed agreed that the purposes of theory were to present fundamentals in a functional way and to contribute to the students' understanding of structure of music to better prepare them for

artistic performance. They also concurred that written work in theory was of more value to those who continued in the study of theory or composition than to those who did not.

This study revealed an apparent trend in music theory in colleges. At least four of the schools completed the study of traditional harmony in three semesters and devoted the final semester of study to more recent styles and techniques.

Tables are included to show what was required in music theory for the degrees offered by the schools. Textbooks used by the faculties are listed, and the content of harmony courses is given in tabular form.