



NORTHWESTERN STATE

Mrs. H.D. Dear, Sr. and Alice E. Dear

School of Creative and Performing Arts

Dear Future Music Major:

Congratulations on your decision to major in music at Northwestern State University! NSU has a wonderful array of courses for you to take to hone your craft as a musician and music teacher. One of the most important areas of your subject that you should know well is music theory. Studying music theory is a basis from which you will grow as a performer, conductor, scholar, and pedagogue.

The music theory courses at NSU are designed as a 4-semester track that should be completed in the first four semesters of residency. These courses are prerequisites to upper-level courses, such as conducting, form and analysis, and music education courses. It is important that you take these courses seriously—if you drop or fail one of these courses, it may set your graduation date back by a semester or more.

With that in mind, we want you to be well prepared for the music theory diagnostic exam, **which you will take during Freshman Connection**. The following fundamentals will be tested on this exam:

1. Know the name notes in both treble and bass clef.
2. Know the names of rhythmic values and be able to identify—i.e. quarter note, eighth note rest, etc
3. Know the order of sharps and flats.
4. Know how to determine the time signature of a piece of music.
5. Know how to write all major key signatures in both treble and bass clefs.
6. Know how to spell major scales.

In order to do well in the music theory courses, all entering freshmen should have a basic knowledge of these skills. To help you prepare, I encourage you to visit one of the following web sites, which have drills in music theory necessary to commit the information to memory: musictheory.net; teoria.com; and tonesavvy.com

In addition to these web sites, there are two mobile apps put out by musictheory.net:

1. **'Tenuto'**(\$3.99) provides students with aural and written drills for practicing everything from note identification all the way up to complex seventh chord constructions.
2. **'Theory Lessons,'** (\$2.99) is a theory e-textbook with step-by-step breakdowns of material from spelling scales, part writing, etc.

Good luck on your diagnostic theory test this summer, and if you need any help, please do not hesitate to contact me at hudlowa@nsula.edu, or Mrs. Terrie Sanders at sanderst@nsula.edu.

Good luck and welcome to NSU!

Dr. Adam Hudlow
Assistant Professor of Music, Music Theory
Music Theory Coordinator

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Phones: Music (318) 357-4522 • Art (318) 357-6560 • Theatre 318.357.4483 | Fax: 318-357-5906 | 140 Central Avenue | Natchitoches, LA 71497