

## Introduction

### A Definition of Music

In its broadest possible sense, music is defined as “organized sound.” This openended and safe definition is coherent regardless of era, style, culture, or the mechanics of musical organization. Each successive historical era produces musically artistic expressions of its own time, its own musical aura. The study of Music Theory is the means by which we investigate this.

### A Definition of Music Theory

Music Theory is the study of music and its organizational characteristics. We define and examine aspects of music:

- How do we perceive music aurally?
- How do we experience music aesthetically and?
- How do we symbolize music visually?

We learn to associate sound with symbol (or notation), so to increase our ability to perceive music at levels of increasing depth and comprehension, both experientially and analytically. The

**Purpose of Music Theory** The study of the language of music yields three unshakeable tenets: •

We learn to analyze music in order to gain an understanding of the how great composers create. We use it as a “window” into their minds, if you will; • We learn to analyze music in order to deepen our own understanding, either as musicians or consumers of this form of artistic expression. • We employ the knowledge gained in the study of music to stimulate and enhance our own creativity. Among the community of musicians, the greater our comprehension, the more sublime our interpretation. This creates a more meaningful experience for our audience.

This is the ultimate focus of the study of music. As consumers, the more we understand about music, the more refined is our ability to intelligently evaluate what we enjoy. It is the intelligent

**consumer of Art who is the greatest supporter of Art. The Means by which We Investigate Music**

Examining music involves evaluation. At any level of experience, this begins with personal taste and preference. As we learn more, our method of evaluation evolves, becoming both more fluent and more critical. Clearly, over time and study, this shapes our perceptions and our tastes, regardless of what general direction these may take. Any study begins with an examination of fundamental precepts or principles. Music is no different. The nature of perception, the basic constructs, craftsmanship in musical construction: all must be mastered in the study of music.

Two broad approaches are employed in the study of music: • **Analysis:** we learn to employ commonly accepted techniques and specialized language to describe musical organization.

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