

MUSIC THEORY FOR *Cellists* With Dr. Nathan H. Whittaker

The Mediants

Intermediate Music Theory for Cellists
Winter 2021

Saturdays, February 13-March 20
2:30pm ET / 11:30pm PT

Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Music Theory for Cellists is an online course designed to teach the basics of Music Theory without the use of a keyboard, instead utilizing the skills and familiarity of the cello. Music Theory is the study of the science of how music fits together in Western Classical Music, of why certain combinations of notes, rhythms, and harmonies work well together. In each class the topics covered will be driven home using examples and exercises on the cello, which can help better integrate the lesson, as well as quickly show the student why it matters to them.

The Mediants is the second level course primarily focusing on the study of harmony, and how it relates to playing the cello and music composed for the cello. Each class will involve a discussion of the topic followed by practical application on the cello.

COURSE MATERIALS

The materials for this class are provided on the Music Theory Portal located at NathanHWhittaker.com.

THE MEDIANTS COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Become fluent in the academic language of harmony
2. Be able to identify harmony in works for cello
3. Gain deeper understanding of how harmony influences musicality and musicianship

COURSE TOPICS

Class 1: Chords and basic triads

Class 2: Diatonic harmony and extended tertian chords

Class 3: Harmony in Major and Minor keys

Class 4: Harmonic Progressions and Cadences

Class 5: Non-harmonic tones

Class 6: Analysis of Unaccompanied Bach

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. The student comes to each class with their cello to participate in live exercises. These exercises will be presented in class, but each student will be on “mute” at the time.
2. Please ask questions should anything be unclear - this is your opportunity to learn something interesting.
3. Should a conflict arise and live attendance is impossible, a video of the class will be posted on the Music Theory Portal along with the slides for that class.
4. Homework assignments will be short, but are required for anyone not registered to vote in a presidential election. Any written assignments should be turned in via email (nhwhittaker@gmail.com) by 5pm ET on the Friday before class.

EVALUATION

There are no tests or exams for this course, as knowledge and understanding is its own reward. A certificate of course completion will be sent upon completion.