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Independent Study & Mentorship

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## You Need Ears to Hear Music!

### Research Assessment #5

Date: October 20, 2017

Subject: Ear training programs

Work Cited:

Rudolph, Tom. "Music-theory and ear-training tools: theory and ear-training programs can greatly

improve your students' skills." *Music Education Technology*, Spring 2005, p. 28+.

*General*

*OneFile*, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=ITOF&sw=w&u=j043905010&v=2.1&id=GALE%

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A13145636&it=r&sid=7888f542b28e5fe464eb3495c09e1e22. Accessed 20 Oct. 2017.

Assessment:

A common skill found among many great artists and producers is the knack for recognizing pitches for what notes are when they are played. This is a skill called perfect pitch. Perfect pitch is difficult to achieve and requires years of consistent practice, but my goal this year is to develop perfect pitch close enough to recognize different keys and work from there with what chords can be used in that key, so when I hear a song on the radio and will be able to

play it on an instrument immediately. I have already practiced ear training in my early years, but not in the same way. The method I used was to sing a pitch and match the same pitch by playing the keys and adjusting the tone. This method uses note spatial recognition that could be attributed to my skills in sight reading in choir. Nonetheless, I will be researching the different programs that are available for ear training and methods to practice ear training from the point of view as a teacher.

According to the article, ear training programs are essential to the music theory curriculum as they “enhance and reinforce the theory” that was taught in class. I agree with this greatly because many times you are transcribing notes from your head, and in order to put the right notes and rhythms on paper, you are not only optimizing your hearing skills, but also the rhythmic structures of the same notes that are taught in music theory. Consequently, you are having to constantly recall your previous knowledge and soon, the skills will become innate to you. The article suggests a teacher to use a program that has a record-keeping mechanism that allows to see a person’s progress. This feature in a ear training program would be very beneficial because as I am dictating my own learning in this topic, so I will be able to pinpoint the different weaknesses I may have while ear training. Of course, seeing improvement within the process is encouraging and motivates one to strive for higher success.

In order to keep up with the skills in ear training that need to be learned, the article suggests to create a list of requirements, or in my case to create a list of skills within ear training that I should learn first and prioritize the different topics from there. Whichever category I choose to put greater emphasis on, it must be something that will aide me in creating music of my own. For example, note recognition will allow me to not only have a written version of

melodies and background music, but will allow me to play around with the notes straightforwardly instead of aimlessly if I were to not have as much knowledge in music theory.

Some great programs were mentioned that would allow me to practice ear training. As the article identified, programs like Sibelius's Auralia and Musition, MiBac Music Lessons, Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory, Electronic Courseware Systems' (ECS) Music Skill Builder, and Ars Nova's Practica Musica are programs designed for high school students, so my level of learning. I have never come across these programs before, so it will be interesting to see which ones will help me best. I have also looked into a few mobile applications that would allow me to continue my practice in ear training on-the-go. The application Earpeggio has so far been the most extensive mobile application that would allow me to do ear training and recognize not only pitches, but keys as well.

Looking at these applications and the different practice exercises interested me the most because it showcased the vastness of the topic in ear training. If one were to develop perfect pitch, it will definitely be at advantage in music transcribing and producing because of efficiency of the process will increase. In some ways, it may also help creating your own remixes and renditions of the popular music of today just by hearing it on the radio. Perfect pitch is definitely a neat skill and will be added into my music theory studies.