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## CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A WEB SITE: *WEB SITES FOR USE BY EDUCATORS*

© 2002-12. Kathleen Schrock (kathy@kathyschrock.net)

Kathy Schrock's Home Page <http://kathyschrock.net>

What type of connection do you have to the Internet?

☒ High-speed connection ☐ DSL ☐ T1 ☐ T3 ☐ Broadband/cable/satellite ☐ Other/don't know

Y @Y ^aA[, •^!A^Á[ ~ Á•q \*ÑChrome

Are you using a tablet to view the page ☐ Yes ☒ No

What is the URL of the Web page you are evaluating? [http:// musictheory.net](http://musictheory.net)

What is the name of the site? musictheory.net

**Place an "x" in the appropriate checkbox.**

Part 1: Technical and visual aspects of the page As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	YES	NO
1.1 Does the page take a long time to load?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Do any pictures or photographs on the page add to the information?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Is the spelling and grammar correct on the page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Are there headings and subheadings on the page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If so, are they helpful?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Is the page signed by the author?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.6 Is the author's e-mail address included?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.7 Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If so, is it current?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8 Is the format of the page standard and readable with your browser?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9 Is there an image map (large clickable graphic with hyperlinks) on the page?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.10 Is there a table (columns of text) on the page? (Check the source code to be sure.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• If so, is the table readable with your browser?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.11 If you have graphics turned off, is there a text alternate to the images?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.12 On supporting pages, is there a link back to the home page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.13 Are the links clearly visible and annotated or explanatory?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.14 Do photographs or sound files appear on the page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If so, can you be sure that a picture or sound has not been edited?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• If you're not sure, should you accept the information as valid for your purpose?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Summary of Part One

Using the data you have collected above, write a short statement explaining why you would or wouldn't recommend this site to a fellow educator.

I recommend MusicTheory.net to educators and students. It is reliable, accurate, and easy to use.

<b>Part 2: Content</b> As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	YES	NO
2.1 Is the title of the page indicative of the content?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Is the purpose of the page indicated on the home page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Does the page include the date it was created?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.4 If there is no date, does the information appear to be current?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 Does up-to-date information matter for your purpose?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.6 Is the information found on the page useful for your purpose?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.7 Would it have been easier to get the information somewhere else?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.8 Would information somewhere else have been different? • Why or why not? <div>Elements of basic music theory are well established.</div>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.9 Did the information lead you to other sources, both print and Web, that were useful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.10 Is a bibliography of print sources included?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.11 Does the information appear biased? (One-sided, critical of opposing views, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.12 Does the information contradict something you found somewhere else?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.13 Do most of the pictures supplement the content of the page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Part 3: Authority</b> As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	YES	NO
3.1 Who created the page? <div>Ricci Adams</div>		
3.2 What organization is the person affiliated with? <div>musictheory.net, LLC</div>		
3.3 Conduct a <i>link:</i> command in a search engine to see who links to this page. Can you tell if other experts in the field think this is a reputable page?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Does the domain of the page (k12, edu, com, org, gov) influence your evaluation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5 Are you positive the information is valid and authoritative? • What can you do to validate the information? <div>A non-expert would be unable to individually validate the information.</div>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6 Are you satisfied the information is useful for your purpose? • If not, what can you do next? <div></div>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7 If you do a search in the newsgroups (i.e. Google Groups) for the creator of the page, do you find any information proving the Web page author is an expert in the field?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Part 4: Pedagogy</b> As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	Y	N	N/A
4.1 Does the information on this page adhere to research-based principles of teaching?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 Does the information on this page provide replicable best-practice information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 Does the information on the page provide links to professional teaching standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4 If the site is intended to provide professional development for educators, is the information presented using multiple modes of presentation, such as the use of text, illustrations, videos, audio, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Part 5: Narrative Evaluation

5.1 Looking at all of the data you have collected above while evaluating the site, explain why this site is (or is not) valid for your purpose. Include the aspects of technical content, authenticity, authority, bias, pedagogy, and subject content.

MusicTheory.net is a free, reliable, effective, and easily navigated site through which to study and practice basic elements of music theory, beginning to relatively advanced. The exercises are customizable, and links may be provided to students as assignments. A recent update (to both the site and the corresponding iOS App, Tenuto) enables generation and submission of progress reports. The site includes a pop-up, playable piano keyboard, as well as ear-training exercises. The Classic version (classic.musictheory.net) also includes a brass trainer with which brass students may practice fingerings.

The information is accurate and clearly presented. It is, however, a bit dry. The exercises are more along the line of skill drill rather than being couched within authentic experiences. The site can be accessed through mobile Android devices, as well, and an iOS App is available to purchase for use with iPads and iPhones, making it usable for classrooms in which a variety of devices are available.

A screen-reader option is available for exercises and lessons. The creators express the desire to provide increased accessibility as needed.

I recommend this site for independent study as well as classroom use. The cost of the Tenuto App may present challenges for classrooms using only iOS devices, but if the funding is available I would suggest it is a worthwhile expenditure. If not, the site can be cast from a tablet or computer to a large screen for full class instruction and interaction.