

# Welcome to Theory Camp!

## More Than Simple Remediation

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Instructors of music theory would undoubtedly concur that in the first stage of training in music theory a student should gain an understanding of fundamentals, which commonly include topics such as pitch reading in various clefs, scales, key signatures, intervals, triads, plus the basics of rhythm and meter. Michael Rogers calls fundamentals the “foundation for all further tonal study.”<sup>1</sup> He warns that “a superficial grounding in the basics elements of pitch will cause more problems later on than almost any other form of negligence.”<sup>2</sup> To gain mastery or fluency in fundamentals, Rogers divides the study into three stages: “understanding the concept behind a topic, developing accuracy through practice, and developing speed.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, mastery of fundamentals is crucial in order to progress well in music theory, and parallels can be drawn with many other subjects including reading, learning a foreign language, algebra, chemistry.

Students who enter college as freshmen music majors come from a wide variety of musical experiences, and this is particularly evident when assessing their pre-college background in music fundamentals. The experience spectrum includes on one extreme a thorough grounding in music fundamentals and on the other a basic ability to read music in only one clef, with no knowledge at all of fundamentals. In between these extremes is found an assortment of experience levels that are often spotty or superficial in coverage. Because of such diversity, colleges are faced with the challenge of

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<sup>1</sup>Michael R. Rogers, *Teaching Approaches in Music Theory* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 36.

<sup>2</sup>Rogers, 34.

<sup>3</sup>Rogers, 35.

finding the best means of evaluating the theory background of incoming freshmen and the most effective way to remediate those students who are weak in the area of fundamentals.

To explore how other colleges and universities handle these issues on fundamentals, Eric Isaacson conducted a survey in 1998 that produced responses from 21 music schools and departments of varying sizes.<sup>4</sup> Of the 21 schools, 15 offer a "pre-theory rudiments" (fundamentals) course. Most of those 15 schools utilize theory placement exams, and a few use individual assessment tools, to determine whether students need to take the fundamentals course. A variety of responses was given to this question from the survey: "Approximately how many students take this course in a given year and what percentage of your total population does this represent?" (It is assumed that "total population" refers to total number of freshman music majors.) The percentages required to take a fundamentals course ranged from "less than 10 percent" to "the majority of our incoming students," with a fairly even spread of percentages in between. One variable that may have an influence on these percentages is the difficulty level of each school's placement exam. Another question that received a variety of responses is: "Approximately how many weeks are spent in the first theory course on teaching or review of fundamentals?" Responses ranged from "we assume knowledge of rudiments" to "the whole first semester is fundamentals," although the most popular response was "in the five-to-six-week range." Several common threads seem to permeate the wealth of responses to this survey: 1) The need for remediation exists in all the schools, 2) The problem does not appear to have an easy solution, and 3) There is an overwhelming desire from faculty for students to be better prepared in music fundamentals when they arrive as freshmen.

At Butler University, we have traditionally offered an "Elements of Music" course that covers fundamentals for those students deemed deficient in the subject, as a result of a theory placement

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<sup>4</sup>Highlights from this survey are provided here. Full survey results are found online: Eric Isaacson, *Music Fundamentals Survey: Summary of Responses* (Indiana University School of Music, Department of Music Theory, ©1998 by The Trustees of I.U.); available from <http://theory.music.indiana.edu/surveyresults.html>; accessed 19 June 2001.

exam administered on audition days. The exam covers the basics of rhythm and meter; pitch notation in treble, bass, alto, and tenor clefs; scales (major and all three forms of minor); key signatures; intervals; and triads. Roughly 25 percent of entering freshmen score lower than 50 percent on the placement exam, which requires them to complete the Elements of Music course before continuing on to the four-semester theory “core” sequence. All other entering freshmen spend four to five weeks on fundamentals at the beginning of the first theory core course. Until recently, Butler students needing remediation had one option, which was to take “Elements” during their freshman year and delay the start of the theory core until their sophomore year. Not only is this delay a curricular disadvantage, but it can be demeaning to the student to be set back a year and not join the majority of the freshman class in music theory. A solution was sought that would address this problem in a positive and productive manner. Because of the size of the institution, offering off-semester theory courses, or offering summer courses to help students catch up, were not viable options. Instead, the idea was explored for offering a 10-day version of the “Elements of Music” course, to be made available to entering freshmen shortly before the start of fall semester. Students who completed this intensive course could then begin the theory core at the start of their freshman year. This idea has now become an annual tradition since 1996 and is affectionately known as “Theory Camp.”

The initial idea for Theory Camp originated with S. Kay Hoke, who states that “Even though we didn’t call it Theory Camp as anything official, it came to be known as Theory Camp right away. Part of that had to do with the fact that what we were really giving students was an immersion experience in music theory.”<sup>5</sup> Theory Camp is much more than a typical intensive course, however, and getting it off the ground initially required the cooperation and support of many people throughout the institution. Hoke garnered support for the idea from the Chair of the Music Department, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts, and most importantly the university’s Of-

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<sup>5</sup>From a personal interview with S. Kay Hoke on 27 June 2001. A former Professor of Music at Butler University, Hoke is currently Chair of the Division of Fine Arts and Department of Music at Brevard College.

fice of Student Affairs. With the cooperation of Student Affairs, at no additional housing charge, campers are able to move into the dormitory rooms that they will occupy throughout their freshman year, ten days before the rest of the students arrive on campus. They are also charged the summer tuition rate for the course, which is slightly lower than the regular year's rate. The only additional expenses are for meals and textbooks for the course. According to Hoke, "Part of the reason it was able to happen was administrative support for the idea, and the fact that people had enough confidence to let us try it for a year to see what happened."<sup>6</sup>

Several aspects of Theory Camp make it a unique and memorable experience, both for students and instructors. The social activities during the evening hours, the team-teaching approach in the classroom, the highly-focused classroom goals, the relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, and the long hours spent together during the ten days all work together to create a special "bonding" experience for everyone that is remarkably similar to a camp experience. Each of these facets of Theory Camp will be highlighted here.

As illustrated in the sample itinerary of Figure 1, evening activities are scheduled that involve both campers and instructors. On the initial day of camp, two very important social activities take place. First, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts hosts a luncheon to welcome students, parents, and camp faculty. That evening a cook-out or pizza party is held, with a representative from student services present to field questions about the campus and talk about issues ranging from safety, to fraternities and sororities, to city life. Since this is the first time most of these students have ever lived away from home, this evening session is a very special time for them. As Figure 1 illustrates, additional evening activities provide opportunities for students to have home-cooked meals prepared by faculty and sight-seeing adventures around the city. A highlight of the social events for both students and faculty is always the outdoor symphony concert and picnic, fully funded by the university. For some campers, this concert is the first symphony orchestra concert they have ever attended. In my own undergraduate experience, I was never invited to socialize with a faculty member until my jun-

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<sup>6</sup>Hoke, personal interview.

ior year, so these opportunities for new freshmen to interact with faculty in social settings are very affirming and memorable activities for them. There are also several "free" evenings on the schedule, and occasionally, former campers will stop by the classroom and invite current campers to socialize with them on one of these free evenings. In addition, campers are allowed long lunch breaks that provide additional opportunities to bond and establish friendships while eating and completing lunchtime homework assignments.

All who have taught Theory Camp thus far maintain that a crucial ingredient for its success has been the team-teaching format, which has been utilized since the camp's inception. While I have taught every year thus far, my teaching partner has rotated among three other Butler faculty members, including Kay Hoke who was quoted earlier. Gail Lewis, another camp instructor, states, "One thing that impresses me about the team-teaching approach is that you can keep the students' interest throughout the ten days. Plus, it makes much more effective use of time for the instructors."<sup>7</sup> Spending five hours on intervals, for example, would make for a very long day for a single instructor. Plus, the students would soon tire of hearing from the same instructor for hours at a time. With two teachers, students get some variety in approach and personality. There are times when both instructors are present in the classroom for a lengthy period, and there are other times when one instructor leaves, either to make out a quiz, grade papers, design a worksheet, or simply take a break. Sometimes both instructors are in front of the class presenting material together, and other times one instructor presents material while the other circulates to give individualized help to students as needed. Having two instructors also provides opportunities to respond more quickly and directly to the needs of the whole class or to individual students. For example, one year approximately one-third of the class did considerably poorer on the rhythm and meter exam than did the rest of the class. For the next half-day following that exam, we divided the class so that those students who needed extra help in rhythm and

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<sup>7</sup>From a personal interview with Gail Lewis on 28 June 2001. Lewis is Assistant Professor of Music at Butler University.

**FIGURE 1. Sample Camp Itinerary**

**Wednesday, August 11**

9:00-11:45 AM

Move into Dorm Rooms

NOON

Lunch with the Dean for Parents, Students, Faculty

2:00-4:00 PM

Class: Pitch Notation, Intro to Computer Lab

5:00 PM

Cookout with Dean of Student Services

**Thursday, August 12**

9:00-11:30 AM

Class: Notation of Pitch; Review and Quiz

1:30-4:00 PM

Class: Notation of Rhythm

Evening

Visit Museum of Art

**Friday, August 13**

9:00-11:30 AM

Class: Notation of Rhythm; Review and Quiz

1:30-4:00 PM

Class: Scales and Key Signatures

Evening

Spaghetti and Ice Cream Sundaes at Instructor's

**Saturday, August 14**

9:00-11:30 AM/1:30-3:30 PM

Class: Scales and Key Signatures

Evening

On Your Own (Carpool to Mall? Movie?)

**Sunday, August 15**

FREE DAY!! Possible Evening Activity!

**Monday, August 16**

9:00-11:30 AM/1:30-4:00 PM

Class: Scales and Key Signatures; Review and Test

Evening

On Your Own

**Tuesday, August 17**

9:00-11:30 AM/1:30-3:30 PM

Class: Intervals

Evening

Visit Observatory on Campus

**Wednesday, August 18**

9:00-11:30 AM/1:30-3:30 PM

Class: Intervals

Evening

On Your Own

**Thursday, August 19**

9:00-11:30 AM/1:30-4:00 PM

Class: Triads

Evening

Cookout at Music Dept. Chair's Home

**Friday, August 20**

9:00-11:30 AM/1:30-4:00 PM

Class: Triads; Review and Final Exam

Evening

Outdoor Symphony Concert with Picnic

meter could receive help and then get re-tested on the material. If a student needs extra help outside of the regular class time, one instructor is able to meet with that student while the other instructor is preparing for the regular class period.

An added benefit of both the team-teaching format and the fast-paced nature of the course is that students are able to observe the teachers as they interact and respond to the needs of the class at any given moment. As students observe this on-the-feet planning, they become very aware of the depth of caring that is involved in teaching the class and in creating the best possible learning experience for them. It is truly an atmosphere in which all of us, teachers and students, are working collectively toward a common goal.

Within the classroom, the pedagogical goals are to achieve mastery of music fundamentals by focusing on Rogers's three "stages" of study, outlined at the opening of this article. Concentrating on fundamentals so intensely for ten days seems to increase the possibility for students to achieve mastery, perhaps more so than in a course taught during the regular year that meets three times a week for 50 minutes, along with all the other courses in a student's schedule. The textbook used for the course is the same text the students will use in the first two semesters of the theory core sequence. At present, that text is Turek's *Elements of Music*<sup>8</sup>, which includes fundamentals primarily in its first three chapters. Instructors supplement the text with additional handouts and worksheets designed to fit the needs of the students. When introducing new concepts, we try to build upon what the students have already learned. For example, even though we do share "tricks" for remembering the ordering of sharps or flats in the key signatures, we spend a great amount of time learning the circle-of-fifths and how the various keys are related to each other. Once mastery is achieved with scales and key signatures, we move on to intervals by first relating them to the structures of the major and the natural minor scale. After intervals are mastered, we introduce major and minor triads, again building on the students' knowledge of the major and minor scales and key signatures. During the course of one day, we may first go over homework from the previous night, followed by more drill and practice

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<sup>8</sup>Ralph Turek, *The Elements of Music*, 2nd ed. (NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1996).

in order to improve on accuracy and increase speed, followed by a short practice quiz that will be graded quickly during a morning break. If additional help is needed, based on quiz results, we may continue with additional worksheets or simply answer questions from students. Only when the class is ready for a timed, graded quiz will we administer one. At various times during the course, we will include more comprehensive exams to tie various topics together. Though we are on a tight and accelerated schedule, we always allow room for flexibility, depending on the needs of the particular class. We do not move on to a new topic until the students are all ready to do so.

Though the basic concepts taught during the camp are pitch reading and notation (in treble, bass, alto, and tenor clefs), rhythm and meter, scales, key signatures, intervals, and triads, we do include extra material along the way. For example, we teach the scale degree names (tonic, supertonic, mediant, and so on), include various musical terms and definitions, and introduce movable “do” solfege so that we can take sightsinging breaks for fun. We include the basic conducting patterns as we practice rhythmic reading exercises, and we listen to lots of different music in many styles, sometimes for the purpose of identifying meter, and other times simply to share our favorite music. Best of all, since camp is meant to be fun, we include a variety of theory games along the way, particularly towards the end of camp as we review all that has been learned. For example, the class divides into two teams for a relay race in which students go to the board to answer questions that are sometimes quite complex. Here are two sample relay race questions:

1. In bass clef, notate the submediant pitch of the natural minor scale that has a tonic of G#.
2. Write the compound duple meter signature that has a beat division of a sixteenth note.

In the race, each student must arrive at an individual answer before getting additional help from the team. Besides being a lot of fun, this game helps tie together many different concepts learned during the camp, it requires students to rely on accuracy and speed,

and it gives students an opportunity to encourage one another through team work. Another popular camp game that also presents challenging questions in a comprehensive manner is "theory bingo," with popcorn (already popped) for playing pieces and an "I love theory" free space in the middle of the playing cards.

The fun activities interspersed within the classroom hours, along with the social events at other times, work together to maintain a relaxed atmosphere throughout the ten days. Spending so much time together, day and night, quickly establishes an atmosphere of support and caring among the students and faculty. We all share a common goal, and everyone supports and encourages one another through the successes and struggles that take place during camp. The success of Theory Camp is evident in the students' grades, and Figure 2 presents some general findings comparing theory grades for camp graduates with theory grades for "regular" Elements of Music graduates. To calculate percentages, individual letter grades were assigned a numerical percentage value, as indicated in the figure. A total of 68 students have completed Theory Camp thus far ( $n=68$ ), representing five classes (1996, '97, '98, '99, '00); and their combined average grade is 90.57 percent. Theory grades for the first four camp classes (minus '00) have been tracked through the four semesters of theory "core" classes. According to the Figure 2, the 52 camp graduates who have taken the first semester of the theory core sequence earned an average grade of 83.88 percent for that course. In subsequent semesters, the total number of campers decreases as some students transfer to other institutions or change their major to something other than music. What Figure 2 does not indicate is that out of the 153 grades from all campers in the four semesters of theory core, only ten of those grades were C- or below.

The total number of "non-campers" represented in Figure 2 needs some explanation. Students attending Theory Camp have consistently been music majors (with an occasional music minor) who plan to continue with additional theory courses, while "regular" Elements students (or "non-campers") tend to include both music majors as well as non-majors who take the course simply as an elective. In order to achieve better balance between the two groups, only the 37 Elements students who continued on with additional music theory courses were included in this particular com-

parison. The pool of Elements students contains a total of four classes (1997, '98, '99, '00), and their mean percentage grade is 85.58 percent, compared with 90.57 percent for campers. The higher mean for campers could be attributed to the intensity of focus for the ten days, the lack of "distractions" from other courses or school activities during that time, or a combination of the two. The lower mean for the traditional Elements course could be influenced by the fact that, unlike camp, the course is spread over an entire semester and is part of a full load of classes for each student.

Figure 2 also illustrates that "combined" means for the theory core grades of both groups (campers and non-campers) are quite similar, with campers earning an 82.98 average and noncampers earning 83.10. These figures illustrate that at the very least, Theory Camp is as successful a course as the Elements course offered during the calendar school year.

To date, students from the first four Theory Camp classes (1996, '97, '98, '99) have been "tracked" throughout their four-semester theory sequence. Means of tracking include a faculty questionnaire and a student questionnaire. Theory faculty members are asked to assess the progress of each former camper in his or her class, for each of the four semesters of theory. In addition to providing details on students' grades for each semester, the faculty answer the questions listed in Figure 3. As the Figure illustrates, faculty members respond to each of the statements according to the scale provided: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree. Means are included for each of the four semesters, for each of the two years, and for all four semesters combined. The questions can be divided into two groups: Questions 1-7 assess the camper; and Questions 8-14 compare the camper with other students in the class. Almost all the mean values fall above the "neutral" rank. The lowest means are found related to Question 10 ("Compared with the rest of the class, the number of times the student asked for outside help from the instructor was... Well Above Average, Above Average, Average, Below Average, or Well Below Average"). Of course, a student may seek little outside help for one of two reasons: 1) the student does not need outside help, or 2) the student needs help but does not seek it because of disinterest or lack of discipline. The highest means are associated with the two

FIGURE 2. Grade Comparisons:

Campers versus "Regular" Elements of Music Graduates (Non-Campers). The grades of Theory Campers were compared with the grades of those students who completed the "regular" Elements of Music course in the fall or spring semesters during the last five years. Mean grades are provided here, based upon assigned letter grades. Numerical percentages used for letter grades are as follows: A = 95, A- = 91.5, B+ = 88, B = 85, B- = 81.5, C+ = 78, C = 75, C- = 71.5, D+ = 68, D = 65, D- = 61.5, F = 58.

|                        | Camp/Elements Grade<br>Sem | Theory Core Grades |                 |                 |                 |                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|                        |                            | 1                  | 2               | 3               | 4               | Comb.            |
| THEORY CAMPERS         | 90.57%<br>(n=68)           | 83.88<br>(n=52)    | 84.57<br>(n=42) | 80.70<br>(n=33) | 81.60<br>(n=26) | 82.98<br>(n=153) |
| ELEMENTS (NON-CAMPERS) | 85.58%<br>(n=37)           | 85.00<br>(n=37)    | 81.13<br>(n=27) | 81.81<br>(n=21) | 83.56<br>(n=18) | 83.10<br>(n=103) |

questions related to positive attitude (Questions 6 and 13) and with Question 2 that addresses students' comfort in asking questions in class. At the very least, data suggest that Theory Camp graduates, students who enter college with deficiencies in theory, are able to "hold their own" in the classroom throughout the four semesters. In addition, data suggest that camp graduates enter the theory core with more confidence and a better attitude than the "regular" theory students do.

Figure 4 provides the Student Questionnaire (with results), which is offered to former campers at the end of the freshman year, and again at the end of the sophomore year with slight adjustments in some questions, as indicated by the italics. Graduates of the first four Theory Camps were strongly encouraged to complete the Questionnaire, but not every student did so. The total numbers of students who did complete the survey are included in Figure 4. With a scale of 1 to 5, note the very positive responses to all seven questions. The two questions which produced the lowest mean scores were Question 2, which is concerned with development of good study habits, and Question 3, which assesses how much Theory Camp helped boost the campers' interest in the subject of music theory. Responses to Question 3 are understandable, because certainly music fundamental do not represent the most exciting set of topics in the world of music theory! What Figure 4 does not show is that for Questions 4 and 5, some campers gave scores of 5+, which were translated into 6 for statistical evaluation. The extremely positive response to these two questions reflects the general enthusiasm that campers have consistently expressed for the entire camp experience.

On the reverse side of the Student Questionnaire, campers are asked to write any comments they wish to make about their camp experience. When we first administered these questionnaires, my colleagues and I were overwhelmed and, quite frankly, surprised by the many positive comments we received from former campers. If we set aside all the statistics, the grades, and the opinions of faculty, we have what represents the heart and soul of the Theory Camp experience. Figure 5 lists some of the many comments that former campers have shared over the last five years.

**FIGURE 3. Faculty Questionnaire Results.**

Mean values are provided that indicate campers' performance in each of the four "core" theory courses, as well as combined, based upon two different scales (as listed within the figure). Faculty completed the surveys following each of the four core courses. One faculty member was unable to complete surveys for some students in semesters 3 and 4, which explains the smaller pools for those semesters (n=20 for Sem3, n=24 for Sem4), compared with the totals presented in Figure 2.

| Question                                                                                                                 | First Year     |                             | Second Year    |                             | OVERALL<br>(n=138) |      |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------|------|
|                                                                                                                          | Sem1<br>(n=52) | Sem2 Comb.<br>(n=42) (n=94) | Sem3<br>(n=20) | Sem4 Comb.<br>(n=24) (n=44) |                    |      |      |
| [For Questions 1-7: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree]                     |                |                             |                |                             |                    |      |      |
| 1) Student participated regularly in class discussions:                                                                  | 3.50           | 3.55                        | 3.52           | 2.85                        | 3.37               | 3.13 | 3.40 |
| 2) Student felt comfortable asking questions in class:                                                                   | 3.92           | 3.76                        | 3.85           | 3.30                        | 3.57               | 3.44 | 3.72 |
| 3) Student felt comfortable seeking help from instructor outside of class:                                               | 3.69           | 3.19                        | 3.47           | 3.50                        | 3.39               | 3.44 | 3.46 |
| 4) Student showed a genuine interest in the subject:                                                                     | 3.25           | 3.38                        | 3.31           | 3.25                        | 3.41               | 3.34 | 3.32 |
| 5) Student exhibited well-disciplined study habits:                                                                      | 3.40           | 3.50                        | 3.45           | 3.40                        | 3.48               | 3.44 | 3.45 |
| 6) Student exhibited a positive attitude:                                                                                | 3.62           | 3.69                        | 3.65           | 3.40                        | 3.61               | 3.51 | 3.61 |
| 7) Student made adequate progress through the course of the semester (add specific comments,as warranted):               | 3.32           | 3.45                        | 3.38           | 3.90                        | 3.65               | 3.77 | 3.50 |
| [For Questions 8-14: 5 = Well Above Average, 4 = Above Average, 3 = Average, 2 = Below Average, 1 = Well Below Average]  |                |                             |                |                             |                    |      |      |
| 8) Compared with the rest of the class, the student's level of class participation was:                                  | 3.69           | 3.26                        | 3.51           | 2.70                        | 3.17               | 2.95 | 3.33 |
| 9) Compared with the rest of the class, the student's willingness to ask questions during class was:                     | 3.29           | 3.31                        | 3.30           | 2.90                        | 3.43               | 3.19 | 3.26 |
| 10) Compared with the rest of the class, the number of times the student asked for outside help from the instructor was: | 2.79           | 2.69                        | 2.74           | 2.70                        | 2.96               | 2.84 | 2.78 |
| 11) Compared with the rest of the class, the student's interest in the subject was:                                      | 3.15           | 3.14                        | 3.15           | 3.10                        | 3.17               | 3.14 | 3.15 |
| 12) Compared with the rest of the class, the student's study habits and discipline were:                                 | 3.15           | 3.21                        | 3.18           | 3.20                        | 3.43               | 3.33 | 3.23 |
| 13) Compared with the rest of the class, the student's positive attitude was:                                            | 4.29           | 3.45                        | 3.92           | 3.40                        | 3.61               | 3.51 | 3.79 |
| 14) Compared with the rest of the class, the student's progress through the course of the semester was:                  | 3.71           | 3.24                        | 3.50           | 3.60                        | 3.39               | 3.49 | 3.50 |

**FIGURE 4. Student Questionnaire Results.**

Mean values are provided, based upon the following response scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree. Phrases in *italics* represent variances in the questions for the sophomore level questionnaire.

| <u>Question</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <u>Fresh.</u><br>(n=19) | <u>Soph.</u><br>(n=9) | <u>Com.</u><br>(n=28) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) The topics covered in Theory Camp (pitches, scales, key signatures, intervals, triads) helped me to gain a "head start" on freshman theory in the Fall ( <i>or helped me throughout the music theory sequence</i> ). | 4.79                    | 5.00                  | 4.86                  |
| 2) My participation in Theory Camp has helped me to develop good study habits for my freshman year ( <i>or has continued to help me develop and maintain good study habits during my sophomore year</i> ).              | 4.00                    | 4.00                  | 4.00                  |
| 3) My participation in Theory Camp helped boost my interest in the subject of music theory.                                                                                                                             | 4.21                    | 4.44                  | 4.29                  |
| 4) The social activities provided during Theory Camp, and the chance to make new friends, were beneficial to me in my freshman year ( <i>or have still benefited me during my sophomore year</i> ).                     | 4.84                    | 4.89                  | 4.86                  |
| 5) I am glad that I chose to attend Theory Camp.                                                                                                                                                                        | 4.89                    | 5.00                  | 4.93                  |
| 6) I would recommend Theory Camp to incoming music students who need to gain a "head start" on theory fundamentals.                                                                                                     | 4.84                    | 5.00                  | 4.89                  |
| 7) <i>I think the work I did in my four semesters of music theory was at LEAST average (or better), compared with the other students in my class.</i>                                                                   | xxx                     | 3.89                  | xxx                   |

It was not anticipated that this intensive fundamentals course would have such a powerful effect on students and would provide such lasting benefits that reach far beyond mere fundamentals remediation. The placement of the camp experience shortly before fall semester of the freshman year provides campers with great self-confidence, not only as they enter the theory core sequence, but as they enter college life in general. In fact, many campers have moved on to become top students in subsequent theory classes. Steven Stolen, Chair of the Music Department, remarked that "The socialization of new colleagues is invaluable to the department, especially since these students, because of their lack of background, might not otherwise emerge as quality students due to the regular beginning-of-the-year problems that less experienced music students have with theory."<sup>9</sup> Instead of campers feeling singled out as being deficient in theory, they feel privileged to be a part of such an experience as Theory Camp. Faculty find the experience particularly fulfilling as well. "I found that after doing it once, it was a great way to spend those ten days," expressed Hoke. "It wasn't like ending the summer early and coming back to something that was drudgery. It really was a rewarding experience, both for students and for faculty."<sup>10</sup> And like many camp experiences, the last day of Theory Camp is typically mixed with satisfaction and sadness; academic goals have been successfully met, friendships have been forged, but the group that has bonded in such a wonderful way will no longer be together.

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<sup>9</sup>From correspondence with Steven Stolen on 28 June 2001. Stolen is Professor of Voice and Chair of the Music Department of Butler University.

<sup>10</sup>Hoke, personal interview.

**FIGURE 5.** Comments from Former Campers.

- This camp was incredibly invaluable to my success as a theory student.
- Oh my gosh, I cannot say enough great things about Theory Camp! I have never learned so much in such a short amount of time! I never would have survived Theory 101/102 (First-Year Theory) without it. I met some awesome people in Theory Camp. Actually, two of my best friends are from Theory Camp. Also, the activities were great. Being from Denver, I wasn't very familiar with the city, but Camp got us off campus and to a few neat places.
- I was glad to be completely settled into the dorm room early and orient myself with the campus. I wasn't worried at all my first day of classes because everything was old hat.
- The friends that I have made during Theory Camp will last for life, and also it gave us a head start in socializing and knowing our way around campus.
- Since we got to spend time with professors on a social basis, we could not be as intimidated as maybe we would be during the year. The things you did for us made us feel special.
- I really benefited from Theory Camp. I felt I was a step ahead because I knew the style of teaching and I already had made a good base of friends. It was a very crucial part of my transition into college.
- Through the Theory Camp I made quite a few friends. Still when a bunch of us get together, we make it known that we went to the camp. This was an experience that I feel fortunate to have participated in. I hope for the sake of other musicians like me, that you continue with this program.
- Theory Camp was an extremely positive experience. If it had not been offered, I would now be a year behind with my required courses for my degree.
- Theory Camp was one of my most memorable times of my first two years at college. Not only did I receive a grasp on the materials, but it gave me confidence in the material for the following four semesters.