

# What is Music Theory?



CHANCES ARE THERE'S A PIECE OF MUSIC THAT MOVES YOU IN A PROFOUND WAY...

A WAY THAT IS FRUSTRATINGLY DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE TO SOMEONE ELSE!

LIKE OTHER FORMS OF ART, MUSIC OFTEN HAS THE CAPABILITY TO CREATE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS IN THE LISTENER THAT TRANSCENDS OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION.

THOUGH A SINGLE PIECE OF MUSIC MAY ELICIT DIFFERENT REACTIONS FROM DIFFERENT LISTENERS, ANY LOVER OF MUSIC WILL TELL YOU THAT THOSE FEELINGS ARE REAL!

AND IF THEY'RE REAL, THEY'RE WORTHY OF STUDY.

ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE PARTS OF MUSIC THEORY IS GIVING NAMES TO MUSICAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES, WHICH MAKES THEM EASIER TO TALK ABOUT!

**lead-ing tone** (lĕ'dīng tōn), *n.* [music] 1. That one note where it's all, like, NNGGG and you just want it to be like AHH yeah and when they don't, you're like UGH man you need to play the

SO THEN THE **BASSOON CHOIR** COMES IN LIKE **FLAMING HONEYDEW MELONS** FROM ON HIGH

PLEASE BRADLEY IT'S LATE

I'M ALMOST DONE



COMING UP WITH **TERMINOLOGY** DOESN'T JUST HELP US TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT MUSIC, THOUGH... IT ACTUALLY HELPS US LEARN!

BUT WHILE IT'S AN IMPORTANT STEP, AND A GREAT PLACE TO START, MUSIC THEORY IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST COMING UP WITH NAMES FOR THINGS!



WHEN **COMPOSERS** WRITE MUSIC - WHETHER IT'S A **CLASSICAL-ERA SYMPHONY** OR A BIT OF **JAPANESE POST-SHIBUYA-KEI GLITCH TECHNO** - THEY ARE NOT FOLLOWING A PARTICULAR SET OF RULES. IF ANYTHING THEY ARE OFTEN TRYING TO **BREAK THEM!**

SO WHILE A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK MUSIC THEORY IS ABOUT LEARNING THE **RULES** FOR HOW TO WRITE MUSIC, THAT'S NOT QUITE RIGHT. MUSIC THEORISTS DON'T **CREATE RULES** FOR WRITING MUSIC; THEY LOOK FOR **PATTERNS** IN MUSIC THAT IS **ALREADY WRITTEN.**



COMPOSERS CREATE...



...THEORISTS ANALYZE!

WHICH LEADS TO THE **MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION...** THE ONE THAT, AS YOU STUDY MUSIC THEORY, YOU SHOULD BE **CONSTANTLY ASKING YOURSELF:**

## WHY?

WHY **DISSECT** MUSIC? WHAT'S THE POINT OF FIGURING OUT **RULES** THAT **COMPOSERS THEMSELVES** WEREN'T EVEN WORRIED ABOUT?

BECAUSE SOMEWHERE IN THERE IS THE REASON WHY THAT PIECE OF MUSIC **MOVES YOU.**

MAYBE IT'S IN THE **NOTES.** MAYBE IT'S IN THE **SILENCE.** MAYBE IT'S **SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN.**

THE REASON IT MAKES YOU **CRY,** GIVES YOU **CHILLS,** REMINDS YOU OF **HOME.**

IT MAY TAKE A **LONG TIME,** OR EVEN CREATE **MORE QUESTIONS** THAN **ANSWERS.**

BUT MUSIC THEORISTS ARE GOING TO **FIND IT,** BECAUSE...

**MUSIC THEORY IS FIGURING OUT WHAT MAKES MUSIC WORK.**



AND YOU JUST **JOINED THE TEAM.** GRAB YOUR STUFF... **LET'S GO!**