Integrated excellence in both research and pedagogy is at the core of the music theory area. Graduates of our program excel at both.
The Master’s degree in Music Theory offers outstanding scholarly training in the analytical approaches, skills, and research methods of music theory. Through theory pedagogy seminars, actual classroom experience, and mentoring, students also become highly skilled teachers.

The M.M. in Music Theory can be undertaken on its own as preparation for doctoral study in music theory. It can also be earned concurrently with a Master’s or Doctoral degree in performance or composition, serving as a secondary credential for the many university positions that combine theory teaching and applied teaching.

Music Theory graduates of Michigan State University have gained admission to Ph.D. programs in Music Theory at prestigious schools such as the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, Florida State University, and the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Dual-degree students have gone on to teach music theory alongside their primary area of expertise at institutions such as Oklahoma State University, North Dakota State University, the Interlochen Arts Academy, Michigan State University, Hong Kong Baptist University, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids Community College, and Del Mar College.

Our curriculum includes:
- Pedagogy of Music Theory I & II
- Research Methods
- Analysis Seminars
- Modal and Tonal Counterpoint
- 20th- and 21st-Century Techniques
- Keyboard Skills
- Proseminar in Music Theory
- Research Seminars (rotating topics)

Each student completes a capstone assignment consisting of two research papers with accompanying public presentations, a formal teaching demonstration, and a keyboard-skills examination. Upon graduation, students have expertise and experience as both practitioners and teachers of music theory.

Degrees offered:
- Master of Music Theory
- Graduate Certificate in Music Theory
Students grow as scholars, teachers, and professionals as part of a supportive cohort and through one-on-one mentoring with faculty members.

The music theory faculty consists of well-respected scholars who publish and present actively in a variety of research areas. At the same time, pedagogical excellence is a signature focus of the music theory area. The faculty includes winners of university teaching awards and prestigious fellowships, innovators, and leaders in the sub-discipline of music theory pedagogy.

MICHAEL CALLAHAN, associate professor of music theory and chair
PATRICK JOHNSON, instructor of music theory
GORDON SLY, associate professor of music theory
CARA STROUD, assistant professor of music theory
JAMES SULLIVAN, assistant professor of music theory
BRUCE TAGGART, associate professor of music theory
STUDENT SUPPORT

Graduate assistantships are available. Each Master’s student in music theory gains at least one year of classroom teaching experience within the undergraduate core curriculum in theory and aural skills. Other teaching opportunities include one-on-one tutoring in our Music Theory Learning Center.

In addition to assistantship positions, graduate applicants are eligible for fellowships and scholarships. No supplemental application is required to be considered.

TO APPLY, VISIT
music.msu.edu/admissions

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