

# In all things, audiation.

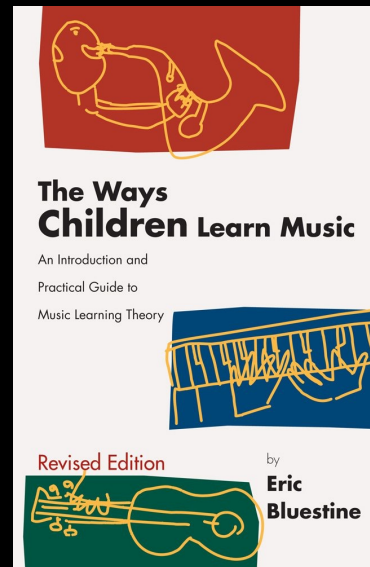
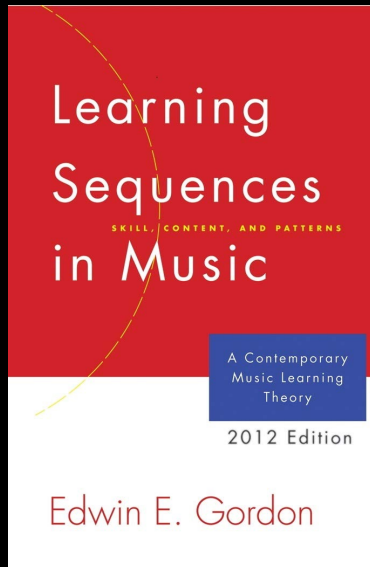
Stuart Chapman Hill, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education  
Michigan State University  
Michigan Music Conference  
24 January 2025

## Goals for today:

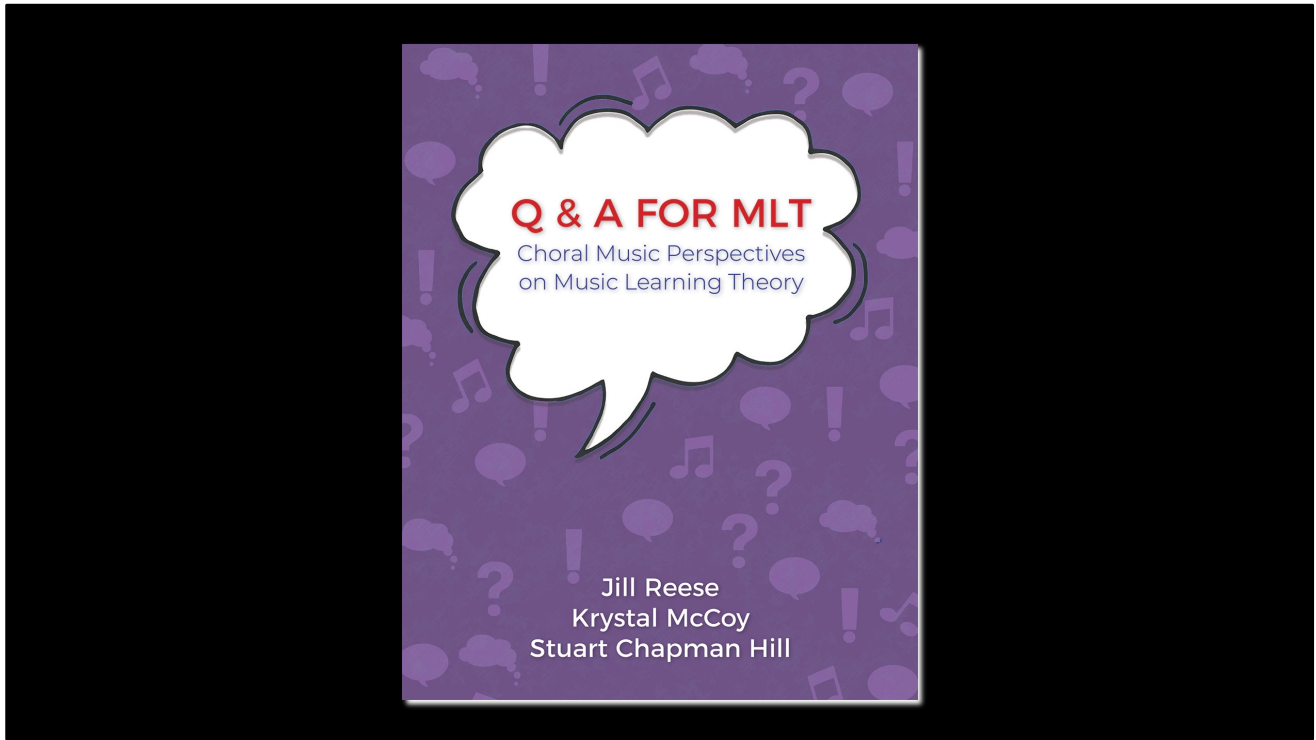
- Briefly define and discuss **audiation**
- Consider how to **focus on audiation in warm-ups**
- Consider how to incorporate **audiation-focused musicianship activities**
- Talk about **audiation-informed repertoire selection**
- Examine **audiation-focused rehearsal strategies**

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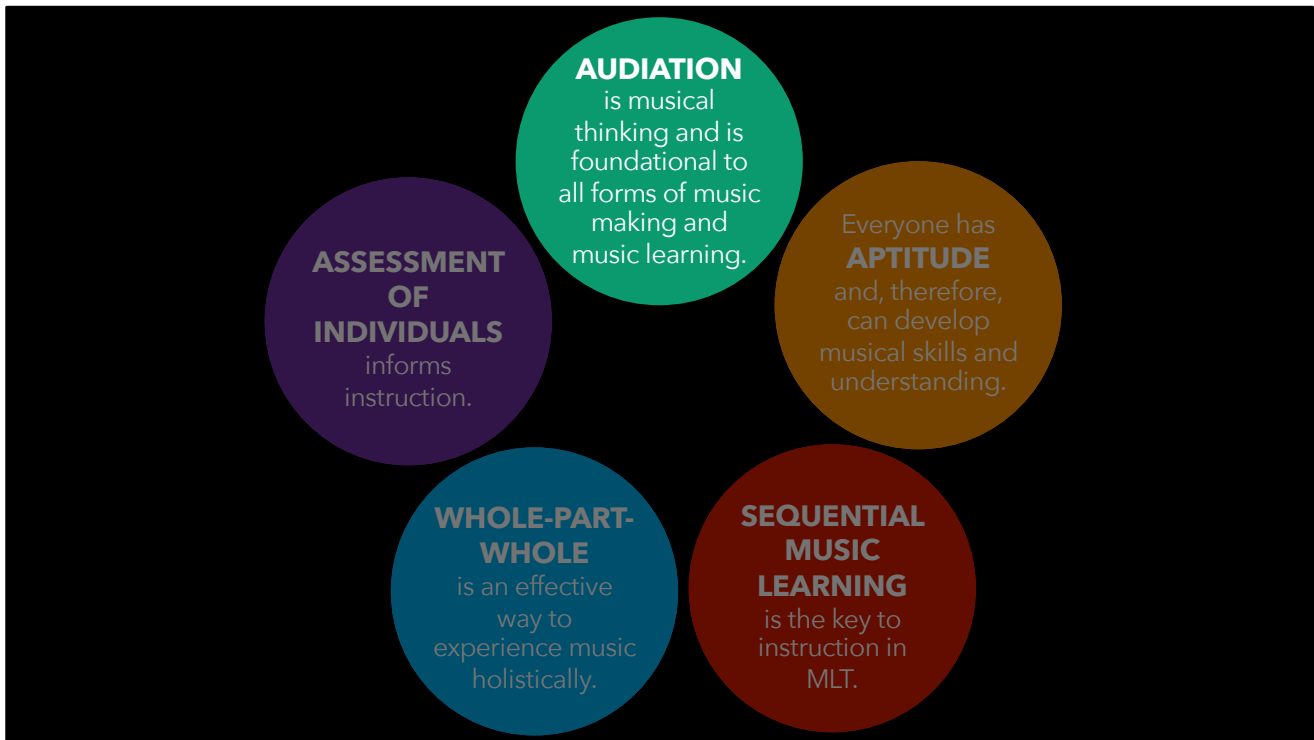
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These two books are essential introductions to Music Learning Theory. The book on the left is the theory itself, as articulated by its progenitor, Edwin Gordon. The book on the right is a more reader-friendly introduction—and a good place to start.



This recent publication features a variety of angles on MLT-informed choral-music pedagogy, from warm-ups to repertoire selection to assessment and more.



Although there are multiple pillars of MLT, today's presentation focuses on audiation.



Musicianship is my North Star. What I want for students when they graduate high school (or otherwise complete a choral music learning experience) is to have core musicianship skills they can transfer—to future choral singing, of course, but also to any other musical pursuit that may interest them.

**musicianship**  
=  
**transferrable musical skills**  
=  
**knowledge of musical "building blocks"**  
=  
**audiation**

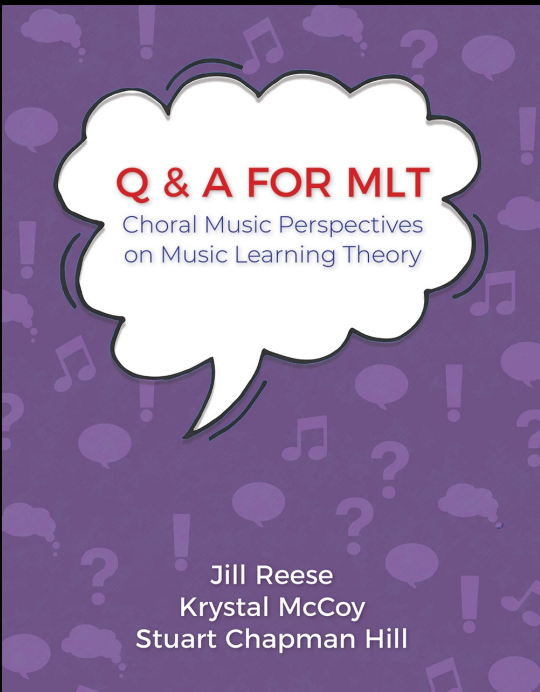


## **au·di·a·tion** (*n.*)

assimilating, comprehending, and giving musical meaning to sound which may or may not have been physically present; includes recalling, connecting, anticipating, predicting, summarizing, synthesizing, and generalizing

*(Jill Reese in Reese, McCoy, & Hill, 2023, p. 19)*

**“giving musical meaning to sound”**  
means understanding sounds in  
**tonal and rhythmic context**



## Tools to support choral **audiation**:

wide **variety of music** (tonalities, meters, styles)

wide **variety of tonal and rhythm content** (patterns)

**skills beyond imitation and performance** (partial synthesis, generalization, creativity/improvisation)

**harmonic structure and tonal context** of choral repertoire (resting tone, chord roots)

**rhythmic structure and metric context** of choral repertoire (macro/micro beat, rhythmic ostinato)

*(Jill Reese in Reese, McCoy, & Hill, 2023, pp.19–20)*

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SMTE musicianship project News Reference Recipes

## 2025 Professional Development Levels Courses


GIML is excited to present these Professional Development Level Courses for Summer 2025. Registration will open soon.

**Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)**  
Dates: June 16 - June 27, 2025  
Courses: [Elementary General Level 1](#) and [Choral Level 1](#)  
Site Manager: Cynthia Taggart ([cynthiacrumptaggart@gmail.com](mailto:cynthiacrumptaggart@gmail.com))  
Faculty: Cynthia Taggart, Heather Shouldice, Krystal McCoy

**Concordia University-Irvine (Irvine, CA)**  
Dates: June 29 - July 10, 2025  
Courses: [Elementary General Level 1](#), [Instrumental Level 1](#)  
Site Manager: Joshua Diamant ([musicteacherjosh@gmail.com](mailto:musicteacherjosh@gmail.com))  
Faculty: Jennifer McDonel, Jennifer Bailey, Terry Bacon

**SUNY Fredonia (Fredonia, NY)**  
Dates: July 28 - August 8, 2025  
Course: [Early Childhood 1](#)  
Site Manager: Jill Reese ([reese@fredonia.edu](mailto:reese@fredonia.edu))  
Faculty: Anna Preston, Holley Haynes

**Seoul National University of Education (Seoul, Korea)**  
Dates: August 4 - August 14, 2025  
Courses: [Elementary General Level 1](#), [Early Childhood Level 1](#)  
Site Manager: Joshua D...



**CORE  
PRACTICES  
FOR  
AUDIATION  
SUPPORT**

1. vary tonalities and meters
2. foreground context
3. emphasize resting tone
4. teach chord roots
5. highlight macro/micro beat

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[u] [o] [a]

bum one do    bum five sol    bum four fa    bum one do    bum four fa    bum one do    bum five sol    bum one do

Exercise

[fi fi fi fi fi fi fi fi]

Chord roots

[fi fi fi]

Try singing warm-ups in two parts, with one half of the choir singing the melody of the exercise, and the other singing chord roots.



Try challenging students' rhythmic audiation by changing the meter of familiar tunes. Above, "Ah Poor Bird" transformed to 7/8.



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The image displays a musical score for a short, wordless rote song in Dorian mode. The score is presented on four staves, arranged in two systems of two staves each. The top system consists of a melody line (treble clef) and a chord root line (treble clef). The melody line features a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The chord root line shows the corresponding chord roots: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The bottom system consists of a melody line (treble clef) and a chord root line (treble clef). The melody line features a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The chord root line shows the corresponding chord roots: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The score is set in 2/2 time and uses a key signature of one flat (Bb).

Musicianship activities can take the form of teaching short, wordless rote songs in a variety of tonalities and meters. Above, a tune in Dorian mode with chord roots notated. This could be the foundation for further activities, including improvising rhythm on the chord roots, building out improvised chordal accompaniments, and more.

- Teach **wordless songs** in a variety of **tonalities and meters**
- Teach students the **chord-root melodies** (i.e., root-position bass lines) that go with these tunes
- Devise **chordal accompaniments**
- Play “**resting tone game**” with familiar tunes (or tunes from repertoire!)
- **Change the tonality/meter** of familiar tunes

**THE EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MUSIC  
CURRICULUM**

EXPERIMENTAL

SONGS AND CHANTS  
WITHOUT WORDS

BOOK ONE



By

Edwin E. Gordon, Beth M. Bolton,  
Wendy K. Hicks, Cynthia C. Taggart

This book is a great source for wordless songs and chants in a variety of tonalities and meters.

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## Considerations for repertoire selection:

- Consider all the things you would normally consider!
  - Vocal ranges and tessiturae
  - Appropriateness of text/subject matter
  - Level of challenge
  - Variety of styles, cultures, time periods
  - Representation of diverse composers, arrangers, performers, &c.
  - Relevance and timeliness
  - Instrumentation

## Considerations for repertoire selection:

- Variety of tonalities and meters
  - More than just major and minor
  - More than just duple and a little triple
  - But not every tonality and every meter!
  - When choosing a piece in a mode other than major/minor, aim for tunes that feature characteristic tones



## Considerations for repertoire selection:

- Include some pieces with simple chords (i.e., mostly I, IV, and V)—support teaching chord roots/harmonic function
  - Could be just for a section of the piece
- Balance need to support notational literacy goals (i.e., what they can read) with need to support audiation development (i.e., variety and exposure)

BL1039      BABYLON      \*MTWO-PART

**BABYLON**

Two-Part Treble Voices with Piano



James DesJardins

**BriLee Music**  
the Voice of Choral Music

**BriLee Music**  
**Part-by-Part**

For Accompaniment and Rehearsal Audio  
Go to: [briLeeMusic.com/BL1039](http://briLeeMusic.com/BL1039)

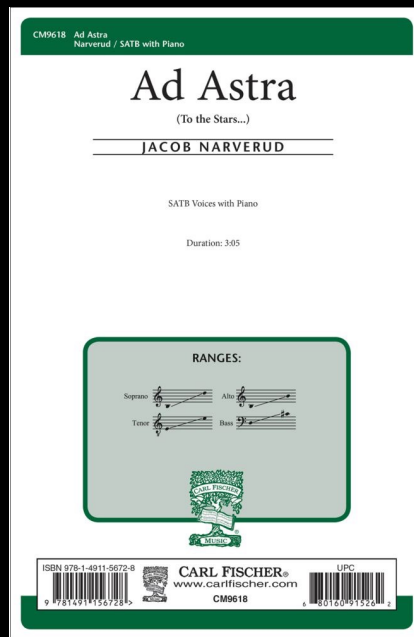
Ranges:

Part 1  Part 2 

Language: English  
Use: General/Festival  
Time: Approx. 2:28  
\*Difficulty: Moderate

"Babylon"  
BriLee Music BL1039  
James DesJardins  
Two-part + piano  
Phrygian  
Uneven paired (asymmetric)

This piece features Phrygian mode and asymmetric meter. Great variety for students.



"Ad Astra"  
Carl Fischer CM9618  
Jacob Narverud  
SATB + piano  
Major  
Triple

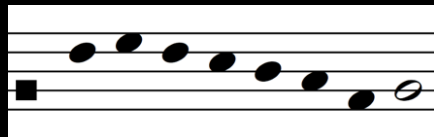
This piece is in major mode, but features triple meter—and has strong, easy-to-audiate harmonic functions that lend themselves well to activities like teaching chord root melodies.

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## Go-to rehearsal practices:

- Establish tonal context using the "sequence of tones":



- Establish metric context with micro-macro-micro-macro (where appropriate)



## Go-to rehearsal practices:

- If harmonic motion is simple enough, teach and sing chord roots (i.e., long-tone bass line composed exclusively of roots; no inversions)
  - If students are ready, build on chord roots to create rudimentary chordal accompaniments
- Play “resting tone games” to ensure students are holding resting tone
- Highlight macro and micro beat through movement and chanting
- If possible, incorporate informal pattern interaction

# Thank you!

Stuart Chapman Hill, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education  
Michigan State University  
hillstua@msu.edu  
[www.stuartchapmanhill.com](http://www.stuartchapmanhill.com)

