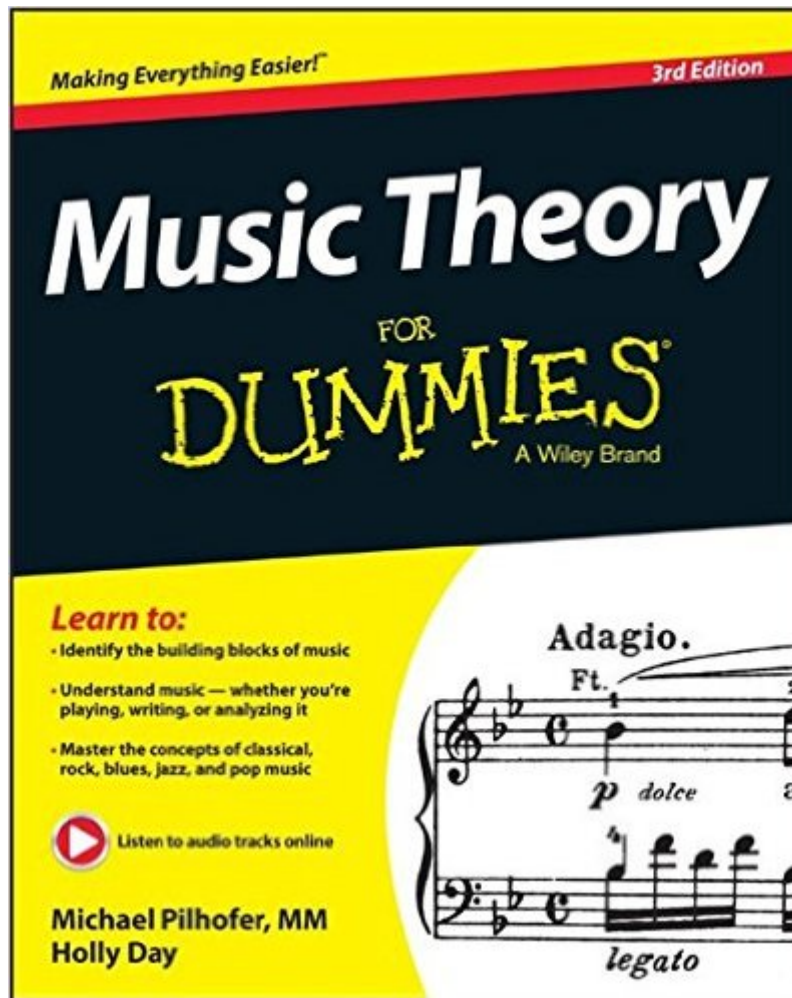


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# Music Theory For Dummies



## Synopsis

Get more out of music with this essential guide *Music Theory For Dummies* makes music theory easy to understand, with a friendly, unintimidating overview of everything you need to know to become fluent at knocking out beats, reading musical scores, and learning to anticipate where a song should go—whether you're reading someone else's music or writing your own. Whether you're a music student or a music lover, you'll learn to read, write, and understand music with this informative guide. With expert instruction, you'll put it all together as you compose, arrange, and create original melodies, harmonies, and chords of your own, with helpful tips for performing your pieces in front of an audience. This new third edition presents the most current teaching techniques, the newest music genres and examples, and updated information on all aspects of understanding, creating, and performing music. Studies have shown that music training improves children's verbal and spatial abilities, and it's been associated with cognitive and mathematical benefits in adults. The music job market is expected to increase over the coming years, and music theory is becoming an increasingly common part of education at all levels. *Music Theory For Dummies* provides the instruction you need to get more out of music than you ever thought possible. Master major and minor scales, intervals, pitches, and clefs Understand basic notation, time signals, tempo, dynamics, and navigation Employ melodies, chords, progressions, and phrases to form music Compose harmonies and accompanying melodies for voice and instruments Whether you intend to pursue a degree or career in music, or just enjoy listening to it, understanding the theory behind it gives you a whole new appreciation for the artistry and craftsmanship behind the pieces that give you goose bumps. It's a mix of technical skill, inborn talent, and plenty of practice—and now you can try your hand at it, with *Music Theory For Dummies*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I ordered this book with some skepticism. I could read music before I got this book but I guess at a very rudimentary level. I have looked through other music theory books and have been left a little bewildered about musical keys, chord construction and such. This book demystifies these and many other musical concepts. I now understand musical keys and many other things that had always seemed very mysterious to me. The book starts off very basically and slowly advances as it introduces you to more advanced concepts by adding more information about how music is constructed. Someone with a firmer background in music may be bored by the pace but for others of us it is just right. I recommend it if, like me, you always wanted to understand music but never found someone who could describe it in an understandable way.

I'm 48, and I've been playing guitar, bass, keyboards and a lot of other instruments since I was 12. Two of them well, all of them by ear. I didn't have a clue what to call anything I did, aside from knowing when I was playing a major, a minor, a 7th or a 9th. But only because better players told me so. Having found some success in other areas with other books in the Dummies franchise, I took a shot at this one. Turns out I was doing a lot of things right all these years and even being fairly close to correct in the way I described them to my guitar students. Yes, a guy who needs a Dummies book for music teaches kids to play. The nerve, right? Well, I feel a lot better about it now. I'm able to give my students some theory with their Green Day, and using the same matter-of-fact way of describing and discussing it as I found in the book, it gets across quite nicely. I'd bought a different book on music theory that was supposed to be very simple. In fact, it seemed extremely short and unimposing... at first. Shortest book I ever failed to complete. THIS book, on the other hand, clocks in at 330-some pages and it never bogs down. They stay with a topic instead of flying past it without making sure you are ready to move on. In my opinion, that's the most important quality a Dummies book should have: a flat-out refusal to leave any reader in the dust. I appreciate that. Now if the same authors will just do a MIDI For Dummies book, aaaaand maybe books for Studio-In-A-Box 24Track Digital Recording, Signal Processing, Microphone Techniques, Child Rearing and a few other topics I need help with, life will be complete.

I can't honestly review Music Theory for Dummies as a beginner, but I hope to suggest who might

find it useful - or not. The book has an odd split between a first half that contains very elementary material about reading notation, intervals, scales, chords and progressions, followed by a later part that describes high-level form and composition ideas from a classical point of view. I don't think the transition works: the first part doesn't adequately prepare you for the second, and I'm not sure how much the second even belongs in this kind of book. If you're interested in jazz improvisation, there's barely a couple of paragraphs that mention jazz and nothing worth your while to play. If you're interested in computer music, in spite of the pop references sprinkled throughout, there's a single mention of synthesizers in the chapter on tone and timbre; otherwise this book could have been written 40-50 years ago. If you're a rock or blues player, there's little besides Roman numeral-style outlines of blues and pop song formulas - which is ironic because that's how a lot of people who don't know theory already communicate. If you're a listener who wants to understand or analyze how music works - there's solid information in here but it's an overview and very compressed. At best it may point you in the direction of other books with more depth. If you're interested in writing music of whatever genre, there are much better books out there - including the one written by co-author Holly Day, "Music Composition for Dummies". Personally, I think this material is covered in more depth, with useful exercises, and better writing in Michael Miller's three volume series that includes, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Music Theory, Music Composition, Arranging and Orchestration".

Music Theory for Dummies is the best of both worlds for those of us interested in learning music theory for the first time or refreshing our musical memories. As a child music student I was inundated with music terms which meant little or nothing to me. I faked my way along, despite my ignorance of proper theory or terminology, never thinking it might pertain to me. Only as an adult, who has now written a few songs with the desire to share them, has it occurred to me that I need to know how to write music others can read rather than trying to express myself by humming my songs out. Music Theory for Dummies is a necessity for anyone who wants to truly understand the basics of music, or anyone who already does but needs an excellent reference for refresher or support in learning or comprehending the more difficult aspects of music theory. Music Theory for Dummies is essential for all students, be they beginners, or the more advanced, in need of a simplified backup source for more difficult concepts. Additionally, the drawings and CD are simply a delightful topping on a very solid foundation.

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