

Tenure-Track Hiring Proposal - Assistant Professor of Music
Music Department
Submitted: April 2023

The Music Department wishes to hire an Assistant Professor of Music (tenure track), specializing in Music Theory. The proximate cause for this request is the retirement of Ron Rodman, Dye Family Professor of Music, combined with Justin London taking over as chair (AY 25; note the music department chair receives two course releases) along with Justin's planned retirement at the end of AY28. This makes a hire in music theory most pressing for the music department, as Justin will not be able to cover both the music theory sequence and his core offerings in Cognitive Science when he becomes Music Department chair (see details below).

Executive Summary

Music Theory is a foundational area in music scholarship, and as such courses in theory are a central part of the music major and minor: Music Theory I (The Principles of Harmony, MUSC 110), Music Theory II (Musical Structures, MUSC 204), and the two musicianship labs MUSC 103 & MUSC 104. These courses are also taken by many other students with interests in music psychology, CAMS, music informatics (CS), and musical performance more generally.

Music is a department comprising specialists with very little scholarly or teaching overlap; thus, other members of the department who might be pressed into teaching theory (Andrea Mazzariello, Andy Flory, Brooke McCorkle-Okazaki) are fully occupied covering their own areas (composition, popular music, classical music and music-media studies, respectively). A position dedicated to teaching music theory is needed.

Amongst the positions in the music department, a position in music theory has the broadest opportunities for interdisciplinary courses in arts, humanities, social sciences, and STEM, as evidenced by Justin's involvement in Cognitive Science and Ron's involvement in CAMS.

The interdisciplinarity of music theory offers some opportunities for increasing the diversity of the department, most especially in terms of gender balance (currently 2 women/5 men among the FT tenured/TT members of the department).

The organization of the music department has significantly changed over the past 5-7 years, as positions have moved from TT to FOCA (Choir, Band), along with additional FOCA lines (Jazz, Chinese Ensemble). Music is the largest department on campus, and the administrative duties are spread across all of the tenured members of the department. This means that an increased administrative burden now falls on a smaller number of TT/tenured members of the department.

We are also, sadly, preparing a proposal for a TT hire in ethnomusicology following the death of Melinda Russell, course offerings in that area will be covered during AY24 and AY25. We thus anticipate a search for a TT ethnomusicologist in AY25, with a start in AY26.

Given the current complexities of staffing in our department we would need to attend the June 9 hiring workshop for this position.

We would like to search next year (2023-24) and have the new hire start in the Fall of 2024.

Specific Points from Provost's Letter Guidelines

Support of the liberal arts

Most people who know a little music theory, if they know it at all, associate it with the study of harmony in western classical and popular music. While harmony remains a staple of music theory research and pedagogy, music theory's remit has expanded to a much broader range of musical styles and practices, and it has a deep engagement with other disciplines in the arts, humanities, and sciences ranging from anthropology and philosophy to mathematical topology and neuroscience. Music Theory's broad interdisciplinarity is the key way it can support the goals of a liberal arts education. In studying music theory students engage with a broad range of activities and materials, from reflections on their own listening experiences and analyses of musical scores to statistical surveys of large musical corpora. They then learn to explore and analyze that data in various ways and present it in a variety of forms, whether in traditional western notation, graphic representations, or sonifications, and (last but not least) express their findings in carefully crafted written and oral presentations.

Where will we (i.e., music theory and the music department) be in 20 years?

We don't know. We couldn't have predicted our current curriculum twenty (or more like thirty) years ago when our current music theory faculty were hired, as it has changed dramatically several times over. Thus, insofar as we are able, we will look for a theorist whose work and interests have the potential to evolve over the course of their academic career.

The *Society for Music Theory* webpage currently lists 29 “Special Interest Groups” for theorists interested in particular subfields, including the following which were organized within the last 10 years:

- The Analysis of World Music
- Autographs and Archives
- Dance and Movement
- Disability and Music
- Film and Multimedia

- Hip Hop and Rap
- Improvisation
- Mathematics of Music
- Music Informatics
- Music Notation and Visualization
- Musical Theater
- Performance Analysis
- Queer Resource/Gender and Sexuality
- Timbre and Orchestration

N.B., For more information, please see <https://societymusictheory.org/interest-group>. Thus, there are many areas which currently are not part of our course offerings. However, there are two broad methodological approaches which incorporate many of the subfields listed above, and which we see as playing key roles in the future of music theory. These approaches are not mutually exclusive. The first involves approaches to music analysis which use "real audio" as opposed to scores or other notational systems as the basis for music theory and analysis. This approach is essential to the study of performance, musical timbre, and many musical traditions which do not have a written system of notation. The other involves the use of large musical corpora for studying musical style, form, harmonic syntax, melodic archetypes, and other aspects of musical structure. The advantage of corpus studies, as opposed to traditional analytic practice grounded in one's personal, inherently situated listening to a piece (i.e., the theorist's "analytical intuitions") is that they eliminate various forms of bias (implicit bias, confirmation bias, sampling bias) that often underlie the construction of theories of music. A theorist conversant in either of these methods would complement the approaches of other academic members of the department: Brooke, who engages with primary sources and documents; Andy, who deals with recording archives and commercial institutions, and an ethnomusicologist who engages in fieldwork, especially interview and observational studies.

Furthering IDE goals of the department

Pedagogically, the new hire will continue the evolution of our music theory curriculum, which has been recognized by the *Society for Music Theory* with an award for "Diversity in Course Design" in its implementation of inclusive materials and approaches. For more information see: (<https://societymusictheory.org/grants/dcd/syllabi>). That is, the current and future music theory curriculum at Carleton will continue its expansion of topics and repertoire beyond a focus on the works and compositional techniques of a handful of white male European composers, and we will seek a theorist who brings the latest materials and strategies for doing so. As noted above, the new hire represents an opportunity to further improve the gender balance in the department.

In terms of strategies for recruitment, Carleton enjoys an extremely strong profile and presence in the field of Music Theory. Justin London is past-president of the *Society for Music Theory* (he currently serves as their ACLS representative), and Ronald Rodman is the Chief Reader for the AP

Examination in Music Theory. Their collective contacts in the field are deep and wide. Together they will personally contact the DGS as well as other colleagues at every school in the USA and Canada that grants the PhD in Music Theory, along with other colleagues who may be serving as dissertation advisors and committee members.

We thus hope to build a diverse applicant pool first and foremost by making it as large as possible, as well as carefully articulating our interest in several specific interdisciplinary sub-specialties noted below that should attract a diverse range of candidates.

Enhancing Interdisciplinary Programs

As noted above, a key goal of the hire in music theory would be to have someone with a strong interdisciplinary presence within and beyond the department. One obvious strategy would be to hire someone with an interest in music perception and cognition, to continue the strong ties that Justin has forged between music, psychology, and cognitive science. Alternatively, we could look for someone with an interest in music/media, continuing Ron's interdisciplinary activities, but we note that Brooke McCorkle Okazaki has a significant presence in this area, and thus we would want to avoid redundancy. We have specifically considered the possibilities for a theorist with an interest in cross-cultural music analysis (which could link with Africana, Asian, or Latin American Studies), popular music analysis (which could link with American Studies, and complement our current strengths in popular music history and performance), or music informatics/corpus studies (which could link with Computer Science). While we would be interested in a theorist whose work focuses on any of those fields, in order to maximize the inclusivity of our candidate pool we are open to a fairly wide range of sub-disciplines.

Mentoring

The hand-off of the music theory curriculum from Ron and Justin to the new hire (outlined below) offers a nearly optimal framework for mentoring. In their first years most of the teaching for the new hire will be in the core music theory sequence, for which they should be well prepared, as these are the "bread and butter" courses for music theorists; most PhD students will have taught several sections by the time they finish their doctorate. Justin, along with the other academic members of the department will work with the new hire regarding re specific aspects of the liberal arts music theory curriculum, which (a) is more compressed than those found at typical conservatories and schools of music (the target for most music theory syllabi), (b) covers a wider range of topics, including musical timbre, musical scales across cultures, rhythm and meter, and some aspects of musical corpus study, and of course (c) involves a greater interaction with primary sources and writing. As we have a strong presumption this hire will also interact with one or more other departments, depending upon their particular interdisciplinary interests, suitable contacts and mentors would be established in due course.

Three Year Staffing Plan

At present the music department is in the midst of a cycle of continuous hiring which has been due to a perfect storm of new hires, reorganization, regularly scheduled leaves, retirements, and the death of Melinda Russell. This has been exhausting. We therefore hope to move to tenure-track hires as soon as possible, so that any required additional hiring (e.g., VAPs for faculty on extended leaves) can be handled in the normal course of departmental business.

As noted above, while Justin can cover the core courses in music theory (and will do so in 2023-24), after he takes over as chair he cannot teach anything else. This would be problematic, as he is needed in the rotation of CGSC 130, as well as his valuable Introduction to Music Perception and Cognition course (MUSC 227/228), and several other popular electives. MUSC 308, our seminar in music analysis, has not been offered since winter 2019; its absence is a significant lacuna in our elective offerings for students interested in composition, music analysis, and music performance. A new hire who could restore this seminar to a regular, biannual schedule, in addition to the core courses in music theory and musicianship, would address this lack. Our plan for covering the core courses in music theory, along with the new hire's other teaching duties is as follows:

AY 2023-24 (Search Year)

- RR retired
- JML on leave Fall;

Winter: MUSC 110, MUSC 103, CGSC 130

Spring: MUSC 204, MUSC 104

AY 2024-25 (1st Year of Hire; Search year for TT Position in Ethnomusicology)

- JML assumes department chair (2 courses)
 - Will annually teach MUSC 227/228 (Intro to Music Perception and Cognition)
 - [2 course equivalents, plus an elective]
 - New Hire - Four Courses
- Fall: MUSC 308 (Form and Analysis Seminar, a standard course)
- Winter: MUSC 110, MUSC 103
- Spring: MUSC 204, MUSC 104

AY 2025-26

- New Hire - Five Courses
- Fall: MUSC 100 (A&I), New Course Related to Hire's Specialty
- Winter: MUSC 110, MUSC 103
- Spring: MUSC 204, MUSC 104

AY 2026-27

- New Hire - Five Courses
- Fall: MUSC 308, Another New Course Related to Hire's Specialty
- Winter: MUSC 110, MUSC 103
- Spring: MUSC 204, MUSC 104

Music Theory Enrollment Data -- Actual

The table below gives enrollment data in the core music theory course for the past six years. Enrollments have been robust and stable, even with the problems of Covid in AY 2020-21.

Course	101	103	104	110	204	308
Course Equivalent	.5	.5	.5	1	1	1
Enrollment Cap	25	25	25	25	25	15
FA17		6		23		
WI18			11		16	
SP18	26					
FA18		6		24		
WI19			8		21	5
SP19	15					
FA19		10		23		
WI20			10		16	
SP20 COVID						
FA20 COVID		12		14		
WI21 COVID			7		9	
SP21 COVID	14					
FA21	9			17		
WI22		14			18	
SP22			9			
FA22	10					
WI23		11		22		
SP23			5		17	