

MFun Music Fundamentals scheduled for December release!

After all these years with only a single title in our MacGAMUT “catalog,” I’m pleased to announce that we will be *doubling* the number of titles we publish by year-end. We expect to release **MFun**, an interactive Music Fundamentals e-textbook authored by Elizabeth Sayrs, Associate Professor of Music Theory at Ohio University, in plenty of time for second-semester courses.

Originally conceived as a distance-learning course to prepare incoming students for university-level theory, MFun is the ideal “text” not only for remedial work but also for both high school and university courses in general musicianship and music fundamentals. Dr. Sayrs offers students a thorough grounding in the basics of music. Without assuming any prior knowledge of music notation, she begins with pre-notation concepts of pulse and pitch. Subsequent chapters furnish clear, detailed presentations of rhythm and meter, scales and keys, intervals, triads and seventh chords, culminating with an introduction to part-writing. Along the way, students learn not just the nuts and bolts of music but how these basic elements work together to produce art.

It is clear that today’s students would rather interact with a computer than read a printed book. But, make no mistake, MFun is much more than a traditional textbook presented on a computer screen (*boring!*). This is a thoroughly interactive e-textbook, designed to keep students engaged and challenged. Throughout, hundreds of sound files provide auditory illustrations of the content, and interactive tutorials reinforce concepts as they are presented. A playable on-screen “Virtual Keyboard” makes the relationship between notation and the piano keyboard come to life.

Computer-evaluated drills and quizzes for each chapter give students a real-time assessment

of their grasp of the material that no traditional workbook can equal. Time-limited drills ensure that students develop the facility they need in recognition and identification, and students can re-take those randomized quizzes as often as needed until they can “beat the clock.” Best of all, the many drills and quizzes **require no instructor grading**, making MFun perfect for large non-major sections and also for aspiring music majors working on their own to prepare for university coursework. Written exercises for each chapter can cut down on instructors’ preparation time if they use them as in-class exercises, or the same worksheets can function as pages from a traditional workbook if instructors have students print, complete, and hand them in for grading.

Similar in design to MacGAMUT, individual Transcript files maintain complete records of each student’s effort and accomplishment. Instructors can track their students’ progress by collecting Transcript files periodically and by using their OpenTranscript application to read the files and/or export the data to a spreadsheet. While the student software may be used as initially installed, instructors have a range of options for customizing the drills and quizzes to match their own pedagogical goals and teaching styles.

Though this is a new publication, don’t imagine that MFun is an untested product. Throughout its nine-year development, incoming music majors have used the software to prepare for university-level courses, first at University of Saskatchewan and later at Ohio University. Over the past two years, instructors have tested MFun with hundreds of students enrolled in large non-major courses at both the University of Vermont and the Peabody Conservatory.

The delivery paradigm for MFun will be very similar to that we’ve used successfully for MacGAMUT. Instructors may choose to order MFun through their academic bookstores as they would any other adopted text, or they may have individual students order directly from MacGAMUT Music Software. Each student who buys an MFun CD will register online and receive a personalized Transcript file. As with MacGAMUT, individuals can install the software on both Windows and Macintosh platforms, with no limit on the number of installations. Since the installed software is resident on their own computers, students can use it anytime and anywhere, without the high-speed internet access required for many online products.

The suggested retail price for each MFun CD will be only \$40, with a 20% discount for orders of five or more. And that’s for the complete, fully interactive package: a comparable product delivered in “traditional” non-interactive format would include a print textbook, a workbook, a CD of recorded musical illustrations, and a much higher pricetag.

You’ll find more info at www.macgamut.com/MFun. We anticipate mailing out MFun Demos to interested instructors before year-end. To be sure you receive your Demo, send an e-mail to office@macgamut.com. If you include “MFun” in the subject line, your message can be simply your institutional affiliation and postal address. We’ll know what you want!

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Look for MacGAMUT's balloons at a conference this fall

We'll be exhibiting both MacGAMUT 6 and the new MFun Music Fundamentals at two national music conferences this fall:

First, we'll be in Richmond, Virginia, for the joint conference of the College Music Society and the Association for Technology in Music Instruction, October 20-23. You'll find all the details about the **CMS/ATMI 2011 National Conference** on the CMS website at www.music.org.

The very next week, October 27-30, we'll be exhibiting at the Society for Music Theory's Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For complete info about the **SMT 2011 Annual Meeting**, check the Society's website at www.societymusictheory.org.

As always, both of these conferences promise to reward your attendance with stimulating presentations highlighting the latest developments in research and pedagogy. Perhaps even more valuable, they offer the opportunity to meet and talk informally with colleagues from across North America and beyond.

If you can fit either (or both!) of these meetings into your autumn calendar, please take a few minutes from your busy conference schedule to stop by the MacGAMUT booth in the exhibits area. Of course, we'll be happy to talk with you about MacGAMUT, but we'd also be pleased to show you the new MFun Music Fundamentals e-textbook by Elizabeth Sayrs (see page 1 of this Newsletter). Elizabeth will be on hand at both conferences to demonstrate her software and talk with you.

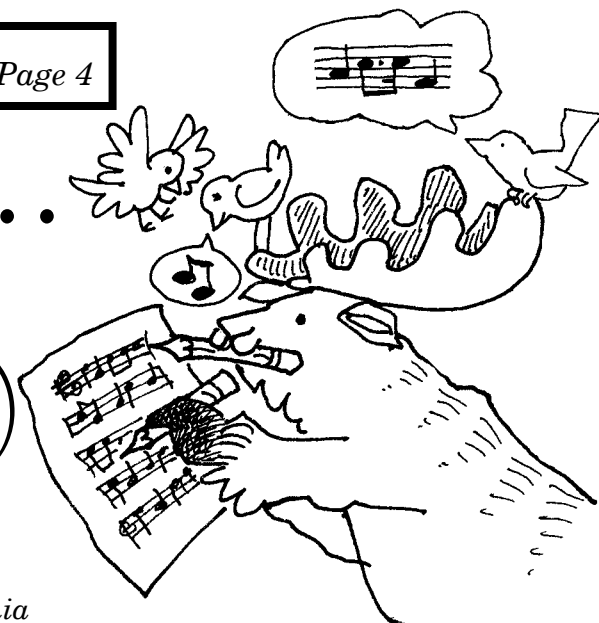
Beyond software demos, we always welcome the opportunity to visit with old friends and to meet face-to-face those we've known only as names on our mailing list, voices on the phone, and e-mail correspondents. Those who regularly attend these conferences know it will be hard to miss the MacGAMUT display: we'll likely be the only exhibitor with helium-filled balloons floating above our booth!

New revised files for *The Musician's Guide Series*, 2nd Ed.

The MacGAMUT 6 Instructor Disk for 2011 will include revised presets and libraries specifically designed to accommodate changes in the second edition of *The Musician's Guide Series* textbooks published by W.W. Norton. If you are using the second editions of *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis* (by Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin) and *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* (by Joel Phillips, Paul Murphy, Jane Piper Clendinning, and Elizabeth West Marvin) this academic year, you will find that the newly revised text-specific MacGAMUT presets and libraries furnish a virtually seamless coordination between the software and the new textbook editions.

For more info, go to: www.macgamut.com/MusiciansGuide

Letters, we get letters . . . (well, actually, we get lots and lots of e-mails)



“I had a great semester using MacGAMUT for the first time. My students did not like how ‘revealing’ it was regarding their study habits, but I feel that this is one of the best features of the program.”

PJ, Virginia

“Our first year [using MacGAMUT] was a big success, measured by the groaning from the students. We are continuing with the software this year and will be expanding its use to our Music Fundamentals course and our Freshman Theory courses.”

RK, Illinois

“Thank you for this great [Enter/Edit Libraries] program and for MacGAMUT as a whole! To have a program as exceptional as MacGAMUT is one thing, but to know that a real human being is behind it is what matters most. Thank you for your care of my students, both personally and through Bill and the very useful website.”

BC, Ohio

“Tell Ann how much we appreciate her continuing work *and* the bargain pricing!”

KT, Oklahoma

“You and your team have always been so helpful. Here it is, a Friday afternoon—and Good Friday holiday for many—and you’re answering work emails! I remember the time when I sent a tech support e-mail after 9:00 PM on a weeknight, and an answer came back within a half hour! I was shocked!”

DS, Pennsylvania

“I really enjoy this software! It is a very fun way of doing assignments for my ear-training class.”

TL, Alberta

“I appreciate how complex it is to design and update cross-platform software. Personally, I’m glad you’re still active with MacGAMUT because it has been tremendously useful for my teaching. There is no other software that does what yours does so well. Thanks for ‘keepin’ on!”

LH, Arkansas

“Thank you for incorporating library editing features for Windows users! I use my own unique libraries, and it was cumbersome for me to borrow someone else’s Mac computer.”

JM, Pennsylvania

“I really appreciate all your work on this important and epic creation! The students complain bitterly. . . and yet they continue to ace their grad school aural skills exams. So hooray for you and thanks very much.”

KH, Georgia

“MacGAMUT is the only teaching tool where students can’t cheat on the exercises. Many textbooks advocate their e-texts and online exercises. They may be good for drill purposes, but to use them for homework is less effective because students today are much keener than many of the folks who program these exercises. With MacGAMUT, the instructor can call up an individual student’s file and see the time the student has put into the work, the number of attempts, and so forth. With other programs and textbooks, the student e-mails the results and we see only a finished assignment. I use MacGAMUT because it makes the students do the work. They do not understand that there is no easy way, and sadly, many other programs want to offer an ‘easy’ solution to the students. I really like your product, even though most students don’t like it at all. Why? Because you have worked hard to make sure they understand that to learn music you have to listen, and that is an acquired skill which takes practice.”

GB, Missouri