

About . . .

. . . the Aural Test Survival Book

Don't be scared of aural tests! The *Aural Test Survival Book* will help you improve your listening skills and prepare you for the aural test in your music exam. You can use this book with a teacher, parent or friend, or you can practise the exercises on your own.

This book will encourage you to listen to music more actively and give you confidence to tackle the aural tests in your exam.

Try to spend a little time on aural skills as part of your regular practice. You already have your examination pieces, studies and scales. Now here's your own book of aural skills!

Caroline Evans

A note to teachers

The material in the *Aural Test Survival Book* corresponds to the Associated Board's aural requirements for music examinations and is suitable for all instrumentalists. Many of the tests are common to other examination boards and so students preparing for any music exam will find the book useful.

You can try out the activities in your lessons, or you can set them for your students to complete at home. The format of the book encourages students to think in terms of four important elements of music: Time, Rhythm, Interval and Key.

- Don't pause after the examiner has finished playing the second time - come straight in and keep to the same speed as the examiner, particularly when the phrase ends on a long note.
- Sing "lah" to each note. If you prefer, you may hum or whistle, although it is hard to whistle accurately.
- Imitate the articulation and dynamics.
- Don't cut short any notes that are long.

At all times:

- Stand tall
- Sound confident
- Sing/play out

Training session

Play some major and minor scales and arpeggios (with key signatures of up to three sharps or flats) on your own instrument (if voice is your instrument, then sing). Play at a comfortable speed and tap your toe gently to keep in time.

After you have played each scale or arpeggio, sing it. In order for it to be comfortable for your voice, you may need to sing it an octave higher or lower than you played it.

Keep to the speed you played before, and still tap your toe gently to keep in time. Sing "lah" or "doh" to each note, and make sure each note is separated. As you sing, try to see the shape of the music in your head.

Play then sing the scale of E minor, then look at the following music. Notice the fall-rise-fall shape of the lowest part, and the repeat of the rhythm of the first bar in the third bar.

1. Look ahead to each interval before you sing it and keep counting. Don't guess.
2. Use bright vowels - "lah" is usually best (not "ler").
3. Don't forget that the upper part can help you.
4. Take a deep breath before you start, and another after the first part of the phrase if necessary.
5. Don't sing crotchets when you see quavers, and observe any rests.
6. Try to hear the notes in your head before you sing.
7. Don't panic - sing something. Try at least to get the rhythm correct. Ask for a second attempt if necessary, although this will affect your mark.



Learn the TRIK:

- T** Time: look at the time signature and keep counting in your head.
- R** Rhythm: the rhythm is just as important as the note pitches.
- I** Interval: work out the interval steps and leaps.
- K** Key: listen carefully to the key-chord and starting note. Sing the notes in your head as soon as the chord is played. Look carefully at the key signature.