by Christine Hermanson, director

3 Reasons Why Ear Training is Critical to the Success of Student Musicians

"Music is the art of thinking with sounds." Jules Combarieu

Music is sound.
Seems obvious doesn't it? But sometimes we, as teachers, get so caught up in helping students play and read music, that we forget this simple fact! Our final product is sound. What goes into making that final product—learning the printed score, discerning the composer's intent, developing the proper technique and expression, and memorizing—can be enjoyable or painful depending on our level of aural skill.

Ear training is a key element of musical understanding.
The primary goal of music theory is *to understand* what we see and hear. Training the ear to understand and analyze what it hears is an essential element of music theory. As students develop aural comprehension, they begin to connect the music notation they see on paper with the sound that it represents.

Aural comprehension skill is directly related to musical satisfaction.
The higher a musician's skill in aural comprehension, the greater the joy s/he experiences during the process of learning new music. So the faster we can help our students develop skills in aural comprehension, the sooner they feel success in their progress—which means a higher probability that they will continue their music study.

Training the ear takes consistent practice. That's where MusicLearningCommunity.com enters the picture.

Ear training games are at the core of each level of the MusicLearningCommunity.com curriculum. The games develop sequential skills in:
- Hearing, then playing back musical intervals and patterns
- Hearing, then identifying intervals, chord qualities, scales and harmonic progressions
- Hearing rhythmic or melodic patterns, then identifying the patterns as they appear in music notation
- Rhythmic, melodic and harmonic dictation—hearing then writing what one hears
- Error detection—hearing and seeing a pattern, then determining the difference between what is heard and what is written—in other words, finding the mistakes.

Next month we will explore these skills and see how they translate into more effective musical performance. We will also examine MusicLearningCommunity.com's approach to these skills.