theory
reimagined

Understanding music theory is key to being a literate musician. NEC's Theory Reimagined elevates the traditional teachings of music reading and writing by incorporating technology, composition and a diverse repertoire.

Technology empowers students to exercise their creativity from the beginning of their studies and to practice fundamentals of music theory on their own. Advanced technology skills enable students to share their music with wider audiences and prepare them to work in the dynamic world of music today.

"The use of technology—specifically, the digital audio workstation, notation software, and MIDI keyboard—has allowed me to hear my composition assignments in their proper context and explore new possibilities. The class resources have helped me grow in my understanding of music and as a creative musician."
—Emily Mitchell '24

Technology

Composition

Repertoire

Students experience music theory through composition, analysis and performance. Students' interaction with music theory is reinforced through listening, discussion and critical thinking, and is applied in day-to-day relationships with music through creative, collaborative and individual projects.

"While I have taken theory classes previously, it hasn't been as in-depth as Analysis and Composition at NEC. The theory classes at NEC are a unique experience in that we have a very hands-on learning approach; we don't merely memorize rules, but we apply them in our own compositions. Through this approach, it is much easier to be familiar with the compositional rules since we are applying our knowledge."
—Su Lillian Yim '24

Students expand their literacy by engaging in a diverse repertoire and developing a deep understanding of music across traditions, genres and historical periods. By studying and applying universal music-making principles, students explore jazz, Western and world music of the past and present.

"The Music Theory Department has done an amazing job of incorporating multiple styles of music into our courses. This helps me realize that each individual musical concept can be applied not just to 'classical' music, but to jazz, folk and even video game music. With this knowledge, my compositional abilities have been greatly enhanced."
—Dominic Vance '24