

Interactive Game for Learning Music Theory

Market and Background

Studying music theory is a requirement for people seeking music related careers. In 2018, nearly 340,000 students were enrolled in US degree-granting music programs, and more than 19,000 high school students took the College Board Advanced Placement[®] (AP) Music Theory exam. Learning music theory is challenging. One-third of the AP students above did not receive test scores high enough to earn college credit. Music theory understanding can be enhanced when difficult course work is combined with creative teaching methods such as games. There are several games that focus on music theory at the elementary level, but there are few games that target advanced students. Among the higher-level games, there is a tendency to focus on a few specific aspects of music theory, rather than the many comprehensive concepts that students are tested on.

Development Status

A University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Sheboygan instructor and private music studio owner has developed a board game called *It's JUST Music Theory*[™] that helps students master challenging music theory concepts. The game covers intermediate and advanced level music theory topics in an interactive platform that students find engaging. It is designed for 4 players who move about the game board and answer questions to test and improve their mastery of a wide range of theory concepts.



Concepts covered include terms, intervals, spelling triads, chord functions, and key signatures. While enhancing overall music theory knowledge, the game provides questions geared specifically toward progressive music theory tests. Replaying the game allows students to encounter new variables and new tests, reinforcing their learning.

It's JUST Music Theory[™] has conceptually been adapted for an online version of the interactive game. No programming has been done to date, but wireframes have been created and an app would expand the potential competitive field far beyond that of the board game. The board game and the app are both expected to be popular with target markets.

The board game has been field tested by music teachers and students. An initial batch of 50 games was produced. Preliminary validation of market interest was demonstrated by the sale of all units through exposure at a state-level music education conference, an independent retail store and by word-of-mouth.

Target Customers

- High school students studying music theory, preparing for theory tests and perhaps a college music degree
- Public and private music schools, camps and teachers
- Groups including the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and National Association for Music Education (NAfME)

Key Benefits

- Fun – an engaging way to learn a challenging subject, as students help each other learn
- Comprehensive – to win, players must pull many aspects of music theory together
- Covers intermediate to advanced level concepts
- Can be replayed to navigate multiple variables
- Includes an answer key to facilitate and reinforce learning

Intellectual Property

WiSys holds copyright and trademark rights around the *It's JUST Music Theory*TM game and related works. Access to a sample game is available for evaluation by interested parties. For more information, please contact our licensing team at licensing@wisys.org.

Development and Commercialization Needs

WiSys is seeking strategic partners interested in additional development, production scale-up, marketing and distribution of this music theory board game and electronic app. Additional opportunities may exist for development of derivative works.