

Level 4 - Music Theory & Composition

Theory & Practice Workbook • SØRAV Music Academy • Logic Pro-centred learning resource

How to use this resource

Work through one task at a time. Keep the session musical and purposeful. These are learning frameworks, not rigid rules; adapt choices to the source material, brief, and listening evidence.

1. Music fundamentals: pitch, intervals and scales

Pitch names describe notes; intervals describe the distance between notes. A scale is an ordered collection of pitches with a characteristic interval pattern. Learn the sound and the spelling together rather than memorising note names in isolation.

In Logic Pro, use the Piano Roll and Musical Typing to inspect pitch relationships. Sing or play a short phrase, identify its starting note, then test the intervals by ear.

Practice prompt

Demonstrate this concept in a real session. Compare at least two alternatives, describe what you heard, and explain why your final choice supports the musical or project goal.

Observation before the change:

Test / demonstration:

What improved and what did not:

Decision and evidence:

2. Rhythm, metre and groove

Beat is the underlying pulse; tempo describes its rate; metre groups beats into recurring patterns. Subdivision explains how beats divide, while syncopation places emphasis away from expected strong points.

Program a simple pattern, then alter only one element: subdivision, accent, note length or placement. Listen for whether the groove becomes more stable, urgent, relaxed or awkward.

Practice prompt

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Observation before the change:

Test / demonstration:

What improved and what did not:

Decision and evidence:

3. Chords, triads and harmonic function

A triad contains a root, third and fifth. Chord quality depends on the intervals between its notes. Chord progressions create expectation and release, but their effect depends on melody, rhythm, register and style.

Build a progression in the Piano Roll. Keep the rhythm fixed while changing one chord; then keep the chords fixed and change the bass note or voicing. Note how context changes the feeling.

Practice prompt

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Observation before the change:

Test / demonstration:

What improved and what did not:

Decision and evidence:

4. Keys, diatonic harmony and cadences

A key centres the music around a tonic. Diatonic chords are built from notes in a scale. Cadences shape phrase endings and the sense of arrival, continuation or suspension.

Identify the tonal centre of a short reference. Map likely chords, then test the ending with a strong resolution and a less final alternative. Treat analysis as a hypothesis to verify by listening.

Practice prompt

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Observation before the change:

Test / demonstration:

What improved and what did not:

Decision and evidence:

5. Melody, motifs and phrasing

A motif is a small recognisable musical idea. Melodies gain coherence through repetition, variation, contour, rhythm, phrase length and space. Strong melodies often balance predictability with a meaningful surprise.

Create a two-bar motif, repeat it, then vary only rhythm, ending note, contour or register. Keep the best version and explain what the variation contributes.

Practice prompt

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Decision and evidence:

6. Arrangement, contrast and form

Arrangement assigns musical roles and controls when elements enter, leave or change. Form gives the listener a larger map through sections, repetition and contrast. Density is not the same as impact; subtraction can create a stronger arrival.

Use markers in Logic Pro to map intro, verse, chorus, bridge and outro where appropriate. Mute or simplify elements before a key section and assess whether the contrast improves the story.

Practice prompt

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7. Orchestration, register and voicing

Register affects clarity and emotional weight. Doubling can add strength but may blur attacks or mask important parts. Each layer should have a role: rhythm, harmony, hook, texture, counterline or transition.

Assign each track a one-sentence role. If two tracks compete for the same register or rhythmic space, test octave, rhythm, articulation, panning or removal before adding processing.

Practice prompt

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Observation before the change:

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8. Composition workflow and revision

Separate generating ideas from evaluating them. Capture a rough idea quickly, develop a coherent section, then revise against a clear intention. Reference tracks can reveal broad structure and energy, but copying surface details rarely solves the musical problem.

Export a rough demo, listen away from the session, and write three specific observations. Revise only the highest-impact issue first. Save versions so you can compare rather than rely on memory.

Practice prompt

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