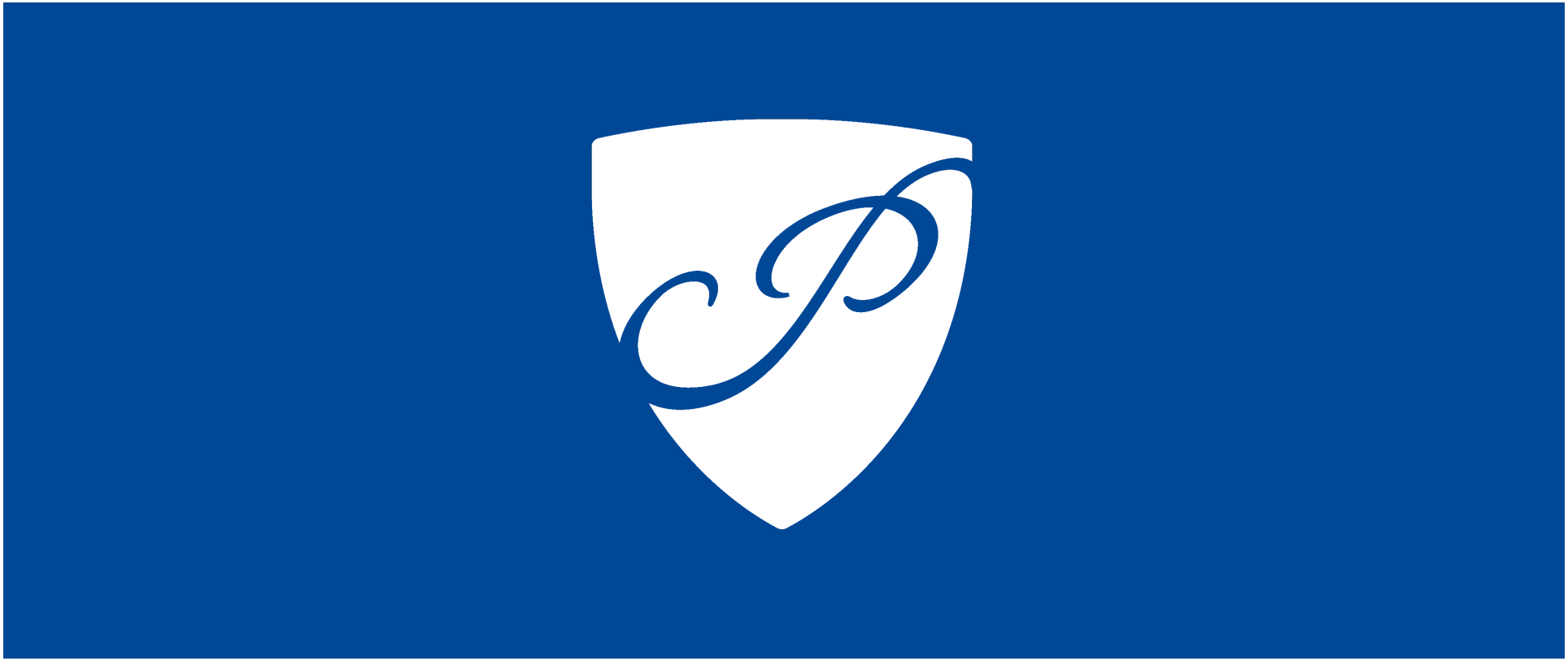


Teaching Ear Training Online

Dr. Jenine Brown
Dr. Gary S. Karpinski

Outline of Today's Webinar:

- Dr. Jenine Brown:
  - Teaching and assessing sight singing online (prepared singing, "at sight" singing, and other activities)
- Dr. Gary S. Karpinski:
  - Teaching and assessing listening skills online (dictation, transcription, and other activities)
- Q&A

In-person ear-training classes at Peabody:

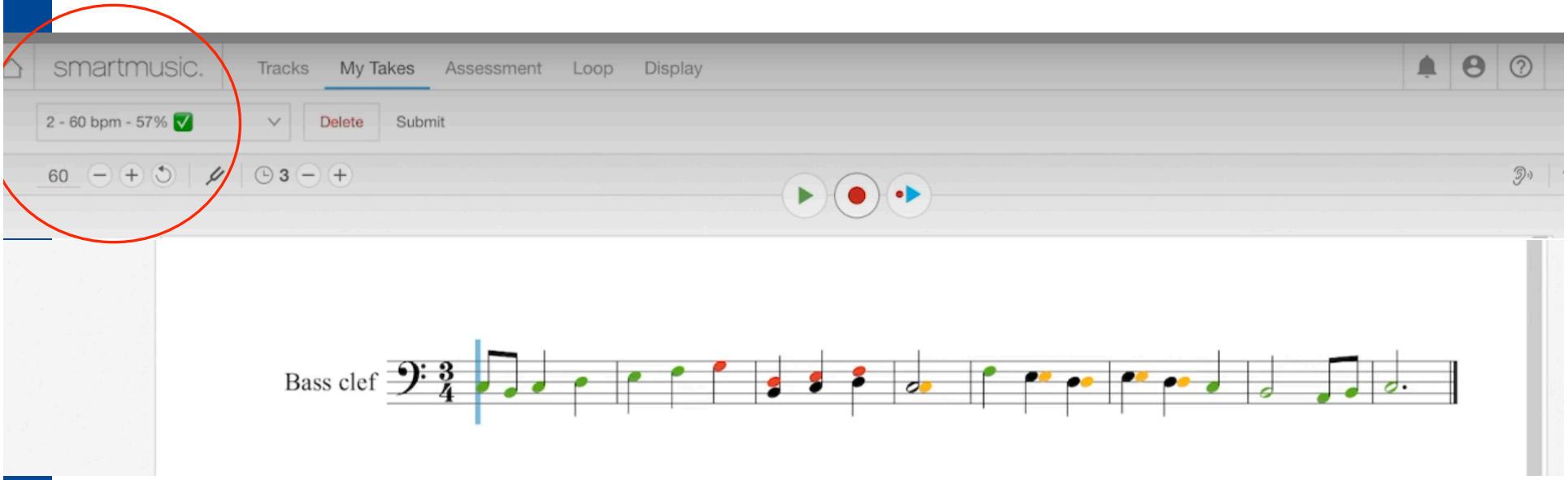
- 25 minutes, M–F
- Classes consisted of teaching content, group singing, and dictation exercises
- To me, assessment of individual singing is not an effective use of class time.

Ways of assessing sight singing outside of class:

- “Prepared” singing assignments:
  - Videos submitted in Blackboard: 1x/wk
- “At sight” assignments:

Ways of assessing sight singing outside of class:

- "Prepared" singing assignments:
  - Videos submitted in Blackboard: 1x/wk
  - SmartMusic untimed assignments: 1x/wk
- "At sight" assignments:


smartmusic.
Tracks
My Takes
Assessment
Loop
Display
2 - 60 bpm - 57%
Delete
Submit
60
3
Bass clef

Ways of assessing sight singing outside of class:

- "Prepared" singing assignments:
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  - SmartMusic untimed assignments: 1x/wk
- "At sight" assignments:
  - SmartMusic timed asst: 1x/wk (or, during an exam week I'll meet with students in Zoom for sight-singing exams)

Ways of assessing sight singing outside of class:

- "Prepared" singing assignments:
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  - SmartMusic untimed assignments: 1x/wk
- "At sight" assignments:
  - SmartMusic timed asst: 1x/wk (or, during an exam week I'll meet with students in Zoom for sight-singing exams)
- Ensemble singing assignments: 1x/wk

Multi-part singing assignment ideas:

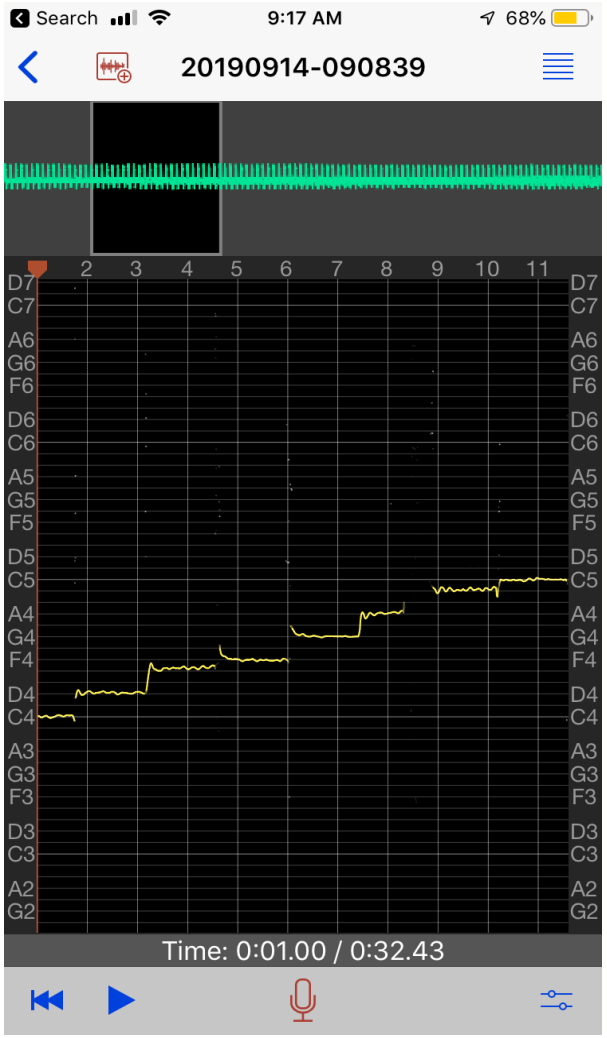
- “Sing this duet with me”
- Record a video of yourself singing the treble clef part while listening to a recording of yourself singing the bass clef part.
- Record yourself singing all four parts of a Bach chorale in open score.
- Pairing students together and having them record different parts, etc.

Important considerations:

- Good online course development takes a long time.
- How can we translate our deeply personal class to an online setting? (Perhaps there are even some elements that work even better online!)
- Let go of trying to translate a face-to-face class 1:1 to the online setting and challenge yourself to embrace what online teaching offers. Be creative and adaptive!

Helpful tools:

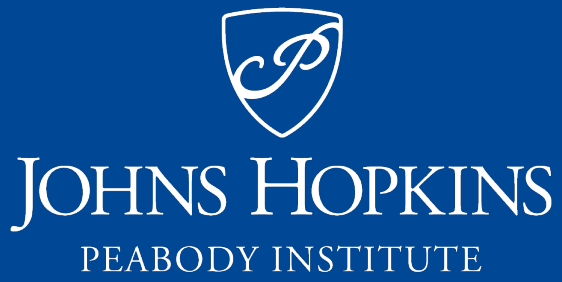
- Sight-singing tools:
  - SmartMusic (home.smartmusic.com using the Chrome browser)
  - SoundCheck (www.noteflight.com/soundcheck)
  - Ear Master (www.earmaster.com)
  - Sight Reading Factory (www.sightreadingfactory.com)
- Applications that may improve synchronous performance in Zoom: cleanfeed.net, SoundJack, JamKazam, and Jamulus (I haven't tried these myself.)
- Tuning apps (Tonal Energy, insTuner, etc.)
- *Singscope* (iOS app): Helps with intonation



A screenshot of *Singscope* from my iPhone after singing a C major scale.

Questions?

Jenine Brown
Jenine.Brown@jhu.edu



Dictation, Transcription, and Other Listening Activities in the Age of Coronavirus

Gary S. Karpinski
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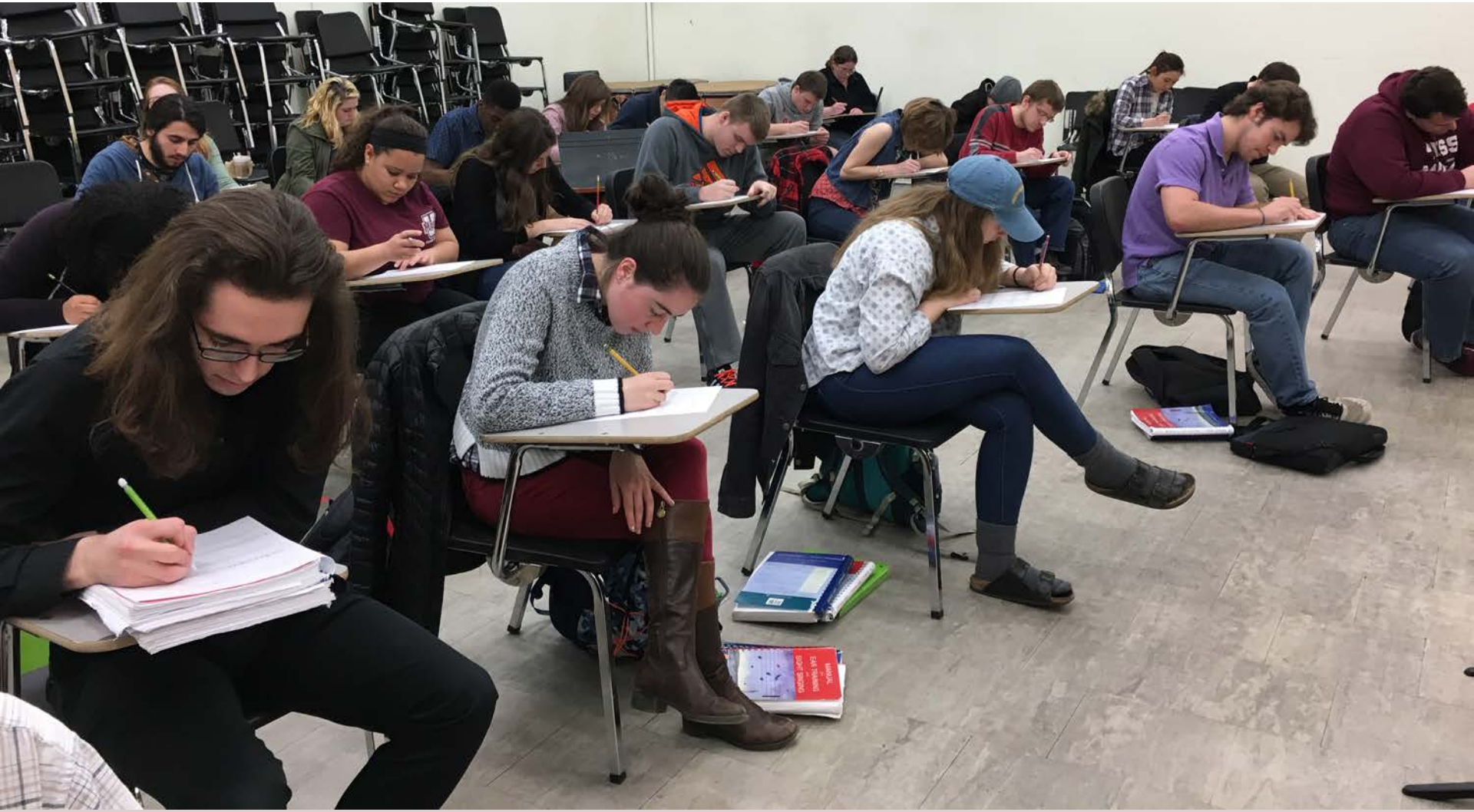
Developing the ear is of the utmost importance

— Robert Schumann, *Musikalische Haus- und Lebensregeln*

Listening is the most dangerous thing of all, listening means knowing

— Javier Marías, *A Heart So White*

Hard at work



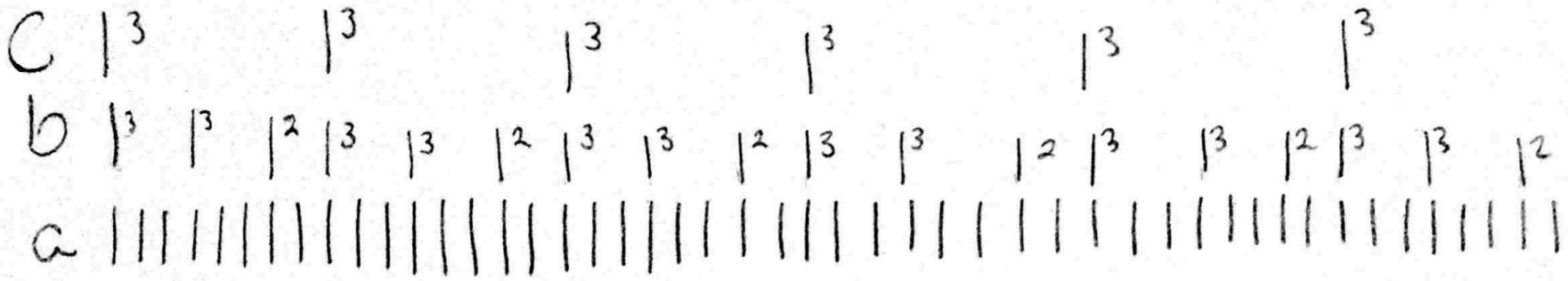
NASM's Only Listening Requirement

2. Musicianship Skills and Analysis. Students must acquire:

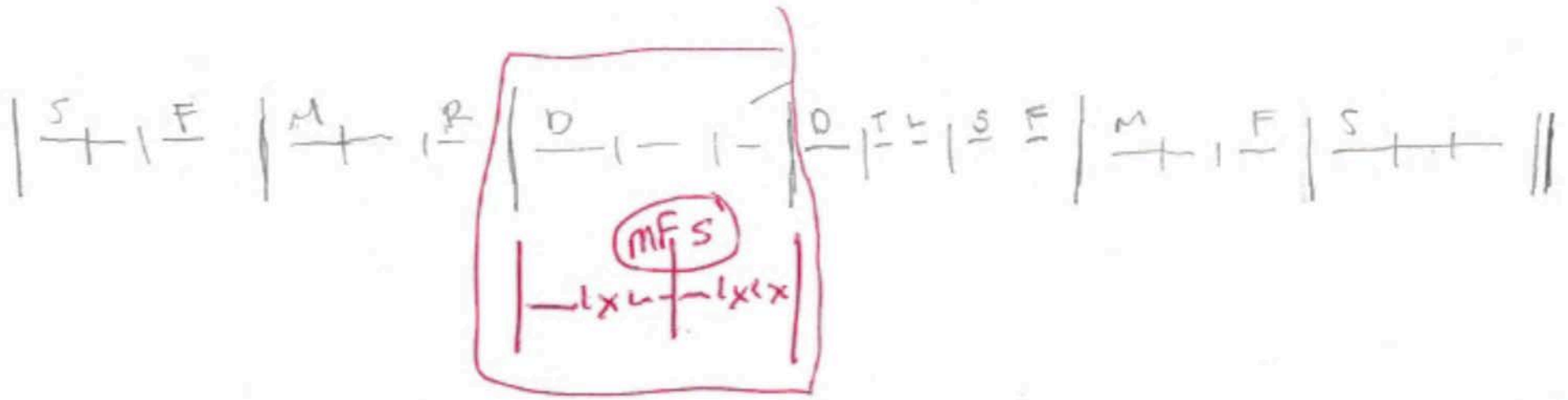
a. An understanding of the common elements and organizational patterns of music and their interaction, the ability to employ this understanding in aural, verbal, and visual analyses, and the ability to take aural dictation.

—NASM Handbook 2019-20, pp. 102-103

Pulse-Graph (Bartók, Bulgarian Dance No. 6)



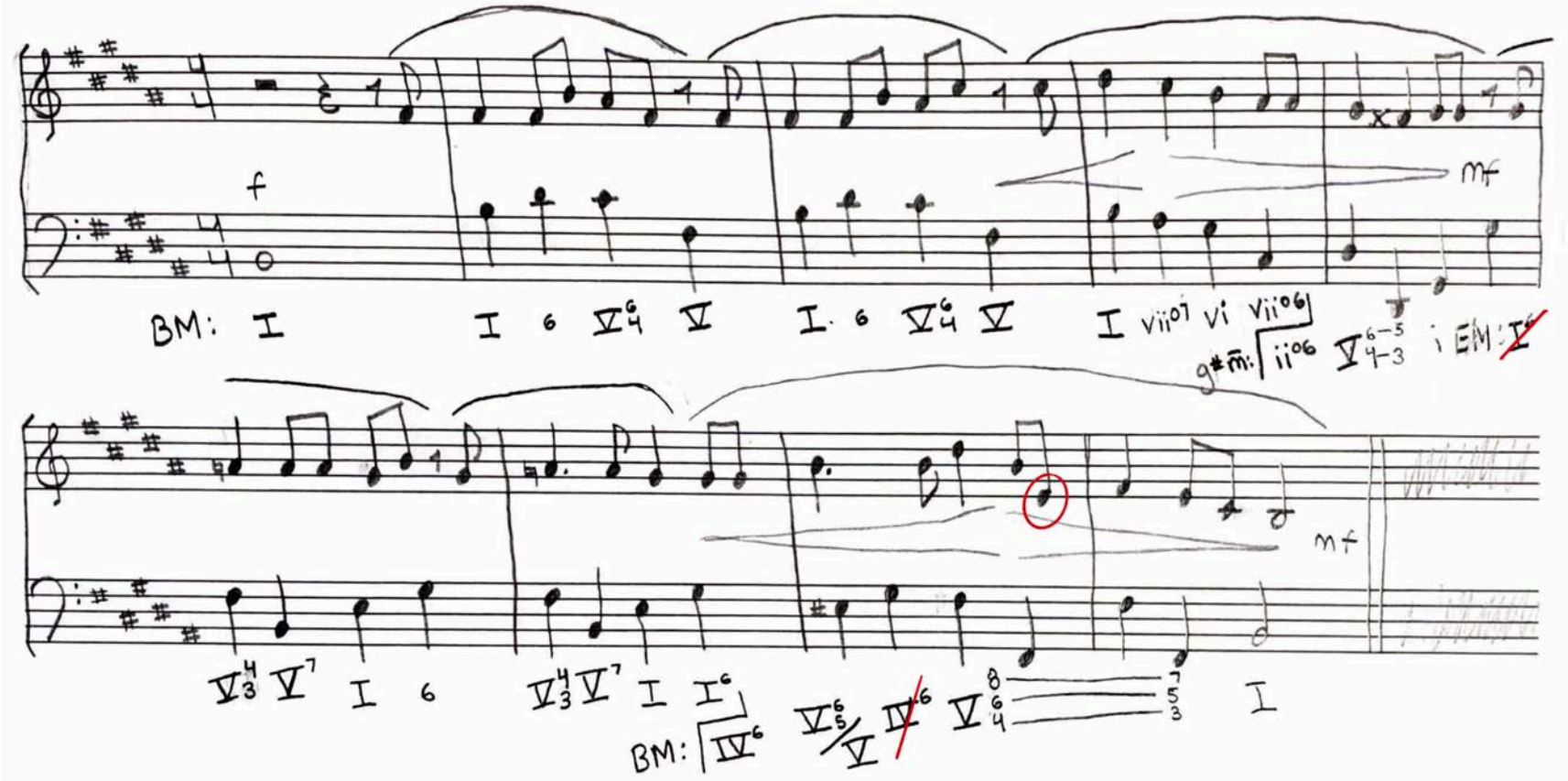
Protonotation



Dictation

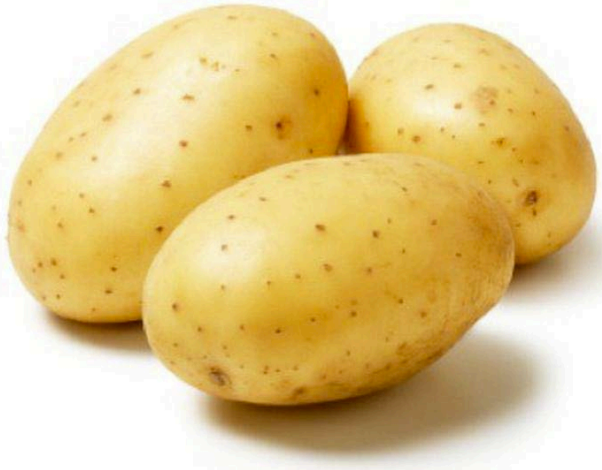
Transcription

(5) Listen to the recording titled "Listening5" and write out a transcription of the soprano voice and the bass line on the staves below. Beneath the bass line, analyze the chords using Roman numerals and figured bass as best you can (some are hard to hear, I know!). Clearly indicate the key areas in your analysis. The first note you hear is a B. Use a 4 on the bottom of the meter sign.



Dictation

Transcription



Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings
- time limit after each playing

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings
- time limit after each playing
- each listening *in toto*

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings
- time limit after each playing
- each listening *in toto*

Transcription

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings
- time limit after each playing
- each listening *in toto*

Transcription

- unlimited number of playings

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings
- time limit after each playing
- each listening *in toto*

Transcription

- unlimited number of playings
- unlimited time after each playing

Differences Between Dictation & Transcription

Dictation

- specific number of playings
- time limit after each playing
- each listening *in toto*

Transcription

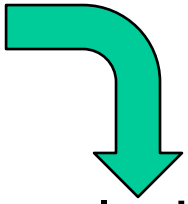
- unlimited number of playings
- unlimited time after each playing
- recording may be stopped and started

A Model for Music Perception During Melodic Dictation

Focused attention

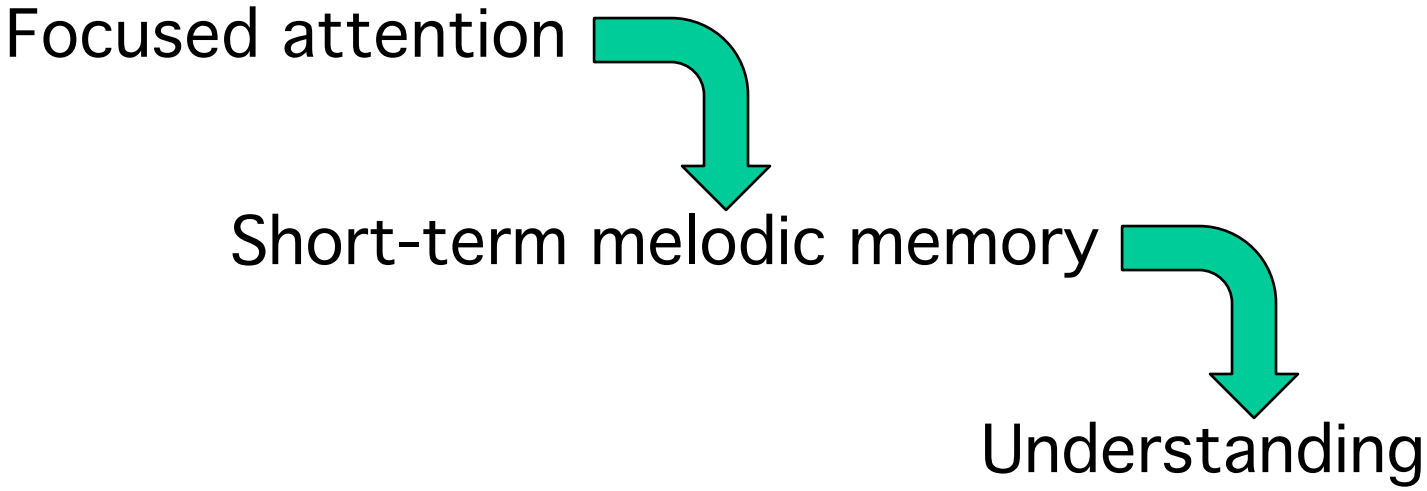
A Model for Music Perception during Melodic Dictation

Focused attention

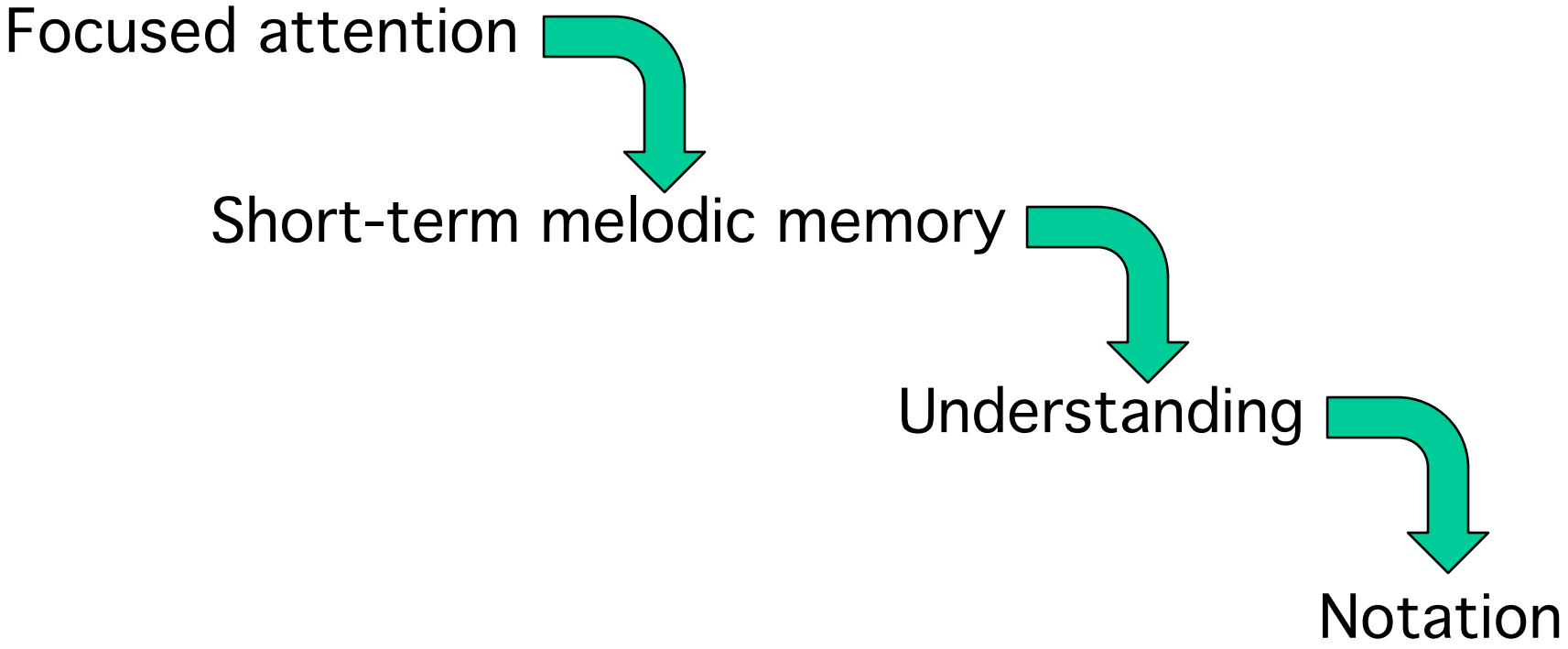


Short-term melodic memory

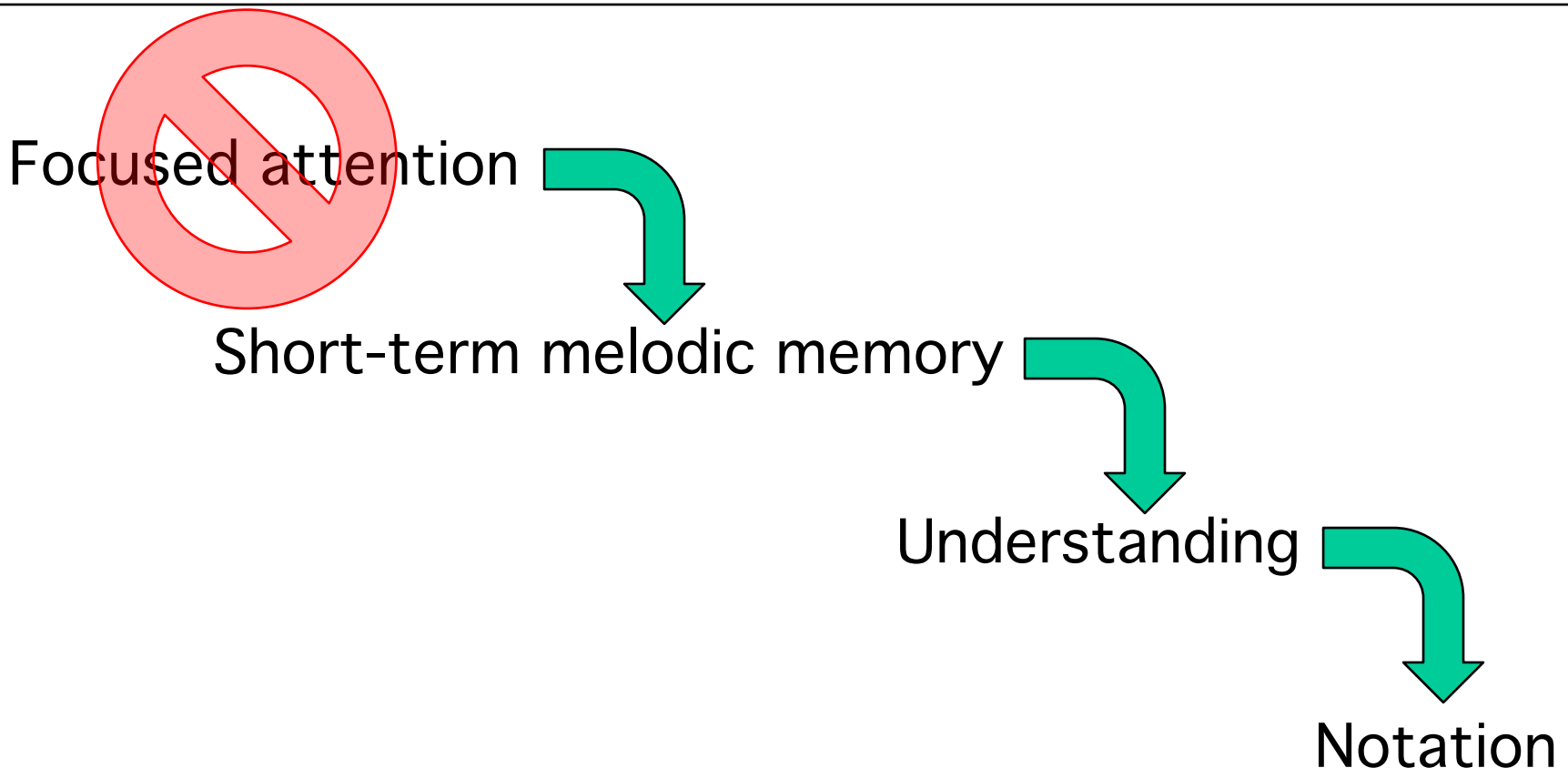
A Model for Music Perception during Melodic Dictation



A Model for Music Perception during Melodic Dictation



The Effects of Substituting Transcription for Dictation



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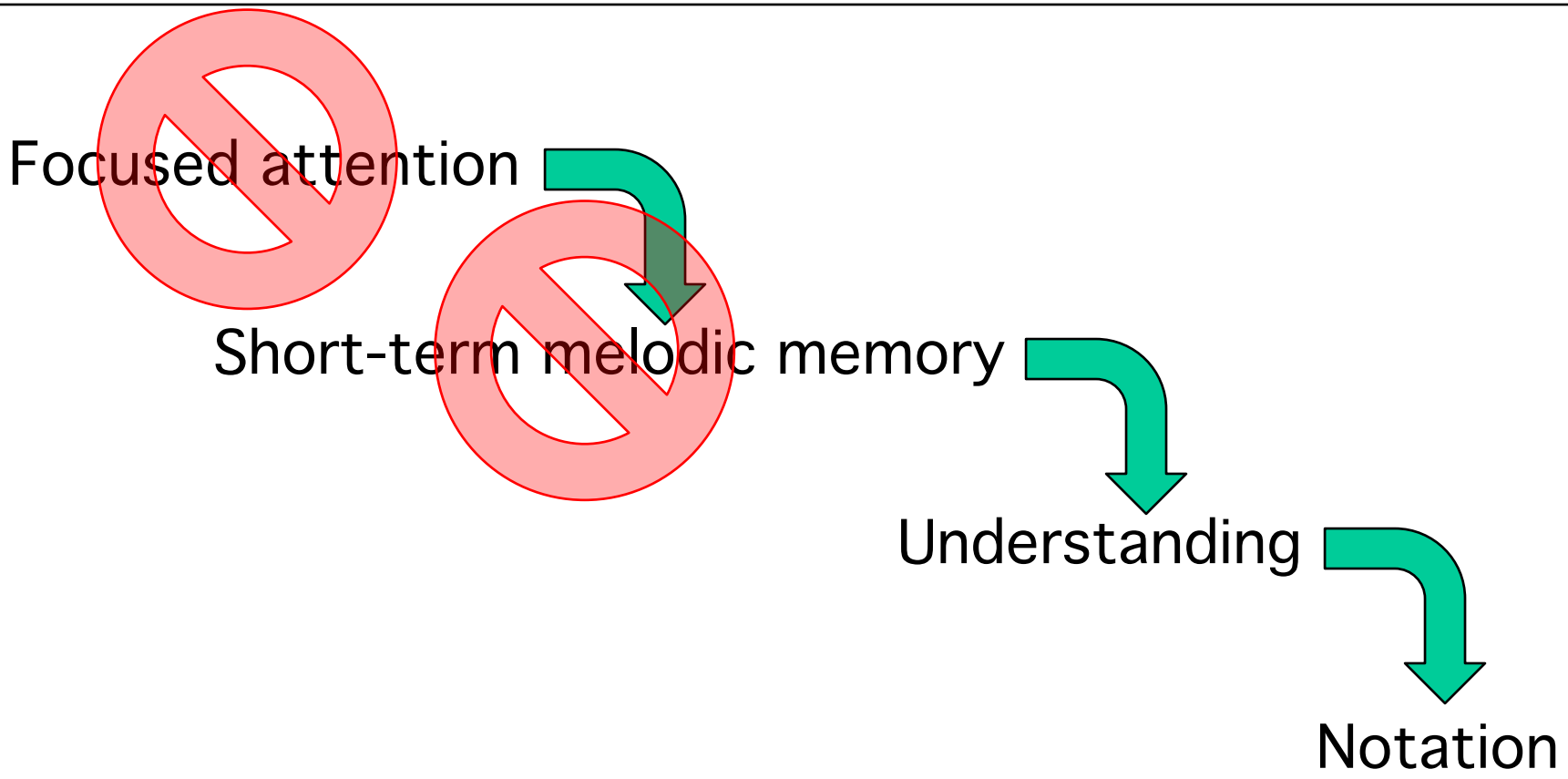

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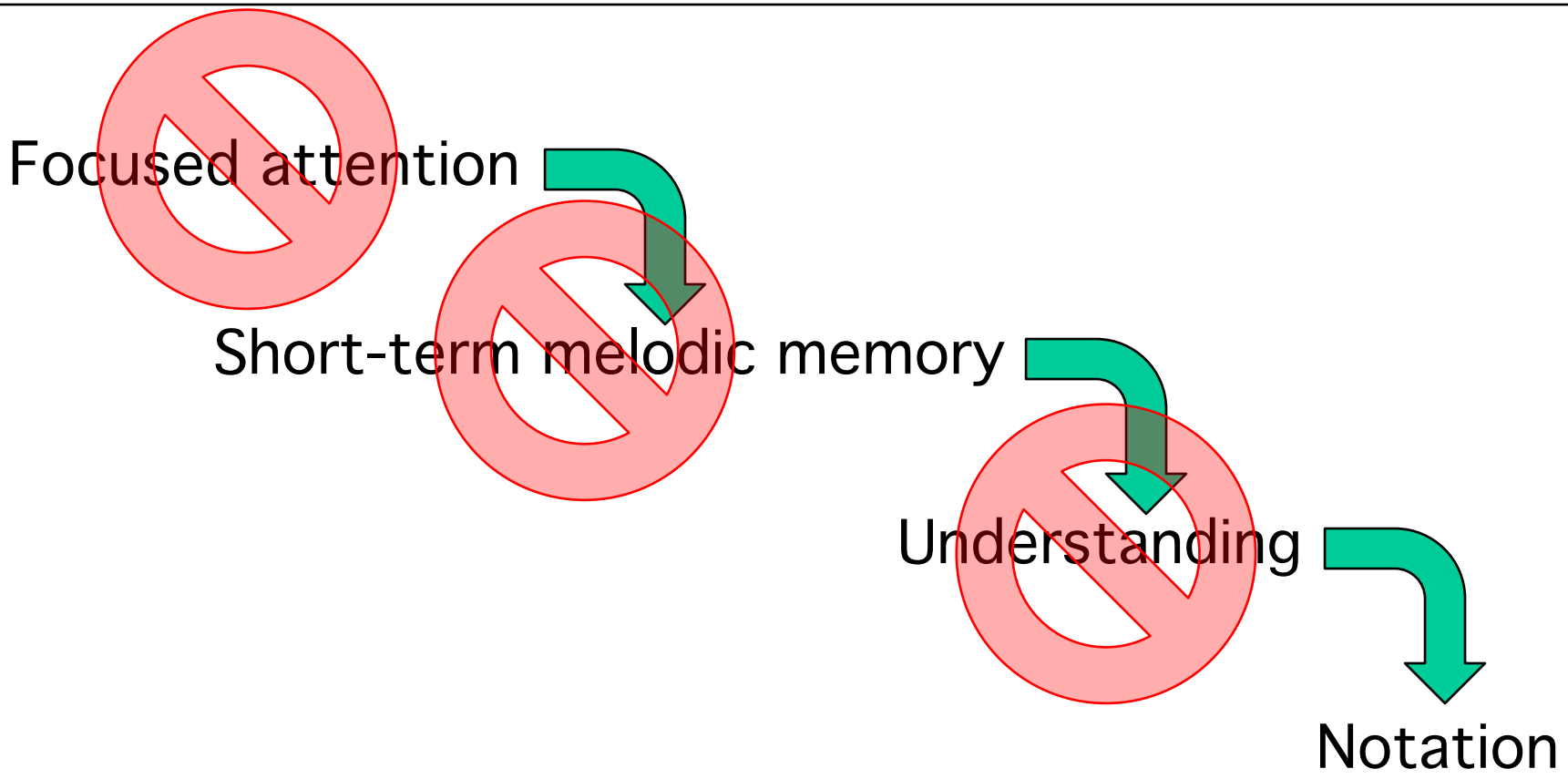
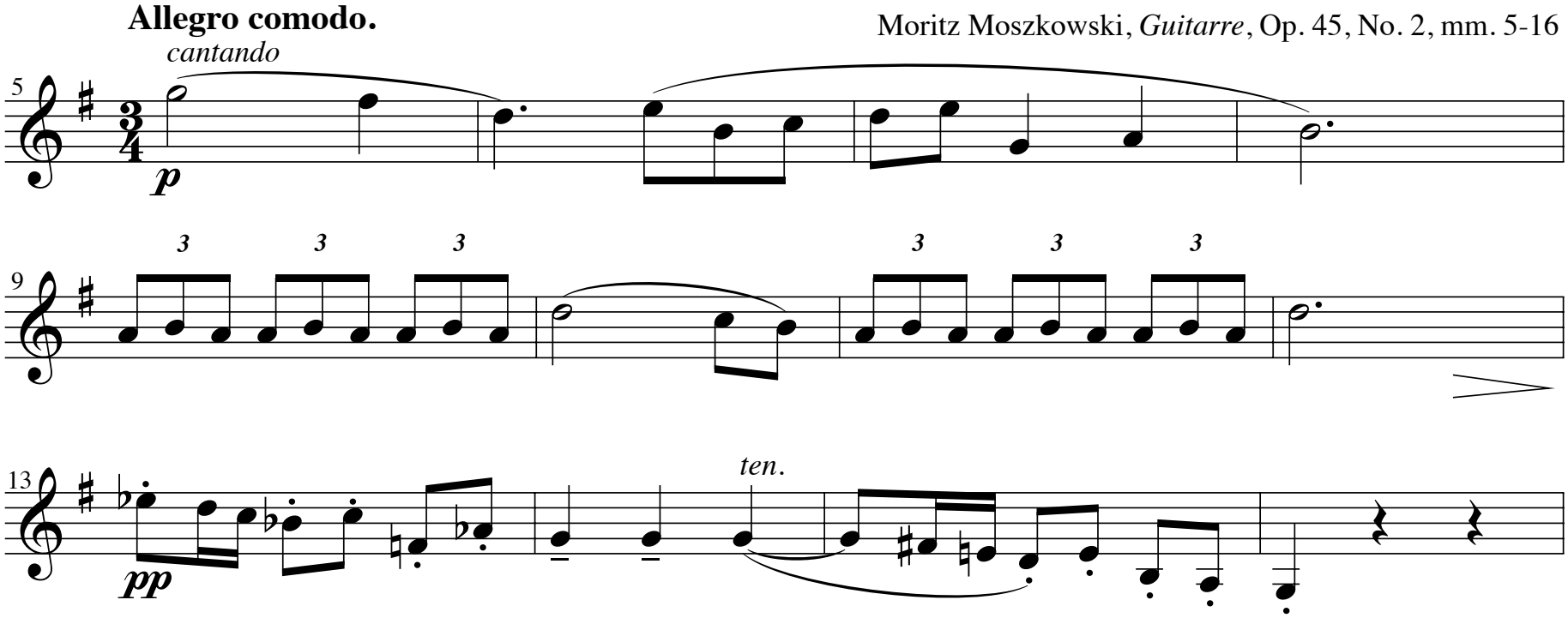


Transcription Can Become a Pitch-Matching Exercise



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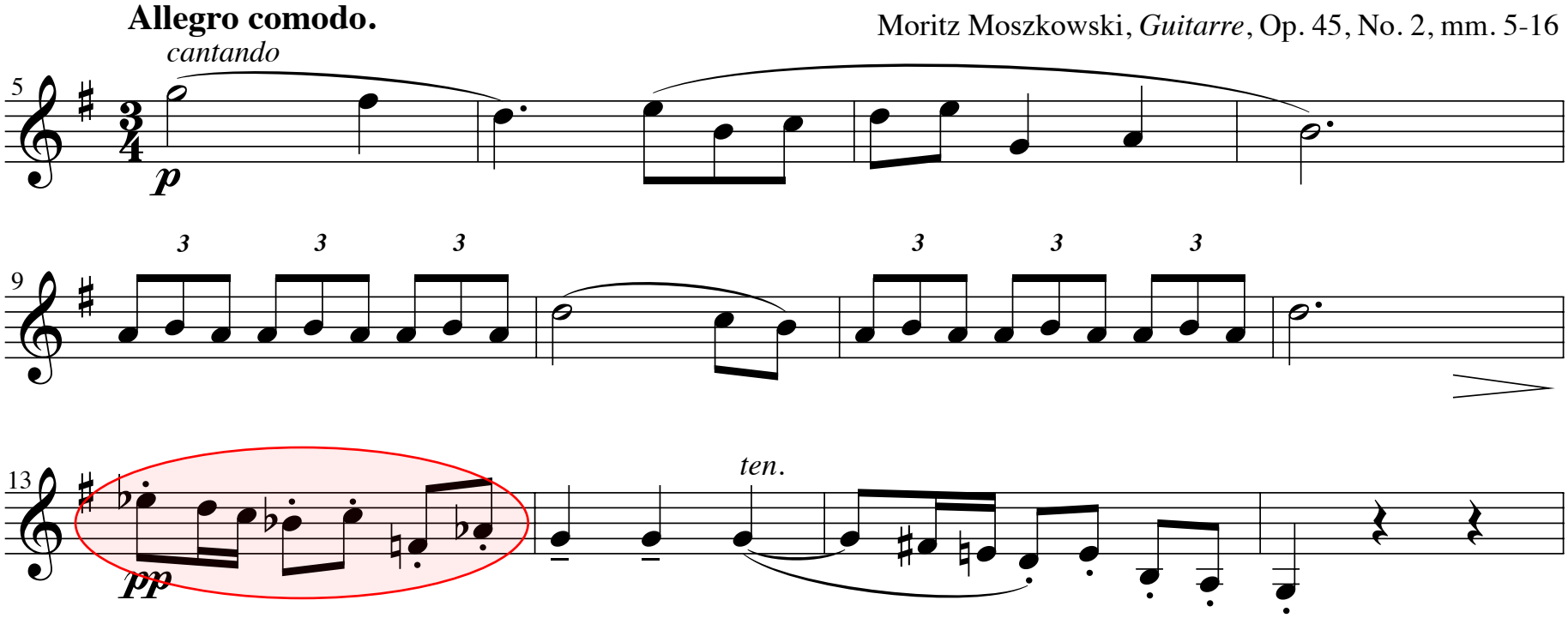

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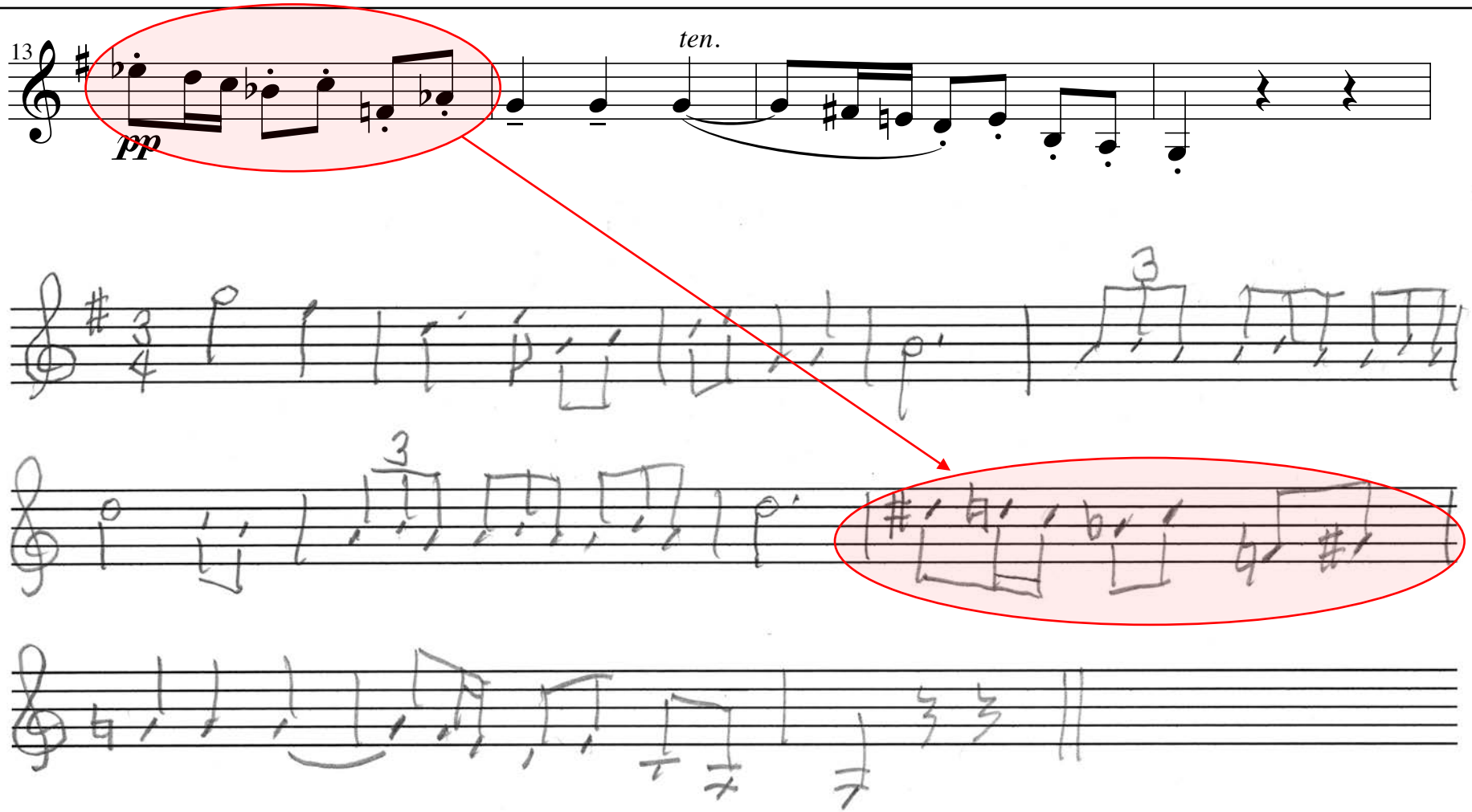


Problems with Audio Fidelity

- Frequency response
  - bass register
  - overtones
- Distortion

Problems with Videoconferencing Software

Latency (or “lag”)

Dropouts

Artifacts

Freezing

Problems with Time to Submit Responses

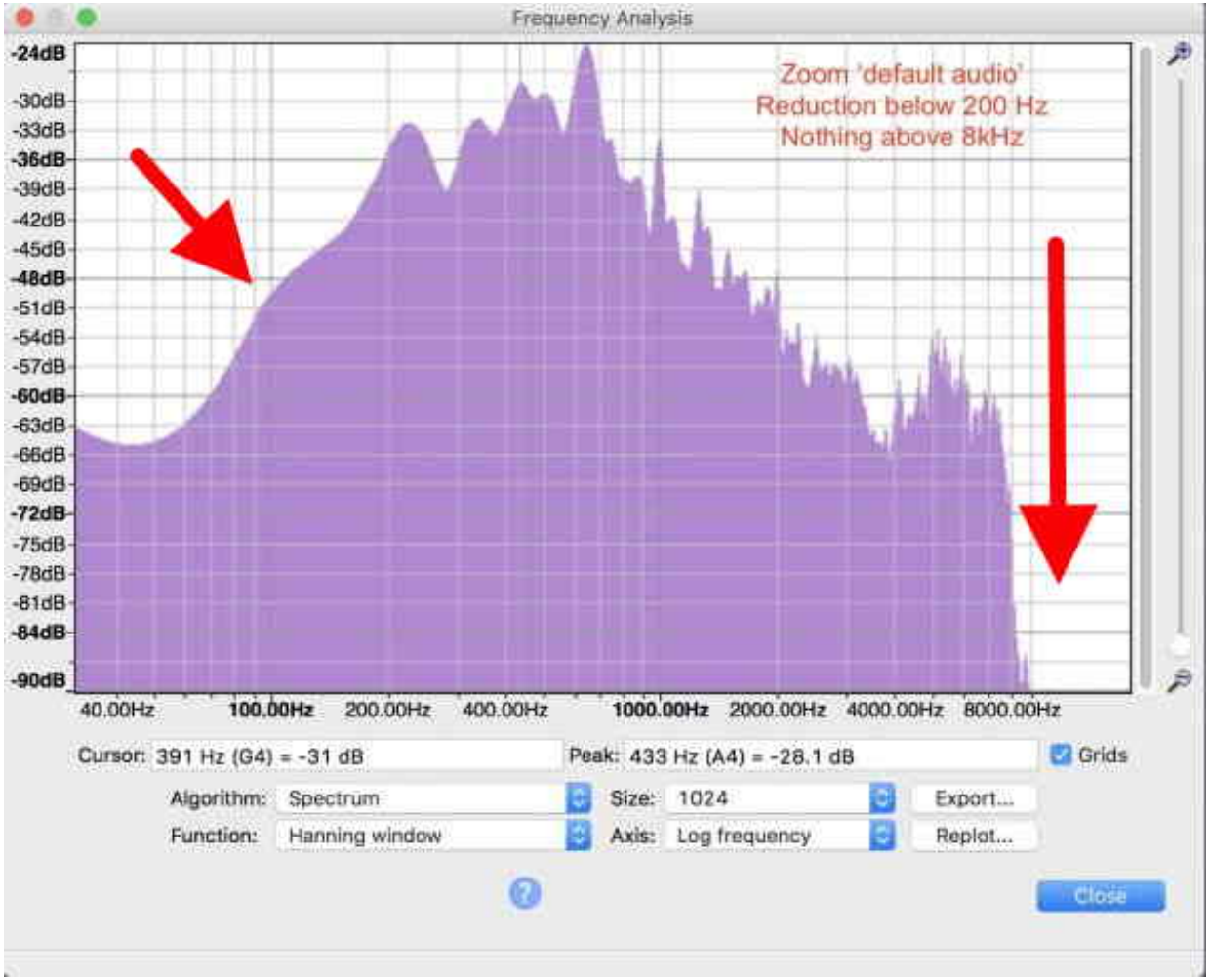
Scanning or photographing

Uploading images

Server functions

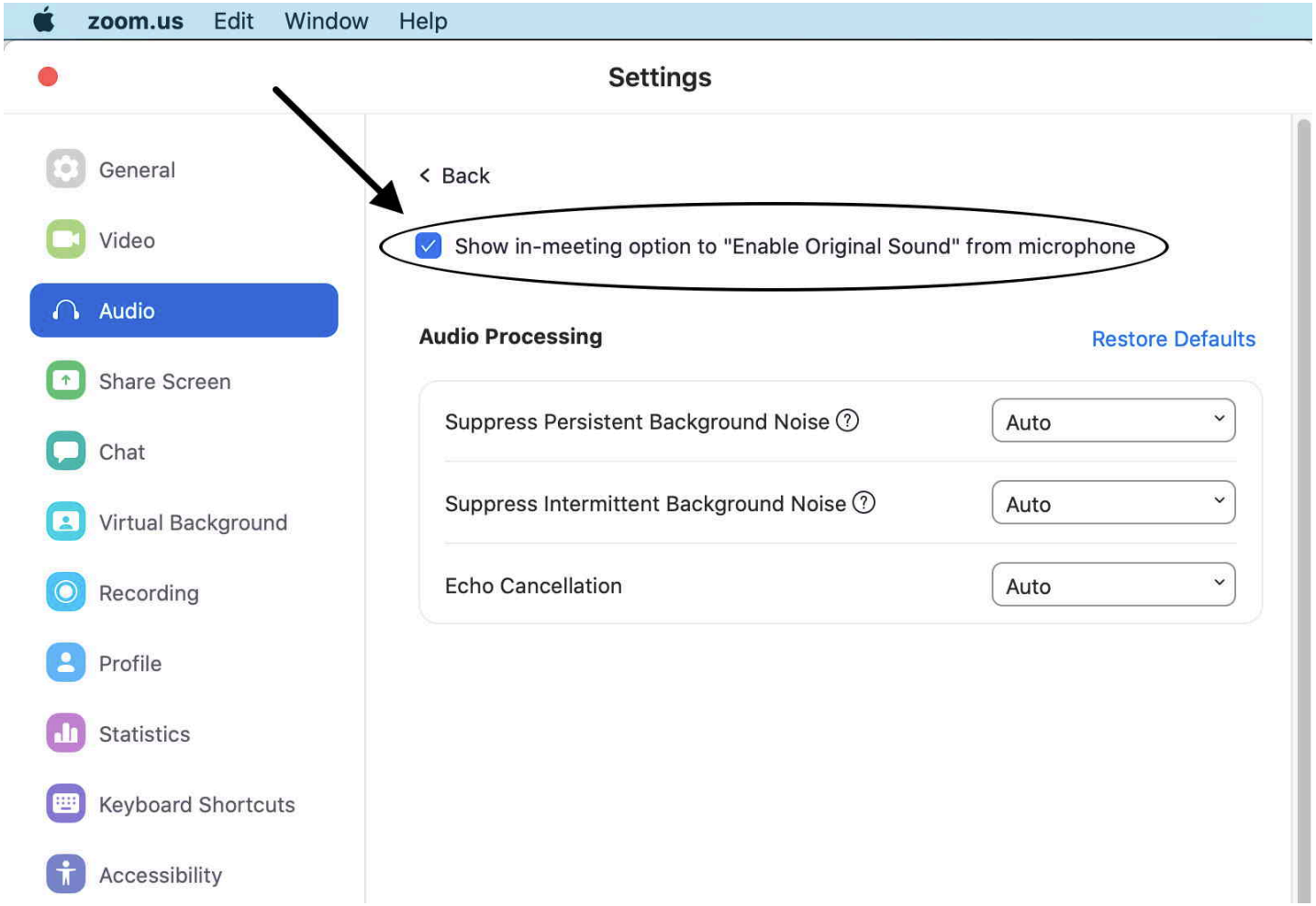
Transmission

Default Zoom Audio Processing

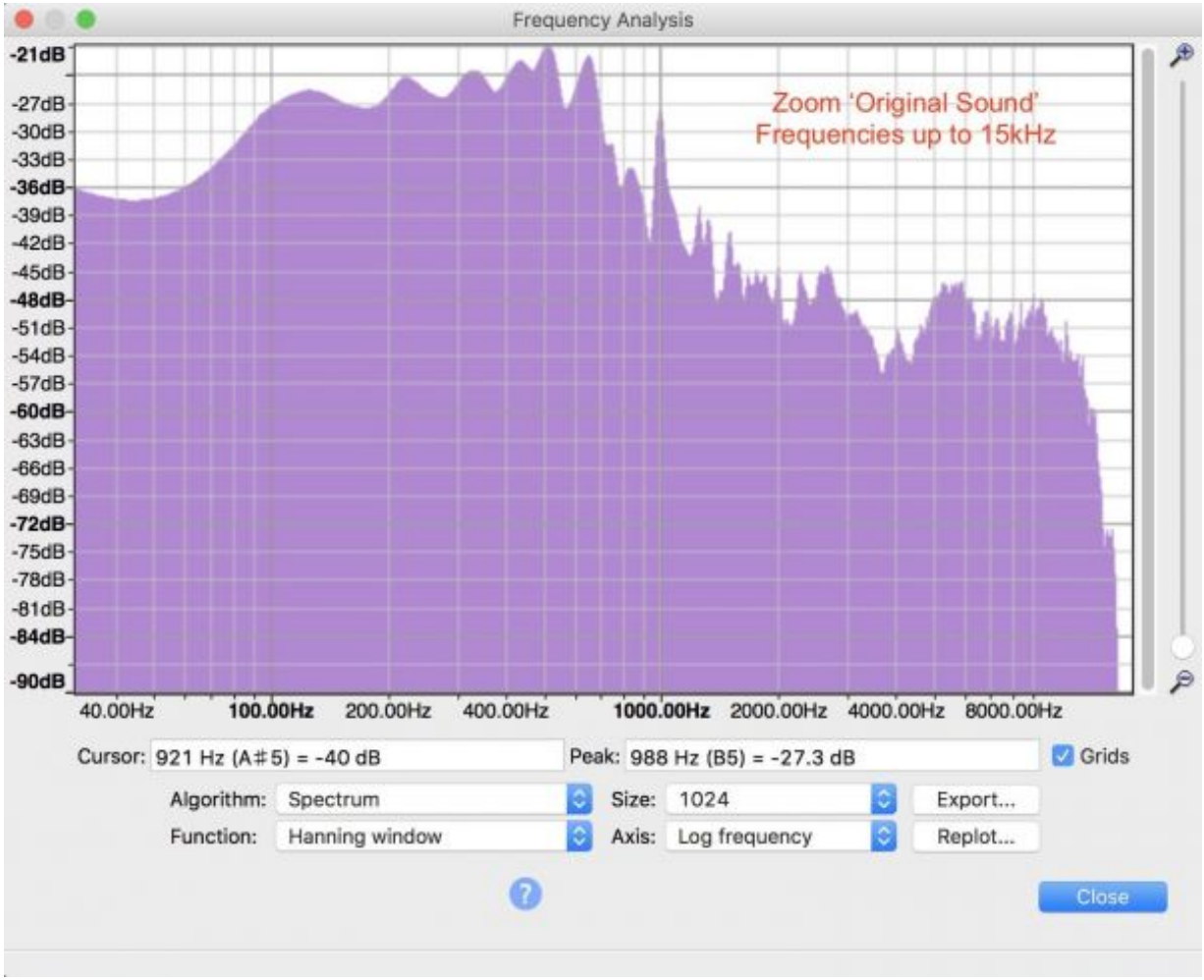


Source: unimelb.edu.au

Adjust Zoom Settings for Better Audio

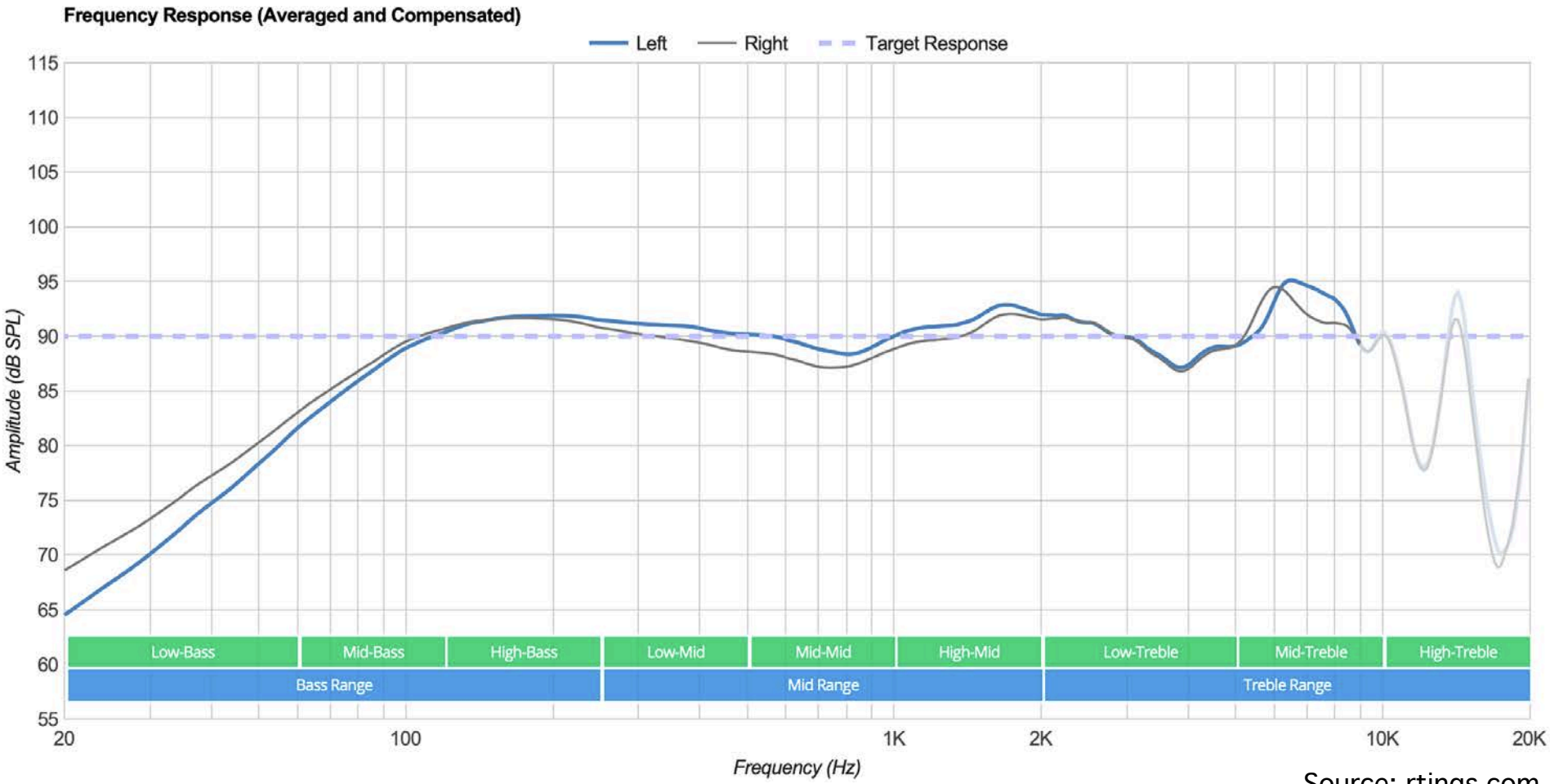


Zoom "Original Sound" Audio



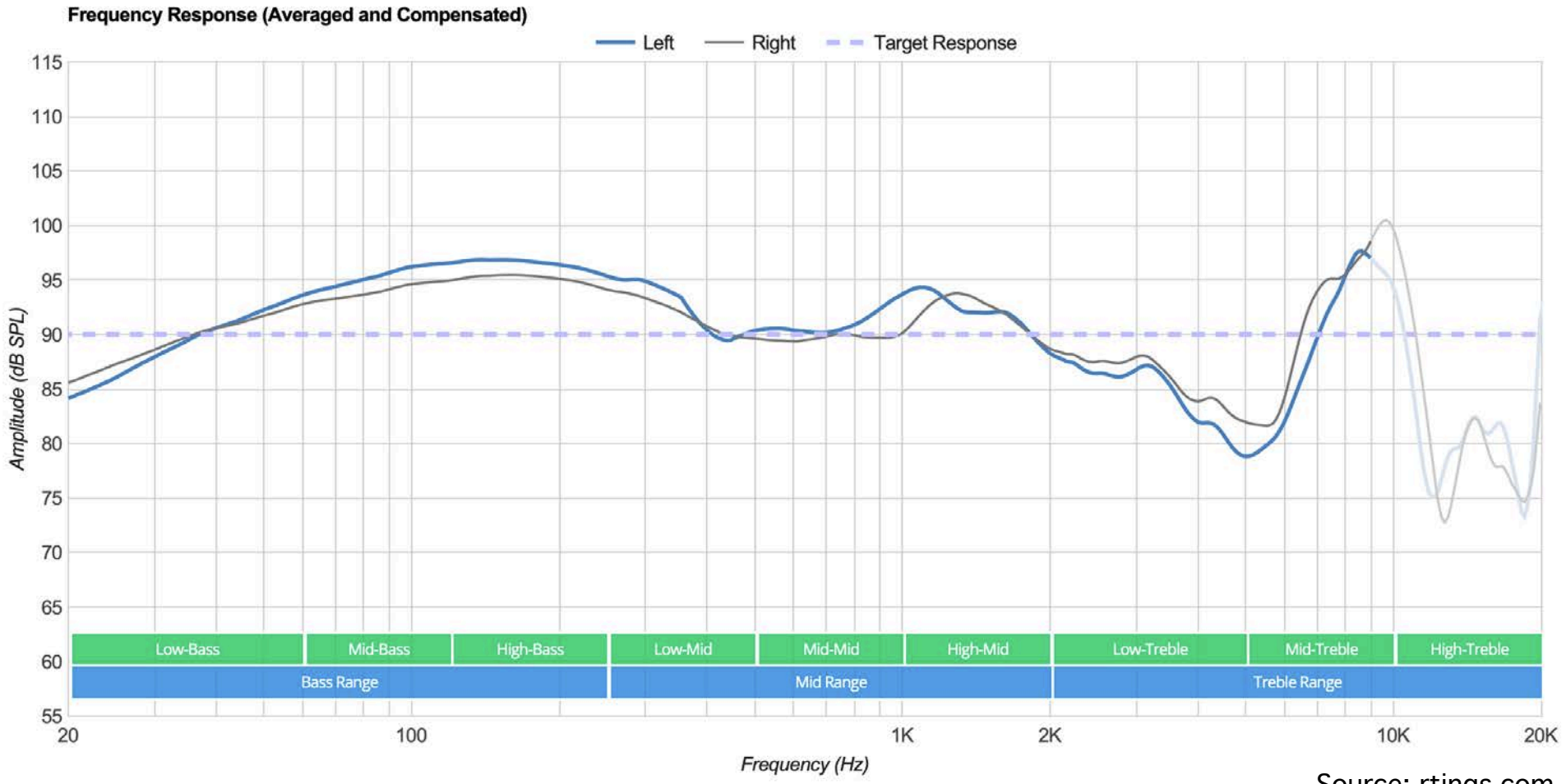
Source: unimelb.edu.au

Frequency Response — Apple EarPods



Source: rtings.com

Frequency Response — Sony MDRZX110 Headphones (ca. $15)



Source: rtings.com

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https://www.rtings.com/headphones/tests/sound-quality/raw-frequency-response

https://le.unimelb.edu.au/video-and-media/additional-media-production-services/performing-music-over-the-internet

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