



Andrew Schartmann

CEB Faculty Think Tank Individual Project

NEC Role: Music Theory Faculty

Title of Project: A Cognitive Approach to Music Theory

Define: To develop a teaching framework that decenters musical style

Discover: To address the need for a diverse theory curriculum that doesn't resort to tokenism

Dream: A concrete methodology that broadens the reach of music theory without prioritizing Western classical music

Design: To peruse research on music perception and cognition; to communicate with colleagues both inside and outside of NEC who are involved with initiatives to diversify theory curriculum

Derive: My experience at the inaugural conference on Theorizing African American Music strengthened my understanding of cultural appropriation in the music academy. As several Black musicians in attendance stressed, music loses its essence when divorced from its culture of origin; and to teach music about which we know little is both intellectually and culturally irresponsible. This project explores one way to broaden the purview of core music theory without disrespecting other traditions.

Delivery: A [resource guide](#) for developing a cognitive approach to music theory.