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Deborah Burton
Department of Composition & Theory
School of Music, Boston University
855 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, Mass.

Dear Deborah,

I wanted to write you and thank you for the productive conversations we've had, both in the past two years and more recently about incorporating my research project, *music21*, into the aural skills and music theory curricula in the School of Music at Boston University.



As you know, *music21* is a set of software tools for analyzing, summarizing, and comparing large numbers of musical scores for researchers in music in order to find large trends and odd behavior in pieces. It makes me very happy that you too have recognized that today a “musical score” is not necessarily a composition that has been edited, published, and performed, but can through computer notation and digitization methods include short music theory exercises, sight singing (if done into a microphone), and even piano rudiments performed on a MIDI keyboard. Using *music21*'s theory capabilities (which are roughly at the level of a very good student who has taken a year of music theory), these pseudo-scores can be compared to correct performances of a sight-singing exercise or piano drill, or searched for common voice-leading or harmonic errors in the case of music theory exercises. We have done some preliminary tests of using *music21* in this way at MIT and the results are extremely promising.

So, I write to you today to apologize for the delay in working with you to make computer assessment and self-training a part of the curriculum for Boston University music students. I know that you had wanted to have a pilot program running this year for a wider roll-out in the 2013–14 year. The delay comes from a changeover in our staff here on the MIT *music21* project that hasn't gone as smoothly as I would like and MIT's increasing interest (with the bureaucracy that come with it) in online music education using *music21* via the MITx/EdX projects. I really do appreciate that you were faster than MIT in seeing the potential of using this software to improve student learning and hope that delaying another semester until we have had another summer's worth of work on developing our system will not inconvenience you or your students too much. I thank you again for being such a great supporter and innovator in digital education in music.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Michael Scott Cuthbert'.

Michael Scott Cuthbert
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