

MELODY MAKERS

Dawn Ressel
Master's Project
Georgia Institute of Technology

ABSTRACT

Music theory, as it is currently taught, is a sometimes arduous and all-too-abstract subject for the student. A significant hurdle for beginning musicians is the gap between understanding how written musical notation translates into its aural form. *Melody Makers* aims to bridge that gap.

Melody Makers is a multimedia CD-ROM based environment that explores basic music notation concepts. This environment escapes the drill-and-practice method usually employed to teach music theory, and instead allow users to build on their own perceptions of melodic sound. The application explores melody and music notation within the context of game-based environment, informed by constructionist theories of education. The environment is a series of puzzles that the user solves in order to visualize musical notation. The prototype is not designed to enable the user to be a completely competent music reader. Rather, it gives the users a foundation for exploring more advanced skills, such as performance and sight-reading.

The primary goal of *Melody Makers* is to give the user a better understanding of musical notation by promoting an immediacy of learning that is uniquely offered through the coupling of educational theories and multimedia. Secondly, the project seeks to offer an environment where, through interacting with puzzles, students can deconstruct and reconstruct their assumptions about music. Lastly, the project aims to make the symbol system of music notation and its translation into aural form explicit. The objective is to reach any user, whether beginning musician or non-musician, who has a desire to learn more about music composition.