

# Pacific Lutheran University

## THE CLIENT:

- » Pacific Lutheran University, located six miles south of Tacoma in suburban Parkland (Washington, USA), on a 156-acre woodland campus.

## SPECIFIC CHALLENGES:

- » PLU has a reputation as the best university in the Northwest
- » 170+ music major undergraduates a year
- » No graduate body to work with undergrads on a one-to-one basis
- » Music department must maintain its highly respected and thorough curriculum



## A RIGOROUS ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Situated just outside Tacoma (Washington, USA) Pacific Lutheran University offers a much sought-after combination of an intense academic programme taught in a friendly, appealing atmosphere. It boasts a position as the only Northwest university to achieve a yearly listing with the top 15 Western region universities in the "Best Colleges" survey (*U.S. News and World Report*).

PLU's music programme is widely recognised as one of the best in the region and is respected nationwide. The university can proudly lay claim to some distinguished alumni in the fields of performance and composition, including Angela Meade of the Metropolitan Opera and composer Cindy McTee, Regents Professor Emeritus at University of North Texas (retired).

PLU's music department is lauded in particular for the thoroughness of its curriculum. For the past five years, PLU has chosen *Auralia* - which can be adapted to suit any curriculum - for lab practice, exam preparation and monitoring student progress.

## AURALIA AS TUTOR

The university student population is approximately 3,600 and each year there is an average of 170+ music majors. At least half of those are vocalists, as PLU has a long history of excellent choral singing, bolstered by their acoustically acclaimed Lagerquist Concert Hall. Associate Professor Jeffrey Bell-Hanson says: *"I believe that Auralia is an extremely valuable tool for students in our ear training programme."*

PLU offers four degree options, including music education, performance and two levels of liberal arts degrees in music, as well as a minor option. A truly varied and comprehensive music department needs the software to match, and *Auralia* comfortably provides that fit for the 100+ students that use it year after year.

## AURALIA 4 PROVIDES:

- » Ability to meet the full needs of any given curriculum
- » Can customise to suit each student
- » One-to-one support for students at every stage
- » Clean, interactive design helps students to enjoy the process
- » Teacher can tailor-make exams and worksheets
- » Test results can be stored and monitored any time for an ongoing account of each student's achievements
- » Marking time / paperwork reduced

## THE RESULTS:

- » Students enjoy ear training
- » Performance is enhanced
- » Improved organisation levels for the music department

As an undergraduate-only institution, students at PLU are exclusively taught by professor level staff, with a very favourable student/faculty ratio of 15:1. One of the key advantages to running *Auralia* is that it behaves exactly like a tutor in a one-on-one situation, reinforcing the work done by professors in lectures and tutorials. At PLU, *Auralia* is often used in conjunction with more traditional methods. Sight singing, solfège exercises (both movable and fixed do), worksheets and group aural activities are all significant parts of the ear training programme and *Auralia* serves as an ideal tool for reinforcing and extending essential aural skills.



The teacher is able to customise *Auralia* for every student, so there is no danger of topics being skirted around or missed out altogether. The teacher is in control. A particular learning goal can be set and the student practises until that level is met before moving onto the next lesson. As Jeffrey Bell-Hanson puts it, *Auralia* is like "a tutor that has infinite patience and as much time as they [the students] need."

## AURALIA TICKS EVERY BOX

At PLU, *Auralia* is used mostly in the lab environment, though some students have their own copy of the software. From the students' point-of-view, *Auralia* is not only a very useful tool but also one they really enjoy working with, being fully interactive and cleanly designed, which in turn enhances the learning process.

For these college-age students, *Auralia* is used regularly to assist with exam preparation. Informally, Associate Professor Jeffrey Bell-Hanson has observed that this tailored ear-training practice really does benefit his students. The proof, he says, is in their improved performance.

The software is used to track students' progress, store results, and create assessments tailored to the PLU curriculum, reducing marking load significantly. The ability to customise the content ensures that Jeffrey Bell-Hanson can make *Auralia* suit his preferred way of teaching. For a university that prides itself on an impressive academic record but is equally eager to maintain a learning environment that is absorbing and personalised, *Auralia* continues to provide the ideal solution.

*"... Auralia is an extremely valuable tool for students in our ear training programme ..."*

*- Jeffrey Bell-Hanson*