

Graduate Music Theory Diagnostic Exam

This document contains a detailed description of the Department of Music and Dance Graduate Diagnostic Examination in Music Theory with appropriate sample questions.

I. Aural Skills

- A) Identify ascending, descending, and harmonic intervals played on the piano, including all intervals up to two octaves.
- B) Identify chord quality and inversion for all triads and commonly used 7th chords.
- C) Melodic dictation: diatonic, simple chromatic, and highly chromatic (but still tonal).
- D) Identify the chord functions of a brief succession of chords, which may include functional chromaticism (i.e. something like... I V7/V V bVI).
- E) Harmonic dictation. Notate the soprano and bass voices and indicate the chord functions for a short choral style progression. The dictation may include borrowed chords, augmented 6th or other altered chords, and secondary (applied) chords as well as the usual diatonic possibilities. Dictation examples may include modulation.

II. Harmony

- A) Partwriting. Complete the following example according to the given figured bass. Also indicate the Roman numeral chord functions for each chord in the key of D major.

6 8 - 7 b3
 5 4 - 3
 b3 #6 #6 #7 #
 #5 4

B) Harmonize the following melody in four-voice chorale style. Include an applied V7 or vii°7 and a French augmented 6th chord.

A musical staff consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef staff contains a melody of eight notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4. The bass clef staff is empty.

C) Provide a harmonic analysis (Roman numeral) of the following musical excerpt.

A musical excerpt for piano in G major, 3/4 time, by Beethoven. The tempo is "Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo" and the dynamic is "mezza voce". The excerpt consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system includes markings for "crescendo", "p", and "sf". The third system includes markings for "cresc.", "sf", and "mezza voce". The name "Beethoven" is written in the upper right corner of the first system.

III. 20th Century Analysis

- A) Given a 12-tone row be able to create the Prime, Inversion, Retrograde, and Retrograde Inversion row forms in any transposition.
- B) Be able to place a given set of pitches into normal order. For example, the normal order for the pitches [Db, E, Bb, D] would be [Bb, Db, D, E] or [10, 1, 2, 4]. Integer notation is preferred.
- C) Be able to give the Prime form for any given set. For example, the Prime form for the set above would be [0, 2, 3, 6]
- D) Be able to give the Interval Vector for a given set. For example, the interval vector for the set above would be [1 1 2 1 0 1].
- E) Be able to define or label 20th century materials like octatonic scales, whole-tone scales, altered diatonic scales, pentatonic scale, and so forth.
- F) Be able to define or label 20th century harmonic innovations like added note chords, quartal chords, polychords, and so forth. Knowledge of specific innovations like Stravinsky's "Petruška Chord" or Scriabin's "Mystic Chord" is also encouraged.

IV. Formal Analysis

- A) Given a short piece (i.e. a minuet by Mozart or a Bach invention), write a brief essay analyzing the various features of the work. Include a discussion of the piece in terms of key centers, cadences, phrasing, form, and other structural elements. Your essay should use proper musical terms like... "phrase group, period, double period, rounded binary, balanced binary, ternary, half cadence, plagal cadence, imperfect authentic cadence, interpolation, and so forth."
- B) Be able to draw a meaningful diagram or chart of the piece above that supports your observations.

V. Counterpoint

- A) Be able to construct a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Species counterpoint to a given Cantus Firmus.
- B) Define various terms found in the discussion of counterpoint, such as countersubject, dux, comes, invertible counterpoint, exposition, answer, episode, middle entries, and so forth.
- C) Compose a tonal and/or real answer to a given fugue subject while supplying a proper countersubject in the 18th Century style.