

Music Systems & Theory Entrance Examination

Section I: Aural Dictation (1 hour)

Accurately notate music performed at the piano by exam proctor:

- Isolated chords (SATB, with bass given)
- Tonal melodies (with chromatic alterations)
- Modal melodies (diatonic)
- Tonal duets (with chromatic alterations)
- Tonal SATB harmony (four voices plus complete harmonic analysis)

Section II: Written topic area exams (2 hours total)

Part 1: Harmonic Analysis

Analyze score excerpts:

- Tonal (Roman numerals, inversions, nonharmonic tones, cadences)
- Modal (identify diatonic mode, cadence areas, and relevant techniques such as planing)
- 12-tone serial analysis (with matrix provided)
- poly-chord use

Depending on the concentration of your master's degree, the following theory/systems areas are also evaluated.

AREA	Form & Analysis	Orchestration	Counterpoint
Conducting-Choral	√	√	—
Conducting-Instrumental	√	√	—
Composition	√	√	√
Education	√	√	—
History	√	√	—
Instrumental Performance	√	√	—
Jazz Studies	—	√	√
Keyboard Performance	√	—	√
Systems/Theory	√	√	√
Vocal Performance	√	—	—

Part 2: Form & Analysis

Analyze large-scale form on score examples provided:

- Identify historical period
- Identify overall formal plan, citing supporting evidence
- Identify primary sections (formal divisions [A B A'], key areas, major cadences)

Part 3: Instrumentation & Orchestration

- Identify ranges and transpositions of standard orchestral instruments and choral voices
- Define standard score expressions and terms
- Transpose excerpt from score into concert pitch

Part 4: Counterpoint

Complete score example (choose one of two provided):

- 16th-century modal canon phrase with cadence
- 18th-century imitative trio sonata phrase with cadence

Suggested Review Materials

Overall review:

Graduate Review of Tonal Theory. Steven Laitz & Christopher Bartlette, Oxford Univ. Press, 2010.

Harmonic Analysis:

Techniques & Materials of Music, 7th ed. Thomas Benjamin (et al), Cengage/Schirmer, 2008.

Form & Analysis:

The Analysis of Musical Form. James Mathes, Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2007.

A Practical Approach to the Study of Form in Music. P. Spencer & P. Temko. Waveland Press, 1988.

Instrumentation/Orchestration:

Instrumentation and Orchestration, 2nd ed. Alfred Blatter, Schirmer (Wadsworth/Thomson), 1997.

Counterpoint:

There are many, many texts available for both 16th- and 18th-century counterpoint, and most are equally fine for review and study

—Dr. Brian Belet

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