

Proficiency Examinations for:

- ***Master of Music students (Theory, History, Piano)***
- ***Undergraduate Diploma students (Theory)***

General Guidelines:

- All Longy Master of Music programs require students to demonstrate proficiency in Music Theory, Music History, and Piano Skills before graduation.
- All Longy Undergraduate Diploma students do not take the Piano Evaluation during New Student Orientation, but will be required to take a Piano Proficiency during the course of their program.
- The Piano Evaluation is waived for keyboard majors (Collaborative Piano, Piano, Jazz & Contemporary Music pianists, Harpsichord, Organ, and any other who were piano performance majors as an undergraduate).
- New Master of Music students are **required to take Music History, Music Theory and the Piano Evaluation** (unless mentioned above) during New Student Orientation, regardless of previous history and theory coursework or lack thereof.

Piano Evaluation

The Piano Evaluation Exam required for all new Master of Music students. Students will have to either pass this evaluation during New Student Orientation, or take and pass one of our new courses. Piano & Collaborative Piano majors, Jazz & Contemporary Music (formerly Modern American Music) piano majors, harpsichordists and organists are exempt, as well as any others who were piano performance majors as an undergraduate.

Students should prepare:

- Two contrasting solo pieces from different time periods that reflect the level at which the student is comfortable playing. (Music may be used.)
- Two major and two minor scales of choice played for two octaves, hands together.
- Sight-reading.
- Identify key signatures for all major and minor keys.

If a student does not have solo pieces or scales ready to play, they still need to be evaluated.

Music Theory

The Longy School of Music of Bard College enjoys a strong reputation in the teaching of theory and musicianship, founded on the principle that a complete musician should have as many tools as possible for understanding musical style and analyzing scores. The Master of Music proficiency examination in Music Theory represents the high standards of Longy's own undergraduate theory program, and we encourage you to view it not as an obstacle but as an opportunity to challenge yourself and grow musically. The Music Theory examination consists of an aural skills test and a written theory test.

The aural skills test covers the following areas:

- Recognition of intervals, harmonic and melodic, up to a tenth
- Recognition of scales and modes
- Melodic dictation in one and two voices
- Recognition of chord quality of triads and seventh chords
- Recognition of progressions by Roman numerals and figured bass symbols
- Rhythmic dictation

A set of sample questions for the aural skills test is attached.

The written test will include testing of a range of knowledge and skills and will include at least some of the following categories:

For Voice, Opera, Strings, Brass, Woodwinds, Historical Performance (formerly Early Music), Composition, Piano & Collaborative Piano Majors:

- Harmonization of a chorale melody in four parts
- Realization of a figured bass in four parts
- Formal and harmonic analysis of a short piece

For Jazz & Contemporary Music (formerly Modern American Music) Majors:

- Major and minor scales, modes and diminished scales
- Spell chords from chord symbols, including chords up to a 13th
- Transpose a melody for a C instrument to B flat & E flat instruments
- Analyze a lead sheet

The remainder of the test will be rudimentary, testing knowledge of fundamentals such as interval and chord spelling.

Even if your theory background is strong, you are encouraged to spend time reviewing these subjects so you can best demonstrate your abilities. A concise and inexpensive guide to the Longy theory department's criteria for good four-part writing can be found in Marjorie Merryman's *Music Theory Handbook* (Harcourt-Brace, 1997).

Music History

The Music History proficiency examination tests your broad knowledge of the history of Western music, including major composers, stylistic developments, genres, and repertoire. It is in four parts and must be completed in its entirety in order for the examination to be passed. Please note: regardless of previous performance in either Graduate History Review or a previous proficiency examination, all sections of the exam must be filled out without exception.

Part I consists of a series of listening identifications, score identifications, and listening identifications accompanied by score excerpts. Each listening example will be played twice. You will be asked to place each excerpt in its correct historical context and make a logical argument for a probable composer, genre, and style period/era. You should support your answers by discussing the stylistic characteristics of the excerpt. The questions for Part I will be answered in a blue examination book.

Part II consists of multiple-choice questions.

Part III consists of name and term categorization.

In Part IV, you will have two sets of short-essay writing prompts. From the first set you will choose from questions that address topics from the Medieval through Baroque, while the questions for Set 2 will cover music from c. 1750 to the present. The topics may ask you to describe a particular work or group of works in some detail, demonstrate your knowledge of important historical trends and genres, or discuss a particular composer's musical legacy. The questions for Part IV will be answered in a blue examination book.

Sample Short Essay Questions:

- Compare the careers of Chopin and Liszt with respect to how they interacted with the music-loving public. How did they earn their livings, and how did this influence the music they composed? Discuss specific musical works by both composers in this context.
- Describe typical musical features found in a Renaissance madrigal. Provide specific examples from pieces by at least two composers in the course of your discussion.
- Discuss the term "neo-classicism" and its manifestations in music of the twentieth century. Give at least three specific examples.

Recommendations for Study and Preparation

We recommend reviewing one of the major music history textbooks, preferably Burkholder/Grout, *A History of Western Music* or Mark Evan Bonds, *A History of Music in Western Culture*, 3rd ed. It would

also be prudent to familiarize yourself with the accompanying score anthologies. It is not necessary to purchase a CD set for exam preparation, but CD anthologies from Norton or those that accompany the Mark Evan Bonds text may be useful to you.

Pick several *representative* and major works from each style period that you can identify by ear, by looking at the score, and can contextualize historically (composer's style, genre development, historical style period).

For each of the six style periods (Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern (20th and 21st centuries), be familiar with the major composers, genres, and works of the period. For example, you would identify Robert Schumann with the Romantic Era and associate him with symphonies, lieder (e.g., *Dichterliebe*), and piano music (e.g., *Carnaval*, op. 9). It would also be prudent to understand the historical development of major genres: motet, Mass, madrigal, symphony, etc.

Theory and History Review Courses for Master of Music Students

Students who do not pass the Music History and Music Theory examinations during New Student Orientation will be required to enroll in one or more of the following structured review courses beginning with their first semester at Longy: One semester or a full year of Graduate Theory Boot Camp (separate sections for aural and written skills offered each semester) and Graduate Survey of Western Music (a one semester course). Review courses are one credit.

Graduate Music Theory Placement Exam: Sample Written Portion and Statement of Expectations

- I. Harmonize in four parts the chorale melody provided. The chorale should be harmonized approaching the style of J.S. Bach. That is: use a consistent harmonic rhythm, with a change of harmony on every quarter note; supply a bass with good melodic contour; produce a clear, functional harmonic progression; employ proper use of inversions, clear cadential formulae, good voice-leading and chord voicing. It is expected that the harmonization will include use of tonicization or modulation.

Musical notation for a chorale melody in G minor, 4/4 time. The melody consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, Bb5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, Bb5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6. The piece ends with a double bar line.

- II. Realize in four parts the figured bass provided. The example will typically be between 10 and 15 chords long, with figures that require one to accurately realize non-harmonic tones, seventh chords, and chromatic harmony (including augmented sixth chords, secondary dominants, Neapolitan sixth chords, and mode mixture).

Musical notation for a figured bass in D major, 4/4 time. The notation is on a bass clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F#, C#). The melody consists of quarter notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C#6, D6. Below the staff are figured bass figures: #6/4, 6, 7b, #6/5, 6/4, 8-7/#3, 6b/3, #, #.

- III. Form and analysis. Identify the form and discuss phrase structure, harmony, rhythm, motivic development, and any other details relevant to a short Classical or Romantic piece for piano. You will be expected to provide a complete harmonic analysis using roman numerals (including inversions).

Graduate Music Theory Placement Exam: Sample Aural Portion

- I. Identify any interval up to a 10th, played either melodically or harmonically. Each interval will be played twice.
- II. Identify scales types, including major, all three forms of minor, dorian, phrygian, lydian, mixolydian, whole tone, chromatic, octatonic, and pentatonic (played once, up and down).
- III. Notate a melodic dictation similar in length and content to the one provided below. The complete melody will be played several times, and each numbered segment will be played separately at least twice.

Musical notation for a single melodic line in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is divided into four numbered segments: 1 (quarter notes G4, A4, Bb4), 2 (quarter notes C5, Bb4, A4, G4), 3 (quarter notes F4, E4, D4, C4), and 4 (quarter notes B3, A3, G3, F3). A triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4) is indicated with a '3' below it.

- IV. Notate a two-part dictation similar to the one provided below. The whole example will be played five times.

Musical notation for a two-part dictation in 2/4 time, key of D major. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with quarter notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

- V. Identify the quality of triads and seventh chords. One need not name the inversions, but be aware that the chords will be voiced as represented in the examples below. Chord possibilities include all simple triads (major, minor, diminished, and augmented) as well as all standard seventh chords (major-major, major-minor, minor-minor, diminished-minor or “half-diminished”, and diminished-diminished or “diminished”). Each chord is played twice.

The musical notation for exercise V consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The chords are as follows:

- Chord 1: Treble clef has a Bb chord (Bb3, D4, F4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Chord 2: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Chord 3: Treble clef has a Bb chord (Bb3, D4, F4); Bass clef has a Bb chord (Bb2, D3, F3).
- Chord 4: Treble clef has a C# chord (C#4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Chord 5: Treble clef has a Bb chord (Bb3, D4, F4); Bass clef has a Bb chord (Bb2, D3, F3).
- Chord 6: Treble clef has a Bb chord (Bb3, D4, F4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).

- VI. Identify the chords making up a progression, using roman numerals for the chord and arabic numerals to indicate inversions. Chord progressions will be played twice each. Typically, progressions are between five and seven chords long.

The musical notation for exercise VI is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The progression consists of the following chords:

- Measure 1: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Measure 2: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Measure 3: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Measure 4: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Measure 5: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Measure 6: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).
- Measure 7: Treble clef has a C chord (C4, E4, G4); Bass clef has a C chord (C2, E3, G3).

- VII. Notate a rhythm played for you. The example below is representative of the length and difficulty you will encounter. Each rhythm will be played four times.

The musical notation for exercise VII is in 4/4 time. The rhythm consists of the following notes:

- Measure 1: A quarter note (C4), followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F4), followed by a quarter note (G4).
- Measure 2: A quarter note (C4), followed by a quarter note (D4), followed by a quarter note (E4), followed by a quarter note (F4).