

Proficiency Examinations for

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

TEST DATES FOR 2016-2017:

Music Theory

AURAL: Monday, August 29, 2016, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM (Pickman Hall)
Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM (Dalcroze Room)

WRITTEN: Tuesday, August 30, 2016, 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM (Pickman Hall)
Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM (Dalcroze Room)

Music History

Tuesday, August 30, 2016, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM (Pickman Hall)
Monday, January 23, 2017, 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM (Pickman Hall)

Piano

Sign-up sheets for individual 15-minute appointments will be posted on the Academic Affairs bulletin board approximately one week before the dates listed below.

DATES and TIMES TBD

Limited slots available: if there aren't enough slots, please email rhaea.daliesio@longy.edu

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 programs require students to demonstrate proficiency in Piano Skills before graduation.
- The Piano Skills examination is waived for keyboard majors (collaborative piano, MAM piano, organ, piano, harpsichord).
- New Master of Music students are **required to take Music History and Music Theory examinations during New Student Orientation**, regardless of previous history and theory coursework or lack thereof.
- The Music History and Music Theory examinations are offered twice a year, at the start of each semester. The Piano Skills examination is offered three times a year, at the beginning of each semester and at the end of the spring semester.

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: Graduate Theory Review (separate sections

for aural and written skills offered each semester) and Graduate History Review (a two-semester sequence). While both review courses are for non-credit and there is no additional charge to take them, they do involve a general amount of graded coursework in order to evaluate proficiency. Please be advised that the purchase of texts and other materials will be necessary.

Students who successfully pass these review courses are excused from retaking the corresponding proficiency exams. The Graduate Theory Review course can be passed in one or two semesters, depending on the prior background of the student. The Graduate History Review course must be taken for a full year, and both semesters must be passed to be excused from the History examination. Students who have had little previous training in one or more of these areas may need additional work, possibly with a tutor, in addition to the Review Courses.

Piano Review Course for Master of Music Students

Master of Music students who do not pass all sections of the Piano Proficiency Examination at the beginning of the school year are encouraged to enroll in the Graduate Piano Review course (offered each semester). This is a non-credit course, and there is no additional charge to enroll in it. Unlike the History and Theory review courses, taking Graduate Piano Review does not substitute for the exam; students take the course in preparation for their next attempt on the exam. Students may also elect to prepare for the Piano exam on their own.

The Graduate Piano Review course is not available to Undergraduate Diploma students, who in general will prepare for their examination through private lessons (described below).

Piano Lessons for Non-Keyboard Majors

Some students may wish to take private piano lessons in order to pass the Piano Skills examination. Undergraduate Diploma students may take up to four semesters of secondary piano lessons at no additional cost, using one tuition credit per semester. Master of Music students (and Undergraduates exceeding their four-semester limit) seeking private piano lessons must pay the secondary studio fee of \$450 (for eight one-hour lessons or the equivalent) and use one tuition credit per semester.

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 three categories:

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

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 three 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 as well as a section that asks you to connect various composers to a style/historical period.

In Part III, you will have three short writing assignments. The first question will test your comprehensive knowledge of repertoire from all the major style periods: Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern. The second and third questions will ask you to write a short essay, picking one question to answer out of several options. The options for Question 2 will cover music from the Medieval through Baroque, and Question 3 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 III 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 Peter J. 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. Please be aware that you will be required to purchase the Bonds text and CD sets for the Graduate History Review course.

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.

Piano Skills

Whether you are a vocalist, instrumentalist, or composer, basic piano skills will be fundamental to your success as a musician. For that reason, Longy expects all Master of Music and Undergraduate Diploma students to demonstrate a basic level of proficiency on the piano. The Piano Skills proficiency exam is divided into four sections. Any of the four parts may be passed separately and do not need to be retaken once passed. **Students must attempt all sections yet to be passed every time the test is administered until all sections are passed.**

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Students need to be able to demonstrate the following piano skills in order to pass the examination:

Section I

- Prepare eight **scales** chosen by the student representing the four fingering groups (2 white-key major, 2 white-key minor [harmonic and melodic], 2 black-key major, 2 black-key minor [harmonic and melodic]) and played **hands together**, legato, with correct standard fingering, two octaves, at a moderate tempo (approximately one note per second). (For example, C major, E minor, B-flat major, and F-sharp minor.) From this group of 8 scales, the panel will select 4 to be played at the exam.
- Consult James Bastien: *Scales, Chords & Arpeggios* (Neil A. Kjos Music Company), *The Brown Scale Book* (The Frederick Harris Music Company), or *The Complete Book of Scales, Chords, Arpeggios & Cadences* (Alfred Music Publishing) for standard fingerings.
- All major and minor **arpeggios** played hands together, legato, with correct fingering, at a moderate tempo (approximately one note per second), three octaves.

Section II

- Two solo classical works from contrasting time periods, at the intermediate level or higher (one performed from memory), such as:
 - Bach: a selection from the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*
 - Schumann: a selection from *Album for the Young*, Op. 68
 - Bartók: a selection from *Mikrokosmos*, Book II or higher
 - Bartók: a selection from *For Children*
 - Kabalevsky: a selection from *30 Children's Pieces*, Op. 27
 - Prokofiev: a selection from *Music for Children*, Op. 65

Section III

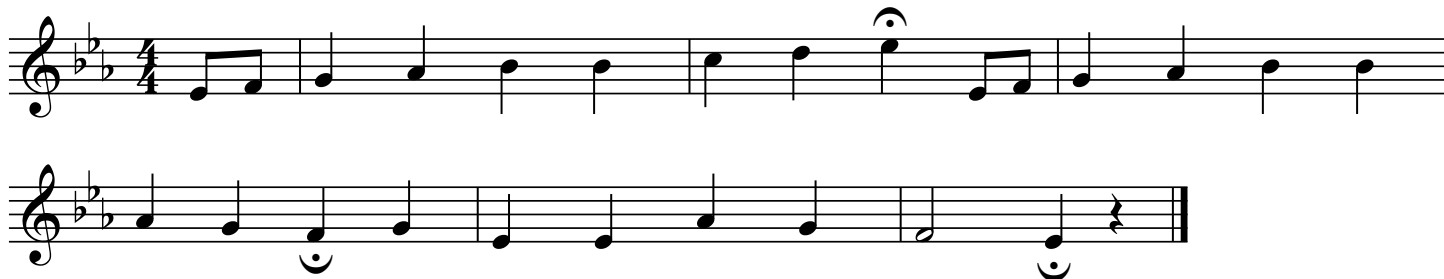
- Sightreading at early intermediate level (for example, Leopold Mozart: Minuet in F).

Section IV

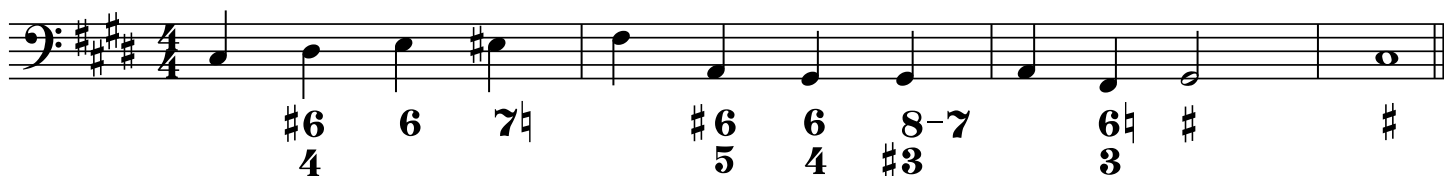
- Accompanying a short piece for your major instrument. You are expected to identify your soloist, prepare and rehearse with him/her, and bring him/her to your exam. If there is no other performer of your major instrument, then please select a soloist from the same instrumental family. Composition majors may accompany any instrument or voice. Singers may not accompany themselves: the goal of accompaniment is to develop the ability to play well with another person. MAM students may play a jazz standard, comping in jazz style for two choruses. Early Music students may play a continuo part with figured bass notation, if they so wish.

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.



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).



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.

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

- 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 a grand staff with six measures. Each measure contains a triad or seventh chord. The chords are: 1. F major triad (F4, A4, C5); 2. C major triad (C4, E4, G4); 3. Bb major triad (Bb3, D4, F4); 4. D# minor triad (D#3, F#3, A3); 5. Eb major triad (Eb3, G3, Bb3); 6. Gb major triad (Gb3, Bb3, D4).

- 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 and consists of seven measures. The chords are: 1. F major (F4, A4, C5); 2. C major (C4, E4, G4); 3. F major (F4, A4, C5); 4. C major (C4, E4, G4); 5. F major (F4, A4, C5); 6. C major (C4, E4, G4); 7. F major (F4, A4, C5).

- 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 and consists of two measures. The first measure contains a half note (F4), followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), and a quarter note (C5). The second measure contains a quarter note (D5), a quarter note (E5), and a half note (F5).