

The Graduate Entrance Examination in Music History
School of Music
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

STUDY GUIDE for SPRING 2018

The **Graduate Entrance Exam in Music History** is required of all entering graduate students, with the exception of those enrolled for degrees in Music Education or Musicology.

Tests will be held on **Thursday January 11th, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm**. This is the week before the spring semester's classes begins.

The exam covers music from the Western classical tradition in two historical periods: music before 1750; and music from 1750 to the present day. Students who do not pass either part of the exam will be required to remediate their knowledge and understanding by taking the relevant review class MUS 501A (Graduate Music History Review I; fall 2018) or MUS 501B (Graduate Music History Review II; spring 2018) and passing it with a Grade of B- or higher.

Please note: students who do not pass all of the entrance exam must successfully complete the MUS 501 review class(es) **before** progressing to graduate-level courses in Musicology. **This means that not passing the entrance exam may significantly slow down your progression through your graduate degree.**

Students who did not pass the exams on the first occasion may retake them. The exams may be taken **twice only**, however.

Format of Exam

The history exam is in two parts:

In **Part One** (Music before 1750) you will be asked to respond to 40 multiple-choice questions and write an essay response to a discursive question about music (there will be a selection of questions to choose from). Some questions may require an ability to comment meaningfully on score extracts. The questions and essays are weighted equally.

In **Part Two** (Music from 1750 to the present day) you will also be asked to respond to 40 multiple-choice questions and write an essay response to a discursive question about music (there will be a selection of questions to choose from). Some questions may require an ability to comment meaningfully on score extracts. The questions and essays are weighted equally.

Preparation Tips

Candidates may prepare themselves for the exam in various ways; we recommend studying one or more of the standard histories of music (particularly Mark Evan Bonds' *A History of Music in Western Culture*, 3rd edition), along with representative scores and recordings, particularly of the prescribed works listed below. Some sample questions are given at the end of this document.

List of Prescribed Works

Please note: all works are included in the text, score anthology, and recordings for Mark Evan Bonds, *A History of Music in Western Culture* (3rd edition). The entrance exam will include at least three pieces from each list, within both the multiple choice and essay portions.

Part 1: before 1750:

1. Léonin (?): Organum, Haec dies
2. Guillaume de Machaut: La Messe de Nostre Dame, Kyrie
3. John Dunstable: Quam pulchra es
4. Guillaume Du Fay: Nuper rosarum flores
5. Josquin des Prez: Ave Maria...virgo serena
6. Jacob Arcadelt: Il bianco e dolce cigno
7. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Missa Papae Marcelli, Credo
8. Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo, Act II, "Tu se' morta"
9. Girolamo Frescobaldi: Toccata IX from Il Secondo Libro de Toccate
10. J.S. Bach: *Jesu, der du meine Seele*, I

Part 2: after 1750:

1. Mozart: Piano Concerto in E-flat Major, K. 271, first movement
2. Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, first movement
3. Schubert: "Erlkönig"
4. Schumann: *Carnaval*, Op. 9
5. Wagner: *Tristan und Isolde*
6. Stravinsky: *Le sacre du printemps*
7. Ives: "The Things Our Fathers Loved"
8. Bartók: *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*
9. Cage: 4'33"
10. Messiaen: *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, first movement

Sample Questions

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions for Part 1 (before 1750)

1. Among other accomplishments, J.S. Bach is known for three cycles of this type of genre that he wrote while employed at Leipzig.
 - a. Operas
 - b. Song Cycles
 - c. Passions
 - d. Cantatas
2. Which of the following composers championed the *seconda prattica*?
 - a. Josquin
 - b. Palestrina
 - c. Monteverdi
 - d. Machaut
3. A *da capo* aria can be represented as follows:
 - a. A A B B
 - b. A B A
 - c. A B A C A D A
 - d. A B B A' B'

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions for Part 2 (after 1750)

1. A rondo can be represented as follows:
 - a. A A B B
 - b. A B A
 - c. A B A C A D A
 - d. A B B A' B'
2. John Cage maintained a lifelong collaboration with which dancer?
 - a. Martha Graham
 - b. Twyla Tharp
 - c. Sergei Diaghilev
 - d. None of the above
3. Who is the composer of *Poème électronique* (1958)?
 - a. Webern
 - b. Varèse
 - c. Ives
 - d. None of the above

Sample Essay Questions

Please choose and answer ONE essay question from each part. Essays should be approximately five paragraphs in length.

Within your answer, please include references to the following AS RELEVANT TO THE QUESTION, as well as any other information you consider appropriate:

- *historical context (musical, cultural, intellectual, etc.)*
- *specific compositions and composers, as well as schools of composition*
- *significant patrons (institutional and individual)*
- *musical genres, forms, and styles*
- *specific instrumentation*
- *type of texts*
- *influence from other artistic spheres (visual arts, architecture)*

Part 1: before 1750: (Choose one question only)

A. Summarize the characteristics of English music during the first half of the fifteenth century, and discuss the historical and cultural significance of the “contenance angloise” during this period.

B. Discuss the attached score excerpt.* To the best of your ability, identify the approximate period, possible composer(s), form, genre, style, instrumentation, and possible context(s).

C. Outline the development of opera at the beginning of the seventeenth century (until approximately 1610). What were the goals of, and influences on, the first operas? Who were some of the major figures, and what were some of the first works? Where did opera originate?

Part 2: after 1750: (Choose one question only)

D. Write an essay on Bartók’s *Music for String, Percussion and Celesta*, drawing attention to notable aspects of its style and to the historical context of its composition.

E. Describe the conflict between advocates of “absolute” music versus “programmatic” music during the later nineteenth century.

F. Provide a general overview of one of the following composers, including a consideration of the significance of her/his work during his/his lifetime as well as her/his legacy as relevant.

- Giuseppe Verdi
- Arnold Schoenberg
- Robert Schumann
- Libby Larsen

**Note: specific score extracts are not provided in these samples, which are intended simply to give you an indication of the types of question you can expect.*