

SAMPLE ANSWERS TO THE THEORY PORTION OF THE PRACTICE EXAM

PIECE A: Holst, First Suite in E-flat, movement II – 65 points total (out of 100)

1. (5pt value). **Correct answer = C minor (4pts)**

Incorrect answer = Eb Major (0 pts)

C is the main melodic pitch throughout the melody, and the first chord stated is a clear C minor chord)

2. a. (4pt value). **Correct answer = C Db Eb F G Ab Bb C (4pts)**

Partly correct = any ordering from Bb-Bb or Eb-Eb (2pts)

b. (4 pt value) **Correct answer = C Phrygian Mode (4pts)**

Partially correct = a modal scale (2 pts)

Note: it is possible that a different correct answer could result depending on the answer given in part a, above.

If the students listed Eb-F-G-Ab-Bb-C-Db-Eb, for example, then **Eb Mixolydian** would be acceptable here.

3. (12 pt value). **Each fully correct entry in the chart is worth 3 points**

	<u>Section 1</u>	<u>Section 2</u>	<u>Section 3</u>
mm.	1—66	67—99	99—end 99—122 (also gets full credit)
Key:	C minor/aolean	F Dorian (3 pts) F minor (1.5 pts)	F Dorian -----> C Minor or major

4. (20 pt value).

Full credit for this answer will be given by going aspect by aspect (or domain by domain) through the music, naming the specific differences between the A and B sections. In essay form, the answer should address **at least four of the following categories (5 pts each)**.

Key: The piece is centered around F (dorian) in the middle section, where it was centered around C (minor/aolian) in the first section.

Texture/Instrumentation: Comparing the start of B to the start of A, the texture is notably thinner. Instead of pulsing wind chords as heard in mm. 1-25, the first theme of B is a solo clarinet with a few woodwind chords supporting it. There are a lot of rests in the accompaniment, which create gaps in the sonic fabric (see m. 67, 69, 80).

Range/Tessitura: The B section feels lower, overall in pitch, than A does. This is because the accompaniment voices throughout B occur *below* the melody. The accompanimental voices in the A section occur *above* the melody. This generalization holds true for most of the middle section, until m. 83, where the new countermelody goes into the C5 register.

Articulation: The B section is quite legato, compared to the overall staccato sound of the A section.

Rhythm: The B section material consists of slower durations, mostly quarter notes and eighth notes in the moving lines. Some longer half notes and whole notes support this sound in the bass voices. The A section, in contrast, has much more active rhythms: there a pulsing eighths at the beginning, and much snappier dotted eighth – to – sixteenth patterns such as in mm. 4-5. Later there are full sets of sixteenth notes in mm. 29-30. All of this makes B sound slower than A. . . *even* though the marked tempo does not change!

Mood/Coloring: The total impact of all of the above domains/aspects means that the middle section sounds much more relaxed and calm. (This is in sharp contrast to the A section's more sharp, driven, and energetic style). Other adjectives that come to mind for the B area are “dreamy” and “fantasia-like”. Last, the Dorian scale used throughout B – which is like F minor with a raised sixth scale degree, D natural – imparts a strong British ballade/folk song feeling.

5. (5 pt value)

Correct answer: Ternary Form (5 pts)

Incorrect answer: Rounded binary (0 pts) / Sonata / Rondo

6. (4 pt value) **Correct answer = Coda (4 points).**

7. (12 pt value) A fully correct answer should note the following three issues (**4 pts each**)

- the shift to major mode
- the unique treatment of the themes (ideas from A and B appear together in combination)
- the effect on the listener

The following student-written attempt would receive full credit for this question:

Answer: In the section after rehearsal F in Holst's First Suite second movement, the thematic material that was stated at rehearsal C by the Bb clarinet in C minor is now stated by the tenor, and baritone saxophones and the low brass except now it is in C major. This coda section also restates the material that Holst used at A in the upper woodwinds. The trumpet also plays the main theme of the piece only now it is in also in major instead of minor and it juxtaposes the material played by the upper woodwinds when they join to play the repeated quarter note motive that was stated earlier in the movement. This is interesting for the listener because up to this point in the music, each theme was stated by itself in the parallel minor key and now all the thematic material is layered on top of each other and juxtaposed against each other to create a cacophony of sound that is in the parallel major key. The last thing that is interesting for the listener is that the thematic material is played by different instruments in different ranges, so the element of timbre and tessitura play a role in making this final coda section more interesting for the audience member.

PIECE B: John Coltrane, “Giant Steps” – 35 points total (out of 100)

1. Give an example of 2-3 motives used in the piece. For each, describe the pitch and rhythmic content using technical terminology wherever possible.

Full credit (6 points): Students may note the two melodic motives as the arpeggiated major/major seventh (mm. 1-2, mm. 5-6) and the descending whole step/ascending fourth motive (mm. 8, 10, 12, 14). Students with a set-theory capacity could describe these using that technology: for instance, the second motive is an [025] set, replicated at various transpositional levels. The rhythmic disposition of each motive should be described (half/half/half/dotted-quarter/whole-tied-to-an-early-syncopated-eighth & half/dotted-quarter/whole-tied-to-an-early-syncopated-eighth) to show that the latter is a subset of the former.

Students with a solid set-theory background could even go so far as to note the beat class set of the first motive ({0, 4, 8, 12, 15} in three measures of eighth notes, i.e., mod-24), with the latter is the subset {0, 4, 7}, now in a mod-16 universe, and T-8 of the initial motive’s last three onsets.

Harmonically, chord progressions are used almost motivically, as the harmonic succession of measures 1-3 is replicated in mm. 5-7, but down a major third. The structure of that succession could be described as three major triads separated by major third, with the last two receiving their own applied dominant. ii7-V7-I also repeats at various pitch levels in succession in the phrase’s continuation.

(Note that there are many ways one could describe these motives, and that a student’s answer does not need to exactly align with the description given here.)

Partial credit (3 points): One motive is recognized, or motives are only partially, imprecisely, or incorrectly described (e.g., “the first motive is made of four descending notes” with no further explanation.)

2. Comment on the phrase structure of the piece. List the places where cadences appear. What kind are they?

Full credit (6 points): The successful analysis would note that the first melodic/harmonic motive lasts four measures, and ends with a half cadence (m. 4). The melody then repeats, truncated, in the following three measures, and that the final two-measure motivic idea of this initial motive is then altered and sequenced up major third for the remainder of the chart, finally ending on a half-cadence in the original key (m. 16). (Students with a post-tonal background could describe this as a T4 relationship.) Ideally, the student would connect this organization to the “sentence” phrase type. They could additionally note there are “PACs” within the phrase’s continuation, but they are not true phrase-ending cadences.

Partial credit (3 points): Cadences are identified, but the way the work together to organize the chart into a sentence is not recognized. If a student described the charts as being in an antecedent/consequent organization or as a “period,” partial credit would be given. Note: there would be no penalty for not remembering the term “sentence”: if a student describes the form and identifies it as a standard phrase type, full credit will be given!

3. What key areas are suggested? For each key mentioned, be sure to list specific measure numbers.

Full credit (3 points): A successful answer should notice that at local and global levels, the keys B, G, and E-flat are tonicized. These keys receive local tonicizations within the sentence’s basic ideas (m. 1, 2, 5, 6), and are the brief tonics of the phrase’s sequenced continuation (mm. 9, 11, 13, 15). Globally, the chart begins apparently on B major (m. 1), half-cadences on G (m. 4), and ends on large-scale half-cadence on B (m. 16).

Partial credit (1 point): If the student simply noted the entire piece to be in B major, partial credit would be given, as this requires identifying the cadences. No credit would be given for F# (interpreting the final chord as tonic) or C (interpreting the no-accidental key signature as indicating the global tonic).

4. How are the keys suggested in this piece related to one another?

Full Credit (4 points): The student should notice that the chart is constructed around major-third related key areas, or the notes of a B-Eb-G augmented triad. Students with a post-tonal background might describe the keys as expressing a major-third cycle ($C4^3$), and that this type of construction returns to its initial point after three rotations of the cycle.

Partial Credit (2 points): If the student identifies 2 of the keys, or does not make the connection that all keys are a major third apart, partial credit is given.

5. While many common-practice (and traditional jazz) tunes move to keys separated by fifth or by relative major/minor relationships, this tune does something else. Describe in detail the processes or relationships the piece uses.

Full credit (4 points): The successful answer will note that the major-third relationships described in answer #4 seems to take the place of “traditional” harmonic organization in this piece. Other convincing connections between traditional rhetoric and what occurs in this music are possible, if explained clearly.

No credit will be given to answers that do not identify something novel in this music that replaces an older musical norm.

6. Having considered the phrase and harmonic structure, please type up a schematic (visual) formal analysis of the melody and chord changes for this tune. In what ways does the form reflect standard jazz models from 1900-1960? In what ways is it unconventional?

Full credit (5 points) will be given to answers that sketch out the design similar to the following:

<i>basic idea</i>	<i>basic idea rep.</i>	<i>Continuation</i>	<i>Cadence</i>
<i>mm. 1-4</i>	<i>5-7</i>	<i>8-15 (8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15)</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>B→HC in G</i>	<i>G→B</i>	<i>Eb→Eb Eb G B Eb</i>	<i>HC in B</i>

The formal layout is quite conventional, but the third-based harmonic relationships are unconventional. Students might also note the conventionality of cadences, voice leading, etc. Again, other convincing connections between normative phrase types and how this piece is constructed are possible for full credit, if explained clearly.

Partial credit (2 points) will be given to fleshed-out schematics that follow some other structure, or correct schematics that do not contain sufficient detail.

7. While being harmonically adventurous, this chart also is eminently tuneful, singable, and catchy. It also imports many more traditional musical elements to balance its harmonic experiments. In 2-3 paragraphs, discuss what aspects of this music make it accessible, tuneful, and participate in traditional jazz stylistic musical rhetoric.

For full credit (7 points) in this response, the student might note the frequent use of the ii7-V7-I cadence, and that — even though the resulting modulations might be unusual — most chord successions make sense using diatonic, functional harmony. For instance, the second chord (D7) is probably first heard as

a V7 of bVI in the key of B. The harmonic succession of mm. 3-5 (Eb-A-7, D7, G) could be heard as bVI, ii, V7, I in the key of G. Melodically, the student might note how repetitive the primary motives tend to be, and that the melody either outlines traditional chord structures (major/major seventh chords, for instance), leaps within a chord (the fourths of mm. 8, 10, 12, and 14) or proceeds stepwise.

Partial credit (3-4 points) may be given for less precise descriptions (e.g., “the melody is easy to sing” or “the chords are recognizable”).

No credit will be given for superficial observations (e.g., “the melody can be played on traditional instruments.”)