

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND DANCE**

**I. Study Guide for the General Master's Examination (All Master's Degrees) for
students entering the program fall 2021 or later**

General Master's Exams test the candidate on their ability to draw upon, bring together, and articulate facts and concepts related to historical, theoretical, and analytical musical knowledge. The examinations comprise two parts:

1. A three-hour written exam covering historical, theoretical, and analytical knowledge.
2. A twenty-minute oral exam in front of a panel of three faculty members, preferably in the student's area of concentration. The oral exam will test area specific knowledge.

The written exam will be offered at least once per semester; students can choose which semester they would like to take it after they have successfully completed 15 graduate-level credits and passed the relevant theory diagnostic exam (general or jazz). Students should take the exam during the fall semester of their second year. The oral exam should be taken during the same semester as the written exam. The written and oral portions of the exams are graded on a pass/fail basis. If a student fails one section of the exam, that section may be taken again up to two more times, for a limit of no more than three total attempts.

II. Music History and Literature Portion of the Exam

A. Format

The Exam in Music History and Literature will cover repertoire from the Renaissance to the present. The exam will consist of two parts: score identification (40 points) and broader historical essay questions (60 points). Students must earn at least 70 points total between both sections to pass the exam.

Score identification (40 points total): Students will be asked to select two score excerpts (20 points each) from among several choices. They will be asked to identify the stylistic era, composer, and genre. The excerpts will be taken from the list of pieces provided in section V of this document (see below). Students will also be asked to justify their answers in one paragraph. If the piece is not identified correctly, they can still receive full credit for their justification if it represents correct information (for example, if the student identifies a Haydn string quartet as a Beethoven string quartet, but correctly points out details about the time period, form, etc. in justifying their answer, they will still receive credit for the justification).

Broad essay questions (60 points): Additionally, students will be asked to write two essays (30 points each) based on broader questions, usually requiring students to draw connections between historical periods. Students will be able to select from among several essay prompts. Students will be expected to draw upon their knowledge of the repertoire from the repertoire list. They can also draw upon additional knowledge of repertoire for their instrument/voice. Essays will be graded based on accuracy, detail, and breadth of knowledge; they will not be graded rigorously in terms of grammar or writing style.

B. Suggested resources for study

1. Oxford Music Online ([UMass Amherst link](#))
2. *Norton Anthology of Music*, 3 vols.
3. Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, 6 vols. ([UMass Amherst link](#))

C. Sample essay questions

1. Describe the development of the symphony after Beethoven.
2. Pick one genre from the following list and discuss its history: mass, sonata, string quartet, concerto, suite, or lied.
3. Choose two major twentieth-century compositional trends. Compare and contrast them, drawing upon specific pieces from the repertoire list.
4. Compare and contrast nineteenth-century opera styles in Germany and Italy.
5. Describe the development and evolution of serious Italian opera.
6. Compare and contrast some of the different compositional approaches to minimalism and postminimalism.
7. Compare and contrast Expressionism and Impressionism.
8. Discuss how Nationalism affected musical style and reception in the nineteenth century.
9. Discuss a major debate about music from any historical period and explain some of the ways that debate affected musical style(s).
10. Discuss some of the ways the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation impacted religious music of the sixteenth century.
11. Discuss how opera originated, including where, when, musical style, social context, and significant works.
12. Discuss the development of the motet in the Renaissance.
13. Choose two different historical periods and discuss prevailing ideas about the relationship between words and music in each era.
14. Choose a composer who was widely felt (during their own time) to have made a huge impact on the way music was composed or conceived and discuss that impact, referring to specific details of musical style in your answer.
15. Choose a historical era and discuss the relationship between music and political power.
16. Discuss repetition, variation, and contrast as elements of larger musical form in one of the following periods: c. 1575–1700, c. 1720–1830, or c. 1890–1945.
17. Compare and contrast European and American music at different points in the twentieth century.

18. Discuss instrumental music between c. 1475 and 1650, including categories, genres, and aesthetic qualities.
19. Discuss the ways composers have used borrowed musical material as the basis for their own compositions. What are the effects of these borrowings? In what ways are the borrowed materials used?
20. Discuss song cycles from Beethoven to Schoenberg.

D. Important additional genres, forms, trends, and styles

Dates and periods	Genres and forms	Important trends and styles
1430–1600 Renaissance	Mass, motet, madrigal, chanson, canon	Origins of instrumental music, control of dissonance, use of rhythm, word painting, academies, modality, music and the Reformation
1600–1750 Baroque	Opera seria, cantata, fugue, concerto, oratorio, passion, suite, trio sonata	Basso continuo, virtuosity, ostinato, counterpoint, doctrine of the affects, emergence of tonality, conceptions of ancient Greece
1750–1800 Classical	Comic opera, symphony, sonata, string quartet, classical concerto, variation	Periodic phrase structures, homophonic textures, tonality, sonata form, simplicity, naturalness of expression, music as drama
1800–1900 Romantic 19th century	Sonata, character piece, chamber music, symphony, tone poem, music drama, tragic opera, Lied, mélodie	New German School, chromatic harmony, obscuring formal clarity, third relationships, Gesamtkunstwerk, historicism, nationalism, virtuosity, absolute music, program music
1900–1950 Early 20th century	Expressionism, surrealism, impressionism, neoclassicism, futurism, serialism, blues, swing, New Orleans jazz, textural music	Experimentation, microtones, electronic instruments, new acoustic instruments, rise of popular music and jazz, realism, pluralism, rhythmic complexity, emphasis on color and timbre, noise music, musique concrète
1950–present Late 20th and early 21st century	Bebop, third stream, cool jazz, rock & roll, country, rhythm & blues, progressive rock, globalism, minimalism, postmodernism, new simplicity, total serialism, new complexity, chance/aleatoric music, crossover	Multimedia, blending of genres and styles, repetition, graphic notation, music and technology

III. Music Theory Portion of the Exam

A. Format

The Exam in Music Theory covers repertoire from the Baroque era to the present day. The exam consists of two parts: a series of focused questions applying music-theoretical concepts to specific pieces on the repertoire list and the analysis of an unfamiliar score excerpt given at the exam. Each section is graded pass/fail; students are required to pass both sections to pass the exam.

Analysis of familiar score excerpts from the repertoire list: Focused questions on this part of the exam might ask students to identify, for example, a specific chord used in Mozart's Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488, first movement; a contrapuntal technique used in J. S. Bach's Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543; a rhythmic technique used in Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*; a motivic idea used in Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, Op. 21, Nos. 8 ("Nacht") using pc set theory; or a scale used in Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, Act I, Conclusion, "Batter My Heart." A short score excerpt will be provided for each question.

Analysis of an unfamiliar score: For the analysis on this part of the exam, students will be asked to analyze an unfamiliar score in more general terms. For example, students might be asked to analyze the overall form of an eighteenth-century tonal work; the harmony and overall tonal trajectory of a short nineteenth-century lied; serial techniques used in a short twentieth-century work; or rhythmic techniques used in a short twenty-first century work.

B. Theoretical Knowledge and Analytical Skills

1. For tonal compositions

- a. Cadence identification (perfect and imperfect authentic, half, deceptive, plagal)
- b. Theme types (sentence, period, small ternary, etc.)
- c. Roman-numeral analysis
- d. Identification of non-chord tones (all types)
- e. Applied chords (secondary dominants and applied leading-tone chords)
- f. Chords involving modal mixture
- g. Modulation techniques (pivot-chord modulation, enharmonic reinterpretation, direct modulation, etc.)
- h. Identification of harmonic sequences
- i. Extended chromaticism (augmented sixth chords, Neapolitan chord, common-tone diminished seventh chords, tritone substitution, etc.)

- j. Contrapuntal techniques, especially those associated with fugue;
- k. Rhythm and meter: Aspects of hypermeter, syncopation, hemiola, etc.

2. For post-tonal compositions

- a. Fluency with mod-12 numerical note names (C = 0)
- b. Pitch-class set theory, including prime forms for all twelve trichords
- c. Pitch-class set transposition and inversion
- d. Diatonic modes
- e. Other scale-types, including octatonic, whole tone, hexatonic, and acoustic
- f. Serial techniques, including constructing a matrix

3. For all works (tonal, post-tonal, or otherwise): Explain what form a piece is in based on its thematic and harmonic contents by comparing it to the following models:

- a. Binary form (distinguish between common types)
- b. Ternary form
- c. Rondo form
- d. Sonata form
- e. Concerto form
- f. Theme and variations
- g. Arch form
- h. For all forms, special attention should be given to non-standard harmonic or thematic events, transitional passages, codas, etc.

4. Suggested resources for study

***On Reserve at the Learning Commons Desk, Lower Level, DuBois Library
(Request with a Call number)***

- a. William Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford University Press, 1998).
- b. Nicholas Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (Oxford University Press, 1987).
- c. Steven Laitz and Christopher Bartlette, *Graduate Review of Tonal Theory: A Recasting of Common-Practice Harmony, Form, and Counterpoint* (Oxford University Press, 2010).
- d. Miguel Roig-Francolí, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* (McGraw-Hill, 2008).
- e. Joseph Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 4th ed. (W. W. Norton, 2016).

IV. Proposed Repertoire List for the Music History and Literature and Music Theory Portions of the Exam

The exams in Music History and Literature and Music Theory will draw upon the repertoire listed below. These pieces are all found in the most recent edition of the *Norton Anthology of Western Music* (***On Reserve at the Learning Commons Desk, Lower Level, DuBois***

Library: MT91 .N67 2014 [V. 1-3]). Students may also draw upon their knowledge of pieces for their own instrument/voice to answer questions on the music history exam.

* Indicates a score is hosted on OneDrive:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/g1i1voaqzlytr81/AADZkdy3d04QDDoWtWgOic9Xa?dl=0>

A. Renaissance

1. Guillaume Du Fay, *Se la face ay pale*, Ballade and Gloria from the cantus-firmus mass
2. Josquin Desprez, *Ave Maria . . . virgo serena*
3. Cipriano de Rore, *Da le belle contrade d'oriente*
4. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Pope Marcellus Mass*, Credo and Agnus Dei I
5. Claudio Monteverdi, *Cruda Amarilli*
6. Claudio Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo*, Act II

B. Baroque

1. Arcangelo Corelli, Trio Sonata in D Major, Op. 3, No. 2, all movements
2. Antonio Vivaldi, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A Minor, Op. 3, No. 6, all movements
3. François Couperin, *Vingt-cinquième ordre*, "La visionnaire" and "La muse victorieuse"
4. Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543
5. Johann Sebastian Bach, *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 62, all movements
6. George Frideric Handel, *Giulio Cesare*, Act II, Scenes 1–2

C. Classical

1. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, *La serva padrona*, "Ah, quanto mi sta male" and "Son imbrogliato io"
2. Joseph Haydn, String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 33, No. 2, all movements
3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488, first movement
4. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551, last movement
5. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, Act I, Scenes 1–2
6. *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Serenade No. 10 in B-flat, K. 361/370 "Gran partita" (1781), third movement
7. Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 13, first movement
8. Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55, first movement
9. Ludwig van Beethoven, String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 131, first and second movements

D. Romantic

1. Franz Schubert, "Gretchen am Spinnrade," D. 118
2. Robert Schuman, *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, No. 1 ("Im wunderschönen Monat Mai")
3. Fryderyk Chopin, Mazurka in B-flat Major, Op. 7, No. 1
4. Franz Liszt, *Trois études de concert*, No. 3 ("Un sospiro")
5. Clara Schumann, Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 17, third movement
6. Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, fifth movement
7. Felix Mendelssohn, Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, first movement

8. Gioachino Rossini, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Act I, No. 7 (“Una voce poco fa”)
9. Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Prelude and Conclusion of Act I
10. Giuseppe Verdi, *La traviata*, Act III, Scena and Duet
11. Johannes Brahms, Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34, first movement
12. Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 74, third movement
13. *Antonín Leopold Dvořák, Serenade in D Minor, Op. 44, first movement
14. Amy Beach, Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32, second movement

E. The twentieth century and after

1. Scott Joplin, *Maple Leaf Rag*
2. Claude Debussy, *Nocturnes*, No. 1 (“Nuages”)
3. Gustav Holst, Suite No. 1 in E-flat for Military Band, Op. 28, second movement (“Intermezzo”)
4. Arnold Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, Op. 21, Nos. 8 (“Nacht”) and 13 (“Enthauptung”)
5. Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, Op. 7, Act III, Scenes 2–3
6. Anton Webern, Symphony, Op. 21, first movement
7. Igor Stravinsky, Octet for Wind Instruments, first movement
8. Béla Bartók, *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*, third movement
9. Charles Ives, *Piano Sonata No. 2, Concord, Mass., 1840–1860*, third movement (“The Alcotts”)
10. Heitor Villa-Lobos, *Bachianas brasileiras* No. 5, No. 1, Aria (Catilena)
11. Ruth Crawford Seeger, *String Quartet 1931*, fourth movement
12. William Grant Still, *Afro-American Symphony*, first movement
13. Miles Davis, “So What”
14. John Coltrane, “Giant Steps”
15. Olivier Messiaen, *Quatour pour la fin du temps*, first movement (“Liturgie de cristal”)
16. *Karel Husa, *Music for Prague*, Introduction and Fanfare
17. Pierre Boulez, *Le marteau sans maître*, sixth movement (“Bourreaux de solitude”)
18. John Cage, *Sonatas and Interludes*, Sonata V
19. Milton Babbitt, *Philomel*, Section I
20. Krzysztof Penderecki, *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*
21. Bright Sheng, *Seven Tunes Heard in China*, No. 1 (“Seasons”)
22. John Adams, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*
23. Alfred Schnittke, Concerto Grosso No. 1, second movement
24. Kaija Saariaho, *L’amour de loin*, Act IV, Scene III (“Tempête”)
25. Osvaldo Golijov, *La Pasión según San Marcos*, Nos. 24–26
26. John Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, Act I, Conclusion (“Batter My Heart”)
27. Jennifer Higdon, *Blue Cathedral*

VI. Proposed Graduate Jazz Composition and Arranging Exam and Study Guide

A. Jazz transcription score analysis study guide (Jazz Performance Masters Only)

The graduate jazz transcription analysis portion of the exam will focus on specific given examples, ranging from the 1920s to present day. The scores will be accompanied by recordings. It will test the ability to look at a score and speak about its components: stylistic contextualization, rhythmic, melodic and/or harmonic approach to jazz interpretation, improvisation and/or accompaniment, time frame of when it was performed, and the performer and/or band that recorded it, etc. Students should be prepared to contextualize their description of the scores historically, offering examples from the general jazz performance oeuvre.

B. Recommended bibliography (Jazz Performance Masters Only)

to be assigned by private instructor

C. Jazz score analysis study guide (Jazz Composition Masters Only)

The graduate jazz score analysis portion of the exam will focus on the composition, arranging, and scoring techniques used in large jazz ensemble writing from the 1920s to present day.

It will test the ability to look at a score and speak about its components: instrumentation, detail of rhythm section parts, voicing techniques, what is going on in the episode of the piece presented, possible style, time frame of when written, and the arranger and/or band that recorded it, etc. Students should be prepared to contextualize their description of the scores historically, offering examples from the general jazz orchestral oeuvre.

D. Recommended bibliography (Jazz Composition Masters Only)

1. Rayburn Wright's *Inside the Score*
2. Score study of the following major jazz composers (not limited to):
 - a. Duke Ellington
 - b. Sammy Nestico/Count Basie
 - c. Thad Jones
 - d. Bob Brookmeyer
 - e. Maria Schneider
 - f. Bob Mintzer
 - g. Toshiko Akiyoshi
 - h. Oliver Nelson

E. Graduate jazz theory study guide

Students should be able to answer questions regarding the following topics in jazz theory:

1. Functional harmony chord analysis of jazz repertoire
2. Chord-scale theory
3. Modes nomenclature and their extensions
4. Chord extensions and chord nomenclature
5. Polychords and their nomenclature
6. Coltrane changes and other reharmonization techniques

Suggested bibliography (not limited to):

1. Dr. Salles's *Harmony Handbook*
2. Rayburn Wright's *Inside the Score*
3. David Liebman's *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody*

F. Graduate jazz history study guide

The graduate jazz history exam will focus on jazz history from its roots through the modern era (twenty-first century). Students should be prepared to talk about the following topics, at least two of which will be chosen by the proctors at the exam:

1. Jazz history (early roots through the modern era) through the discussion of no more than four to five jazz musicians
2. Jazz performance practice changes throughout jazz history (early roots through the modern era) through the discussion of major figures on your instrument
3. The evolution of early jazz up until 1929
4. Jazz performance practice differences between the Swing and Bebop eras
5. Cool Jazz and its evolution
6. Discuss three examples of different fusions of jazz and other music prior to 1969
7. Jazz from the 1970s that is not fusion or jazz-rock oriented
8. Women in jazz

Students should be prepared to cite as much relevant information as possible to the topic, including key figures, terms, dates, recordings, years etc. Recommended readings include (but are not limited to):

1. Ted Gioia's *History of Jazz*
2. Mark Gridley's *Jazz Styles* (11th ed.)

G. Thesis and recital

Upon completing their jazz composition thesis and performing it on their recital, students will be asked to discuss orally their composition project from several perspectives, including (but not limited to):

1. Theme and its esthetic implications
2. Techniques used to realize it
3. Form
4. Instrumentation and scoring techniques