

Music Theory Qualifying Exam

Study Guide

This exam is used for two purposes: as part of

- (1) admission to the master's and doctoral primary graduate theory programs, and
- (2) application for a theory Graduate Teaching Fellowship.

It has three main components: aural skills, written skills, and keyboard skills. Below is a description of the activities you will be expected to do on each part of the exam.

AURAL SKILLS

Sightsinging

Sing an 8- to 10-measure melody at sight. The melody will feature some chromatic pitches (suggesting any or all of the following harmonies: secondary dominants, borrowed chords, Neapolitans, augmented sixths). It may also modulate to a closely related key.

For practice, consult Robert Ottman and Nancy Rogers, *Music for Sight Singing*.

Harmonic dictation

Notate the outer voices of a chorale containing approximately 16 chords. The chorale will feature several chromatic harmonies (including any or all of the following: secondary dominants, borrowed chords, Neapolitan chords, augmented-sixth chords). It may also modulate to a closely related key.

For practice, consult Gary Karpinski, *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing*.

WRITTEN SKILLS

Chorale completion

Part-write a chorale containing approximately 25–30 chords, with a soprano melody provided for one half and a figured bass line provided for the other half. The chorale will feature several chromatic harmonies (including any or all of the following: secondary dominants, borrowed chords, Neapolitans, augmented sixths, common-tone diminished sevenths).

For practice, consult any basic theory textbook (Clendinning and Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*; Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony*; Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, etc.).

Analysis

Supply Roman numerals to a passage of approximately 16 measures. The passage will feature several chromatic harmonies (including any or all of the following: secondary dominants,

borrowed chords, Neapolitans, augmented sixths). It may also modulate to a closely related key. Be prepared as well to discuss the phrase structure of the excerpt.

For practice, consult any basic theory textbook (Clendinning and Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*; Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony*; Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, etc.).

KEYBOARD SKILLS

Realizing a figured bass

Realize a figured bass line containing approximately 10–12 chords. The bass line will feature some chromatic harmonies (including any or all of the following: secondary dominants, borrowed chords, Neapolitans, augmented sixths).

For practice, consult Helen Keaney, *Figured Bass for Beginners: A Self-Paced Primer in Playing from Figured Bass*, R.O. Morris, *Figured Harmony at the Keyboard*, Parts I and II, or David Ledbetter, *Continuo Playing According to Handel: His Figured Bass Exercise*.

Harmonizing a melody

Harmonize an 8- to 10-measure melody.

For practice, try harmonizing melodies from Robert Ottman and Nancy Rogers, *Music for Sight Singing*.

Realizing a Roman-numeral string

Realize a Roman-numeral string containing approximately 8–10 chords. The string will feature some chromatic harmonies (including any or all of the following: secondary dominants, borrowed chords, Neapolitans, augmented sixths). It may also modulate to a closely related key.

For practice, try harmonizing Roman-numeral strings found in basic theory textbooks (Clendinning and Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*; Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony*; Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, etc.).