

**ITHACA COLLEGE  
GRADUATE PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS  
MUSIC THEORY AND SIGHTSINGING  
STUDY GUIDE**

The graduate music theory and sightsinging examinations are administered to each matriculating graduate student to evaluate knowledge and skills in writing, and in the analysis and aural perception of music. A basic level of proficiency, which is that of most undergraduate music programs in the United States, is necessary for the study of music at the graduate level.

### **Music Theory**

The music theory examination is divided into three parts: part writing, analysis of traditional harmony and form, and analysis of twentieth-century compositional techniques. A summary of the information covered in each part of the music theory examination is given below. Two different analysis questions and a writing problem are included.

Melody harmonization and figured/unfigured bass realization: writing in four-part choral style (SATB) or a keyboard realization of a figured or unfigured bass with an emphasis on correct chord spelling, voice leading, doubling, spacing, and Roman numeral analysis (including inversions).

Analysis of traditional harmony and form: detailed analysis of diatonic and chromatic chords, modulation, non-chord tones, contrapuntal techniques (real and tonal imitation, canon, stretto, etc.) and form identification (invention, fugue, binary, ternary, rondo, variation, and sonata-allegro).

Analysis of post-tonal compositional techniques: tonality, melody and harmony, rhythmic and metric treatment, secondary parameters (e.g. texture, register, dynamics, articulation, etc.) and form.

A minimum score of 70% on each part of the examination is required to establish proficiency. A student may retake any portion of the examination two times to remove the deficiency. See the **STUDY GUIDE FOR FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS** for information on courses that exempt students from parts of these exams..

### **Sightsinging**

Singing at sight several exercises and singing a prepared example with satisfactory melodic and rhythmic accuracy determines proficiency in sightsinging. The examination covers diatonic major and minor melodies with rhythmic features such as beat subdivision and syncopation. Treble and bass clefs will be used for the sight-reading portion of the examination. Any system of singing (e.g. solfege syllables, numbers, or neutral syllables) may be used.

Several melodies comparable to those that will be used on the sightsinging examination are provided. In addition, you will be asked to speak, in rhythm, the letter names of the notes of an example written in the alto clef. The attached prepared singing example, a string quartet by Haydn, which includes alto clef, will require the student to move between parts at the beginning of new phrases as requested by the examiner.

A minimum passing score (equivalent to C-) is required to establish proficiency. A student may either retake the examination two times to remove the deficiency, or enroll in and receive a grade of B or better in the appropriate undergraduate course (Sightsinging II, MUTH 13400). This course is offered only during the academic year and does not count toward any graduate degree program. Graduate students should study and practice the material independently or in groups, and they should seek the advice of the graduate chair and the theory faculty for appropriate study techniques and strategies.

### **Recommended Books**

Books recommended for preparation for the examinations are listed below, although most textbooks written for use by undergraduate students are suitable.

Henry, Earl. Music Theory. Vols. 1 and 2. Prentice-Hall.

Kostka, Stefan. Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music. Prentice-Hall

Kostka, Stefan, and Dorothy Payne. Tonal Harmony: With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music. McGraw-Hill.

Lester, Joel. Analytical Approaches to Twentieth-Century Music. Norton.

Ottman, Robert. Elementary Harmony and Advanced Harmony. Prentice-Hall.

Piston-DeVoto. Harmony. Norton.

Ottman, Robert. Music for Sightsinging. Prentice-Hall.

Stevenson-Porterfield. Rhythm and Pitch: An Integrated Approach to Sightsinging. Prentice-Hall.

**The key to successful completion of the examinations is thorough preparation.**

ITHACA COLLEGE  
School of Music

Sample Graduate Music Theory Proficiency Examination

**Part I. Melody harmonization and figured/unfigured bass realization.**

A. Melody harmonization: Choose one of the two eight-measure melodies. Using either SATB chorale-style texture for the first exercise, or a piano accompaniment for the second exercise, complete the harmonization that has been started. Your harmonization must include at least (a) one secondary dominant, (b) one diminished seventh, (c) one Neapolitan chord, and (d) one augmented sixth chord. Maintain an appropriate harmonic rhythm. Analyze your work using Roman numerals, including inversions.

1.

The musical score for exercise 1 is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of four measures each. The first system includes Roman numeral analysis below the bass staff: E: I vi° ii V° vi. The melody in the treble clef starts with a dotted quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef provides a harmonic foundation with chords corresponding to the Roman numerals: I (G2-B2-D3), vi° (F#3-A3-C4), ii (B2-D3-F#3), V° (G3-B3-D4), and vi (F#3-A3-C4). The second system continues the melody and provides a blank space for the student to complete the harmonization.



B. Figured/unfigured bass. A modulating bass line with figures for the first phrase is given. In SATB chorale-style, add the upper voices following the principles of common-practice harmony. No bass figures are given for the second phrase, but you should continue the SATB texture. Keep in mind correct chord spelling, voice leading and resolution, doubling and spacing. Give a Roman numeral analysis for the entire exercise, including the appropriate pivot chord. The harmony in measures 5-8 should include at least one secondary dominant, one diminished seventh, and one augmented sixth chord.

6/5 4/2 6 6/4 7 4/2 6 6/5 7/# 7/# 4/7

5

## Part II. Analysis of traditional harmony and form.

Using the score provided, answer the following questions that deal with the Schubert *Moment Musicaux*, op. 94, no. 6 (D. 780). You will hear a recording of the work played one time.

### A. Form

1. Using measure numbers and upper case letters, diagram the large-scale form of this piece (remember to take *D.C. al fine* into account).

Section:

Meas. No.:

2. Discuss the internal form (small-part form) of mm. 1-77 and identify it by name.

3. The texture of mm. 1-16 is typical of the entire composition. Describe this texture as specifically as you can.

4. Identify one rhythmic motive that unifies mm. 1-77 and list by measure number(s) at least three occurrences of this motive.

Motive:

Occurrences:

5. Examine the material in mm. 65 (beat 3)-77. Cite any similarities between the two phrases and compare their cadences.

6. Using lower case letters, diagram the phrase structure of mm.77-93 and 104-115. Discuss specifically how these sections are similar and how they are different.

Phrase structure:

Similarities:

Differences:

### B. Tonality

1. Measures 1-16 are in the key of \_\_\_\_\_.

Measures 16 (beat 3)-28 are in the key of \_\_\_\_\_.

The specific relationship between these two keys is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Measures 29-39 are in the key of \_\_\_\_\_.

What method of modulation does Schubert use to effect the key change in m. 29?

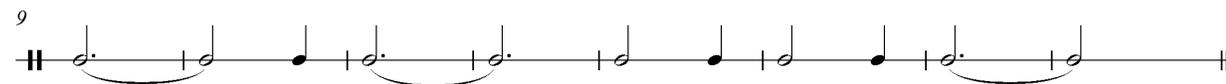
How is the key in this section (mm. 29-39) related to the opening key?

3. The key of the Trio is \_\_\_\_\_.

The method of modulation used to arrive at the key in m. 77 is \_\_\_\_\_.

### C. Harmony

1. The harmonic rhythm for mm. 1-16 is given. Provide a Roman numeral analysis; include all inversions.



2. The type of nonchord (nonharmonic) tone used in m. 11 is \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Identify the harmonic function (Roman numeral) of the chord in m. 17. \_\_\_\_\_.

4. The harmonic rhythm for mm.77 (beat 3)-85 is given. Provide a Roman numeral analysis of these measures, including inversions.



**D. Identification**

Cite by measure number, one occurrence of each of the following:

Measure number

1. sequence
2. chromatic passing tone
3. syncopated rhythm pattern
4. anticipation
5. neighbor tone

**Part III. Analysis of twentieth-century compositional techniques**

Using the score provided, answer the following questions that deal with the “Funeral Song” by Béla Bartók. You will hear a recording of the work played one time.

**A. Form**

Using inclusive measure numbers, diagram the formal organization (i.e. sections) of the piece.

Section:

Measure:

**B. Melody**

Discuss the melodic material in mm. 1-12 in terms of:

1. phrase structure
2. motivic structure
3. intervallic content and scale basis

**C. Harmony/Tonality**

1. What chord types are most prevalent in this piece?

2. What factors contribute to cadence in this piece? Identify two cadences in the piece by measure number and discuss two factors for each that contribute to cadential treatment.

Cadences:

Factors that contribute:

- 1)
- 2)
3. Cite a pitch that might be considered the tonic and discuss three reasons for your choice.  
Tonic \_\_\_\_\_.
- a)
- b)
- c)

**D. Treatment of material**

Compare the music in mm. 4-53 with that in mm. 1-12. How is this music related? Cite at least two specific differences and two similarities.

Similarities:

1)

2)

Differences:

1)

2)

# Moments Musicaux

Edited and fingered by  
G. BUONAMICI.

F. SCHUBERT. Op. 94.

Allegretto. (♩ = 60)

6.

Musical notation for measures 6-10. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is Allegretto (♩ = 60). The dynamics range from piano (p) to fortissimo (fp) and forte (f). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above the notes.

11

Musical notation for measures 11-21. The dynamics include piano (p) and pianissimo (pp). A double bar line is present at measure 17. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

22

Musical notation for measures 22-30. The dynamics include pianissimo (pp) and mezzo-forte (mf). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

31

Musical notation for measures 31-39. The key signature changes to two flats (B-flat, E-flat). The dynamics include piano (p), fortissimo (fp), and pianissimo (pp). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

40

Musical notation for measures 40-48. The dynamics include pianissimo (pp), crescendo (cresc.), piano (p), and forte (f). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

49

Musical notation for measures 49-56. The dynamics include piano (p) and pianissimo (pp). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

59

Musical score for measures 59-67. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The music features a mix of chords and melodic lines in both hands. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo).

68

Musical score for measures 68-77. The music continues with various textures and dynamics, including *p* (piano), *fp* (fortissimo piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). The piece concludes with a *Fine.* marking.

**Trio.** 78

Musical score for measures 78-86, the beginning of the Trio section. The time signature changes to 3/4. The music is characterized by a delicate texture with *pp* (pianissimo) dynamics.

87

Musical score for measures 87-96. The Trio continues with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking, indicating a gradual increase in volume.

97

Musical score for measures 97-105. The music features *pp* (pianissimo) dynamics and includes various melodic and harmonic elements.

106

Musical score for measures 106-114. The Trio concludes with a tempo change to *Allegretto D.C.* (Allegretto Da Capo).

## 43 FUNERAL SONG

[There in the deep valley]

*Lento*

*quasi recitando*

*p* *mp*

9

*poco agitato*

*p rubato* *mp*

18

27

*dim.* *molto cresc.* *f*

37

*poco a poco . . . più tranquillo*

*dim.* *p*

45

*molto tranquillo* *ritard.*

*pp* *p* *ppp*

*calando . . . ppp*

Graduate Sightsinging Examination

Andante

Mozart

1.  *p*

5.  *fp* *fp*

Detailed description: This exercise is in 3/4 time and G major. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system contains measures 1-4, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system contains measures 5-8, with a forte-piano (*fp*) dynamic. The melody features eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together, with some notes tied across measures.

Mozart

2. 

5. 

9. 

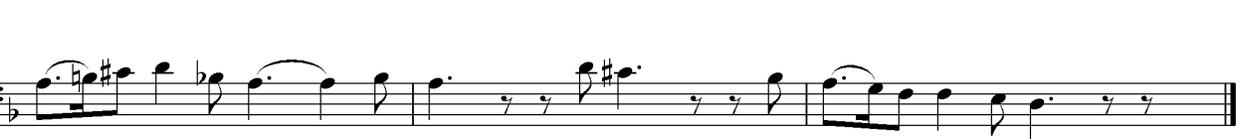
Detailed description: This exercise is in 6/8 time and G major. It consists of three systems of two staves each. The melody is primarily composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some beaming and ties. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Largo

Handel

3. 

3. 

5. 

Detailed description: This exercise is in 12/8 time and B-flat major. It consists of three systems of two staves each. The melody is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some beaming and ties. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).

## PREPARED SIGHTSINGING EXAM

You will be asked to sing any of the parts from the Haydn string quartet excerpt provided below. Be prepared to move to another part at any time. Use octave transposition where necessary to accommodate your voice range.

**III**

Menuetto  
Allegretto

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *pf*, *cresc.*, and *f*. Measure numbers 10 and 20 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems.

