

**University of Manitoba  
Desautels Faculty of Music**

**Graduate Diagnostic Exam in Music Theory  
(updated May 28, 2021)**

Students admitted to the Master of Music program in the Desautels Faculty of Music are expected to possess a certain breadth and depth of knowledge of music theory, in order to enter and succeed in graduate-level theory courses. In order to assess their knowledge, all incoming graduate students must write a diagnostic exam, involving theory and analysis of tonal and post-tonal music. The material on the exam corresponds to that covered in the Faculty's undergraduate theory courses. Students will need to write the diagnostic exam before registering for any courses.

The Fall 2021 diagnostic exam will be given on **Friday September 3, 2021**, from **9:00 am to 12:00 noon** (Central Standard Time). The exam will be **delivered remotely via email and Zoom**.

**REMOTE DELIVERY – procedures for the September 2021 diagnostic exam**

Shortly before the exam time, the exam document, sound recordings, and Zoom link will be sent to the email address that the University of Manitoba has in your file. Please complete the exam in one of these two ways:

- Print the exam pages, answer all exam questions on paper, and make good-quality, clear scans of the completed exam.
- Complete the exam electronically using a tablet and stylus, and save the electronic files.

During the exam, you can refer to course notes and textbooks that you may have. You may also use a keyboard or other instrument. However, you must write the exam entirely by yourself, without help from any other person. You will need to sign a statement to affirm that you acknowledge and will abide by these conditions.

You will have a total of 3 hours (9:00 am to 12:00 noon) in which to download and print the exam, complete all of the questions, create electronic files of the completed exam, and send it back to the email address provided.

While you will not be required to stay on Zoom for the duration of the exam, a theory faculty member will ask you to check in at the beginning and will remain available on that platform to answer questions you may have.

## **MATERIAL ON THE THEORY DIAGNOSTIC EXAM**

The exam contains four parts, as follows:

### **1. Harmonization, in four-voice chorale style, of a brief tonal melody**

A short chorale-style melody will be given in the soprano. You will write a harmonization of the melody, in four voices. In some bars, a bass line and/or figured bass symbols may be provided. For at least part of the melody, you will need to write your own bass line and harmonic progression. You will provide complete harmonic analysis, including figured bass for inversions, using any standard analytical notation.

You should expect to include the following in the harmonization:

- An effective harmonic progression typical of four-voice chorale style and displaying idiomatic voice leading
- Some use of non-harmonic tones/melodic elaborations
- Correct use of some chromatic chords, such as applied (secondary) dominants, diminished sevenths, Neapolitan, borrowed chords / modal mixture, augmented sixth chords

### **2. Analysis of an extended movement of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century music**

You will be given a complete extended movement from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century repertoire. You will be asked some questions about the piece, dealing with topics such as the following:

- Large-scale formal structure. This may include large forms such as sonata-allegro or rondo, as well as various types of binary, ternary, etc.
- Analysis of smaller sections: cadences, division into phrases, etc.
- Discussion of how different sections of the movement relate to each other
- Discussion of the formal function or purpose of a given section within the entire movement
- Analysis of key areas and modulations
- Some detailed harmonic analysis of shorter sections may be required

### **3. Analysis of chromatic harmony**

In this section, you will need to provide complete and detailed harmonic analysis of a passage of chromatic harmony, most likely from the 19<sup>th</sup> century repertoire. The types of chromatic chords to be expected are those listed above for Part 1.

In addition to providing harmonic analysis (using any standard notation), you may be asked to explain the function or voice leading of certain chords in the passage, using your own words.

#### 4. Analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> century music

In this section, you will be given a short complete piece (or section from a longer piece) of 20<sup>th</sup> century music, and then asked some analytical questions about the piece. Those questions will deal with the following:

- Pitch structure. Depending on the piece, you may want to refer to different pitch collections or scales, or to employ specific analytical techniques (such as pitch-class set theory or 12-tone theory). However, employing specific theories is not strictly necessary. What is important is that you are able to discuss aspects of melody and harmony in detail, in any way that seems useful and appropriate to you.
- Formal structure. You will be asked to describe the form of the piece, in any way that seems useful and appropriate. To help determine the form, you may be asked to discuss how different sections in the piece relate to each other, or contrast with each other.
- Other features of the music, including rhythm, texture, timbre (tone colour).

#### AFTER THE EXAM IS COMPLETE

Based on your work on each part of the exam, you may be required to complete the theory review module for that part; for example, a student might pass parts 1 and 4, but be required to complete theory review for parts 2 and 3. If you do sufficiently well on all four parts of the exam, you will not be required to complete any theory review. All theory review modules will normally be completed during the student's first term in the master's program. Theory review does not count for credit toward the Master of Music degree.

#### SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR STUDY

**Please prepare thoroughly for the diagnostic exam!** Careful and detailed preparation may ensure that you don't need to complete any theory review. To help you prepare for the exam, we recommend that you study from undergraduate theory textbooks, such as the following:

- Horton and Ritchey, *Harmony Through Melody*
- Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony*
- Clendinning and Marvin, *Theory and Analysis*
- Laitz, *The Complete Musician*
- Burstein and Straus, *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*
- Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*
- Roig-Francoli, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*

You can also study handouts and other material from your undergraduate theory courses. In addition, please see the **sample diagnostic exam** that is included after this page. While the exact subject matter, pieces for analysis, and types of questions will vary, this sample provides a good idea of what to expect on the diagnostic exam.



**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA  
DESAUTELS FACULTY OF MUSIC**

**GRADUATE DIAGNOSTIC EXAM in MUSIC THEORY, for all entering master's students**

**SAMPLE EXAM**

This sample provides an overview of the graduate theory diagnostic exam's format, plus some of the types of questions that may be asked. The exact subject matter, passages, and questions on the actual test will vary.

The purpose of the theory diagnostic exam is to assess the current extent of your knowledge of music theory and analysis. The results of this test will determine which areas of theory review will be needed (if any), before you can register for the graduate theory seminar. The exam contains four parts:

1. Melody harmonization
2. Analysis of common-practice tonal music
3. Analysis of chromatic harmony
4. Analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> century music

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This sample document is 10 pages, including this cover page and 9 pages of exam questions. In addition, links to recordings will be provided with the exam, so you can listen to the musical examples at your leisure. You are also welcome to play through analysis examples and/or compositions on your own instrument.

During the exam, you may consult materials from previous courses you have taken (including notes and textbooks), if needed. However, you will be expected to complete these questions *entirely on your own, without help from any person*. Before you begin the actual exam, you will be asked to take a moment to acknowledge this restriction by signing the statement below:

**Academic Integrity Contract**

I understand that cheating is a serious offence.

*"As members of the University Community, Students have an obligation to act with academic integrity. Any Student who engages in Academic Misconduct in relation to a University Matter will be subject to discipline."* (2.4 - Student Academic Misconduct Procedure).

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

You will have **3 hours (180 minutes)** to work on the exam. You should aim to complete each part to the best of your ability; however, if you are short on time, it is more important that you show us at least some work on each of the four parts, rather than completing one part thoroughly and leaving other parts blank. To help manage your time, we recommend that you first spend a maximum of 30 minutes on each part, and then move on to another part. You can then use the final 60 minutes to complete any parts of the exam that are not yet finished, and also to review and send your work.

We recommend that you print out a copy of the exam and then make good-quality scans or pictures of your handwritten work when you are finished. Prose responses may be typed or written out by hand. You can also complete the exam on a tablet using a stylus. Please write as neatly as possible.

A few days after the exam, you will receive an email from the faculty detailing the results of the exam and what theory review module(s) you will need to complete (if any). All graduate theory review will normally be completed by the end of your first term in the Master's program. The exact date for completion of all requirements will be included in the email with your test results.

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**Desautels Faculty of Music – Graduate Diagnostic Exam in Music Theory – SAMPLE EXAM**  
**PART ONE – Melody harmonization**

The melody given below is taken from a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Lutheran chorale.  
A bass line and figured-bass symbols are provided in bars 1 and 2.

1. In bars 1 and 2, write the inner voices (alto and tenor), based on the chords specified in the figured bass.
2. In bars 3 and 4, complete the harmonization by writing the bass line and the inner voices, using a correct and effective harmonic progression, and ending with a final cadence. For the F in bar 4 (marked with an asterisk), use two different chords in your harmonization, on beats 1 and 2. Somewhere in bars 3 or 4, use at least one chromatic chord in your harmonization.
3. In the lower three voices, introduce two different types of non-harmonic tones (melodic elaborations), anywhere in the harmonization. Identify them on the score, using any labels that you know.
4. Provide complete harmonic analysis for the whole harmonization using any standard system of analytical notation.

The musical score is written in G minor (three flats) and common time (C). It consists of four measures. The top staff is the melody, and the bottom staff is the figured bass. The figured bass symbols are: bar 1: 7; bar 2: 4/2, 6, 6; bar 3: (empty); bar 4: (empty). The melody has a fermata over the final note in bar 4, which is marked with an asterisk (\*).





Desautels Faculty of Music – Graduate Diagnostic Exam in Music Theory – SAMPLE EXAM  
SCORE for PART TWO (Mozart)

Andante cantabile

The score consists of seven systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Andante cantabile' and the mood is 'dolce'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'dolce' marking. The first system includes a 'dolce' marking and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a 'cresc.' marking. The third system features a 'p crescendo' marking, a piano (*p*) dynamic, and a 'tr.' (trill) marking. The fourth system includes a 'sf' (sforzando) marking, a 'cresc.' marking, and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The fifth system starts with a 'pp' (pianissimo) dynamic. The sixth system includes a 'crescendo' marking, a piano (*p*) dynamic, and a 'f' (forte) dynamic. The seventh system features a 'sf' marking, a piano (*p*) dynamic, and a 'crescendo' marking. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

(score continues on next page)

37 <sup>o)</sup> *pp*

*pp*

*p*

41 *dolce* *p* *f* *p*

*dolce*

*p*

*f*

*p*

46 <sup>[N]</sup> *p* *cresc.* *p crescendo*

*p*

*cresc.*

*p crescendo*

51 *p* *f* *f* *dolce* *tr.* *p*

*p*

*f*

*f*

*dolce*

*tr.*

*p*

56 *sf* *p* *cresc.* *f* *f* *p*

*sf*

*p*

*cresc.*

*f*

*f*

*p*

60 <sup>o)</sup> *pp* *fp*

*pp*

*fp*

Desautels Faculty of Music – Graduate Diagnostic Exam in Music Theory – SAMPLE EXAM  
PART THREE – Analysis of chromatic harmony

The following passage is from a piano piece by Beethoven.

Thema  
Allegretto

WoO 80

*f*

*f* *p*

1. Below the score: provide a complete harmonic analysis of the entire passage, including Roman numerals and figures.
2. Briefly explain the chromatic chords in the following measures by discussing the function and resolution of each chord:
  - a) Bar 2
  - b) Bar 3
  - c) Bar 4
  - d) Bar 5
3. Briefly describe how the passage leads overall from bar 1 to the *sforzando* chord in bar 6 (beat 2).



3. Formal structure

- a) What is the form of the movement? How does the piece divide into sections? List those sections here, using measure numbers. Then, briefly describe the musical features that define each section.

- b) Describe and specify how measures 11 to 13 relate to musical material stated earlier in the piece.

***Translation of German terms used in the score:***

<i>Sehr langsam</i>	very slow
<i>mit Dämpfer</i>	with mute
<i>am Steg</i>	play near the bridge ( <i>sul ponticello</i> )
<i>zögernd</i>	hesitating
<i>äußerst zart</i>	extremely soft
<i>äußerst ruhig</i>	extremely calm
<i>so zart als möglich</i>	as soft as possible
<i>verklingend</i>	fading away
<i>flüchtig</i>	fleeting

Desautels Faculty of Music – Graduate Diagnostic Exam in Music Theory – SAMPLE EXAM  
SCORE for PART FOUR (Webern)

Sehr langsam (♩ = ca 58)      zögernd im tempo

Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Cello

mit Dämpfer am Steg      ppp      ppp      ppp      am Steg      5      rit. -

mit Dämpfer am Steg      ppp      ppp      arco      äußerst zart      ppp

mit Dämpfer      ppp      ppp      am Steg      ppp

mit Dämpfer      ppp      ppp      am Steg      ppp

tempo      so zart als möglich      rit. -      verklingend

äußerst ruhig      am Steg      ppp

äußerst ruhig      arco      ppp      am Steg      ppp      ppp      am Steg      ppp      ppp      flüchtig

10

ppp      ppp      ppp      ppp      ppp      ppp