

Study Guide for the Music History Placement Exam

The purpose of this exam is to determine whether incoming graduate students have an adequate understanding of the basic chronology and major concepts of Western music history to succeed in graduate course work. The exam covers the entirety of Western music history (medieval period through the present). It consists of:

- I. an association chart for the basic periods, concepts, and figures of Western music history;
- II. twenty-four multiple-choice questions responding to six different listening excerpts from famous musical works;
- III. and thirty-four multiple-choice questions on the major concepts and figures of music history.

This short practice exam (with answers provided on a separate page at the end) including questions of the same types and of comparable difficulty as the ones on the placement exam is provided below help you in your preparation.

In order to prepare for this exam, review the course materials from your undergraduate music history and musicology courses as well as a standard textbook along with its accompanying anthologies (scores and recordings). We recommend the following textbooks and their anthologies (which exist in multiple editions, so please don't worry too much about the year of publication, as long as it is within the last 10-15 years):

Grout, Donald Jay, James Peter Burkholder, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Burkholder, James Peter and Claude V. Palisca, *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, volumes 1, 2 and 3.

Wright, Craig M. and Bryan R. Simms. *Music in Western Civilization*. Vols. 1–3. Schirmer Books.

Roden, Timothy, Craig M. Wright and Bryan R. Simms. *Anthology for Music in Western Civilization*. Vols. 1–3. Schirmer Books.

Bonds, Mark Evan. *A History of Music in Western Culture*. Prentice Hall.

Bonds, Mark Evan. *Anthology of Scores for A History of Music in Western Culture*. Vols. 1 and 2. Prentice Hall.

Taruskin, Richard and Christopher H. Gibbs. *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition*. Oxford University Press.

Holzer, Robert R., Richard Taruskin, Christopher H. Gibbs, David J. Rothenberg, Clara Moricz and David E. Schneider. *Oxford Anthology of Western Music*. Vols. 1 and 2. Oxford University Press.

We recommend that you study diligently for this exam. If you do not pass it, you will be required to take MUSC 6600 (Graduate Survey of Music History) before you may enroll in the graduate-level music history and musicology courses that fulfill your degree requirements.

PRACTICE EXAM
Graduate Music History Placement Exam
University of Utah, School of Music

Part I. Western Music History Association Chart

For this section of the exam you will be asked to place the standard time periods of Western music history in order in the left column. You will be given a list of composers, musicians, terms, concepts and events that you will need to associate with the appropriate time period in the column to the right. To prepare for this you should revisit and review your notes and textbooks from your music history survey courses, identifying the major events and figures of each era.

TIME PERIODS In order	COMPOSERS, MUSICIANS, TERMS, CONCEPTS AND EVENTS Give as many as possible.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Part II. This part of the exam consists of excerpts from six very famous musical works. You will be asked to respond to four multiple choice questions for each excerpt relating to the work’s title and composer, musical style, textures or features, and time period or century (Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, or 20th/21st century). Questions will vary depending on the excerpt, but examples of the sort of questions that will be asked are available below.

The best way to prepare for this section is to review an anthology associated with a textbook on Western music history, focusing on the musical features that are remarkable for each period and also identifying the composers and/or musical works that are most representative of each period. Create your own multiple-choice questions for a few of the excerpts to prepare for the exam.

Listening Excerpt 1. (Answer questions 1–4 based on what you heard in Excerpt 1)

1. The time period or century during which this work was composed is:
 - a. Baroque
 - b. Classical
 - c. Medieval
 - d. 20th/21st century

2. This excerpt is by:
 - a. Mozart
 - b. J.S. Bach
 - c. Beethoven
 - d. Debussy

3. This is an excerpt from:
 - a. *La mer*
 - b. *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*
 - c. St. Matthew's Passion
 - d. Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica")

4. What features of this piece make it typical of its time period?
 - a. use of a *basso continuo*
 - b. regular phrase structure
 - c. use of inventive instrumental combinations for coloristic effects
 - d. atonality

Part III. For this section of the exam you will be asked to answer multiple-choice questions, choosing the best answer of the options given. Examples are given below.

The best way to prepare for this section is to revisit and review your notes and textbooks from your undergraduate music history courses. The questions given here are representative of the types of questions that will be featured on the exam. The approximate distribution by time period on the actual exam will be:

- pre-1750 25%
- Classical 25%
- Romantic 25%
- 20th/21st century 25%

1. Music notation was first developed in order to organize:
 - a. secular songs of the troubadours
 - b. the music of the Catholic liturgy
 - c. the repertoire of opera and oratorio
 - d. homophonic chansons

2. Which statement(s) about instrumental music from the Medieval period is/are true?
 - a. Instrumental musicians were often employed as town musicians.
 - b. Most instrumental music was improvised or played from memory.
 - c. Musical instruments had not yet been developed.
 - d. Both a and b.

3. The Italian madrigal of the 16th century was important as a genre:
 - a. that was performed exclusively by professional church musicians
 - b. that was printed and distributed throughout Europe
 - c. that was performed primarily by amateurs in social settings
 - d. both b and c

4. An important musical innovation ca. 1600 that led to Baroque music was:
 - a. the development of basso continuo.
 - b. the development of the genre of opera.
 - c. a new approach to expression and improvisation called monody.
 - d. all of the above.

5. Vivaldi's most stable employment was:
 - a. as a court composer.
 - b. as a music printer.
 - c. as the music director of an orphanage for girls.
 - d. as a singer in the papal chapel.

6. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) is a(n):
 - a. opera buffa
 - b. Singspiel
 - c. opera seria
 - d. ballad opera

7. Rondo form may be diagrammed as:
 - a. AABB
 - b. ABAB
 - c. ABCDB
 - d. ABACA

8. Which of the following statements is *not* true of a Classical-period concerto cadenza?
 - a. It is introduced by a cadential six-four chord in the orchestra.
 - b. It is based on thematic material of the movement in which it occurs.
 - c. It usually occurs in the middle of a movement.
 - d. Its end is signaled by a trill.

9. Into how many periods are Beethoven's life and career typically divided?
 - a. two
 - b. three
 - c. four
 - d. five

10. What is the instrumentation of a string quartet?
 - a. 2 violins, 2 violas
 - b. 2 violins, 2 cellos
 - c. 2 violins, viola, cello
 - d. violin, viola, cello, double bass

11. Schubert's first-movement sonata forms often feature:
 - a. no development sections
 - b. three-key expositions
 - c. double codas
 - d. no transitions

12. What music journal did Robert Schumann found and edit for approximately a decade?
 - a. *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*
 - b. *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*

- c. *Die Zeit*
- d. *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*

13. *Lied* is the German word for:
- a. a character piece
 - b. loud
 - c. the lute
 - d. song
14. Which of the following was *not* written by Wagner?
- a. *Composing with Leitmotives*
 - b. *The Artwork of the Future*
 - c. *Judaism in Music*
 - d. *Opera and Drama*
15. Which of the following composers was one of the “Mighty Handful” or “Mighty Five”?
- a. Glinka
 - b. Rimsky-Korsakov
 - c. Tchaikovsky
 - d. Stravinsky
16. Which of the following composers was *not* part of the “Second Viennese School”?
- a. Bartók
 - b. Berg
 - c. Schoenberg
 - d. Webern
17. In which city was Tin Pan Alley located?
- a. Berlin
 - b. Chicago
 - c. London
 - d. New York
18. _____ was an Italian aesthetic movement that advocated for an “Art of Noises.”
- a. Futurism
 - b. Symbolism
 - c. Surrealism
 - d. Popular Front
19. Innovation(s) most associated with composer John Cage include:
- a. Indeterminacy
 - b. Prepared piano
 - c. Both a and b
 - d. Neither a nor b
20. The 1960s African American style known as soul synthesized:
- a. delta blues and country music fiddling
 - b. blues and Latin American dance rhythms
 - c. electric blues and ragtime
 - d. rhythm-and-blues and gospel

Answers to Part III:

1. B
2. D
3. D
4. D
5. C
6. B
7. D
8. C
9. B
10. C
11. B
12. A
13. D
14. A
15. B
16. A
17. D
18. A
19. C
20. D