

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**

**Preparation Suggestions for the Graduate Entrance Examination in Music History**

**Description of the Examination**

The exam requires you to use your knowledge about music history primarily from the Western art music tradition, and it is set up so that you can demonstrate your listening and score reading skills in relation to your music history knowledge.

There are five sections in the exam:

1. Chronology
2. Association
3. Score identification
4. Aural analysis
5. Short essay

This exam does not require you to connect composers and music with historical “periods” and the labels often used for them, nor does it require you to have memorized a lot of dates. It does, however, test your understanding of chronology and association, and your recognition of stylistic traits and sounds associated with selected genres and composers. To a certain extent it also tests your familiarity with the repertoire across history. For example, instead of knowing to which musical period the compositions of J. S. Bach belong, you should have a good idea of when Bach lived compared to other composers throughout history and in the context of what else was going on in the world at the time he was living. Familiarity with selected compositions and the types of music that composers wrote (such as Bach, for example), is also an important part of music history knowledge.

Aside from the short essay that gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills, the exam includes fill-in-the-blank (with dropdown menu choices), matching, and ordering questions. Score excerpts and audio clips are provided in the relevant sections. You will have up to 60 minutes each to complete Sections 1, 2, and 5, and you will have up to 90 minutes each for completing Sections 3-4. (Six hours total should be plenty of time to finish the entire exam.)

**Chronology**

If you wish to memorize dates, that would be one way to prepare, but the questions on the exam dealing with chronology are set up so that you must be familiar with composers, events, and compositions in relation to others. This requires you to know at least approximately when people lived but you aren’t expected to provide the specific birth and death dates of composers or the dates when specific compositions were written. To take an example from French history, you would need to know whether King Louis XIV lived before or after Napoleon Bonaparte, and you should be familiar enough with when they lived to distinguish between their lives and accomplishments.

**Association**

This is a short section that tests your familiarity with selected people, musical genres, compositions, or events in music history. Although the possibilities to be included in this section could be limitless, you will likely recognize them from your music history course(s) or

textbooks. The examples selected for this section are drawn from general music history knowledge and are not intended to be obscure.

### **Score identification**

This section features seven different score excerpts with short questions on each one. The questions address aspects such as the stylistic features, recognition of vocal or instrumental parts, genre, likely composer, performance context, and approximate date of composition. You are advised to think carefully about the answers but there should not be any “trick” questions or overlap in the answer choices.

### **Aural analysis**

In this section you can expect to answer questions about musical style, vocal and instrumental parts, likely composer, approximate dates of composition, and other aspects as relevant. The question format is similar to what you encounter in the score identification section, and you may listen to each audio clip as many times as you wish in order to complete the questions (keeping in mind that you will have up to 90 minutes to complete the entire section).

### **Short essay**

The short essay is intended to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills and share some of your interests and past experiences. It is very short and is not a central part of the exam, but the section is important because writing is an essential skill for succeeding in graduate studies and in professional life.

## **RESOURCES**

Your preparation for the music history graduate entrance exam should strike a balance between listening to music, studying scores, and reading about music history. The list below includes some recommended resources for studying. You may consult the Music Materials Center (MMC) at Andrews University regarding availability and access to study materials.

- Barbara Russano Hanning, *Concise History of Western Music* (any edition): published by W. W. Norton and based on Burkholder/Grout/Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (This textbook corresponds also with the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*.)
- J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (any edition, but the most recent is the 10th edition)
- J. Peter Burkholder and Claude V. Palisca, eds., *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, three volumes (Any edition is fine, although it would make sense to select the edition that accompanies the textbook you have chosen—but note that the editions may not correspond exactly. For example, the 9th edition of *A History of Western Music* corresponds with the 7th edition of the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*.)
- K. Marie Stolba, *The Development of Western Music: A History*
- K. Marie Stolba, ed. *The Development of Western Music: An Anthology*
- Craig M. Wright, *Music in Western Civilization* (older editions are in 2-3 volumes)
- Timothy Roden, *Anthology for Music in Western Civilization*
- Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, College Edition
- Milo Wold, *An Outline History of Western Music*