



Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam (version D)

Answer Packet

Student ID: _____
(do not write your name on the exam)

Date: _____

Overview

The Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam is a three-hour written exam. The components and suggested time allowances are as follows:

PART 1. HARMONIC COMPETENCY: (35 minutes)

- NOTE: the skills tested in this section are essential concepts presented at the bachelor's degree level. Graduate students must earn a grade of 80% or better on this section: if the 80% minimum is not attained, students will be required to re-take the entire theory exam.

PART 2. SCORE ANALYSIS: three longer excerpts (40 minutes)

PART 3. ESSAY RESPONSE: (50 minutes)

PART 4. SCORE ID AND COMMENTARY: (20 minutes)

PART 5. TERMINOLOGY: (35 minutes)

Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam, Part 1:

HARMONIC COMPETENCY

(35 minutes time allowance)

A. Identify the requested scales/collections given below.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

B. For questions 1–3 below, fill in the missing information (keys, Roman numerals and figured bass symbols). For question 4, label each triad (e.g., “BM,” “Am,” etc.) and identify the PLR transformation. For question 5, compose the indicated transformation on the staff using smooth voice-leading and label both chords below.

1. Em: ____ - ____ 2. ____: ____ - IV6 3. ____: ____ - V 4. ____ (triad) ____ (triad) 5. ____ L ____ (triad) (triad)
(key) (key) (P or L or R?)

C. For each of the following, fill in any missing information (e.g., key, Roman numerals, figured bass symbols) as appropriate. Then, identify the type of cadence implied by each pair of chords.

1. cadence: _____ 2. cadence: _____ 3. cadence: _____

- F#m: ____ - ____ ____: ____ - V B: ____ - ____
(key)

D. List two keys related to G-flat major by *diatonic* mediant. Use root and quality, not Roman numerals.

List three keys related to D-flat major by *chromatic* mediant. Use root and quality, not Roman numerals.

Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam, Part 2:
SCORE ANALYSIS – three longer excerpts
 (40 minutes suggested time allowance)

Excerpt 1: Score reading and transposing instruments.
 (See score packet, page 2 to answer the following questions.)

1. Identify the cadences in this excerpt. In what measures do they occur, and what type(s) are they?

2. On the staves below, arrange measures 1-2 for the following instruments:

soprano = flute
 alto = clarinet in B-flat
 tenor = horn in F
 bass = bass clarinet in B-flat

Include the appropriate key signatures, clefs, and transposition (if any) for each instrument.

	Measure: 1	2
Flute		
Clarinet in B \flat		
Horn in F		
Bass Clarinet		

Excerpt 2: Tonal form and analysis.

(See score packet, pages 3-4 to answer the following questions.)

1. What specific type of cadence occurs in m. 16? Briefly explain, and be sure to consider how it is approached.
2. What term(s) best describe(s) the overall formal design of this prelude? Be as specific as possible here, and briefly explain your answer.
3. What contrapuntal technique is on display at the opening of this prelude, mm. 1-2? Briefly explain your answer.
4. Identify the type of sequence that occurs in m. 6, beat 3 to m. 8, beat 1.
5. Examine m. 1. How many distinct pitches occur in the right hand in this measure? Are there any missing pitches to complete the entire chromatic scale? If so, which ones are missing? Does the left hand help to complete the gaps?
6. How do measures 1 and 17 compare in terms of (a) motivic design, and (b) contrapuntal arrangement? Be as specific as possible here, and briefly explain your answer.

Excerpt 3: Post-tonal analysis.

(See score packet, page 5 to answer the following questions.)

1. Provide the set class (in prime form) and interval-class vector for the sets marked A and B.

Prime Form:

Interval-class vector:

Set A: _____

Set B: _____

2. How is set B related to set A? Choose one answer below: _____

Transposition

Inversion

Transposition and inversion

Z-relation

12-tone row

Roman numeral analysis

Other (describe): _____

3. Examine sets A and C. What specific term describes the relationship between these two sets? Briefly explain as necessary.

4. What specific rhythmic technique is used in bars 1-3 of the lower treble clef?

Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam, Part 3:
ESSAY RESPONSE

(50 minutes suggested time allowance)

(See score packet, pages 6–15 to answer the following questions.)

1. Complete a structural diagram of the piece provided in the score packet. Be specific by labeling parts and subparts of the form, measure numbers, and important key areas. *Some cues have already been provided—**add missing details as necessary.***

Section :	Theme	Var. 1								
Bars:	1–24			76–99			148–171			
Key:	F-sharp minor	F-sharp minor								

2. Answer the following questions:

- a. This is a piece in variation form. There are two distinct types of variation forms. In this type, the theme is relatively short, but it is a complete and independent piece (and often indicated by a final double bar). What is the term that describes this specific type of variation form?

- b. Compare the key regions of mm. 1-24 and mm. 76-99. What is the term that describes the relationship of these two keys?

3. Provide an essay response to **ONE** of the following three questions. Your response should be approximately 3 paragraphs in length. Be sure to use terminology specific to this musical form. (Please write neatly on the following pages).

Write your essay response on the following pages. Part 4 begins on page 9.

Reminder: For this portion of the exam you will be evaluated for your clarity of writing and expression of ideas; be sure to write in full sentences, not bullet points.

Question 1:

Describe in detail the phrase structure of this work's theme (mm. 1-24).

- How many phrases are there, and what is their length? (i.e., 2 + 2 or 4 + 4, etc....)?
- What is the specific term that describes the phrase structure of mm. 1-8?
- The theme has 5 important cadences. Identify each of them by providing:
 - a) the **location** (measure and beat)
 - b) **cadence type**, and
 - c) the **key** in which each cadence functions
(e.g., measure 25, beat 1, half cadence in G major).

Question 2:

Composers writing in variation form usually have a larger structure in mind for the arrangement of each successive variation. As the work proceeds, a broader dramatic trajectory forms as harmony, rhythm, texture, register, melody, and dynamics vary in complexity.

Describe this work's overall dramatic trajectory:

- What happens with the overall pacing? Which variations increase in activity, and which decrease? In what specific ways?
- Which section serves as the dramatic highpoint of the work? How and in what ways?

Question 3:

In 1856 Johannes Brahms wrote to Joseph Joachim about variation form:

I sometimes ponder on variation form and it seems to me it ought to be more restrained, purer. **Composers in the old days** used to keep strictly to the base of the theme, as their real subject. **Beethoven** varies the melody, harmony and rhythms so beautifully. But it seems to me that a great many **moderns** (including both of us) are more inclined—I don't know how to put it—to fuss about with the theme. We cling nervously to the melody, but we don't handle it freely, we don't really make anything new out of it, we merely overload it. And so the melody becomes quite unrecognizable.

Select **two** of the variations and compare/describe the melody's original presentation (mm. 1-24) with its subsequent treatment. Address the following questions:

- How is the theme originally presented? Does this change? (Consider the three strategies outlined by Brahms.)
- Specify how the original melody compares with its later treatment in terms of texture, rhythm, register, harmony, articulation, dynamics, instrumentation, etc.

Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam, Part 4:

SCORE ID AND COMMENTARY

(20 minutes suggested time allowance)

(See score packet, pages 16-21 to answer the following questions.)

Five musical excerpts are provided. Select **three** of these excerpts and provide comments for each. Items for your consideration:

- specific stylistic characteristics
- probable date (within a reasonable range) of composition
- probable composer

Excerpt no. _____:

Excerpt no. _____:

Excerpt no. _____:

Doctoral Music Theory Common Exam, Part 5:
TERMINOLOGY
(35 minutes suggested time allowance)
(See score packet, page 22 to answer the following questions.)

Briefly define or explain **five** of the terms and/or concepts listed on p. 22.

1. term/concept: _____

2. term/concept: _____

3. term/concept: _____

4. term/concept: _____

5. term/concept: _____

(End of exam—congratulations, you're done!)