

Longy School of Music

Proficiency Examinations for

- *Master of Music students (Theory, History, Piano/Keyboard)*
- *Undergraduate Diploma students (Piano)*

TEST DATES FOR 2007-2008:

Music Theory

AURAL: Wednesday, August 29, 2007, 3:30-5:00 PM (Pickman Hall)

WRITTEN: Thursday, August 30, 2007, 8:30-11:00 AM (Pickman Hall)

WRITTEN: Tuesday, January 22, 2008, 6:30-9:00 PM (Pickman Hall)

AURAL: Thursday, January 24, 2008, 6:30-8:00 PM (Pickman Hall)

WRITTEN: Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 6:30-9:00 PM (Room N-1)

AURAL: Thursday, May 8, 2008, 7:30-9:00 PM (Pickman Hall)

Music History

Wednesday, September 5, 2007, 6:00-8:30 PM (Pickman Hall)

Tuesday, January 29, 2008, 6:30-9:00 PM (Pickman Hall)

Wednesday, April 30, 2008, 6:30-9:00 PM (Room N-1)

Piano

Sign-up sheets for individual 15-minute appointments will be posted on the Academic Affairs bulletin board approximately one week before the dates listed below.

Tuesday, September 11, 2007, 1:00-4:00 PM (Room TBA)

Friday, September 14, 2007, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Room TBA)

Thursday, January 24, 2008, 1:00-4:00 PM (Room TBA)

Friday, January 25, 2008, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Room TBA)

Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Room TBA)

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 1:00-4:00 PM (Room TBA)

General Guidelines

- All Longy Master of Music programs require students to demonstrate proficiency in Music Theory, Music History, and Piano/Keyboard Skills before graduation.
- All Longy Undergraduate Diploma programs require students to demonstrate proficiency in Piano Skills before graduation.
- See the *Conservatory Catalog 2006-2008* for additional policies pertaining to proficiency examinations.
- The Piano Skills examination is waived for keyboard majors (collaborative piano, MAM piano, organ, piano, harpsichord).
- Early Music students (non-keyboardists) must pass a separate Keyboard Skills exam, offered three times a year, schedule to be determined by the Department Chair. See the final section of this handout.
- New Master of Music students are required to take Music History and Music Theory examinations during New-Student Orientation.
- Examinations are offered three times per year (August/September, January, and May).

Review Courses for Master of Music Students

Many students who do not pass the examinations initially are able to review independently and pass them at a later time (especially those who have had previous undergraduate coursework in the examination areas). Other students prefer to enroll in one or more of the following structured review courses: Graduate Theory Review (separate sections for aural and written skills offered each semester), Graduate History Review (offered each semester), and Graduate Piano Review (offered each semester). These courses are intended as refreshers for students who have had previous coursework or study in these areas. Based on the results of examinations taken during Orientation, some students may be required to enroll in these courses. Students who have had little previous training in one or more of these areas may need to take remedial (undergraduate-level) coursework.

Piano Lessons for Non-Keyboard Majors

Some students may find it necessary to take private piano lessons in order to pass the Piano Skills examination. Undergraduate Diploma students may take up to four semesters of secondary piano lessons at no additional cost, using one tuition credit per semester. Master of Music students (and Undergraduates exceeding their four-semester limit) seeking private piano lessons must pay the secondary studio fee of \$450 (for eight one-hour lessons or the equivalent) and use one tuition credit per semester.

Music Theory

The Longy School of Music enjoys a strong reputation in the teaching of theory and musicianship, founded on the principle that a complete musician should have as many tools as possible for understanding musical style and analyzing scores. The Master of Music proficiency examination in Music Theory represents the high standards of Longy's own undergraduate theory program, and we encourage you to view it not as an obstacle but as an opportunity to challenge yourself and grow musically.

The Music Theory examination consists of an aural skills test and a three-section written theory test. Any of the three parts may be passed separately and do not need to be retaken once passed. Students should attempt the sections yet to be passed every time the test is administered until all sections are passed.

The aural skills test covers the following areas:

- Recognition of intervals, harmonic and melodic, up to a tenth
- Recognition of scales and modes
- Melodic dictation in one and two voices
- Recognition of chord quality of triads and seventh chords
- Recognition of progressions by Roman numerals and figured bass symbols
- Rhythmic dictation

The three sections of the written test are as follows:

- Harmonization of a chorale melody in four parts
- Realization of a figured bass in four parts
- Formal and harmonic analysis of a short piece

Attached is a set of sample questions. Even if your theory background is strong, you are encouraged to spend time reviewing these subjects so you can best demonstrate your abilities. A concise and inexpensive guide to the Longy theory department's criteria for good four-part writing can be found in Marjorie Merryman's *Music Theory Handbook* (Harcourt-Brace, 1997).

Music History

The Music History proficiency examination tests your broad knowledge of the history of Western music. It is in two parts and both must be completed successfully in order for the examination to be passed.

Part I consists of ten short recorded examples. Each will be played twice. For each example, you will write approximately one to two paragraphs. You will be asked to place each excerpt in its correct historical position, identifying the genre, style period (Baroque, Classical, etc.) and the approximate date of composition. You should support your answers by discussing the stylistic characteristics of the excerpt. If you can, identify the composer or make a reasonably well-informed guess based on the characteristics you provided.

In Part II, you will write two essays (3-4 pages each in a blue examination book). You will be provided with a list of approximately ten topics, grouped into two sections: (1) music up to 1750 and (2) music from 1750 to the present. You will select one topic from each section. The topics may ask you to describe a particular work or group of works in some detail, demonstrate your knowledge of important historical trends and genres, or discuss a particular composer's musical legacy.

Sample Essay Questions:

- Compare the careers of Chopin and Liszt with respect to how they interacted with the music-loving public. How did they earn their livings, and how did this influence the music they composed? Discuss specific musical works by both composers in this context.
- Describe typical musical features found in a Renaissance madrigal. Provide specific examples from pieces by at least two composers in the course of your discussion.
- Discuss the term "neo-classicism" and its manifestations in music of the twentieth century. Give at least three specific examples.

Piano Skills

Students need to be able to demonstrate the following piano skills in order to pass the examination. Students in the Early Music Department have a separate examination (see below).

- All scales (major, harmonic and melodic minor) with correct fingering played hands separately—two octaves. Consult James Bastien: *Scales, Chords, and Arpeggios* for accepted fingerings.
- Four scales chosen by the student representing the four fingering groups (1 white-key major, 1 white-key minor, 1 black-key major, 1 black-key minor) and played hands together, two octaves. (For example, C major, E minor, B-flat major, and F-sharp minor.)
- All major and minor arpeggios played hands together—three octaves.
- Two solo works from contrasting periods, at the intermediate level (one performed from memory), such as:
 - Bach: *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*
 - Bartók: *Mikrokosmos*, vols. II and III
 - Schumann, *Album for the Young*, Op. 68
 - Bartók: “Dance” from *For Children*, Book II
 - Kabelevsky: “A Little Song” from *15 Children’s Pieces*, Op. 27, Book I
 - Prokofiev: “March” from *Music for Children*, Op. 55
- Sightreading at early intermediate level (for example, Leopold Mozart: Minuet in F).
- Accompany a short piece for your major instrument. (You are expected to identify your soloist, prepare and rehearse with him/her, and bring him/her to your exam.)

Early Music Keyboard Skills

The keyboard proficiency exam for Early Music majors consists of three sections, each of which is administered at the beginning of each semester and at the end of the spring semester. Students may elect to retake sections of the exam at different times, but must take all sections at the beginning of the first semester.

1. Scales and chord progressions:
 - Major scales, one octave, hands together in the following keys: C major, C minor, D major, D minor, E-flat major, E-flat minor, F major, F minor, G major, G minor, A major, A minor, B-flat major, B-flat minor.
 - I-IV-V-I progression in any five of the keys listed above.
2. Solo playing:
 - Play a short piece for keyboard on the harpsichord, such as a Bach prelude or fugue.
 - It is acceptable to play from a score.
3. Figured bass:
 - Play a prepared piece of any length with correct realization of figures.
 - Play another prepared piece, as accompanist to another musician and with correct realization of figures.