DMA Music Theory Exam

Description from the Handbook

DMA Performance students in brass, percussion, and voice must pass either the history or the theory exam; all other students must pass both exams.

The music theory exam is a three-hour analysis exam. Students will be expected to analyze one of the pieces relevant to their major. Students will know the pieces in advance but will not know which one(s) they will be asked to analyze until the beginning of the exam.

Each exam will be graded by two theory/composition faculty members. In the event of a split decision, a third reader from the theory/composition faculty would evaluate the exam and that evaluation would determine whether the student passes or not.

If a student does not pass, they will receive specific feedback about what knowledge was lacking and advice about what to focus on for a future attempt. Retakes will not include pieces students have already written about.

DMA Theory Exam Rubric

Students should become intimately familiar with the required pieces for their instrument or area of study. During the exam, students will receive either one of these pieces (about which they will write one long essay) or smaller parts from multiple pieces (about which they will write shorter essays). In formulating their essay(s), students should keep the following in mind:

Musical Parameters

Required components

1. Pitch organization: A discussion of the relevant and significant aspects of pitch and harmony, which may include key areas and tonal centers, modulations, chord progressions, modes, symmetrical collections, pitch centricity, pitch-class sets, and tone rows. For unpitched percussion, this includes a discussion of relative frequencies and how tuning might play a role in the preparation of the piece.

2. Form: An analysis of formal organization at multiple structural levels, including large-scale form, key areas, and cadential structure, as well as small-scale formal units (phrases, sentences, periods), phrase rhythm, and non-pitch means of formal articulation.

3. Motives and Themes: A discussion of motivic and/or thematic material and its role in compositional development at both local (small-scale) and global (large-scale) levels.

Additional components

1. Rhythm and Meter: An analysis of rhythmic and metric organization, including rhythmic character, metric structures, changing or mixed meters, metric dissonance, and hypermetric organization.

2. Musical Topic, Narrative, Character, and Text–Music Relations: A discussion of musical topics, expressive character, narrative implications, and—where applicable—the relationship between text and music.

3. Timbre, Texture, Articulation, Dynamics, and Density: An analysis of timbral and textural organization and their interaction with articulation, dynamics, and musical density.

Integrative and Contextual Criteria

Required component

Quality of Writing: Clarity, organization, and correctness of prose, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Additional components

1. Synthesis: The integration of analytical observations into a coherent argument, presenting an overarching thesis or interpretive perspective rather than a list of isolated points.

2. Performance Implications: An explanation of how the analysis informs interpretive and performance decisions.

3. Connections to Other Repertoire: A discussion of how the work relates to other pieces by the same composer or contemporaries, including stylistic context, repertoire associations, and similarities or contrasts in technical or musical demands.

Evaluation of the Exam

Graduate faculty members from music theory and composition will evaluate the essay(s) considering whether each component "Exceeds Expectations," "Meets Expectations," or "Does Not Meet Expectations," as defined below.

- Exceeds Expectations - Addresses the component thoroughly and insightfully. Demonstrates a strong command of relevant concepts, accurate and precise terminology, and clear analytical judgment. Observations are well chosen, well supported by musical evidence, and contribute meaningfully to a larger interpretive understanding of the work.
- Meets Expectations - Addresses the component clearly and competently. Demonstrates adequate understanding of relevant concepts and appropriate use of terminology. Observations are generally accurate and supported by musical evidence, though depth, scope, or integration may be limited.
- Does Not Meet Expectations - Fails to address the component or addresses it superficially or inaccurately. Demonstrates significant gaps in understanding, misuse of terminology, lack of musical evidence, or analytical claims that are unclear, unsupported, or incorrect.

In order to pass the exam, students must receive an evaluation of at least "Meets Expectations" for the four required components: pitch organization, motives and themes, form, and quality of writing. The essay(s) do not have to address all of the additional components, but in order to pass, students must receive an evaluation of at least "Meets Expectations" for *at least one of three* additional components under musical parameters and *at least one of the three* additional components under integrative and contextual criteria

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Component Type	Component Name	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Required components (students must receive “Meets Expectations” in all three categories)	Pitch organization			
	Form			
	Quality of Writing			
	Motives/Themes			
Additional components - Musical Parameters (students must receive “Meets Expectations” in one of three categories in order to pass)	Rhythm and Meter			
	Musical Topic /Narrative/ Character/Text-Music Relations			
	Timbre/Texture/ Articulation/ Dynamics/ Density			
Additional Components - Integrative and Contextual Criteria (students must receive “meets expectations” in one of the three categories in order to pass)	Synthesis			
	Performance Implications			
	Connections to Other Repertoire			

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Exam Procedure

On the day of the exam, students may bring blank paper. They may not bring their own copies of scores or any notes. During the exam, students will receive paper copies of the piece(s) they have to analyze. These copies must be returned at the end of the exam period.

DMA Theory Repertoire Lists

Below are repertoire lists for the DMA Exams in Music Theory. For some emphases, there is additional repertoire identified by the faculty as valuable. However, the additional repertoire will not appear on the exam. Students are responsible for securing scores for study.

Bass Performance

- Giovanni Bottesini, Concerto in B Minor for String Bass and Piano (edited by Lucio Buccarella)
- Giovanni Bottesini, "Elegy" in C major
- Antonin Dvořák, Quintet, op. 77
- Adolf Mišek, Sonata no. 2 in E minor, op. 6
- Gioachino Rossini, Duet for Cello and Bass
- Franz Schubert, Quintet in A major, op. 114, "Trout"

Bassoon Performance

Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Partita in A minor for Solo Flute, BWV 1013
- Samuel Barber, *Summer Music*
- Valerie Coleman, *Umoja: The First Day of Kwanzaa*
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Bassoon Concerto in Bb, K. 191
- Camille Saint-Saëns, Sonata for Bassoon and Piano
- Antonio Vivaldi, Concerto for Bassoon, Strings, and Continuo in D minor, RV 481

Additional Pieces for Study

- Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, IV
- Elliott Carter, 8 Etudes and a Fantasy (especially movements 3, 7, and the Fantasy)
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Gran Partita (Serenade No. 10, K. 361/370a)
- Igor Stravinsky, *Histoire du soldat*

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Cello Performance

- J. S. Bach, Suite no. 3 for Solo Cello, BWV 1009
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Sonta for Cello and Piano, op. 5, no. 2
- Antonin Dvořák, Cello Concert in B minor, op. 104
- György Ligeti, Sonata for Solo Cello
- Serge Prokofiev, Cello Sonata in C major, op. 119

Choral Conducting

Required Repertoire

- J.S. Bach, *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf*, BWV 226
- Johannes Brahms, *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
- Leonard Bernstein, *Chichester Psalms*, I
- Franz Joseph Haydn, Te Deum in C Major; Hob. XXIII
- Herbert Howells, *Collegium Regale*, Magnificat only
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Solemn Vespers for a Confessor*, K. 339, Laudate pueri Dominum
- Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Pope Marcellus Mass*, Gloria

Additional Pieces for Study

- Maurice Duruflé, Requiem, Introit & Kyrie
- Jocelyn Hagen, *Already Always*
- Vytautas Miškinis, *Dum Medium Silentium*

Clarinet Performance

Required Repertoire

- Bela Bartók, *Contrasts*
- J. S. Bach, Sonata No. 4 in C minor for Violin, BWV 1017 (transcribed for Bb clarinet by Joseph Eller
- Johannes Brahms, Clarinet Sonata, op. 120, no. 1
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Concerto for Clarinet, K. 622
- Francis Poulenc, Sextet
- Igor Stravinsky, Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo

Additional Pieces for Study

- Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 6, *Pastoral*
- John Mackey, *Divine Mischief*
- Carl Nielsen, Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, op. 57
- Steve Reich, *New York Counterpoint* for clarinet and tape

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Flute Performance

Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Partita in A minor for Solo Flute, BWV 1013
- Samuel Barber, *Summer Music*
- Valerie Coleman *Wish* (Sonatine for Flute and Piano)
- Claude Debussy, *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'une faune*
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Concerto in G, K. 313
- Serge Prokofiev, Sonata for Flute, op. 94

Additional Pieces for Study

- Johannes Brahms, Symphony no. 4, IV
- Mario Davidovsky: *Synchronisms no. 1*
- Steve Reich: *Vermont Counterpoint*

Guitar Performance

Required Repertoire

TBA

Horn Performance

Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto no. 1
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Sonata for Horn and Piano
- Johannes Brahms, Trio, op. 40
- Benjamin Britten, Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, op. 31
- Paul Hindemith, Sonata
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Concerto no. 3, K. 447
- Francis Poulenc, Elegie

Additional Pieces for Study

- Gustav Mahler, Symphony no. 5
- Franz Schubert, *Auf dem Strom*
- Richard Strauss, Horn Concerto no. 1, op. 11

Oboe Performance

Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Partita in A minor for Solo Flute, BWV 1013
- Henri Dutilleux, Les Citations
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Oboe Quartet in F Major, K. 370
- Richard Strauss, Oboe Concerto, AV 144, TrV 292
- Ralph Vaughan Williams, Oboe Concerto
- Maurice Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (piano version)

Additional Pieces for Study

- Johannes Brahms, Violin Concerto, op. 77
- Elliott Carter Oboe Quartet
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Gran Partita (Serenade No. 10, K. 361/370a)
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Oboe Concerto. K. 314

Orchestral Conducting

Required Repertoire

- Ludwig van Beethoven, Violin Concerto
- Johannes Brahms, Symphony no. 3
- Antonin Dvořák, Cello Concerto
- Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 92
- Jennifer Higdon, *Blue Cathedral*
- Jessie Montgomery, *Rounds*
- Florence Price, Symphony No. 1

Additional Pieces for Study

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano Concerto no. 23, K. 488
Fanny Mendelssohn, Overture in C Major
Lili Boulanger, D'un matin de printemps

Organ Performance

Required Repertoire

TBA

Percussion Performance

Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Suite no. 1 for Solo Cello, BWV 1007
- J. S. Bach, Suite no. 2 for Solo Cello, BWV 1008
- Warren Benson, Three Dances
- Elliott Carter, Eight Pieces for Timpani
- Joseph Schwantner, *Velocities*
- Iannis Xenakis, *Rebonds*

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Piano Pedagogy and Piano Performance

- Amy Beach, *Ballad*
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Concerto no. 5 in E-flat Major, op. 73, *Emperor*
- Dietrich Buxtehude, Partita diverse una Aria d'Inventione detta La Capriciosa
- Gabriel Faure, Piano Quartet no. 2 in G minor, op. 45
- Franz Liszt, Sonata in B Minor
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano Sonata no. 13, K. 333
- George Walker, Piano Sonata no. 1

Additional Pieces for Study

- J. S. Bach, Sonata for Flute, BWV 1034
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Violin Sonata, op., 23
- Luigi Dallapiccola, *Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*
- Franz Schubert, Four Impromptus, op. 90, D. 899
- Heitor Villa-Lobos, *Rudepoêma*

Saxophone Performance

Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Partita in A minor for Solo Flute, BWV 1013
- Fernande Decruck, Sonate in C-sharp
- Alexander Glazounov: Concerto in E-flat Major for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra, op. 109
- Paul Hindemith, Trio, op. 47
- Jean-Baptiste Singelee, Duo Concertante
- Anton von Webern – Quartet, op. 22
- John Anthony Lennon, *Distances Within Me*

Additional Pieces for Study

- Leonard Bernstein, *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*
- Edison Denisov, Sonata
- Bernhard Heiden, Sonata Sergei Rachmaninoff, *Symphonic Dances*
- Modest Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition*
- Robert Schumann, *Fantaisiestück*, op. 73
- Henri Tomasi, Concerto for Alto Saxophone

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Trombone Performance

Required Repertoire

- Ferdinand David, Concertino op. 4
- Launy Gröndahl, Concerto
- Franz Joseph Haydn, "The Glorious Work" from *The Creation* (transcribed for four trombones)
- Joseph Jongen, Aria et Polonaise
- Jan Koetsier, Allegro Maestoso, op. 58, no. 2
- Alexej Lebedjew, Concertantes Allegro
- Sigismond Stojowski, Fantaisie, op. 27
- Steven Verhelst, *Devil's Waltz*
- Carl Maria von Weber, *Romance*
- Donald H. White, Sonata

Trumpet Performance

Required Repertoire

- Oskar Böhme, Concerto, op. 18
- Victor Ewald, Brass Quintet no. 1 in B-flat Major, op. 5
- Franz Joseph Haydn, Concerto in Eb
- Hans Werner Henze, Sonatina for Solo Trumpet
- Paul Hindemith, Trumpet Sonata
- Anthony Plog, *Postcards* for Solo Trumpet
- Gottfried Reiche, *Abblasen*
- Halsey Stevens, Sonata for Trumpet and Piano
- Toru Takemitsu, *Paths*
- Georg PhillippTelemann, Concerto in D

Tuba/Euphonium Performance

Required Repertoire

- Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique*, IV and V
- Paul Hindemith, Konzertmusik für Streichorchester und Blechbläser, I
- Gustav Holst, *The Planets*, I. Mars
- Leoš Janáček: Capriccio for Piano Left-Hand and Chamber Ensemble, III
- Modest Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, no. 4 Bydlo
- Silvestre Revueltas: *Homenaje a Federico Garcia Lorca*, I

Additional Pieces for Study

- Arnold Schoenberg, Theme and Variations for Band, op. 43A
- Béla Bartók, *Kossuth*
- Gustav Holst, *The Planets*, IV. Jupiter, V. Saturn, and VI. Uranus

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Viola Performance
Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Suite no. 2 for Solo Cello, BWV 1008 (transcribed for viola)
- Béla Bartók, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra
- Paul Hindemith, Sonata for Solo Viola, op. 25, no. 1
- Robert Schumann, *Märchenbilder*, op. 113
- Carl Philipp Stamitz, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, op. 1

Violin Performance
Required Repertoire

- J. S. Bach, Sonata no. 1 for Solo Violin, BWV 1001
- Béla Bartók, Sonata for Solo Violin
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61
- Alban Berg, Violin Concerto
- Serge Prokofiev, Violin Concerto no. 2

Voice Performance
Required Repertoire

- Johannes Brahms, "Die Mainacht," op. 48, no. 2
- Benjamin Britten, Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, op. 31
- Claude Debussy, "Mandoline"
- Henri Duparc, "Chanson triste"
- George Frideric Handel, "Thus saith the Lord" and "But who may abide" from *Messiah*, HWV 56
- Charles Ives, "Tom Sails Away"
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, "In quali eccessi" and "Mi tradi quell'alma ingrata" from *Don Giovanni*
- Florence B. Price, "Hold Fast to Dreams"
- Franz Schubert, "Ganymed," op. 19, no. 3
- Giuseppi Verdi, "Dal labbro il canto estasiato" from *Falstaff*

Wind Conducting
Required Repertoire

- Paul Hindemith, Symphony in B-flat
- Joseph Schwantner, *and the mountains rising nowhere*
- Igor Stravinsky, Octet
- Omar Thomas, *Come Sunday*
- Joan Tower, *Fascinating Ribbons*