

DMA Entrance Exams New England Conservatory

Assessment examinations in music history and music theory are required of all finalists for DMA admission at NEC. The exams take 6 hours to complete (3 hours allowed for each exam) and will be administered via secure, remote internet connection after studio faculty have reviewed audition materials. The purpose of the exams is to assess your potential to succeed in the academic rigors of the program. **The results of the examinations factor significantly into the admissions decision.**

Below is a brief overview to guide your preparation.

MUSIC HISTORY EXAM

The music history exam is divided into three sections that will evaluate your knowledge of a broad range of periods, composers and repertoire. While detailed content knowledge is helpful, the ability to organize your thoughts and express them clearly in writing is most important.

- I. **Score samples:** You will be asked to discuss music score samples in terms of stylistic characteristics, performance issues, and historical context.
- II. **Identification of terms:** You will be asked to provide definitions for a list of terms from a number of musical periods.
- III. **Essay:** You will be provided with a list of potential topics and asked to write an essay about one. While knowledge of stylistic periods and/or works is helpful, the ability to organize your thoughts and express them clearly in writing will be just as important as factual information.

We encourage you to review one of the texts below with its accompanying scores and recordings.

- Bonds, Mark Evan. *A History of Music in Western Culture*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.
- Burkholder, J. Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. 9th ed. New York: Norton, 2014.
- Wright, Craig, and Bryan Simms. *Music in Western Civilization*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Schirmer, 2009.

MUSIC THEORY EXAM

The music theory exam is designed to assess specific ability, knowledge and skills in ear training, music writing and analysis. The exam includes the following:

- I. **Ear training:** a) Intervals, b) short tonal two-voice counterpoint, c) atonal melody, d) two harmonic progressions.
- II. **Music Writing:** Harmonization of a traditional chorale melody. You may recall the settings by J.S. Bach or create your own setting.
- III. **Analysis:** You will choose one of the three pieces given. Piece A is a work of the classical or romantic period, Piece B is a twentieth-century work, and Piece C is a jazz-tradition work. (Jazz applicants will analyze a jazz score.)

Suggested texts for review:

- Harmony
 - Kostka, Stefan, et.al. *Tonal Harmony: with an introduction to Twentieth-Century music.* New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1995
 - Aldwell, Edward; Schachter, Carl; and Cadwallader, Allen. *Harmony and Voice Leading.* Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2010
- Form
 - Green, Douglass Marshall. *Form in Tonal Music: an Introduction to Analysis.* New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979
 - Caplin, William E. *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998
- Twentieth-Century
 - Straus, Joseph Nathan. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990
- Software:
 - Software such as *MacGamut*, *Earmaster*, or *Auralia* may be helpful for ear training review.