Language Proficiency Examination

Every degree candidate at Yale School of Music is expected to demonstrate reading proficiency in a foreign language. It is understood that the language selected will normally be one of those in which there is a solid corpus of writing on music, such as German, French, Italian and Spanish. In cases of particular professional need, such as a project involving extensive use of Russian, Polish or Hebrew sources, another language may be substituted, by permission of the examiner.

THE EXAMINATION:
The examination consists of a passage of expository prose on a musical topic. It will be selected from a book or current periodical dealing with music criticism, music history, or current musical events.

The student is expected to translate into coherent accurate English prose a MINIMUM of three hundred words in the two hours allotted. Use of a Printed dictionary is permitted, and the student should bring one to the exam.

Accuracy and quantity count: that is, the minimum is essential, and even there the translation must show comprehension of the sense of the text. Word-for-word deciphering with no regard for the author’s intent or the English result is not acceptable.

HOW TO PREPARE:
Practice translating the sort of prose that will appear on the exam. Copies of previous exams are available from Rosemary Gould in Sprague Hall; any passage of prose on the subject of music is good practice. Note that writers of expository prose (scholars and journalists) use many expressions that do not necessarily turn up in the fiction read in most beginning language courses.

EXEMPTIONS:
Students whose native language is not English may be exempt from this exam requirement.

Good luck and bring a dictionary!