Yale School of Music

Sample MMA Entrance Exam

Spring 2010

The MMA Entrance Exam is always comprised of the same four sections: (1) Listening and Score Identification, (2) History, (3) Tonal Analysis, and (4) 20th-Century Analysis. One hour is allotted for applicants to complete each of the four sections, and a one-hour lunch break is provided between sections 2 and 3.

This PDF, which contains an actual exam that was administered at Yale, is distributed to MMA applicants for study purposes.

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MMA Admission Exam Spring 2010:
Part I: Listening & Score Identifications

Please label your blue book with *only your ID number*, answer all questions in the blue book only.

As best as you can, please identify the exact/likely composer, and approximate date of composition for each of the five listening excerpts and five score excerpts. Please describe stylistic features that account for your identification. If you happen to know the titles of works, please be sure to include them.

The five listening excerpts will be heard at the beginning of the hour and again at 40 minutes past the hour. Be sure to label your answers as LISTENING ID 1-5 and SCORE ID 1-5. Please separate the two sets of answers in the blue book.
M.M.A. Admission Exam. 27 February 2010.

PART II. History

Write your ID number (not your name!) on the blue book, and answer all questions in the blue books.

1. Identify and describe eight of the following ten items. Your answers should be about 3–4 informative sentences in length. Be sure to state when the technique/genre/movement/idea flourished and name some works and/or composers related to each. (30 points, 15 minutes)

-Cori spezzati
-Futurism
-Galant Style
-Fauxbourdon
-Grand motet
-Grand opera
-Landini cadence
-Opera and Drama
-Partita
-Style brisé

2. For ten of the following fifteen compositions, identify the composer and give the approximate date when it was written. (30 points, 15 minutes)

-Atys
-Clavierübung
-Fitzwilliam Virginal Book
-Idomeneo
-L’Art de toucher le clavecin
-Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi
-Magnus liber organi
-Missa Caput
-Movements for Piano and Orchestra
-Oxford Symphony
-Symphony no. 1 in C minor, op. 68
-The Wooden Prince
-Vox Balaenae
-Zeitmasse
-Zigeunerlieder
3. Answer one of the following questions in essay form. (40 points, 30 minutes)

1) In the history of western culture, the arts were long seen as servants of religion, a means of emphasizing theological truth; as St. Augustine famously put it, music did so “by indulging the ears [such that] weaker spirits may be inspired with feelings of devotion.” His words held considerable sway throughout the Middle Ages and beyond.

By contrast, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries art often came to be seen as a substitute for religion; Nietzsche no less famously wrote “Without music, life would be an error. The German imagines even God singing songs.”

Identify and discuss two pieces of music, one representing the first category, the other representing the second. Explain how each piece embodies the aesthetic positions outlined above, either through its internal structure or through such external factors as biography and ideology (by the beliefs that we know to have animated its composer and/or first audiences).

2) Scholars and critics have devoted much energy to exploring the “late style” of this or that composer. They have paid less attention to the “early style,” yet it is an equally intriguing concept. Indeed, one could argue that fledgling composers seek to demonstrate their mastery (of a style, a technique, and idiom), or to play the part of iconoclast (overthrowing the conventions said style, technique, or idiom); often they have attempted to do both at once. Identify and discuss one work each from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth / twenty-first centuries that either comes from early in its composer’s career or represents the first essay by that composer in a particular genre, and consider its features in the light of the dichotomy sketched above.
Spring 2010: MMA Admission Exam, Part 3

Write your ID number, NOT YOUR NAME, on the blue book. Write an essay that characterizes the variation process that relates the theme to this variation. Be sure to address phrase structure, harmony, motive and melodic design as well as other features you consider musically significant.

Describe both
a) the elements of the variation that preserve the theme's design and
b) the elements of the variation that depart from the theme.

If you need to refer to staff-based diagrams in your essay, you may submit the manuscript paper with ID number. However, do NOT submit the score as part of your response to this question.
Thema.

Sehr präzis.
MMA EXAM PART IV

The following work is the third movement of the contemporary British composer Thomas Ades’ seven-movement string quartet, *Arcadiana*, from 1994. This movement’s subtitle is “Auf dem Wasser zu singen.”

In essay form, write an analysis of this movement. In this analysis, talk about Ades’ basic building blocks, their distinctive qualities as musical material, and how he uses them throughout the course of the piece. Discuss the way in which Ades uses some of these materials to invoke the 19th Century. How are these materials at once evocative of that earlier music and at the same time elusive in Ades’ rendering of them? Discuss how Ades transforms his materials throughout the course of this short movement, and elaborate on Ades’ use of texture and approach to form in this miniature.

Write your ID number (not your name) and your analysis in the blue book *only*. You may write on the score for your own personal notes, but this will not be graded.
III. Auf dem Wasser zu singen

$J = 44 \ (J = 132)$ Dolce muovendo

pizz.

$singhiozzando$

arco, senza vib.

$p$ expr.

mf (meno)

$pp$

moltò sonore ed expr.

pizz.

mf

$pp$

arco, pocc. sul pont.

pizz. $singhiozzando$

$pp$

mp

$p$

$pp$

moltò sonore ed expr. sempre

poco sf expr. $mp$ sempre expr.

(pizz.) sul tasto sempre

solo, expr.

$pp$

pizz.

$p$

solo, expr.

$pp$

pizz.

$pp$

arco, intenso

pizz.

poco $f$

pizz.

$p$

poco $f$

arco ord.

arco