

## THE DMA COMPREHENSIVE EXAM IN MUSICOLOGY

Students should contact the musicology advisor on their Academic Advisory Committee no later than the semester before they wish to take the exam. Preparation for the exam consists of two tasks:

### **Focused, research-based preparation (TYPE A)**

In consultation with their advisor, students will select four research topics, one pertaining to each of the following time spans:

1. Pre-1700
2. 1700-1800
3. 1800-1900
4. 1900-present (including ethnomusicological topics)

A research topic should be broad enough that at least 8-12 highly relevant sources (such as articles, books, or book chapters) can be found on the topic. It should be narrow enough that no one source is able to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic. Students should create bibliographies for individual topics in consultation with their advisors which should consist of 8- 12 highly relevant sources and then discuss the most interesting themes in that literature with their advisor. Ultimately, students should find that their combination of sources enables them to have a solid overview of the topic; to see the limitations in the existing literature and avenues to remedy them; and to be able to combine ideas in different sources in order to have a fresh and interesting take on the topic. In the exam, students should be prepared to answer an essay question about each topic which will have a close and clear connection to the ideas and themes that the student and advisor have discussed. Students will not know the exact question in advance.

A note about research topics: these do not need to be repertoire based. In the event that these are, however, students should ensure that their research topics do not focus on a particular instrument or genre more than once (for instance, “Late Style in Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas” should not be paired with “Neoclassicism in the Piano Works of Prokofiev”).

## **Comprehensive preparation (TYPE B)**

In consultation with their musicology advisor, for each research topic students should select two chapters in Taruskin and Gibbs' *A History of Western Music* that deal with the immediate time period of the research topic.

Students should then familiarize themselves with the information in these chapters, such that they have command of the information and ideas contained within them. For the exam, students should be able to define key terms used in the chapters; demonstrate complete command of important dates raised in the chapters; be able to identify score excerpts drawn from any major piece discussed in the chapter(s) and to discuss their most salient musical features, and to summarize important concepts discussed in the chapters.

The one instance in which a candidate should NOT use Taruskin and Gibbs' *A History of Western Music* is for TYPE B preparation where the topic is ethnomusicological. In this instance, the student should instead consult with their advisor to find two articles relevant to their topic. The method of preparation will be similar — students should be able to define key terms used in the articles, demonstrate complete command of the content of the articles, and summarize important concepts discussed in the chapters. If the articles contain musical scores, candidates should also be familiar with these and able to identify them.

### **Structure of the examination**

Once student and advisor decide the student is prepared for the exam, the exam can be scheduled with two weeks' notice.

The examination will be divided into four sections, each of which lasts two hours. Students will be tested as follows:

Section	Time Span Tested	Method of Testing
Section 1	Pre-1700	EITHER an essay question based on their research-based (TYPE A) preparation OR a series of questions (i.e., short answers, score IDs, multiple choice, etc.) which test their comprehensive (TYPE B) preparation
Section 2	1700-1800	EITHER an essay question based on their research-based (TYPE A) preparation OR a series of questions (i.e., short answers, score IDs, multiple choice, etc.) which test their comprehensive (TYPE B) preparation
Section 3	1800-1900	EITHER an essay question based on their research-based (TYPE A) preparation OR a series of questions (i.e., short answers, score IDs, multiple choice, etc.) which test their comprehensive (TYPE B) preparation
Section 4	1900-present (including ethno-musicological topics)	EITHER an essay question based on their research-based (TYPE A) preparation OR a series of questions (i.e., short answers, score IDs, multiple choice, etc.) which test their comprehensive (TYPE B) preparation

In total, students will be asked two essay questions which test TYPE A preparation and two sets of questions which test TYPE B preparation but will not know in advance how each topic will be tested.

Since the entire examination lasts eight hours, students can elect to take the exam in two four-hour sections. In this instance, students will be handed half the exam at a time.

Source: DMA Guidelines Appendix C