Manhattan School of Music  
Study Guide for Composition Audition

The audition is two days. The first day has a 3.5 hour exam covering the following subjects:

- sightsinging  
- dictation (intervallic/melodic/ four part and rhythmic)  
- scales (diatonic and non-diatonic)  
- set theory and serial transformations  
- 16th C. counterpoint analysis  
- 4 part harmonic analysis  
- instruments (ranges and transpositions)  
- a historical composition exercise (e.g. the continuation of a binary dance piece)  
- "20 Questions" a brief survey of composition related information in Column A/B matching format

The exam is given in the morning. At its conclusion each candidate is given the same composition exercise which is to be completed in time for presentation to the faculty during the candidate's scheduled audition interview time on the second day of the audition. This exercise is to be composed in the candidate’s own style and is general in its guidelines, therefore not demanding of a specific stylistic solution.

The audition interview with the faculty usually begins with the candidate’s presentation of his or her overnight composition. If the candidate can perform the work on the piano or some other instrument this is encouraged but not required. MIDI versions of the piece are acceptable as well.