

PREPARING FOR DOCTORAL ENTRANCE EXAMS

In addition to the audition on your major instrument, you must pass exams in music history and music theory to be admitted to the DMA program at Manhattan School of Music.

History -- This exam expects a general familiarity with the various style periods of music history from the Baroque era to the present. You should be able to say something about the lives and works of the major composers of each period, know what genres they worked in, specific compositional techniques employed, other popular genres of the time, the theoretical principles that underlie the music, and changes in compositional style and technique from one period to another. The exam is largely repertoire-based, which is to say that if you know who wrote the “Symphony of 1000,” or how many cantatas Bach wrote, you’ll do well.

Preparation for this exam, which involves short answer questions, essay questions and sometimes a reading comprehension exercise, could come from a review of class notes from a music history survey course that you took in the past. If you have no such notes, we recommend that you read David Poultney’s *Studying Music History*, or Hugh Miller’s *Harper-Collins College Outline History of Western Music*, both of which are concise review-oriented books. **DO NOT TRY TO READ DONALD GROUT’S HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC FROM COVER TO COVER.**

Theory -- This exam requires the ability to harmonize a melody, realize a figured bass, write in a four-part chorale style, analyze non-harmonic tones, write species counterpoint, write Bach-style fugal counterpoint, and build and resolve chromatic chords. In addition, a knowledge of 20th century compositional techniques of analysis is required. This includes 12-tone operations as well as some understanding of “set” theory.

Preparation for this exam could also be done with the aid of old class notes. Otherwise, several different books on elementary harmony and counterpoint are possible study sources, along with a book on 12-tone techniques and something that will provide an overview of set theory, such as Allen Forte’s *The Structure of Atonal Music*. For additional study suggestions see the separate theory study guide from Dr. Fueting.

A more detailed theory study guide prepared by the Chair of the Theory Dept., Dr. Reiko Fueting is available upon request. Email rfueting@msmnyc.edu