

The UNLV School of Music DMA Qualifying Exam: Description and Sample Questions

Purpose of the Historical Portion of the DMA Qualifying Examination

Following the completion of course work and prior to writing a research document, Doctor of Musical Arts degree candidates take a Qualifying Examination that includes broad coverage of music historical topics. Among other tasks, candidates must demonstrate their understanding of music historical issues, concepts, styles, and repertoires through essays and style analyses of diverse scores.

The historical portion of the DMA Qualifying Examination intends to ensure and ascertain that degree candidates have acquired and can communicate an advanced knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, stylistic innovations, artists, and works that comprise the Western art music tradition and that are the basis and core of modern performance practices, repertoires, and pedagogies. The expertise and knowledge of the DMA candidate should meet the complete artistic and scholarly demands placed especially on those who work as performing artists, teachers, administrators, or other capacities in higher education or allied cultural institutions and business organizations.

Structure of the Historical Portion of the DMA Qualifying Examination

The music history written portion of Doctoral Qualifying Examination has the following components:

Part 1. The examinee will correctly explain and illustrate a selection of terms (concepts, persons, musical works, or technical terms) relating to each of the following five periods of music history: medieval and Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern (post-1900). The examinee will select two out of four randomly presented terms for each period, producing thus a total of ten explanations. The examinee will moreover be asked to identify a specific composer, musical work, or other object that clearly illustrates or exemplifies the meaning of each selected term. Responses may receive partial credit depending on the quality of the explanation as well as inclusion of an illustrative example.

Sample terms (only two are given in each column in this sample; an exam will have four in each column):

Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V
1. motet 2. formes fixes	1. sonata da chiesa 2. monody	1. Sturm und Drang 2. sonata form	1. character piece 2. Lied	1. neo-classicism 2. minimalism

Part 2. The examinee will choose four out of five unidentified score excerpts that represent different musical periods, styles, and genres. For each excerpt chosen, the examinee will explain in a brief essay important stylistic and technical features of the music, and will use this evidence to attribute the work plausibly to a historical period and composer. For each score, a response length of 200-250 words is recommended, though there is no limit to the length or detail of the response. Audio recordings of these excerpts will **not** be played, and fluency in reading musical notation in various score formats is called upon. Scores will normally represent an entire short work or movement, or formally significant portion

of a larger movement or work. The essays will be evaluated based primarily on the comprehensiveness, depth, and terminological accuracy of the examinee's analysis, and secondarily on the attribution of the work.

Sample score: See p. 3.

Part 3. The examinee will write essays (500–750 words recommended) addressing two broad music historical questions that he/she will chose from among four given questions. The essay will be evaluated based primarily on content, and secondarily on form and style. The questions will specify the minimum requirements for their adequate responses.

Consult the Department's Graduate Handbook, which may contain additional information about the Doctor of Musical Arts degree qualifying examination.

Sample essay question:

1. Identify and explain what you think are important musical styles and techniques of Western art music between 1900 and 1950. Support your explanation by describing at least **three** representative examples of works that represent **three** different genres (e.g., vocal, chamber, solo, orchestral, etc.).

Sample Score for Part II:

Allegro

Violine I
Violine II
Viola
Violoncello und Kontrabaß

The score is divided into four systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-6) shows the initial entry of the strings with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system (measures 7-13) features a piano (p) dynamic. The third system (measures 14-20) includes dynamic markings for sf, p, and cresc. The fourth system (measures 21-26) returns to a forte (f) dynamic.

28

p

35

f

42

B

p *f*

49

p

56

f