

Music Appreciation (MUSC 326A): Midterm Exam Information

Date: Friday, March 3, 2023

Location: Music Building, Room 462 (our regular classroom)

Time: 1 – 1:50 p.m. (our regular class time)

Format:

The exam is in four parts, each worth ten marks.

Part 1, Short Answer (ten questions, 1 mark each): These are typically one- or two-word answers to a simple question (eg., “what do we call the large ensemble that is used in a concerto grosso?” or “what do we call the type of vocal setting in which more than one note is used per syllable?”)

Part 2, Listening (five questions, two marks each): I will play five short musical passages. For one mark, you will identify the work and, where possible, the composer. For a second mark, you will briefly answer a factual question, such as “what type of texture do we hear in this passage?” or “which specific component of opera seria is this?” (eg., aria, secco recitative, chorus, overture).

Part 3, Multiple Choice (ten questions, 1 mark each): Remember to choose the best possible answer. A sample question could be, “Palestrina’s ‘Pope Marcellus’ Mass is, a) an example of a pre-Tridentine Mass, b) a Mass that makes extensive use of imitative polyphony, c) the first complete setting of the Mass Ordinary, or d) an example of a *sine nomine* Mass (ie., Mass ‘without name’).”

Part 4, Long Answer (one question to respond to): You will be given a **choice** between **two** topics to reply to. You simply need to provide information; you do not need to think about formulating an essay of any kind. The topics will give you an opportunity to discuss a range of works that we have carefully studied in class; you will therefore be expected to refer to such works in support of your answer.

Studying for the midterm:

Our midterm exam covers our readings up to the end of the Baroque—that is, precisely what we covered up to the final day of class before Reading Break, and the last chapter of our text that I distributed before the break. For study purposes, I assume you will have your own course notes from each day of listening carefully in class, as the principal focus of the midterm will be on the key musical concepts and historical stylistic developments that we have learned about in relation to particular musical genres and works. Since you will be asked to identify musical works during the exam, ensuring that you can recognize each work that we have studied in class is essential. No impression that is helpful to you should be overlooked—e.g., does the work have voices or none at all? many or few? is it distinctive in character in some way? Does it remind me of anything, musical or not? Etc.

You do not need to know precise dates, but approximate time sequences and eras do matter: you should be able to distinguish between genres or styles that would correspondingly distinguish between music of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Baroque, and likewise important distinctions within the medieval or Renaissance eras (for example, *Ars nova*, pre- or post-Tridentine).

My main piece of advice is to remember what I said on the first day of our class: the repertoire lists—in this case, for music of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Baroque periods—is your course outline: your focus should be on understanding *why* we have learned about these genres of music in particular, both in terms of their origins and in terms of the characteristic features they have that reflect those origins. We have learned some interesting tidbits along the way about composers’ lives and circumstances, but biographical information has not been the focus of the course, nor would it be on the exam.