

Comprehensive Examinations in Collaborative Piano

Students completing the Master of Music or Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Collaborative Piano must pass a final comprehensive examination. These exams may be taken no more than three times. A third failure will result in failing the program.

MM Oral Exams

MM students will take a comprehensive oral exam after the completion of the MM Recital. Students are responsible for scheduling the time and location of the exam. The examination committee consists of Dr. Harlos, Dr. Puccinelli and the student's related field professor.

MM students planning to graduate in the same semester in which the oral exam will be attempted are advised to note the deadline by which all requirements must be completed in order to avoid a delay in graduation. The exam may be taken no more than three times. Failing and retaking the exam may delay graduation; a third failure will result in failing the program.

DMA Qualifying Exams

Students completing the Doctor of Musical Arts in Collaborative Piano must pass written and oral comprehensive examinations. Students will first take the written qualifying exam on one of the dates set by the College of Music Graduate Studies Office. Once written exams are passed, the candidate is then responsible for scheduling the time and location of the oral exam after consulting all committee members. The examination committee consists of Dr. Harlos, Dr. Puccinelli and the student's related field professor. These exams may be taken no more than three times. Failing and retaking the exam may delay projected graduation; a third failure will result in failing the program.

Preparation and Content

In order to pass these examinations, MM and DMA students will demonstrate a degree-appropriate level of knowledge related to all areas of collaborative piano performance and literature, as well as knowledge of lyric diction/sung language. DMA students are additionally expected to demonstrate knowledge of effective pedagogical strategies for use in studio and classroom settings.

All students are expected to demonstrate a basic understanding of the historical development and representative repertoire for the following genres:

- Duo sonatas and larger chamber works involving piano
- Major concerti

- Art Song/ Song Cycles (including *Lieder*, *mélodie*, British and American art song, as well as other national song literature)
- Opera

For the DMA qualifying exams, students can expect essays and short answer questions regarding:

- major works and bodies of literature for both vocal and instrumental collaborative repertoire;
- the use of piano and other keyboard instruments in collaborative repertoire;
- issues of performance practice and style;
- teaching collaborative skills;
- analysis and score identification;
- important musical terms;
- major reference works for the discipline; and,
- important personages.

Sample Topics for Preparation

Topics and questions are listed below to aid in your preparation for your exams. Questions will not necessarily appear in the same form at the exams, but you can expect similar questions, as well as others which will draw on the answers to the questions below.

Review all repertoire lists from literature courses.

The bibliography of reference materials will be of assistance with several of these questions.

Be sure to incorporate score study and review of essential reference texts into your preparations.

You may be asked to sight-read or play other repertoire in the exam.

1. What are your goals as a pianist? In which ways do you hope to see your skills evolve in the immediate future? What are your dream pieces or programs? Why?
2. Construct several collaborative programs for yourself. Include vocal and instrumental literature... or works that involve both. What are some ways to “modernize” the traditional recital?
3. What are your next steps in creating a career in music for yourself?
4. Who are the pianists you most admire? Why?
5. Who are the collaborative pianists (past and present) you most admire? Why? Who are some of the major pedagogues in our field and where could you find them if you wanted to study with them? What are the essential traits necessary to be a successful collaborative artist?
6. What do you feel to be the essential ingredient(s) in any collaboration? Do these differ with singers and instrumentalists? If so, how?
7. Discuss the various terminologies: accompanist; pianist; collaborative pianist. How do they differ? Which do you use/prefer? Are there situations where one might be more appropriate than another? What tools could you use to market yourself in general? What is needed to apply for a professional performing position? For a college or university position? What materials do you need to have ready? Are your materials ready?
8. What does “professionalism” mean to you? How do you apply that in your freelance work? What issues have you encountered in working with others within the university

- setting, and what have you done to resolve or avoid any problems? What summer programs or training programs have you applied for or participated in, or intend to apply for? What experience did you gain/do you hope to gain?
9. Does the repertoire to be learned influence how you approach the music or how you prepare it? Does knowledge of the background of a piece influence your interpretation of it? What is the role of research for a performing artist, in your opinion and experience? Discuss appropriate and complete score preparation for all types of collaborative literature.
 10. What musical styles, other than classical, have you had experience with? Is it important to be familiar with other styles? Why or why not?
 11. Do we need to be able to sight-read in order to be a good collaborator? What can you do to improve those skills?
 12. Typically solo works are performed from memory, and any collaborative literature is played from the score. How does this affect your learning process and your performance of the works involved?
 13. Discuss your method(s) for memorization. What would you suggest for a student who is struggling with memory skills?
 14. If you were asked to teach collaborative skills, what skills would you emphasize? How would you “teach” these? How do they differ from skills needed as a soloist? What sort of support materials (books, recordings, etc.) would you use, and why? What pieces would you suggest first learning (drawing from all repertoires)? How would you structure an undergraduate course in collaborative skills?
 15. Develop a sample technical regimen for an undergraduate piano major. What are some collaborative repertoire pieces appropriate for the average student at that level? What additional issues might you need to address for an undergraduate organ major in a collaborative piano instruction setting?
 16. When confronted with an issue of balance, what should you do? Discuss the importance of voicing and texture in achieving good balance.
 17. Discuss pedaling, in general, and specifically as regards balance and as regards orchestral playing.
 18. Full-stick, half-stick, baby-stick, lid down... Discuss situations when each of these might be the best choice.
 19. Are there different ways of setting up the performance space which might help with balance or ensemble?
 20. What are the types of ensemble? What are some ways to ensure good ensemble, both in general and in isolated, tricky passages? How can visual contact be of assistance here? What other techniques can you use to be prepared to always be with your partner?
 21. What skills are needed in working with a conductor? How can these be taught/learned? Do any of these have an application in solo or ensemble work, when there is no conductor?
 22. Compare and contrast preparing a solo sonata with an instrumental sonata. How is this different when working with a larger ensemble (trio, quartet, etc.)?

23. Discuss the difference in preparing and performing a sonata with virtuoso character pieces (Sarasate, Kreisler, etc.).
24. What are some of the issues in preparing concerto reductions which we do not encounter in sonata literature? What benefits are there to knowing the orchestral realities of works transcribed for piano and voice or instrument? What are some ways to recreate the orchestral sound? What are some major concerti for string instruments?
25. In what situations might you not play the piano part “as written”? Discuss facilitation of a score, what it is, why it is necessary, and where it is appropriate.
26. You’ve been called with a desperate last minute request to play a concert. How do you learn music quickly? What are some ways to deal with difficult passages?

27. What are the benefits of language skills for a pianist? Can you be a successful partner to singers without them? What are the most important languages to be familiar with, and what constitutes basic familiarity as opposed to fluency?
28. What is lyric diction? How does it differ from spoken diction? What is IPA and what is its value for performing classical musicians?
29. What are some of the basic reference books on art song, either in general, or for the repertory of a particular language/country?
30. Is it really necessary to understand every word literally in any sung piece? Is it more important in certain vocal genres than in others? What are the different types of translations you can use to aid in your understanding of a text? Are there reference sources which can aid in this understanding? If so, give examples.

31. Who are some of the major composers of chamber music, and what did they write? Who are some of the major composers of art song? Be able to briefly discuss their style and/or works.
32. Are there composers who are well-known for both chamber music and art song? Only chamber music? Only art song? Who are some of the most commonly-heard opera composers?

33. The development of the piano and its mass production in the beginning of the 19th century were of central importance to the flowering of art song. Discuss.
34. Trace the evolution of Lieder (cycles and songs) from Viennese classical composers through Richard Strauss, giving specific examples from the literature to illustrate your points about style, form, poets, poetic themes, text setting, text painting, writing for the voice, interplay between the voice and piano, use of the piano or other accompanimental partners, etc.
35. Compare the song cycles and styles of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf and Strauss.
36. Give a detailed overview of the *melodie* repertoire. What are Debussy’s songs considered innovative? How do they compare to the *melodies* of Faure, Duparc and Ravel? Be prepared to discuss specific sets or songs as examples.
37. What are some major works in 20th and 21st century British and American art song?

38. Who are important poets in each of the major sung languages? When were these poets active? What was the poet’s style of writing? Who set these poets, and were the composers contemporary of the poet, or from a later generation/century? What is *commedia dell’arte* and what is its significance for the collaborative piano repertory?

39. Compare Beethoven's violin sonatas with his cello sonatas and other works for cello and piano (size, style, number, form, writing for the instruments, etc.).
40. Discuss the major 19th and early 20th century works for viola and piano.
41. What are the major works for cello and piano? Discuss form, style, etc. of each.
42. Who are some of the major composers of chamber music, and what did they write? Who are some of the major composers of art song? Be able to briefly discuss their style and/or works.
43. Are there composers who are well-known for both chamber music and art song? Only chamber music? Only art song? Who are some of the most commonly-heard opera composers?

44. How did developments in the piano as an instrument change the style of writing for this instrument?
45. As collaborative pianists, we are called upon to play music written for many different keyboard instruments on the piano (as well as repertoire written for orchestra). Discuss the differences between various keyboard instruments (their sound, mechanism, style of music, etc.) and also discuss how we can best approximate the sound of those instruments on the modern piano.
46. Performance practice issues for a collaborative pianist change significantly whether we're playing repertoire transcribed from the Baroque era, originally for basso continuo, through concerto reductions from the 21st century. Discuss how performance practice applies to these various transcriptions as well as to repertoire written for various keyboard instruments from the late 18th through the early 20th centuries.
47. Discuss the experience of preparing and performing a work by a contemporary composer for which you do not have a recording. What is it like to work with a living composer?

48. Discuss the fundamental differences in philosophy between Classicism, Romanticism, and Impressionism. How do these differences manifest themselves in piano music and collaborative repertoire? How does Neoclassicism make itself known in 20th century instrumental literature?

49. What are the skills needed in preparing an opera or opera excerpt? How do these compare to skills needed in preparing a song written for voice and piano? How does this compare to preparing a vocal selection from a musical or other popular style?
50. The operas of Mozart, Verdi, and Puccini contain some of the most commonly studied arias. What are some of these arias? Discuss time periods, plots, musical style, or other pertinent factors. Which other operas feature arias which appear frequently in university voice studios?