

Study guide for comprehensive theory exams

You will be given four scores to analyze, one each from the following categories. The questions for each will not be about specific details; but rather, will call upon a broad, general grasp of the forms, techniques, and the use of musical language found in each piece. You will not be asked to define specific terms or analyze individual chords; however, be advised that complete answers to the questions will necessarily involve the appropriate application of terms, and that a satisfactory explanation of form and/or use of musical language will inexorably involve some harmonic analysis.

The following lists of genres, forms and styles are not exhaustive checklists. They should provide some orientation for the types of pieces you should be prepared to analyze.

Baroque

Genres: sonata, trio sonata, prelude (or something else) and fugue, concerto, opera, cantata, oratorio

Forms: suite, sonata, variations, da capo aria

Classical

Genres: sonata, chamber music, concerto, symphony, opera

Forms: sonata, binary, ternary, variations, rondo

Romantic

Genres: character pieces, art songs, symphony, concerto, symphonic poem, opera

Forms: binary, ternary, “programmatic”

20th century

Styles: impressionism, expressionism, folklorism, neo-classicism, aleatoric, sound mass, minimalism, texture/timbre composers (Crumb, Berio, etc.).

Sample question/answer (see following score)

Schumann's “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai” from *Dichterliebe*.

Analyze this song, focusing in particular on characteristics of 19th c. Romanticism. Diagram the form on the score, and analyze as much of the chromaticism as you can.

Sample answer:

- I. Form: strophic, A-A1 (mm. 1-12, 13-27)
- II. Harmony/tonality
 - A. V-I delayed until m. 6
 - B. opening appears to be iv6-V in f#– but never resolves in f#
 - C. iv6-V progression used chromatically in a sequence, mm. 9-12 (in ii, then in IV, using modal borrowing)
 - D. Ends ambiguously on V/vi
- III. Melody
 - A. long appoggiaturas (c# in piano, m. 1 and voice opening); and, many appoggiaturas generally (mm. 10, 12, etc.). Chromatic appoggiaturas (piano, m. 10, e.g.)
 - B. voice part unresolved– ends on $\hat{6}$ both phrases; piano part ends on $\#_5^{\hat{}}$ both phrases.

Schumann
Dichterliebe, Op. 48
Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
(Heine)
Op. 48, No. 1

Langsam, zart

Musical notation for the first system (measures 1-4). Includes piano (*p*) and *ffz.* markings.

Musical notation for the second system (measures 5-7). Includes piano (*p*) marking and the lyrics: "Im wun - derschönen Mo.nat Mai, als

Musical notation for the third system (measures 8-10). Includes the lyrics: "al. - le Knos - pen spran - gen, da ist in mei. - nem

Musical notation for the fourth system (measures 11-13). Includes the lyrics: "Her - zen die Lie - be auf - ge - gan - gen." and a *ritard.* marking.

Musical notation for the fifth system (measures 14-16). Includes piano (*p*) marking and the lyrics: "Im wun - derschönen Mo.nat

Musical notation for the sixth system (measures 17-19). Includes the lyrics: "Mai, als al. - le Vö - gel san - gen, da

Musical notation for the seventh system (measures 20-22). Includes the lyrics: "hab' ich ihr ge - stan - den mein Seh - nen und Ver -

Musical notation for the eighth system (measures 23-25). Includes the lyrics: "lan - gen." and a *ritard.* marking. Ends with a double bar line and an asterisk (*).