

General Examination in Theory

August 2007

<i>(Monday, 8/20, 9 a.m.-noon)</i>	1. Theoretical Systems
<i>(Monday, 8/20, 2-5 p.m.)</i>	2. History of Music Theory
<i>(Wednesday, 8/22, 9 a.m.-noon)</i>	3. Topic 1: Cognitive approaches to musical meaning
<i>(Wednesday, 8/22, 2-5 p.m.)</i>	4. Topic 2: Phenomenology and temporality of music
<i>(Friday, 8/24, 9 a.m.- Monday, 8/27, 3 p.m.)</i>	5. Music Analysis (take-home paper)

Monday, August 20, 9 a.m.-noon

1. Theoretical Systems

3 hours

Choose **two** questions from these three sections; each question must come from a different section. You are encouraged to use music examples (in pertinent analytical notation where appropriate) and illustrations from relevant repertoires to underscore your argument. Avoid using the same materials in multiple answers.

A. Schenker

1. When Schenker's theory left its native Vienna and came to cold-war USA, what was in the ideological baggage that was left behind? What was it replaced with?
2. The rising *Umlinie*—pro and con.

B. neo-Riemannianism

1. Critics have argued that neo-Riemannian approaches should be called neo-Lewinian theories.—What's in a name?
2. Discuss the place of tonality in neo-Riemannian approaches.

C. Pitch-class set theory

1. Allen Forte chose Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* as an analytical test case for pc-set theory. Discuss the implications of this choice and the debates surrounding this application of the theory.
2. The concept of pitch-class set genera were introduced to placate Forte's critics and refine the scope of pc-set theory. Have pc-set genera succeeded in this task? (If so, how? If not, why not?)

Monday, August 20, 2-5 p.m.

2. History of Music Theory

3 hours

Choose **two** questions from these three sections; each question must come from a different section. Avoid using the same materials in multiple answers. You are encouraged to underscore your points with pertinent examples wherever they may help clarify or strengthen your argument.

A. The Early Modern Period

1. What is the *senario*?
2. Why was Descartes' maxim "huius objectus est sonum" [its object is sound] so meaningful to music-theoretical discourse?

B. The Eighteenth Century

1. Discuss Rameau's concept of *supposition* and the problems surrounding it.
2. Compare and contrast different eighteenth-century approaches to musical expressivity.

C. The Nineteenth Century

1. Discuss ways in which the concept of *Klang* has been used in nineteenth-century music theories.
2. Can there be any consensus on the nature of tonality in nineteenth-century theoretical discourse? Discuss.

Wednesday, August 22, 9 a.m.-noon

3. Topic 1: Cognitive approaches to musical meaning

3 hours

Answer **two** of the three questions. Avoid using the same materials in multiple answers. You are encouraged to underscore your points with pertinent examples wherever they may help clarify or strengthen your argument.

1. Musicology in the 1980s and 1990s was significantly concerned with the question of musical meaning. This period saw the rise of such approaches as semiotics, hermeneutics, gender theory, and Adorno's critical theory. Place cognitive musicology within this heterogeneous methodological framework and explain how cognitive notions of musical meaning may relate to, converge with, or differ from other approaches toward musical meaning. (You may, if you wish, focus on the work of one or a few researchers, or tackle general epistemological issues.)
2. Assess the contribution the "Penn" school of theory (Meyer, Narmour, Gjerdingen, Eitan) has made to the question of musical meaning. Compare and contrast the ideas of at least two of its members.
3. Is cognitive musicology condemned to forever being "the next big thing"? Or will it be the lodestar of music theory for the coming generation? Give reasons for your answer.

Wednesday, August 22, 2-5 p.m.

4. Topic 2: Phenomenology and temporality of music

3 hours

Answer **two** of the three questions. Avoid using the same materials in multiple answers. You are encouraged to underscore your points with pertinent examples wherever they may help clarify or strengthen your argument.

1. Discuss the influence of Edmund Husserl on American music theory.
2. Compare models of attentiveness (including problems of succession and time-span or memory) in the work of two of the following authors: Green, Levinson, Lochhead, London, Lewin.
3. Over 20 years ago Thomas Clifton proposed a phenomenological model for theorizing musical experience. The response to this work has been minimal. Discuss:
 - a. reasons for the failure of this work to be taken seriously by music theorists *and/or*
 - b. issues or approaches raised by this work that might be posed in more productive ways.

Friday, August 24, 9 a.m.- Monday, August 27, 3 p.m.

5. Music Analysis (Take-home paper)

You are given two pieces from the tonal repertoire and two from the post-tonal repertoire. Choose **one** from **each** section and write an analytical essay on each of these two pieces. You may use any analytical approach you deem useful for the piece in question. You are encouraged to underscore your points with pertinent musical examples with analytical annotations wherever they may help clarify or strengthen your argument.

Tonal pieces:

1. Claude Debussy, "Ombre des arbres" from *Ariettes oubliées*
2. Franz Liszt, Sposalizio from *Années de Pèlerinage*

Post-tonal pieces:

1. Igor Stravinsky, Three pieces for string quartet, no. 2
2. György Ligeti, Horn Trio (1982), 3rd movement