

2019-2020 Music Department Assessment Report

Assessment Meeting: May 27, 2020

During the 2019-2020 school year, in addition to updating our goals for student learning and the departmental Student Assessment Plan, the Department of Music assessed LG1, which states that students will:

“Acquire knowledge of the theoretical basis for music as practiced in Western cultures, and develop practical competency in sight singing, aural skills, and keyboard proficiency in order to demonstrate their understanding of theoretical concepts.”

Our assessment of LG1 involved examining student work and exams from courses such as MUSI 100, 202, 301, and 425 (direct tools of assessment), as well as a brief survey our graduating seniors completed (indirect tool of assessment; there were two graduates this year) regarding their experiences in developing knowledge of music theory through our departmental courses and activities.

Student Survey

Two students graduated with music majors this year, and both completed the survey we distributed regarding LG 1. The respondents' answers (see next page) suggest that they felt least satisfied with their progress in developing aural skills, an essential skill in music theory. While many higher education institutions offer dedicated courses in aural skills that are a requirement for graduation, we do not have such courses at Hendrix, and must therefore incorporate the teaching of aural skills into our existing courses. Simply put, we ought to consider ways to increase the time spent on this subtopic of music theory study. Additional remarks on this topic are included on p. 15.

My experiences in music courses and activities have contributed toward my knowledge of music theory and its applications in the following ways: *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Knowledge of analysis of harmony and form in printed music	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An ability to identify harmony, melodic features, and formal structures through aural analysis (i.e., ear training)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development of sightsinging ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keyboard proficiency	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Keyboard proficiency	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It should also be noted that, due to COVID-19 and the closing of our courses, that the aural component of our courses was essentially forced to cease mid-semester. However, we are actively looking into ways of incorporating aural skills (along with keyboard proficiency and sightsinging) into our courses for the fall should online instruction continue.

Student Work from MUSI 100, 202, and 425

The examples that follow represent a range of courses in music theory, from our music introductory courses to advanced composition courses for upper level music majors, and includes composition assignments, analysis papers, and a final exam.

MUSI 100 – student composition assignments

96r3=99/96 Well done!

Score

Composition Assignment #4

Name Micklynn Myers

Allegretto

Piano

5

Pno.

9

Pno.

Scale (write in your key signature) Triads (write in your key signature)

Major Key: I IV V I⁷ vi
Minor Key: i iv v v⁷ ii

Score

Composition Assignment #4

Well done! Thanks for trying
in minor!

Name Monica Martinez

Piano

1 time sig placement

-1 note choice
6-7-1

-2 poor triad fit

-1 works better (and in m. 10)

mf f

i 5 3 iv 3 V 3

Pn. Pno.

5 accel. maestoso

f ff

-1 rhythm (too many beats)

i 3 iv 3 V 3 VI 3

Pno.

9 a tempo

rit. meno

pp

-1 note choice
6-7-1

-1 too many beats

-2 poor triad fit

mf

i 3 iv 3 V 3 i 5 3

Scale (write in your key signature)

Scale (write in your key signature)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

Triads (write in your key signature)

Triads (write in your key signature)

Major Key: I IV V I' vi

Minor Key: i iv V V' VI

MUSI 202 – final exam

Name Quinn Gilchrist
MUSI 202 - Final Exam

222 pts.

125 = 50

- I. Chord realization. Using the provided key signatures and Roman numerals, notate each chord in SATB of keyboard format on the staves. Be attentive to any necessary accidentals in minor keys. You may write the names of the pitches for each chord on the provided lines (optional). 20 points.



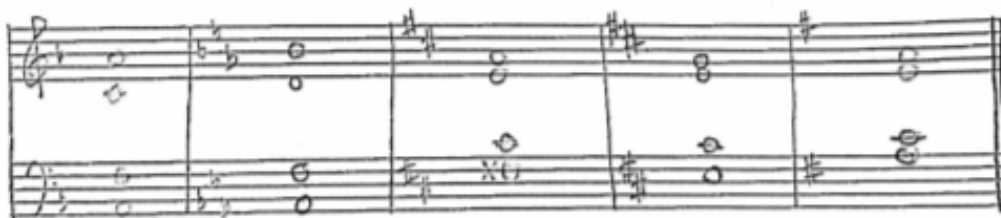
1. G: vi

2. B-flat: V^{6/5}

3. C min: vii^{4/2}
C E A

4. B: IV⁶

5. A: ii^{6/5}



6. F: I⁶

7. E-flat: V^{4/2}

8. B min: V⁷
B D E

9. D: vii⁶

10. E min: iv

II. Chord identification. Examine each key signature and chord below, then label each chord with its proper Roman numeral and figured bass. You may write the names of the pitches for each chord on the provided lines (optional). 20 points.

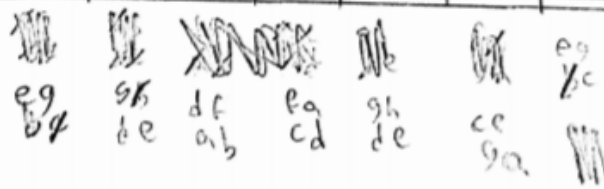
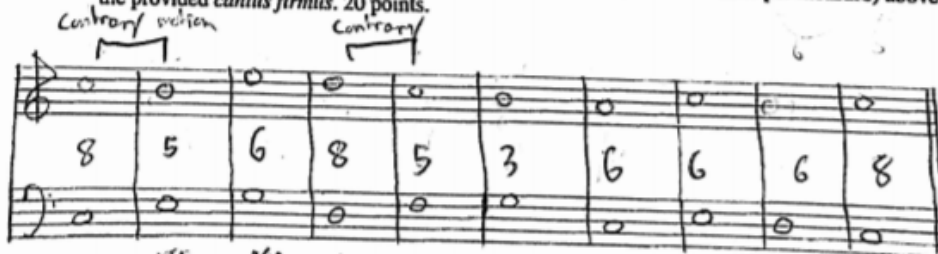


1. E: I^6 2. D min: $\text{vii}^{\text{b}6/5}$ 3. C# min: vii^7 4. D-flat: IV^7 5. C: ii^7



6. G min: $\text{vii}^{\text{b}6}$ 7. A: Vi 8. E-flat: $\text{vii}^{\text{b}6}$ 9. G: $\text{V}^{\text{b}4/2}$ 10. A-flat: $\text{ii}^{\text{b}4/2}$

III. Species counterpoint. Compose a first species counterpoint (one whole note per measure) above the provided *cantus firmus*. 20 points.



- IV. Species counterpoint. Compose a second species counterpoint (2 half notes per measure) above the provided cantus firmus. 20 points.

Handwritten counterpoint exercise. The cantus firmus is written on a single staff. Above it, the intervals for the second species counterpoint are written: *contrary/contrary/contrary/contrary*. The counterpoint is written on a second staff, with intervals written below it: *CG, dF, fG, dF, Gb, Ac, Gb, Ed*. The intervals are written in a way that suggests the counterpoint is composed of half notes.

- VI. Harmonic composition (part 1). Below you are provided with a short melody, and space for a keyboard accompaniment below it. Using keyboard format, add appropriate harmony to each measure below. Note that measures 3 and 7 each require two chords, while the other measures each require just one chord. 20 points (5 pts. per measure)

Your composition must include:

- A half cadence in m. 4 and a perfect authentic cadence in m. 8
- At least 2 different predominant chords (vi, IV, ii, ii⁶, ii⁷, etc.)
- At least two positions of V7 chords: one in root position, and one inverted (you may use more if you wish)

Examine the melody and your bass line carefully to avoid any parallel fifths or parallel octaves.

Handwritten harmonic composition exercise. The melody is written on a single staff. Below it, the keyboard accompaniment is written on two staves. The chords are written above the melody: *DFA (I), AC LG (V7), DF (I), GB (IV), E (V)*. The chords are written in a way that suggests the accompaniment is composed of half notes.

VII. Harmonic composition (part 2). Below you are provided with a bass line. Using SATB format, add a melody and harmony to complete the example. The first chord is provided. The rhythm for the soprano, alto, and tenor lines should be the same as the bass line. Each measure requires four chords, with the exception of m. 4. 4 2 points. (3 pts. per chord)

Your composition must include:

- Two inversions of V^7 (6/5, 4/3, or 4/2)
- A cadential 6/4 (either 6/4-5/3 OR 8/6/4-7/5/3) ✓
- A perfect authentic cadence (P.A.C.) ✓
- At least 2 predominant chords (4, 6, or 2)
- Appropriate use of voice leading principles, vocal ranges, doubling, and spacing of notes within each chord

E^b Major

1 4 3 7 4 4 5 4 3 C 4 2 5 5 I

I ~~IV~~ I^c V^c I IV ~~V~~ IV I^c vi V⁴ ii⁷ I^c V I

(E) (A) E B (E) (A) (B) (E) (C) B (F) E (B) (L)

G C (G) (D) G C D C (G) (E) B (F) E (B) (L)

B E B F B E F E B G D A G D G

E A E/G A E A B A E/G (A) E B B E

MUSI 425 – examples of student analysis papers

A(-)

Analysis #2

March 30, 2020

1. The first movement is basically in Sonata form with some interesting deviances. The movement begins in D minor with an Introductory section that lasts about a page. Then the exposition starts and instead of stating a theme in D minor and then transitioning to a second theme in a new key, Schumann continues to develop the first theme in D minor for most of the exposition. He does however go to F major for a while and explores some secondary ideas as well. The exposition is repeated, and the development begins on page 110. The development first focuses on the main idea of the exposition, but then starts developing new themes. It seems that maybe the exposition and development sections have been switched. There does not seem to be much of a recapitulation. The development goes on almost till the end of the movement and instead of coming home to D minor, it finishes in D major. The second movement begins on page 118 and is labeled *Romanze* after the German literary genre. This movement is in A B A* form where the first A section is itself in A B A* form. The first A section is in A minor and it's a section goes till measure 12. The B section of the first A section goes to measure 22 and also states the introductory theme from the first movement. The A* section of the first A section lasts until the key change to D major at measure 26. The B section then states the

sorry, I should have read further

? It is in F from p. 108 bottom 21st through p. 109
Identity them?

One can say that the end of the devel. goes directly to coda, based largely on a new idea from the development (p. 112, 1st syst. m. 4)

and the central portion is a restatement of the 1st movt intro.

introductory theme again but varied from earlier in the movement and lasts until measure 42. The A* section is in A minor and lasts until the end of the movement. The *Romanze* movement has its own theme as well. The theme is distinguished by a dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth note figure which appears three times in this movement. The third movement is a Scherzo and begins on page 120. The structure of this movement is in four sections: a scherzo until measure 64, a trio until measure 112, another scherzo until measure 176, and another trio until the end of the movement. Each of these sections follow an A B A* form like in the second movement. Most Scherzo movements I have seen have a three-part form where there is one trio played in between the scherzi. This Scherzo movement is an extra trio part which may be there to add balance to the movement or to help with some narrative within the piece. The scherzo sections are in D minor and do not differ much from each other. The trio sections are in B-flat major which is a major 3rd below D minor and the first trio ends in A which is the dominant of D minor. The transition section after the second trio is in D minor but ends in A as to prepare for D major in the final movement. This transition section should be considered to be in the final movement. The final movement is labeled *Lebhaft* just as the exposition of the first movement was. The final movement seems almost like a continuation of the first movement with how it uses themes from the first movement and continues to flesh them out. This finale also seems to be in Sonata form with an exposition lasting until measure 77, a development through measure 114, a recapitulation through measure 167, and then a coda until the end. The exposition starts in D major, which

this is the
 reason for the
 statement of
 the trio

? (same material, though) →
 ?
 they are the same.
 ?! Ends in Bb
 dom. of D
 62!
 without restatement of first subject.

is the key the first movement ended in, and stays in D major for most of the
? not really, A Major is the key from p. 127 syst 2, m. 3 until the end of expos.
exposition just as the first movement did but in D minor. The development section

follows closely in still to that of the development in the first movement. However,

see previous page
the finale has a recapitulation section whereas the first movement did not. The

reasons for this might be because Schumann was trying to compose a narrative

throughout this piece and a recapitulation was needed to resolve the narrative. This

may be why the piece ends in D major instead of D minor.

2. The opening theme is characterized by sets of eighth notes moving in mostly a

stepwise pattern throughout the introduction. I believe in the full score the theme

starts with the lower pitched instruments such as the bassoons and violas and then

gradually the higher instruments like the clarinets play the theme. In the second

movement, the opening theme comes back in the major mode and is in the form of

sixteenth notes in triplets. In the first trio of third movement, the opening theme is
it's really a variation of the central portion in mvt. 2
played similar to how it was in the introduction with eighth notes. In the second trio

the theme has rests breaking up the melodic line and it is played with quarter notes

which slows it down and fragments it. In the final movement the opening theme has

a larger range than it did in the introduction, but still follows the same general

motion of the introduction. Schumann seems to like to call back to the introductory

theme in every movement but vary certain aspects to change the mood or narration

that the theme provides.

3. Page 110 starts in the neopolitan of D minor for three systems. It then seems to
? The development actually begins in eb, which is established on syst. 3, measures 4
move to B major for two measures and then modulates to E minor by the end of the

fourth system. In the next system, Schumann takes it to the dominant of F major. In the last system on page 110, it goes to the dominant of F-sharp. At the top of page 111, the piece goes to the neapolitan of G using A-flat. On this first page of the development and the top of the second, Schumann seems to be taking the piece up by halfsteps starting with E-flat and going up to G using dominant and neapolitan chords. On page 111, the piece stays around the dominant of E-flat for a while. On page 112, the piece seems to be in the dominant of C, but then goes towards being in the dominant of the home key D minor. By the end of the fourth system on page 112, the piece has moved to the dominant of F-sharp minor. On page 113, I believe the piece moves up by fourths going from D major to G minor, G to C, and C to F. By the fifth system the piece modulates into E major. On page 114, the piece moves through C-sharp to get to the dominant of A-flat and then goes back to how the development started in the neapolitan of D minor by the end of the third system. On page 115, the piece moves to A minor which is the minor form of the dominant of D minor. By the end of the page, we have moved to A major.

not following this }

I think what's really going on here is a very large sequential repetition: starting in eb (p. 110, syst. 3, m. 4) with contrasting material in Db (p. 111, syst. 2 m. 3) and F (moving to A) (p. 112, top syst. m. 4); then repeating that entire stretch beginning in f# (p. 112, bottom syst. m. 2) and progressing now to E and Ab (C). On p. 115, after establishing a minor, we have a sequence down to g, then f, and from there a circle of M3 progression f - c# - a; finally landing on $\text{II}/0$ in the final bar.

D

This is pretty sketchy, particularly questions 1 and 2. You need to be much more detailed for an assignment like this

Analysis #2

elaborate?

^

1. The structure of movement 1 is roughly sonata form, with some slight variation. Same with movement 2. Movement 3 is scherzo and trio. Movement 4 is also roughly sonata form.

↓
not true

↓
how so?

2. There's a variation on pg. 110 that returns throughout the rest of the piece, and other variations appear in the other movements of the piece, like in the scherzo and trio.

where?

3. On the 2nd half of pg. 110, there's a small scale sequence that's repeated several times; on the top half of pg. 111, there are 2 small scale sequences combined (last 2 measures of the first system and 1st 2 measures of second system); multiple short sequences throughout pg. 112; another short sequence is repeated for the first 4 systems on pg. 113 in the same measures. In pgs. 110-115, the keys modulate through sequences from Eb to Ab, then back to Eb, moving then to e minor, and moving down through minor thirds down to C then A, then up a major third to Db. There's a fair amount of repetition throughout this portion of the piece: the bottom half of pg. 110 into the 1st system of pg. 111; portions of pg. 112, including the 4th system of pg. 112 repeating on pg. 114 several times.

The bulk of this section features a lengthy stretch of music (p. 110, syst. 3, m. 4 - p. 112, bottom system) which is then repeated up a minor 3rd (p. 112 bottom syst. m. 2 - m. 115, syst 2, m. 2) thus moving up by minor 3rds eb - f# - a

Assessment Meeting Discussion

Student work in MUSI 301 and 425, our upper level theory courses, consistently shows a wide disparity in students' comprehension of basic music theory concepts (as indicated by the examples provided). While some students enter these courses highly prepared, many demonstrate a significant lack of mastery of skills covered in previous courses. Those students, who represent a significant portion of those enrolled, struggle significantly while a small number of advanced students excel. In our meeting, we agreed that many of our students would benefit from better preparation in MUSI 100 and 202 to help facilitate the transition to upper level music. Specifically, students often struggle to identify basic musical structures such as key signatures, types of chords, common chord progressions, and forms (topics generally covered in MUSI 202 – see below). These topics clearly warrant further opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate mastery in our courses.

The issue of disparity in student comprehension presents us with a difficult challenge. Helping the less skilled students achieve some of our current course objectives will either require a significant adjustment in our expectations and course goals (i.e., bringing the upper courses down to “their level,” which in some cases is very minimal), or it will require sizable alterations to MUSI 100 and 202 in order to bolster their music theory learning prior to entering MUSI 301. In truth, both approaches to solving this problem must be considered. As a department, we agree that MUSI 202 – the only theory course placed between music fundamentals and upper level analysis courses, needs to be better designed to help reinforce essential musical skills such as identifying key signatures in major vs. minor, and developing some fluency in reading musical scores with varied textures and rhythms rather than purely homophonic chorale-style examples.

In terms of the aural skills matter discussed earlier (as indicated in the student survey), we are increasingly in agreement that the development of aural skills needs to encompass more than a technical approach to listening (i.e., identifying chords, melodic dictations, etc.). Students must develop better listening habits in order to cultivate their musical curiosity and a broader understanding of musical style and repertoire. While this more holistic description of listening as a musical skill is not one explicitly included in LG1, we feel strongly that this is a skill our students need to have. To that end, we are discussing the possibility of further revising LG1 to better address this issue. We also think it would be very feasible to incorporate music listening assignments into our theory courses to help develop these habits. As a liberal arts institution, Hendrix is in a unique position to develop a theory curriculum that focuses on critical thinking and a broad & nuanced understanding of music, rather than a purely technical mastery of the subject. Refocusing our approach to aural skills teaching could help reinforce this aspect of our students' learning.

Another portion of our discussion related to improving the way we teach composition at Hendrix. While MUSI 425 (Composition) is the only course dedicated to the topic, students need more exposure to composing music before they reach this point in the sequence. Over the next three semesters (MUSI 425 will be taught next in Spring 2022), we will integrate more composition topics and assignments into all music theory courses. It may be beneficial to consider curricular changes to MUSI 425, including the possibility of renaming the course and providing an improved description of it in the catalog (we will be discussing this with Curriculum Committee in the fall).

Next year will also provide us with an opportunity to examine how MUSI 405 (Conducting – offered Fall 2020) will help reinforce music theory knowledge, since much of a conductor's

preparation synthesizes skills such as harmonic analysis, sight-singing and rhythm, determining form, and listening.

In summary, the evidence collected and our group conversation on student progress and course design suggests that we are meeting some aspects of LG1, but that we need to work better to ensure that courses in our sequence are adequately preparing students for future classes.