

Certificate of Merit (CM) Level 8 Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Questions

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- 1. What is the meaning of the term 'senza' in music?**
 - A. With**
 - B. Without**
 - C. Less**
 - D. Heavily**

- 2. Which term indicates a playing style with less motion and a slower tempo?**
 - A. Meno mosso**
 - B. Ritenuto**
 - C. Pui mosso**
 - D. Pesante**

- 3. Which period is Schumann from?**
 - A. Romantic**
 - B. 20/21 Centuries/Contemporary**
 - C. Impressionistic**
 - D. Classical**

- 4. Which scale allows the performer to play all the white keys from F to F?**
 - A. Lydian Mode**
 - B. Ionian Mode**
 - C. Mixolydian Mode**
 - D. Phrygian Mode**

- 5. What does "m.s." stand for in musical notation?**
 - A. means to play with the right hand**
 - B. means to play with the left hand**
 - C. means to play with both hands**
 - D. means to play loudly**

- 6. Which musical period is Scarlatti known for?**
 - A. Baroque**
 - B. Classical**
 - C. Modern**
 - D. Post-Romantic**

- 7. What musical period does Dello Joio belong to?**
- A. Romantic**
 - B. 20/21 Centuries/Contemporary**
 - C. Classical**
 - D. Baroque**
- 8. In music theory, what is the term for the third scale degree?**
- A. Mediant**
 - B. Supertonic**
 - C. Dominant**
 - D. Submediant**
- 9. Which term indicates that music should return to the original tempo?**
- A. A tempo**
 - B. Ritard**
 - C. Crescendo**
 - D. Tenuto**
- 10. What is the definition of a subdominant chord?**
- A. A chord with a root of the dominant degree in its key**
 - B. A chord with a root of the subdominant degree in its key**
 - C. A chord that resolves to the tonic**
 - D. A chord that is always a minor triad**

Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. A
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. B
8. A
9. A
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What is the meaning of the term 'senza' in music?

- A. With
- B. Without**
- C. Less
- D. Heavily

The term 'senza' in music originates from the Italian language and translates to "without." It is used in musical notation to indicate that a particular element should be omitted. For example, 'senza sordino' means "without mute," directing the performer to play an instrument without the use of a mute. This instruction helps convey the specific sound quality desired by the composer. The other terms provided do not accurately capture this meaning: 'with' refers to inclusion, 'less' suggests a reduction, and 'heavily' conveys a specific intensity, which does not relate to the concept of absence or omission. Therefore, 'senza' is highlighted as indicating the lack of something in the musical context.

2. Which term indicates a playing style with less motion and a slower tempo?

- A. Meno mosso**
- B. Ritenuto
- C. Pui mosso
- D. Pesante

The term that indicates a playing style with less motion and a slower tempo is "Meno mosso." This Italian phrase translates to "less motion" or "less rapid," and it serves as a directive for musicians to play the passage more slowly than the previous section. This term is commonly used in music to create a sense of calm or to contrast with faster sections, allowing for a more relaxed interpretation of the piece. Understanding this term in the context of music helps performers convey the intended emotional nuances, contributing to the overall expression of the piece. In contrast, other terms like "Ritenuto" suggest holding back the tempo suddenly but not necessarily to a slower, flowing pace, while "Pui mosso" indicates an increase in tempo or motion. "Pesante," meaning heavy or weighty, relates to the manner of playing rather than the tempo, suggesting a more pronounced or forceful performance. Thus, "Meno mosso" specifically captures the idea of a reduced tempo and less motion effectively in musical performance.

3. Which period is Schumann from?

- A. Romantic**
- B. 20/21 Centuries/Contemporary**
- C. Impressionistic**
- D. Classical**

Schumann is classified within the Romantic period, which spanned roughly from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. This era is characterized by a focus on emotion, individualism, and the exploration of new musical forms and structures. Schumann's compositions are notable for their lyrical melodies, rich harmonies, and deep expressiveness, all of which are hallmarks of Romantic music. He was deeply influenced by the romantic ideals in literature and art, which also informed his musical language. Schumann's works, including his piano pieces and symphonies, often convey personal narratives and emotional depth that resonate with the Romantic spirit. His contribution to music during this period helped shape the direction of future composers and solidified his place as a prominent figure in Romantic music history. This understanding of the Romantic period context is crucial for recognizing the significance of Schumann's work and its impact on the evolution of Western classical music.

4. Which scale allows the performer to play all the white keys from F to F?

- A. Lydian Mode**
- B. Ionian Mode**
- C. Mixolydian Mode**
- D. Phrygian Mode**

The correct scale that allows the performer to play all the white keys from F to F is the Lydian Mode. The Lydian Mode is based on the fourth degree of the major scale and is characterized by its raised fourth note. In the case of starting on F, the notes would be F, G, A, B, C, D, E, and again F, which are all the white keys on the piano. This mode provides a distinct sound compared to other modes, as the raised fourth creates a unique and bright quality that differentiates it from the Ionian (Major) scale. The Ionian Mode, while also played on the white keys from C to C, does not start on F, and thus does not fit the criteria of the question. Similarly, the Mixolydian and Phrygian modes would utilize different note sequences, leading to different keys and tonalities that do not correspond to the F to F range strictly on white keys. Therefore, the Lydian Mode is the correct choice.

5. What does "m.s." stand for in musical notation?

- A. means to play with the right hand**
- B. means to play with the left hand**
- C. means to play with both hands**
- D. means to play loudly**

The abbreviation "m.s." in musical notation specifically indicates that the passage should be played with the left hand. This notation is crucial in piano music, where clear indications must be provided for hand distribution to achieve proper technique and sound. Understanding hand notation helps performers accurately interpret the music as intended by the composer and execute passages effectively. The other options refer to different hand indicators or dynamics, but they do not align with the specific meaning of "m.s." It is essential for musicians to recognize distinct terms related to hand usage in order to enhance their performance skills and adhere to the written score.

6. Which musical period is Scarlatti known for?

- A. Baroque**
- B. Classical**
- C. Modern**
- D. Post-Romantic**

Scarlatti is predominantly recognized for his contributions to the Baroque period, particularly through his keyboard sonatas. His works exemplify the stylistic traits of this era, characterized by ornamentation, the use of counterpoint, and expressive melodies. Scarlatti's innovative sonatas, which blend Italian and Spanish influences, showcase the dramatic contrasts and emotional depth that are hallmark features of Baroque music. The Baroque period is marked by composers like Bach, Vivaldi, and Handel, who were contemporaries of Scarlatti, highlighting the rich and diverse musical landscape of the time. His unique keyboard style laid the groundwork for later composers while retaining the intricate, expressive qualities typical of Baroque works. This makes his association with the Baroque period not only accurate but key to understanding the evolution of keyboard music.

7. What musical period does Dello Joio belong to?

- A. Romantic**
- B. 20/21 Centuries/Contemporary**
- C. Classical**
- D. Baroque**

Dello Joio is identified with the 20th and 21st centuries, which is often referred to as the Contemporary period. This time frame is characterized by diverse musical styles and a departure from the traditional forms and structures of earlier periods. Dello Joio's compositions reflect contemporary techniques and influences, showcasing the evolution of music in the 20th century. He integrated various styles and sought to express modern ideas through his works, aligning him with the innovations and explorations typical of Contemporary composers. Thus, selecting the Contemporary period appropriately recognizes his contribution to music during this dynamic era.

8. In music theory, what is the term for the third scale degree?

- A. Mediant**
- B. Supertonic**
- C. Dominant**
- D. Submediant**

The term for the third scale degree is "Mediant." In music theory, the scale degrees are named based on their position within the diatonic scale. The mediant is specifically the third note of the scale, acting as a bridge between the tonic (first scale degree) and the dominant (fifth scale degree). Understanding the mediant's function is crucial because it helps establish the tonal center and contributes to harmonic progressions within a piece of music. The mediant is often used in chord creation and modulation because of its stability while also providing a sense of movement away from the tonic. The other terms refer to different scale degrees: the supertonic is the second degree, the dominant is the fifth, and the submediant is the sixth. Each of these plays a unique role in scale structure and harmony, but they do not represent the third scale degree, hence why they are not applicable in this context.

9. Which term indicates that music should return to the original tempo?

- A. A tempo**
- B. Ritard**
- C. Crescendo**
- D. Tenuto**

The term that indicates music should return to the original tempo is "A tempo." This instruction is commonly used in musical scores to signify that the performer should revert back to the initial speed of the piece after a section that may have altered the tempo, such as a ritardando or a tempo rubato. Understanding tempo is crucial in music performance, as it affects the pacing and emotional delivery of a piece. "A tempo" acts as a clear signal to the musician that it is time to go back to the established rhythm that was set at the beginning, ensuring that the flow of the music is maintained. In contrast, the other terms serve different functions in music. "Ritard" indicates a gradual slowing down, "crescendo" refers to a gradual increase in volume, and "tenuto" suggests that a note should be held for its full value or slightly longer. These terms indicate specific alterations to performance rather than a return to the original tempo.

10. What is the definition of a subdominant chord?

- A. A chord with a root of the dominant degree in its key**
- B. A chord with a root of the subdominant degree in its key**
- C. A chord that resolves to the tonic**
- D. A chord that is always a minor triad**

The subdominant chord is defined specifically as a chord that has its root based on the subdominant degree of the scale in its key. In any given key, the subdominant is the fourth degree of the scale. For example, in the key of C major, the subdominant chord would be F major, since F is the fourth note in the C major scale. This chord plays a vital role in establishing harmony and creating movement towards the dominant chord, which in turn typically resolves to the tonic. This understanding highlights the function of the subdominant chord within harmonic progressions. It does not necessarily need to resolve to the tonic but often does serve that purpose in various musical contexts. Additionally, the subdominant chord can be both major or minor, depending on the key, further expanding its role within compositions.

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