CORNELL UNIVERSITY
Graduate School
Field of Music

THE Ph.D. IN MUSICOLOGY AT CORNELL

Revised May 2013

The doctoral program in musicology is uniquely flexible; it is developed individually, in consultation with the student’s Special Committee, and students may combine their study in the Field of Music (historical musicology, ethnomusicology, theory, composition and performance practice) with work in other Fields of study at Cornell. The phrase Field of Music, or Field, is the official Graduate School designation for the graduate programs and the Graduate Faculty in music. The Graduate Faculty includes Professors Bjerken, Boettcher, Ernste, Groos, Harris-Warrick, Hicks, Holst-Warhaft, Kellock (minor member), Krumhansl, Moseley, Peraino, Piekut, Pinch, Pond, Richards, Sierra, Stucky, Webster, Yearsley, and Zaslaw. Retired members of the Graduate Field may also continue to participate on graduate student committees; currently they include Professors Bilson, Hatch, and Rosen. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) coordinates the activities of the Field, including such concerns as admissions, financial aid, advising, and job placement, and represents the Field vis-à-vis the Graduate School. For 2013, the DGS is Professor Boettcher; as of the academic year 2013-14 it will be Professor Yearsley. More information about the structure of the Field and major and minor concentrations may be found at the end of this document.

Residence: The normal minimum residence requirement is six residence units (a unit equals one satisfactorily completed semester of full-time study). It is possible to earn credit “in absentia,” while studying away from Ithaca. A student who comes with a master’s degree from another institution may petition for reduction of the minimum requirement, usually to four units. At least two of the minimum six units must be spent in consecutive semesters of full-time study on the Ithaca campus. At least two of the six must follow successful completion of the Admission-to-Candidacy exam (colloquially “A Exams”; see below, although this requirement, too, can be waived upon petition).

Diagnostic exam: Entering students take an individual diagnostic exam at the beginning of their first semester of residency. The exam consists of harmonization and aural dictation exercises, sight singing, realizing figured bass at the keyboard, and keyboard sight reading. If any issues are noted, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will discuss possible options with individual students.

Language study: The Field of Music requires reading proficiency in two foreign languages pertinent to the student’s area of specialization. This requirement must be satisfied before attempting the special areas portion of the A Exams. Students who have not already gained proficiency in two suitable languages are advised to begin this work during the summer before they arrive at Cornell. German, French, Italian, and Spanish exams are given regularly by the Graduate Field; exams in other languages may
also be requested as appropriate, and arranged with suitable faculty outside the music department. In consultation with the Special Committee, students should determine as early as possible the question of which languages they are expected to know. Native speakers of languages other than English may submit a written request to the Graduate Field to waive one language requirement if their native language will likely be appropriate for their dissertation research.

Graduate language exams test for reading comprehension of substantial pieces of prose and for ability to translate accurately shorter passages of prose and poetry. Sample exams are available in the Music Library. Exams are generally offered during the Fall orientation period and, if needed, at another time during the year.

**Courses:** During the first two years (4 semesters) students are expected to take graduate research seminars with at least 6 different music faculty members, within the guidelines described below. The distribution of faculty members ensures a broad grounding in topical areas and methodologies. This policy also allows time for students to take courses outside the music department. During the third year, students should take at least two seminars; there are no formal requirements for the fourth year and beyond, although students are encouraged to enroll in seminars of interest.

**Course/distribution requirements:**

1) The introductory course on Research and Critical Methodologies is team-taught by the Music Librarian and a musicologist or ethnomusicologist, and typically taken in the first semester of residency;

2) Historical musicology students: one course on an ethnomusicological topic or a popular music topic; and one course on a topic of music analysis, composition, or orchestration, or equivalent ethnomusicological approach;

3) Ethnomusicology students: at least one course focusing on western music traditions and one course on a popular music topic.

Graduate seminars are normally taken for a letter grade, but it is possible to take one research seminar per semester on an S/U basis, with the instructor’s permission; students utilizing the S/U option are required to participate fully in the seminar, but are not required to write the final paper. This option is suggested for students wishing to pursue practical music study in addition to seminars, and for students who have completed their A Exams (see below).

Students are required to submit what they consider to be their best seminar paper from their first year of residency at the beginning of their third semester. The Field will review the papers to gauge progress.

Students are required to take the first part of their A Exams during the week preceding the beginning of their fifth semester of study, and the Special Areas Exam (part two of the A Exams) no later than the end of their sixth semester.
**Recommended schedule:**

Year 1: Seminars: 3 plus 3 (may include a language; discuss with the DGS)
Summer 1: language study, if the language requirement is not yet satisfied
Year 2: Seminars: 2 plus 2; teaching
Summer 2: A-exam study
Year 3: General qualifying exam at beginning of year; Special Areas Exam at end of year. Seminars: 1 plus 1; teaching. Begin to work on dissertation area as well as prepare for Special Areas Exam.
Summer 3: prepare dissertation proposal
Year 4: Dissertation proposal presented at the beginning of the Fall semester; work on dissertation; perhaps seminars if relevant, may be in another department. One of the two post-A's years (Years 4 and 5) will include teaching duties; the choice is made by the Department Chair in consultation with the DGS.
Year 5: Dissertation research and writing

**Special Committee:** Each graduate student’s program is supervised by a “Special Committee” of professors. Although the Field as a whole sets policies, it is the Special Committee that certifies that the various requirements for graduate degrees have been satisfied. The Special Committee of a doctoral candidate comprises three or four professors who are members of the Graduate Faculty; each student selects the members of his or her Committee, subject to their agreement. Every Committee comprises a Chair and two or three “minor members.” The Chair always represents the major subject. Two minor members also represent official subjects or concentrations (see “Graduate minor” below). Retired professors with the status of Graduate School Professor may co-chair a committee; however, a second co-chair from the active faculty must also be chosen.

Those who hold minor member status on the Graduate Faculty may only participate as a minor member of the committee. Students may also petition the Field for permission to include as a minor member of the committee other members of the Music Department faculty who are not on the Graduate Faculty (e.g., Professors Johnston-Turner, A. Kim, or C. Kim to represent performance). If students wish formal supervision in an area that is not adequately represented at Cornell, they may, with the approval of the Special Committee, petition the Graduate School to permit the appointment of an authority from outside Cornell. **Students must have three Cornell members** on the Special Committee; the outside authority serves as an additional member. All decisions regarding the composition of the Committee are subject to the approval of the entire Committee.

During students’ first year, the DGS, acting as temporary Chair, will sign the necessary forms and can offer advice about forming the Committee. **Students must choose at least a Committee Chair by the beginning of their third semester**; ideally, the entire committee will be established then, which must in any case happen before the end of the third semester. The most effective way to get to know the professors in the Field is to take courses with them or work with them independently. A professor's participation should not
be taken for granted; any professor may decline to serve on any Committee. Requests to serve should be preceded by extended acquaintance and prior consultation.

The Field requires that students meet with their Special Committee every semester; it is the student’s responsibility to organize the meetings.

Students may change the membership of their Special Committees if their academic focus changes or if other circumstances warrant a reformulation. Unless students have already passed the second part of the A exam (see below), no special permission is required except that of the remaining and new members of the reformulated Committee. (The DGS must also sign the form, so that the Field as a whole understands the reasons for the change.)

**Admission-to-Candidacy Exam (General and Special Areas):** The A Exam consists of two parts: the General Exam and the Special Areas Exam. The purpose is to bolster and refine knowledge of musical repertories and their associated historical and scholarly literature in a relatively wide-ranging but nonetheless discrete group of six areas, and to develop special expertise in the larger area that circumscribes the dissertation topic, as well as one secondary area (the minor). Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and critical skills in written and oral form, developing a body of polished scholarly work and exercising their skills at oral discussion and argument.

For the General Exam, students will be asked to revise and submit to the examining committee three seminar papers (each ca. 20 pages), and then to write three short essays based on exam questions in three other scholarly areas (see below). An oral segment follows and will give the examiners and examinee the opportunity to discuss more fully aspects of this body of writing and knowledge. The Special Areas Exam is an oral exam, leading to the presentation of the dissertation proposal.

Paperwork to schedule the Special Areas segment of the A Exam must be sent to the Graduate School at least 7 days in advance of the exam, and the report of the exam must be sent within 3 days of completing the exam. If a committee member must participate remotely, a petition must be filed with the Graduate School in advance of the exam. The Graduate Field Assistant is available to assist with these requirements and to ensure that forms are submitted in a timely manner.

**I. Generals: to be taken at the start of the 5th semester**

The entire cohort will take this exam at the same time, during the week prior to the start of their fifth semester.

The purpose of the General Exam is to demonstrate a focused body of knowledge via three seminar papers, and to demonstrate a general historical/critical knowledge in three additional areas.

(i) Students will provide their Special Committees with three revised seminar papers, representing seminars taken with three different professors and representing three of the areas/topics listed below. For each of the three papers the student will revise the paper,
incorporating suggestions received from the seminar professor, and by expanding the
bibliography (and repertoire list, as appropriate), in consultation with the special
committee. The expanded bibliography should define an area somewhat broader than the
paper (such as a historical period, geo-political area, genre, or critical method) as well as
the current state of research. Students will be asked to talk about these larger historical-
critical contexts in the oral exam (see below). One important rationale for this exercise is
not only to build up an archive of relatively polished written work, but also to allow the
student practice in the kind of revision required of any peer-reviewed article.

The three papers and expanded bibliographies are to be turned in at least two weeks prior
to the Exam date.

ii) Students will choose three additional topics (see list of topic areas, below). The Field
will prepare repertoire and/or issues lists related to each of the topic areas, and will
distribute them at the beginning of the students’ fourth semester. Students will register
their three topics with their Special Committees no later than the end of the fourth
semester. Students will assemble bibliographies relevant to the chosen topics. During
the exam period, students will be given one question for each of the topics chosen and
will be allotted two hours for each topic, during which time they will prepare written
responses to the questions. The written responses will be discussed in the oral segment of
the exams.

iii) The seminar papers and the larger context they circumscribe, as well as aspects of the
three additional topic areas, will be discussed with the committee in a three-hour oral
exam. Students may be asked to talk about repertoire or texts not discussed in the essays,
but the oral examination will keep within the parameters circumscribed by the papers and
bibliographies/repertoire lists.

**A Exam Topics**

The topics should fall into six of the following:

- Medieval
- Renaissance
- The long 17th century (chronological range dependent on topic)
- The long 18th century (chronological range dependent on topic)
- The long 19th century (chronological range dependent on topic)
- 20th-21st century
- Opera
- Performance practice
- Popular Music
- Non-Western Area Musics
- Ethnomusicological methods and theory
- Music Theory and Analysis
- Music and Constructions of Identity (including Gender, Sexuality, Class, Race, Nation,
  Ethnicity, Geographic Regions)
- Critical Theory and/or Aesthetics and Criticism (including Sound Studies, Improvisation Studies, and other interdisciplinary configurations)

For historical musicologists at least three of the topics should represent historical eras, and two of the topics must represent the other areas; for ethnomusicology students, at least two of the topics should represent non-western area musics plus ethnomusicology theory and methods, and perhaps other more appropriate general topics, with questions developed by the ethnomusicology faculty.

All students will receive written comments from their committee on both the written and oral parts of the exam.

II. Special Areas: to be taken no later than the end of the 6th semester
In consultation with their Special Committees, students will determine a broadly conceived area of specialty (e.g., sixteenth-century sacred music, rather than the sacred music of a specific composer); students should also designate a minor concentration either within the Field of Music or outside of the Field of Music (which must be represented by a committee member) in which the students would like to teach, publish, and/or perform, and which will be represented as a topic in the exam. Topics chosen for the Generals can be used again as the two Special Areas topics. The students will be responsible for constructing relevant bibliographies and repertory lists for this exam; course syllabi may also be prepared, per discussion with individual committees.

The exam consists of a three-hour oral examination on both the major and minor areas. Students will be expected to show an in-depth knowledge of the musical repertory, the important scholars past and present, current issues, and be able to demonstrate a facility with oral presentation and argument. Scores and/or texts chosen by the Special Committee may be discussed in the exam, and will be given to students shortly before the exam.

Ph.D. thesis: The dissertation is a substantial work displaying independent thought and research on an original topic in any area of musical study, including aesthetics, analysis, criticism, ethnomusicology, history, and performance practice. When students have passed their A Exams, they will be expected to present a dissertation proposal to the special committee no later than the beginning of their seventh semester of study. The dissertation proposal should include a chapter outline, bibliography, and a related writing sample (draft chapter, literature review, etc.), and will be discussed in a formal meeting with the Special Committee. The dissertation is generally written under the supervision of the Chair, but a minor member may be the most active supervisor of the dissertation; the nature and extent of minor members' participation varies according to individual circumstances.
The Final Examination (B exam), also known as the thesis defense

The dissertation defense consists of two parts:

1) A public colloquium of 45-50 minutes on a topic drawn from the dissertation, to be given during the same semester that the student plans to submit the entire thesis to the Special Committee.

2) A formal meeting with the student’s Special Committee to defend the dissertation. Students are expected to submit a complete draft of the thesis - including an abstract not to exceed 600 words - to all members of their committee six weeks before their defense, unless otherwise specified by the Committee.

Both parts of the dissertation defense must be announced to the Graduate Field no later than 7 days in advance of the dates; the thesis defense must also be scheduled with the Graduate School at least 7 days in advance of the exam, and the results must be submitted within 3 days of the exam. Ideally the public colloquium should take place during the regular departmental colloquium time as part of that series of lectures; therefore the student will need to submit a title and abstract to the Lecture Committee one semester in advance to facilitate scheduling. Exceptions due to scheduling conflicts will be accommodated.

[Note: the Thesis and Dissertation Guidebook, as well as formatting guidelines may be found at http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/thesis-and-dissertation .]

Graduate Major Subject and Concentration: The Field of Music includes two major subjects, each with one or more associated “concentrations” that represent our three degree programs. As a Ph.D. student, the major subject and concentration is “musicology.” By contrast, the major subject for D.M.A. students is “music”; their concentration will be either “composition” or “performance practice.”

Graduate minors: students in the Field of Music are required to have one minor subject of study, represented by at least one member on the special committee, and course work in that area as deemed suitable by that committee member. In addition to the two major subjects (music and musicology) the Field also includes three minor subjects: music performance, musical composition, and theory of music. The graduate minor can be chosen among the four distinct subjects within the Field of Music, which are 1) musicology/ethnomusicology 2) musical performance 3) theory of music 4) musical composition. A graduate minor subject may also be taken in an area of study outside of the Field of Music, such as Comparative Literature, Psychology, History, English. Some academic programs, such as the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program (FGSS), offer graduate minors as well. Below is a list of the faculty and the subjects they represent.

Musicology/Ethnomusicology
Boettcher, Groos, Harris-Warrick, Hatch, Hicks, Holst-Warhaft, Moseley, Peraino, Piekut, Pinch, Pond, Richards, Rosen, Stucky, Webster, Yearsley, Zaslaw
Music Performance
Bilson (piano and fortepiano), Bjerken (piano), Hatch (gamelan), Kellock (voice), Richards (organ), Yearsley (organ, harpsichord, clavichord)

Musical Composition: Ernste, Sierra, Stucky

Theory of Music: Ernste, Krumhansl, Moseley, Rosen, Sierra, Stucky, Webster

Note: there is much confusion about the difference between a “subject” and a “concentration.” The Special Committee form asks for a faculty member’s “concentration.” This is a category that is recognized and tracked by the legislation of the State of New York and represents our degree programs. For most faculty members in the Field of Music, the concentration will be the same as the subject. The one exception is the concentration “Performance Practice.” Professors Bilson and Bjerken should be listed with this concentration; Professors Harris-Warrick, Richards, Yearsley, and Zaslaw may be listed with this concentration, or with “musicology.”

Students must make sure that their committee members, whatever the Graduate Field, represent an official concentration. The “Academics” page of the Graduate School website has a link to a PDF file listing officially recognized “Fields, Subjects, and Concentrations.”