Sacramento State School of Music
Music Theory

Composition Exam

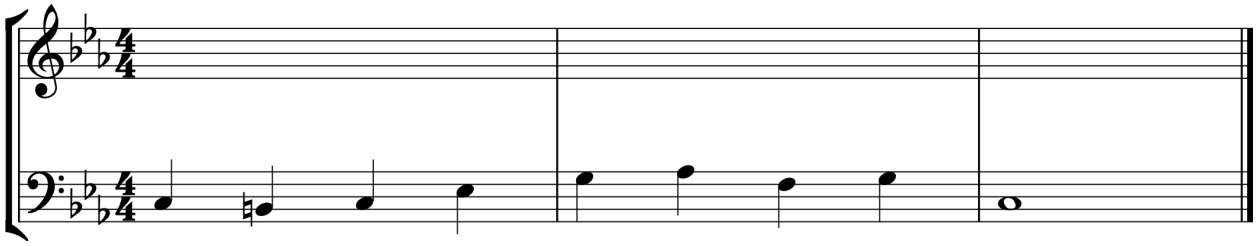
NAME:

General instructions

This composition exam will test your ability to understand aspects of harmony, counterpoint, motives, and form by composing short phrases in various styles. Although it is designed to take you no more than an hour to complete, you may spend as long as you wish on it, provided that you have uploaded your work to Canvas by 6:00 p.m. Do not work with anyone else on this exam.

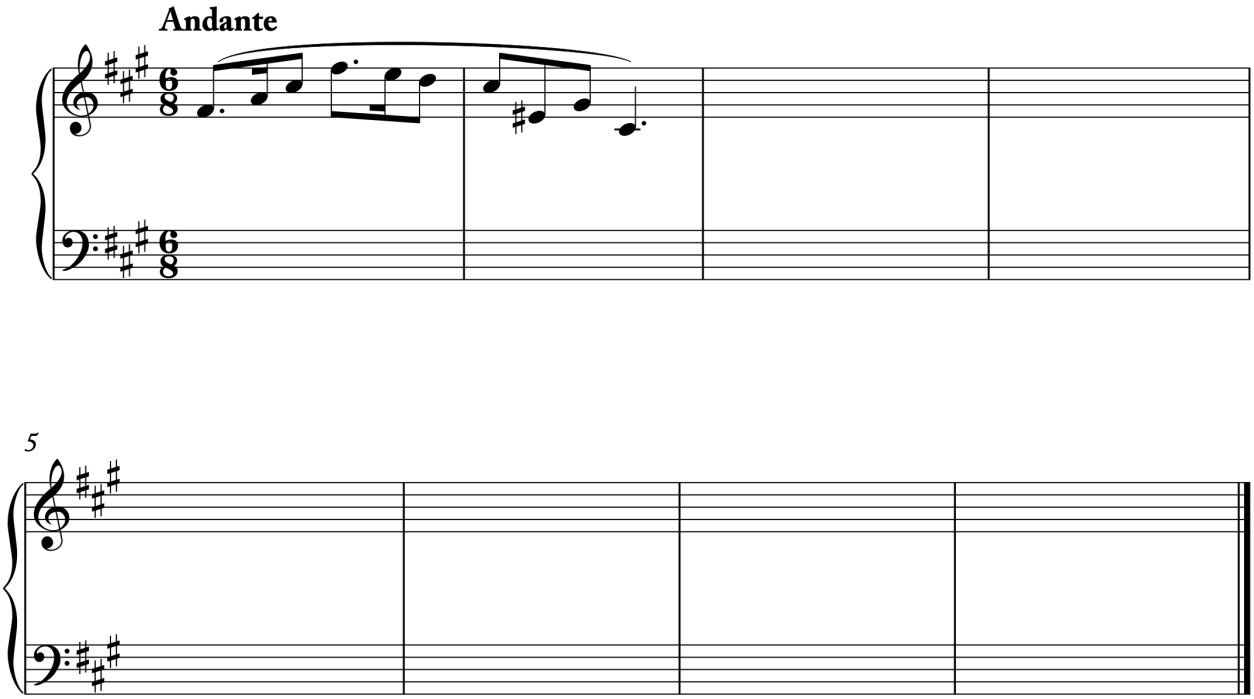
Part I: Two-Part Counterpoint

- Using the bass line as a guide, choose harmonies typical of classical music from the Common Practice period.
- Indicate your choice of harmonies by writing Roman numerals and figures beneath the bass staff.
- Compose a melody against the bass line that agrees with your harmonies. Use only:
    - Passing tones (at least one). Circle your passing tones and write "PT" above them.
    - Neighbor tones (at least one). Circle your neighbor tones and write "PT" above them.
    - Suspensions (at least one). Circle your suspensions and write "PT" above them.
    - Consonances (i.e., chord tones).
    - The following note durations: 𝅝 | 𝅗𝅥. | 𝅗𝅥 | ♩. | ♩ | ♪ |.
- Do not write any dissonances other than passing tones, neighbor tones, and suspensions.
- Do not write inner voices.



Part II: Melody Harmonization and Small Forms

- Harmonize the melody in measures 1 and 2.
- Add inner voices.
- Create an eight-measure sentence in the Classical style based upon the first two measures.
- End the sentence in a tonicized half cadence.
- Provide Roman numerals and figures beneath the bass staff.

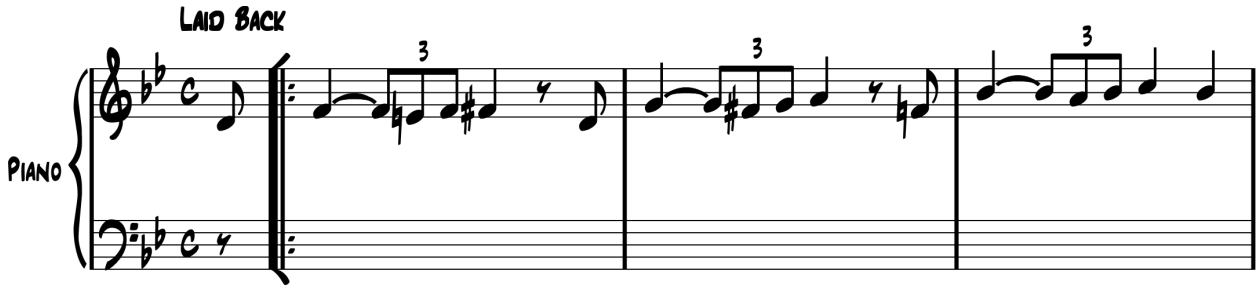


- Assume that this eight-measure sentence were the antecedent phrase of a 16-measure parallel period. Briefly describe how you would compose a consequent phrase.

Part III: Jazz Harmonization

Harmonize the melody on the following page in a bebop style according to the following guidelines:

- Except in the last measure, write two chords per measure: one on beat 1, and one on beat 3.
- In the last measure, write one chord as a whole note.
- Do not use triads. Instead, be generous with extensions so that your harmonies are colorful but tasteful.
- Do not use the same chord twice in a row.
- Choose appropriate chords where Roman numerals are given.
- Choose any chord you wish where there are no Roman numerals or where there is a question mark.
- Carefully consider the voicings you use from the perspectives of balance and color.
- Write chord symbols for each chord above the top staff. Do not provide Roman numerals or figures.
- Make sure a pianist could easily play your chart.



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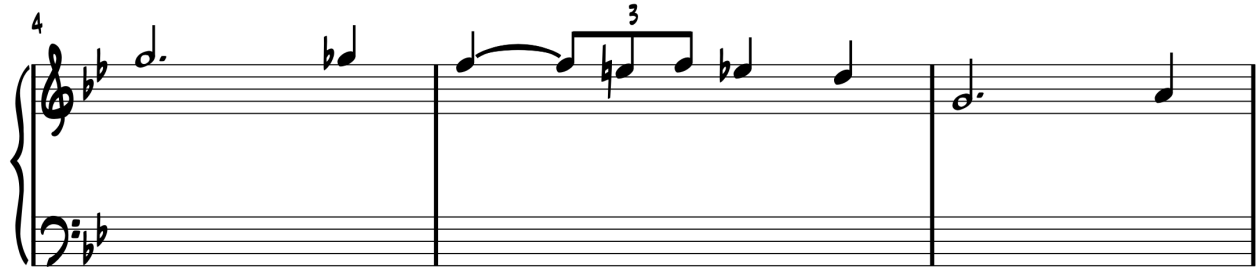

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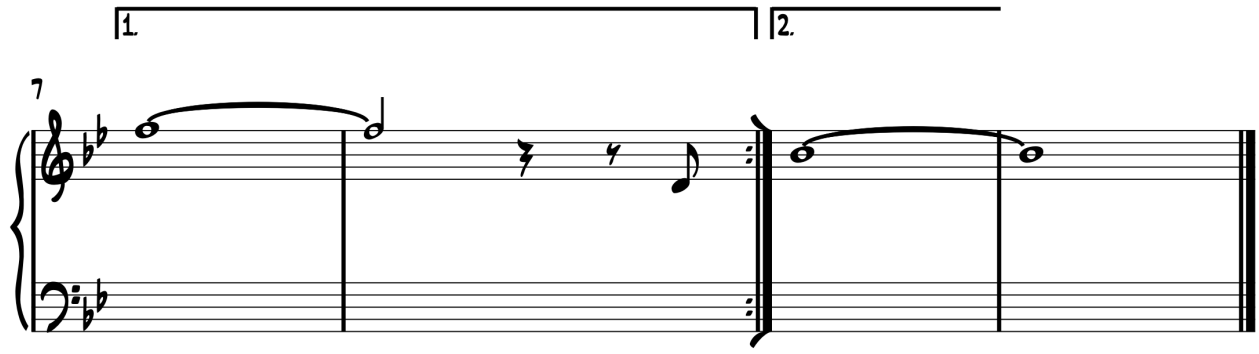

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