



AP[®] Music Theory 2002 Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] MUSIC THEORY

2002 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Sample Z – Score 8

This is an excellent response with only one small problem, but a reader might overlook this problem when rushing. All segments are correct except the 7th, which contains the most difficult part of the melody. The only note this student missed was the final 8th note in the penultimate bar. Seven segments correct plus the extra point equals an 8.

Sample P – Score 7

This answer represents a fairly good response, where segments 1, 2, and 3 are correct before the student goes astray in 4, 5, and 6. In the final bar, however, the student returns to the do-ti-do idiom, and gets those 2 points as well. A close look at the end of bar 2 and beginning of bar 3 yields another contiguous segment as well. The total score, with 5 segments correct, one contiguous segment correct, and the extra point equals a 7.

Sample E – Score 5

In this response, the first segment is perfect, the last two segments are perfect, and two continuous quarter note beats between segments 4 and 5 are correct. The dotted quarter is properly placed in that contiguous context, and so four points are awarded, plus the extra point, which equals 5.

Sample C – Score 3

This answer contains the first segment correctly notated in pitch and rhythm, but nothing else is correct until the final bar. Here, the reader must be aware that two contiguous quarter note beats may be counted as a correct segment. The quarter note B followed by the quarter note A-sharp, though misplaced, nevertheless counts as a correct segment. Two segments correct plus one equals 3.

AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Sample B – Score 8 (7+1)

This sample represents a very strong response to the question. Seven half-measures are correct in both pitch and rhythm, earning the candidate 7 points. The student did not catch the one accidental, the D-sharp in measure 3, and thus did not earn the point for that half measure. Because the segments were correct in both pitch and rhythm, the student earns the extra point, for a total of 8.

Sample T – Score 6 (5+1)

This sample represents a fairly strong response to the question. The first three half measures are correct in both pitch and rhythm, earning the candidate 3 points. The rhythm of the B in measure 2 is incorrect, and thus the next segments are rhythmically shifted. They are, however, correct in pitch and rhythm, and thus the candidate earns the 2 points for those segments. The rhythmic shift causes a problem again, though, in the last measure, where the candidate lengthens the final note to fill the measure. Had the candidate thought about idiomatic rhythms in compound meter, he or she might have realized the rhythm was probably incorrect and might have changed it to the more likely (and correct) dotted quarter. Because the correct segments were correct in both pitch and rhythm, the student earns the extra point, for a total of 6.

Sample A – Score 5 (4+1)

This sample represents a fair response to the question. The first three half measures are totally correct in pitch and rhythm, earning the candidate 3 points. After losing track, the student wisely notes the common pattern at the end and wrote in the last four pitches. The first three of these are correct in rhythm as well, earning the student one more point. Because the segments were correct in both pitch and rhythm, the student earns the extra point, for a total of 5.

Sample G – Score 1 (2x½)

This sample represents a weak response to the question. No segments are correct in both pitch and rhythm. The student, however, filled in some pitches, some even with just noteheads. The first three pitches represent a half-measure correct in pitch alone, thus earning 1/2 point. The final pitch is also correct, earning another 1/2 point.

AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3

Sample O – Score 24 (8+8+8)

This excellent response is correct in every respect. The analysis of the cadence as I 6-4 V I is one of the correct methods for labeling the cadential six-four.

Sample N – Score 20 (6+8+5.5)

This response is very good. The student has 6 of the soprano pitches correct, having missed those in the penultimate measure. The student has all the bass pitches correct. The student receives credit for the last six chord analyses, though only 1/2 point for the antepenultimate chord labeled V.

Sample J – Score 11 (4+5+2)

This weaker response has only the first four soprano pitches correct (4). The student also has difficulty with the bass pitches starting in measure 2 and into measure 3 (5). Only two Roman numeral analyses are correct (2). Because a ii follows the V on the antepenultimate chord, neither chord is awarded credit.

Sample P – Score 8 (1+5+2)

This fairly poor response has only one correctly notated soprano pitch. The last two soprano pitches are displaced by an octave and, therefore, are unacceptable. The student has some difficulty with the bass as well and is awarded only five points. The student struggles with the Roman numerals and figured bass adding to the score points for the last three chords. Because of missing figures on the antepenultimate and penultimate chords, only half credit is awarded for each.

AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 4

Sample B – Score 23 (8+8+6.5 rounded up)

This response was considered to be excellent. All pitches in the bass and soprano are correct for 16 points. The roman numerals include one completely wrong symbol (III) and one with a wrong inversion: the third chord symbol should be a V followed by 4-2 or simply 2, not 5-2. Six-and-a-half points are awarded for the analysis.

Sample D – Score 16 (5+6+4.5 rounded up)

This response was considered to be good. The first four soprano notes that the student wrote are correct, as is the second note in m. 4, for 5 points. The first four notes and two last two notes of the bass are correct for 6 more points. The first two roman numerals are correct, as are the first in m. 3 and the one in m. 5. The third numeral indicates the wrong inversion: the student should have written 4-2 or 2 instead of 4-3. The student receives 4 points for the completely correct symbols and one-half point for the roman numeral with the incorrect inversion.

Sample L – Score 13 (3+5+4.5 rounded up)

This response was considered to be fair. The last three notes of the soprano are correct. Five of the bass notes are correct. The a-flat in m. 3 is enharmonically correct but should have been notated as a g-sharp since it leads up; therefore, it receives no credit. Most roman numerals are correct although several inversions are not. The candidate's fifth chord is not technically correct but represents a functionally equivalent alternate answer on the most difficult chord, a response that earns one-half point.

Sample I – Score 4 (1+1+1.5 rounded up)

This response was considered to be weak. Only the fifth candidate note (that is, the fifth note after the given note) is correct in the soprano. Only the last note is correct in the bass. The last harmony is correct for one point. The next-to-last chord has the correct roman numeral but should have indicated first inversion and therefore receives only one-half point.

AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 5

Sample K – Score 23 (6+10+7)

This is an example of an excellent response. All of the Roman numerals are correct, so 7 points were awarded in this area. All chords were correct realizations of the figured bass, so 6 points were awarded for spelling. All of the voice leading is correct until the connection between the last two chords. The passing tone added by the student creates parallel fifths in the outer voices, so no points were awarded. Had the passing tone been left out of the response, the last chord connection would receive only 1 point instead of 2 because of the hidden fifths between the outer voices. As is, this response earns a total of 23 points, representing an excellent understanding of figured bass realization.

Sample D – Score 19 (5.5+6+7)

This response was considered very good, but it displays some common errors as well. All of the Roman numerals are correct, earning 7 points in this area. The first five chords are spelled correctly, earning 1 point each. The last chord earns 1/2 point because there is more than an octave between the tenor and the alto voices. The first voice leading connection is correct, receiving 2 points. There is a skip of a diminished fifth in the tenor at the second connection and an augmented second in the alto at the third connection. No points are awarded for either. The fourth and fifth connections receive 2 points each because they are correct, and the sixth connection receives no points for the approach to the leading tone in the tenor. This response receives a total score of 18.5 points, which is rounded up to 19.

Sample F – Score 15 (4+4+7)

This response was considered to be fair, although it features many common errors. All of the Roman numerals are correct, earning 7 points in this area. Chords one, two, three, and five are spelled correctly. Chord four receives no points because the third is missing, and chord six is considered incorrect because the accidental is missing from the D. Therefore, this response receives only 4 out of 6 possible points for chord spelling. The voice leading between the first three chords is correct, earning 2 points per connection for a total of 4 points. The connection between chords two and three receives no points because there is an augmented second in the tenor voice. The last three voice leading connections are not considered because they are on either side of incorrectly spelled chords four and six. Voice leading earns only 4 points, so the total score for the response is 15.

**AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 5 (cont'd.)

Sample Q – Score 11 (2.5+3+5)

Sample Q represents a somewhat weak response to this question. The first five Roman numerals are correct with an allowance made for the VI chord presented in the wrong case. The penultimate Roman numeral is wrong, and the final one is missing. Therefore, only 5 points are awarded in this area. The first two chords are spelled correctly, but there is more than one octave between the tenor and the alto voices, so these chords receive 1/2 point each. Chords three and six are incorrectly spelled, receiving no points. Chord five is correctly spelled, but it contains the same spacing problem as the first two chords and thus receives only 1/2 point. The total points awarded for chord spelling were 2.5. The first voice leading connection is awarded 2 points, even though it is not as smooth as would be preferred. The second connection contains parallel octaves in the outer voices, so it receives no points. The third and fourth connections are not considered because they are on either side of the incorrectly spelled V chord. The fifth connection receives 1 point instead of 2 because of the overlapping of the soprano and alto voices. The last connection is not considered because it leads to the incorrectly spelled final chord. The total points received for voice leading were 3. The final score of the response is 10.5 points, which is rounded up to 11.

Question 6

Sample N – Score 16

This response was considered to be very good. All chords are spelled correctly for an award of 6 points. All voice leading connections are very good except from chord 5 to chord 6 (the 4th and 5th chords written by the student). The seventh of the chord, in the soprano voice, goes up, instead of down as it should, with no points awarded for that connection. A total of 10 voice leading points (of the possible 12) are awarded for this response. Chord four (third chord written by student) is correct even though the leading tone from chord three resolves down by step; since it does not appear in the soprano, it is considered as an acceptable resolution.

Sample P – Score 14

This response was considered to be good. It features very good chord spelling and mostly good voice leading. The connection from V to vi (student chords two and three) demonstrate the ever dangerous parallel octaves and fifths that frequently appear between two chords whose roots are a second apart. The other voice leading error appears between student chords four and five where the temporary leading tone B natural resolves down in the soprano instead of up as it should. Six points were awarded for chord spelling and eight for voice leading.

**AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 6 (cont'd.)

Sample Q – Score 13

This response was considered to be moderately good. Five of the six chords that the student must complete are written correctly. The incorrect chord, the fourth chord to be written, is missing the B natural which results in a loss of one point for chord spelling and automatic deductions of 2 points each approaching and leaving the misspelled chord. Other problems exist in the connections where the automatic deductions are taken (parallel 5ths into chord four, 7th of chord goes up instead of correctly going down out of chord four) but no additional deductions are imposed.

Sample H – Score 11

This response was considered to be fair. It suffers from voice leading problems. Five of the six chords are spelled correctly for an award of 5 points. The missing B natural on the fourth chord to be written results in a one point loss for chord spelling and automatic 2 point losses going into and out of the chord. Other voice leading problems include parallel 5ths in alto and bass from the first chord to be written to the second, fifths by contrary motion between the third chord written to the fourth (no additional deductions) and the incorrect resolution of the seventh on the fourth chord written (resolves up instead of down; no additional deductions).

Question 7

Sample BB – Score 9 (2+3+3)

This response was considered to be excellent. The candidate followed V4-2 in the second phrase with I6 as required and also ended on V, the most likely of the possible correct answers there. These two chords alone earned the student the maximum 2 points for the phrase. But the candidate elegantly composed a pre-dominant between the two chords. The third bass line has a clear and elegant shape and implies harmonies that work functionally with the soprano. Although the roman numerals show one incorrect inversion, they are otherwise correct and show the candidate's understanding of secondary functions. As a result, the candidate receives 3 points, which is the maximum possible for this phrase. The correct use of passing tones, however, which are not required for the perfect score, speak in favor of the extra aesthetic point. The third phrase again has a clear shape and correctly matches the melody to imply functional harmonies, earning the candidate the 3 points maximum for this phrase. The inclusion of the extra secondary dominant demonstrates advanced harmonic understanding and clinches the aesthetic point.

AP[®] MUSIC THEORY
2002 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 7 (cont'd.)

Sample H – Score 7 (2+2+3)

This response was considered to be very good. The candidate followed V4-2 in the second phrase with I6 as required and also ended on V, the most likely of the possible correct answers there. These two chords alone earned him the maximum 2 points for the phrase. The candidate also elegantly composed a pre-dominant between the two chords. The third phrase shows a fairly good understanding of counterpoint and a correct knowledge of how to write and resolve secondary dominants. This is enough to call the phrase at least fair for 2 points. On the other hand, the parallel 5ths at the beginning, the retrogression from V to IV, and the use of C-natural between the two C-sharps in the melody keep this phrase from earning the 3 points possible. The fourth phrase has one set of parallel 5ths and a less-than-perfect interpretation of the third-to-last note in the roman numerals, but these problems were not considered enough to keep the student from earning the full 3 points for the phrase.

Sample A – Score 5 (2+0+3)

This response was considered to be fair. The candidate makes a strong showing in the second and fourth phrases, but did not demonstrate an understanding of what to do with the accidentals in the third phrase. The second phrase includes the two chords required for the full 2 points possible for that phrase. The third phrase includes several sets of parallel perfect intervals and unresolved dissonances, and it shows no understanding of the move to the dominant implied by the C-sharps in the melody. Therefore the phrase receives 0 points. The fourth phrase presents a solid line that works perfectly with the melody. The one error, the incorrect use of the II6-4 label (the pitch itself was acceptable), is not enough to keep the candidate from receiving the full 3 points for the phrase.

Sample W – Score 3 (1+0+2)

This response was considered to be quite weak. The second phrase correctly comes to a close on the V chord, but it does not correctly resolve the bass of the V4-2 chord. It receives 1 point out of a possible 2. The bass line of the third phrase forms many unresolved dissonances, including the extremely problematic augmented octaves with the C-sharps. The roman numerals show correct labels for secondary chords, but the lack of proper resolutions and other labeling problems make the roman numerals poor overall. Since both the bass and roman numerals are deemed inadequate, the phrase receives 0 points. The third phrase contains one clearly incorrect note: the E forming an inappropriate fourth beneath A. The others, however, while vertically correct, are too static to allow the bass line to be called “good.” Therefore, this phrase receives 2 of the 3 points possible.