

Aural Skills Quiz (Introduction)

For this aural skills quiz, I have targeted an audience of students who should be relatively comfortable with hearing scale degrees in both major and minor modes. I have tried to create a progression of exercises that takes this scale-degree hearing and extends it to settings where the particular tonal environment has to be further and further internalized. As well, I have attempted to gradually incorporate rhythmic elements into the dictations to help develop the connections between pitch and rhythm during the quiz.

In Part 1, which is to be played very slowly and almost arhythmically, a simple sequence of scale degrees over a pedal should be easy for most students to complete since the tonic is played throughout the exercise as a reference (probably restruck on the piano during dictation). This tonal reference persists in Part 2, but now the melodic shapes become slightly less familiar and include rhythmic elements; these examples are short to allow students to easily play the fragments back in their aural memory. Finally, in Part 3 a sequence of tonal melodies are given for a combination of rhythmic and melodic dictations; the melodies in Part 3 have been carefully chosen to progress from easy (limited range and emphasis on tonic scale degrees) to slightly harder and finally a trickier final melody that moves from major to minor.

I have not included any analysis in the exercises on purpose, but the dictations themselves include analytic aspects. For example, in Part 2 the student must determine the first note of the fragment based solely on the sounding interval with the bass. I have avoided having the instructor simply play stark intervals and having the students label them since that process seems divorced from any musical context. I was going to include some questions on intervals between melodic notes, but it did not seem an appropriate since the melodies always exist in tonal settings where the sound of a melodic interval changes depending on which scale degrees it spans (e.g. the m6 between $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{1}$ sounds different than the m6 between $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{b6}$); also, I wanted to focus on topics directly related to ear training and not covered by written theory.

In retrospect, I think a significant disadvantage of this quiz is that it would be too easy to complete for students with perfect pitch. I am not entirely sure how or whether it is worthwhile to subvert perfect pitch in favor of relative pitch. At the minimum, the rhythmic aspects of the dictations would be just as difficult for those students with perfect pitch as those without it. I could have included exercises on rhythmic dictation only to correct this imbalance, but the rhythmic exercises alone (without pitch) seemed too sterile.

With grading, the system should be fairly obvious from the headers on the quiz itself. In Part 1, each melodic note carries the weight of one point. In Part 2, four points for the pitches and three points for the rhythms seems appropriate. In Part 3, the 10 points would be split equally between pitch and rhythm. In the last two parts, a one-to-one mapping does not exist between the answers and the point values as in Part 1, but the person grading should have enough discretion to make a judgement call on what portion gets awarded in each exercise. In summation:

Part 1:	2 x 14 points	= 28 points
Part 2:	6 x 7 points	= 42 points
Part 3:	3 x 10 points	= 30 points
	Total	= 100 points

Part 1: Simple Melodic Dictation (14 points each)

For the following two exercises, a melody consisting of only quarter-note durations will be played over a stable bass pitch. Notate the melody in the space provided (the beginning and ending note is given for each).

Ex. 1a)

Ex. 1b)

Part 2: Melodic Fragments (7 points each)

For the following six exercises, a short melodic fragment will be played over a held tone in the bass. Notate both the pitch and rhythm of each melodic fragment. (No penalty for incorrect register since no starting tone is given.)

2a)

2b)

Part 2: Melodic Fragments (continued)

2c)



2d)



2e)



2f)



Part 3: Free Melodic Dictation (10 points each)

Listen to the following excerpts from musical literature. Given the starting note, notate the melody using correct pitches and rhythms.

Brahms, *Symphony No. 1*

3a)



Handel, *Chaconne* (HWV435)

3b)



Mussorgsky, *Boris Godonov*

3c)



**Aural Skills Quiz
(Student's Version)**

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Part 1: Simple Melodic Dictation (14 points each)

For the following two exercises, a melody consisting of only quarter-note durations will be played over a stable bass pitch. Notate the melody in the space provided (the beginning and ending note is given for each).

Ex. 1a)

Musical notation for Exercise 1a. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is common time (C). The bass line contains four quarter notes, all on the same pitch (F2), connected by a long slur. The treble line starts with a quarter note on G4 (F#4) in the first measure, followed by three empty measures, and ends with a quarter note on G4 in the fourth measure.

Ex. 1b)

Musical notation for Exercise 1b. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The bass line contains four quarter notes, all on the same pitch (F2), connected by a long slur. The treble line starts with a quarter note on G4 (Bb4) in the first measure, followed by three empty measures, and ends with a quarter note on G4 in the fourth measure.

Part 2: Melodic Fragments (7 points each)

For the following six exercises, a short melodic fragment will be played over a held tone in the bass. Notate both the pitch and rhythm of each melodic fragment. (No penalty for incorrect register since no starting tone is given.)

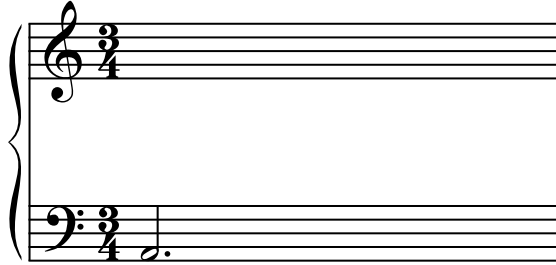
2a)


Musical notation for exercise 2a. It shows a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The time signature is common time (C). The bass line has a single quarter note on F#2, which is held throughout the exercise. The treble line is empty.

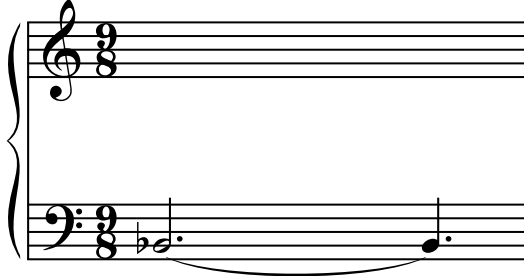
2b)

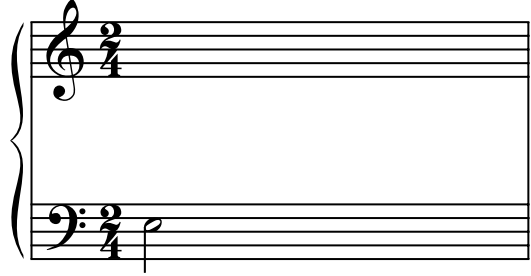
Musical notation for exercise 2b. It shows a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The time signature is 6/8. The bass line has a single quarter note on F2, which is held throughout the exercise. The treble line is empty.

Part 2: Melodic Fragments (continued)

2c) 

2d) 

2e) 

2f) 

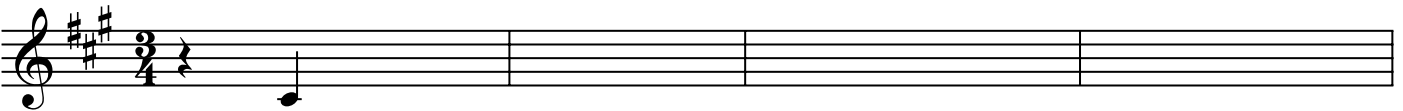
Part 3: Free Melodic Dictation (10 points each)

Listen to the following excerpts from musical literature. Given the starting note, notate the melody using correct pitches and rhythms.

Brahms, *Symphony No. 1*

3a) 

Handel, *Chaconne (HWV435)*

3b) 

Mussorgsky, *Boris Godonov*

3c) 