

Brass Study Guide

For MM – Performance Oral Comprehensive Exams

Master's degree students preparing for exams in the Brass area should consider the following questions. These questions are divided into a rather specific Major area and a broad General Brass category. Students would be remiss in studying only these questions, but a good understanding of these areas will be helpful in passing the exams(s).

General Brass Questions

- Discuss the development of the valve and how it influenced composers of the 19th century. Be able to show knowledge of the basic valve types that were developed in the 19th century.
- Identify, and be prepared to discuss, the important composers for the brass family (i.e., Hindemith wrote Sonatas for each member of the brass family).
- Compare and contrast the use of brass in the orchestras of Haydn, Beethoven, Berlioz, Wagner, Hindemith, and Stravinsky.
- Identify and discuss significant mixed chamber works for members of the brass family.
- Describe the differences in brass instrumentation between band and orchestra
- Discuss the Baroque instrumental “guilds.”
- Be prepared to write the correct concert pitch from any transposition normally found in the parts for brass instruments.

Instrument Specific Questions (You are only responsible for the questions under your instrument heading.)

Identify the most obvious sources of practice materials for assisting brass musicians from your area of expertise (i.e., horn, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba) in the development of the following categories:

- a. basics; tone, embouchure, breathing, etc.
- b. articulation
- c. multiple tonguing (if appropriate)
- d. phrasing/musicianship
- e. range/endurance
- f. contemporary rhythms/meter studies (if appropriate)
- g. transposition (if appropriate)
- h. flexibility

**Be prepared to discuss the above material at beginning, intermediate (high school), and advanced (college) levels*.*

Horn

- Identify at least one (preferably more) famous and/or important performer on your instrument from each of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.
- Identify at least five performers, educators, or scholars from the 20th and 21st centuries who have contributed greatly to the advancement/enhancement of your instrumental family. Inclusion of women and BIPOC is encouraged.
- Explain “stopped” horn, both theoretically and practically.
- Be able to identify the slides on a double horn (which will be shown to you).
- Discuss intonation problems which exist on your instrument. Include an explanation of compensating systems which are commonly used today.
- Be prepared to write the harmonic series for each valve combination/slide position on your instrument, and show why knowledge of the harmonic series is important to good performance.
- Discuss the history and evolution of your instrument, briefly touching each style period. Cite relevant compositions where appropriate.
- Identify, and be prepared to discuss, the most (and obvious) reference sources used for gaining a historical perspective of your instrumental family.
- Identify the most important solos in your area and be prepared to discuss the historical and pedagogical importance (5-10 solos). Include solos at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.
- Identify several compositions in orchestral and band literature which have prominent parts for your instrument.
- Be prepared to identify the title and composer of significant works that include your instrument via score identification.

Trumpet

- Identify at least one (preferably more) famous and/or important performer on your instrument from each of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.
- Identify at least five performers, educators, or scholars from the 20th and 21st centuries who have contributed greatly to the advancement/enhancement of your instrumental family. Inclusion of women and BIPOC is encouraged.
- Discuss the use of the trumpet by Bach, Purcell, and Handel, citing examples where relevant. Include an explanation of the five so-called Bach Trumpets.
- Be prepared to discuss the use, relevance, and history of the cornet, flugelhorn, and B-flat, C, D, E-flat, and piccolo trumpets.
- Discuss intonation problems which exist on your instrument. Include an explanation of compensating systems which are commonly used today.
- Be prepared to write the harmonic series for each valve combination/slide position on your instrument, and show why knowledge of the harmonic series is important to good performance.
- Discuss the history and evolution of your instrument, briefly touching each style period. Cite relevant compositions where appropriate.
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Trombone

- Identify at least one (preferably more) famous and/or important performer on your instrument from each of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.
- Identify at least five performers, educators, or scholars from the 20th and 21st centuries who have contributed greatly to the advancement/enhancement of your instrumental family. Inclusion of women and BIPOC is encouraged.
- Discuss the use of a valve(s) on the trombone; its purpose and practical use.
- Discuss and contrast historical and present-day usage of the trombone.
- Discuss intonation problems which exist on your instrument. Include an explanation of compensating systems which are commonly used today.
- Be prepared to write the harmonic series for each valve combination/slide position on your instrument, and show why knowledge of the harmonic series is important to good performance.
- Discuss the history and evolution of your instrument, briefly touching each style period. Cite relevant compositions where appropriate.
- Identify, and be prepared to discuss, the most (and obvious) reference sources used for gaining a historical perspective of your instrumental family.
- Identify the most important solos in your area and be prepared to discuss the historical and pedagogical importance (5-10 solos). Include solos at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.
- Identify several compositions in orchestral and band literature which have prominent parts for your instrument.
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Euphonium/Tuba

- Identify 5 influential performers active pre-1990, and 5 performers post-1990 (roughly). Must be a mix of orchestral musicians/band musicians/soloists. Explain the significance of each person.
- Identify at least five performers, educators, or scholars from the 20th and 21st centuries who have contributed greatly to the advancement/enhancement of your instrumental family. Inclusion of women and BIPOC is encouraged.
- Explain the compensating system used in euphoniums and how it differs from standard baritones/euphoniums that are non-compensating.
- What is meant by the terminology: 3/4, 4/4, 5/4 as related to tubas?
- Be prepared to discuss the various keys of both the contrabass and bass tuba, and how each tuba is typically used.
- Discuss intonation problems which exist on your instrument. Include an explanation of compensating systems which are commonly used today.
- Be prepared to write the harmonic series for each valve combination/slide position on your instrument, and show why knowledge of the harmonic series is important to good performance.
- Discuss the history and evolution of your instrument, briefly touching each style period. Cite relevant compositions where appropriate.
- Identify, and be prepared to discuss, the most (and obvious) reference sources used for gaining a historical perspective of your instrumental family.
- Identify the most important solos in your area and be prepared to discuss the historical and pedagogical importance (5-10 solos). Include solos at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.
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