



Instructions for the Preparation of the External Examiner's Report: Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) in Composition

We greatly appreciate the time and effort you will invest in reviewing this candidate's DMA thesis. Your expert analysis will be of great value to the other members of the examining committee, and later also to the candidate. Your report will also have a significant influence on the decision about whether the candidate will proceed to final oral defence. The report will be given to the other members of the examining committee before the defence and to the candidate afterwards. In the event that the thesis is nominated for an award your comments may be included as part of the nomination package.

The DMA thesis is defined as a substantial musical composition (the thesis composition), supported by a written discussion of the work (the thesis document). As External Examiner, we seek your assessment of the thesis and its readiness for final evaluation at the doctoral oral defence.

The final oral defence is a public event. It starts with a 20-30 minute presentation by the candidate, describing the contents of the thesis. This is followed by a question period. The questions posed in your report will be put to the candidate either by the research supervisor or by the exam chair.

The members of the examining committee present at the defence will evaluate the candidate's presentation and response to questions. Where necessary, the candidate may be required to make final revisions to the thesis on the basis of your report and the findings of the other members of the examining committee.

We ask that you address the following in your report.

A. Overall artistic merit

The thesis is defined as a substantial musical composition (the thesis composition), supported by a written discussion of the work. The thesis composition is to be for large or chamber ensemble(s) (minimum of 6 performers), and should have a minimum duration of approximately 15 minutes. The thesis composition should demonstrate originality, clarity of musical expression and presentation, and mastery of compositional technique. The supporting thesis document should clearly and intelligently communicate the technical and aesthetic basis of the work, and should situate it in the context of relevant compositional traditions and discourses. The written document should be at least 20 pages in length, and should critically engage a relevant artistic



and/or scholarly literature. The document should also include a programme note for the work's premiere.

As External Examiner, you are asked to concentrate your assessment primarily on the thesis composition. Your assessment of the composition will be integrated with the assessments of the other members of the examining committee at the final doctoral defence. To facilitate the collective assessment process, it is essential that your observations about the composition refer to specific features in the music and clearly articulate the technical and aesthetic criteria you are applying.

The supporting written document should provide an introduction to the genesis of the composition and to the composer's perspective on its aesthetic context. Please assess the effectiveness of the accompanying document in these two respects.

B. Revisions to the thesis

You may suggest revisions to the thesis. In this case, please gather your recommendations into a separate section of your report. Clear and specific guidance on your expectations will be appreciated by all involved.

C. Overall Recommendation

Please conclude the body of your report with one of the following four statements:

1. In summary, I recommend that the candidate **proceed** to oral defence. The thesis composition and/or written document need only minor revisions.
2. In summary, I recommend that the candidate **proceed** to oral defence. The thesis composition and/or written document need revisions to improve the presentation of ideas, or elements of the conceptual framework, but these can be determined in the context of an oral defence and overseen by a few members of the examining committee in the period following the examination.
3. In summary, I recommend that the candidate **not proceed** to oral defence. Major revisions to the composition or written document are needed before the examination can continue.
4. In summary, I recommend that the candidate **not proceed** to oral defence. The thesis is unacceptable; it is fundamentally flawed and therefore beyond revision.

In cases where an external examiner chooses statement 3, we normally proceed as follows. The candidate is given a copy of the examiner's report and allowed an opportunity to revise the thesis. The revision is then submitted both to the original



external examiner and to one new external examiner. If the revised thesis earns recommendation 1 or 2 from either examiner, an oral examination is held; if both examiners choose 3 or 4, the student fails.

D. Questions for oral defence

If you judge the thesis satisfactory to proceed, please provide a short list of questions to be answered by the candidate at the final oral defence.

If you need any further guidance or information, please do not hesitate to contact the Doctoral Exams unit: graduate.doctoral@ubc.ca

Thank you for the time and wisdom you are contributing to this candidate's examination.