

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

LISTENING SECTION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Tuesday, January 22, 2013 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only

BE SURE THAT THE LISTENING SECTION IS ADMINISTERED TO EVERY STUDENT.

- 1 Before the start of the examination period, say:

Do not open the examination booklet until you are instructed to do so.

- 2 Distribute an answer sheet to each student. Then distribute one examination booklet, one essay booklet, and scrap paper to each student.
- 3 After each student has received an examination booklet, an essay booklet, scrap paper, and his or her answer sheet, say:

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

- 4 After the students have filled in all headings on their essay booklets, say:

You will listen to a passage and answer some multiple-choice questions. You will hear the passage twice.

I will read the passage aloud to you once. Listen carefully. You may take notes on page 3 of your examination booklet. Then I will tell you to open your examination booklet to page 4. You will be given a chance to read the questions before the second reading. Then I will read the passage a second time. You may also take notes during the second reading or answer the questions.

Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time. Open your examination booklet to page 3.

- 5 Note the time you start reading the listening passage. The three-hour examination starts now. Read both the introduction and the passage aloud, including the attribution at the end. Read with appropriate expression, but without added comment.

Listening Passage

The following passage is from an article entitled “Remembering Harpo: His Life and Legacy” by Rod Colvin, published in *The American Harp Journal* in Winter 2009. In this excerpt, Colvin discusses Harpo Marx’s impact on American show business.

In his signature trench coat, red wig, and top hat, Harpo Marx was a mugging, pratfalling, horn-honking clown who entertained audiences for nearly sixty years. He could bring down the house with laughter, but when he became Harpo the harpist, he transformed from clown to musician. The laughter faded and audiences listened in amazement.

Perhaps Harpo himself best described this transformation in his 1961 autobiography, *Harpo Speaks*. “There is a character...he wears a ratty red wig and shredded rain coat. He can’t talk, but makes idiotic faces, honks a horn, whistles, and leaps after blondes. When he’s chasing a girl across the screen, it’s Him. When he sits down to play the harp, it’s Me. Whenever I touch the strings of the harp, I stop being an actor.”

For many moviegoers, Harpo Marx provided their first and only introduction to harp music. Today, thanks to late-night reruns of the old black and white Marx Brothers movies, Harpo continues to entertain audiences old and new. And even though last fall [2009] marked the forty-fifth anniversary of his passing, the comedian’s music lives on. In fact, outside the professional harp community, he remains one of the best “ambassadors for the harp” the world has known, and his work continues to entertain and inspire.

Among both professional and amateur harpists today, opinions vary about Harpo Marx. Was he a professional harpist? Or was he a professional comedian who played the harp? Should his unconventional playing style make a difference in how his work is perceived by harpists today?

Regardless of one’s answers to these questions, the life and career of Harpo Marx was nothing less than remarkable. Born Adolph Marx on November 23, 1888, he came from a poor family that lived in tenement housing in Brooklyn, New York. Harpo dropped out of school in second grade and grew up working at dozens of odd jobs. Having always disliked his given name, he later changed it to Arthur.

In 1910, as a young man of twenty-two, Harpo joined his brothers on the vaudeville [stage] circuit. He took up the harp only after his mother, Minnie, sent him a harp while he was on the road with his brothers. She had learned they could earn an additional five dollars per week if they had a harp in their act. (The harp had belonged to Minnie’s mother and had sat in the corner of their apartment for years.) Having some self-taught piano experience, Harpo taught himself to play chords on the harp as accompaniment to the piano pieces his brother Chico played in the act.

Through his own ingenuity and motivation, Harpo continued to teach himself to play the harp, and eventually picked up his famous nickname. In time, his talent earned him an international reputation as he performed in movies as well as in stage shows around the globe. In 1933, he became the first person in America to perform in Russia after the two nations formed normal diplomatic relations. He received standing ovations during the six weeks he toured there as a goodwill ambassador.

Harpo never learned to read music and received little instruction through the years. He did, however, develop a friendship with internationally known harpist, the late Mildred Dilling, and received some training from her. Dilling met Harpo when she was a teenager. “I don’t know how old he was when I first met him. He was older than I was, but he was dead serious about music, and he had great reverence for my knowledge,” Dilling said. “Music was an overwhelming passion, and classical music filled his life. The way he is on

screen, the way everyone knows him, is the way he played after I began teaching him. We met before they made any of the movies. Harpo had individuality, and he never changed. I never could make him learn to read music. Harpo wasn't really an intellectual, but he was brilliant." ...

History has a tendency to remember many celebrities with a certain amount of reverence—whether it is deserved or not. However, the reverence accorded to Harpo Marx is anything but overstated. Modern screenwriter and Harpo Marx historian Benji Samit describes him this way: “He was a gentle, compassionate, comedic genius. People were drawn to him for reasons that even he could not explain. Harpo had a genuine love for life that people found immensely appealing. It was almost contagious. Wherever he went, he loved people, and they loved him right back. Some have described him as one of the kindest men in show business.”...

—adapted and excerpted from “Remembering Harpo: His Life and Legacy”
The American Harp Journal, Winter 2009

6 After reading the passage aloud once, say:

You may take five minutes to read the questions on page 4 of your test booklet before I read the passage aloud the second time.

7 After the students have had five minutes to read the questions, say:

As you listen to the second reading, you may take notes or answer the questions. You will be given an opportunity to complete the questions after the second reading. Now I will read the passage aloud a second time.

8 Read both the introduction and the passage a second time.

9 After the second reading, say:

Now turn to page 4 of your test booklet, read the directions and answer the multiple-choice questions. You may look over your notes to answer the questions.

