

rockschool®

Vocals Syllabus Guide

2014-2017

Table of Contents

3	Introduction
7	Grade 1
11	Grade 2
16	Grade 3
21	Grade 4
26	Grade 5
31	Grade 6
36	Grade 7
41	Grade 8
46	Technical Work
49	Sight Reading/Improvisation & Interpretation
50	Quick Study Piece and Ear Tests
52	Assessment Criteria
55	Exam Regulations

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Rockscool 2014-2017 syllabus for vocals. This syllabus guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded examinations run by Rockscool.

The Rockscool website, www.rockscool.co.uk has in-depth information on all aspects of our examinations including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes, assessment criteria and free choice piece criteria as well as notated and audio examples to help you prepare for the examination.

This Syllabus Guide covers the following vocal Examinations:

- Graded Examinations Grades 1–8
- Performance Certificates Grades 1–8

Please note that there is no debut exam in this series.

EXAMINATIONS

GRADE EXAMINATIONS

Grade Examinations are available at Grades 1–8 and consist of the following elements:

- **Three** Performance Pieces: Grades 1–8
- Technical Exercises: Grades 1–8
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation: Grades 1–5
- Quick Study Piece: Grades 6–8
- Ear Tests: Grades 1–8
- General Musicianship Questions: Grades 1–8

These elements fall into two categories:

- Prepared work: This consists of **three** Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises
- Unprepared work: This consists of Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation (Grades 1–5), Quick Study Piece (Grades 6–8), Ear Tests (Grades 1–8) and General Musicianship Questions (Grades 1–8)

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Performance Certificates are available at Grades 1–8 and consist of the following elements:

- **Five** Performance Pieces

REPERTOIRE

Rockscool publishes more than 90 established hits associated with top international vocalists for use in the vocal exams. Individual books are available at each grade (1-8) and these are split into male and female with six songs in each. Candidates may mix and match the pieces as they wish and a backing track is provided on the download card. Candidates are also permitted to change the key of any song according to their range. In this situation a backing track must be presented to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.

EXAMINATION STRUCTURE

The examination structure for the Grade Examination is shown below:

Grades 1-5

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

Grade 6-8

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Quick Study Piece
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

EXAMINATION TIMINGS

Examination Timings for Grade Exams & Performance Certificates

- Grade 1: 25 minutes
- Grade 2: 25 minutes
- Grade 3: 30 minutes
- Grade 4: 30 minutes
- Grade 5: 30 minutes
- Grade 6: 40 minutes
- Grade 7: 40 minutes
- Grade 8: 40 minutes

FREE CHOICE PIECES

A Free Choice Piece (FCP) is defined as any piece outside of the grade book and can fall into two categories:

- 1) **Wider Repertoire:** A full list of pre-approved and regularly updated pieces can be found at www.rockschool.co.uk. These songs can be used without prior approval from Rockschool.
- 2) **Own Choice:** Candidates can choose or compose any song in any genre outside of the grade book and wider repertoire. These songs can, however, only be used with prior approval from Rockschool and this requirement is compulsory. To gain approval for Free Choice Pieces, please email the Rockschool Syllabus Advisor freechoicepieces@rockschool.co.uk with a copy of the relevant sheet music. Please allow at least five weeks before the exam to receive a decision.

We cannot accept any songs which have not been approved or are not contained in the grade book or wider repertoire list. If a piece is performed in the exam which has not been pre-approved then it will be referred to the Head of Exams for verification.

Candidates are able to perform a number of Free Choice Pieces in the examination:

- Grade Examinations: **Two** Free Choice Pieces (at least **one** piece must be from the grade book)
- Performance Certificates: **Three** Free Choice Pieces (at least **two** pieces must be from the grade book)

It is important that all pieces performed are at the correct level for the Graded Examination being taken. For more detailed information on Free Choice Pieces please visit our website www.rockschool.co.uk

IMPROVISATION REQUIREMENTS

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as FCPs, need to incorporate improvisation. Improvisation can be prepared in advance but is expected to be individually constructed and needs to include **both** vocal ad-libbing and re-working of existing melody lines as follows:

Level 1 Grade 3: Vocal ad-libbing (2–4 bars) and re-working of melody line (4 bars)

Level 2 Grades 4–5: Vocal ad-libbing (4–8 bars) and re-working of melody line (4–8 bars)

Level 3 Grades 6–7: Vocal ad-libbing (8–12 bars) and re-working of melody line (8 bars)

Level 3 Grades 8: Vocal ad-libbing (12–16 bars) and re-working of melody line (8 bars)

For all pieces candidates will need to highlight the sheet music to show the examiner the location of both ad-libbed and re-worked parts at the beginning of the exam.

Notes:

- Candidates are free to choose where they improvise. However, in all cases, improvisations need to be a continuous number of bars, not a number of smaller bars which in total add up to the ranges shown
- Vocal ad-lib could be demonstrated in a variety of places (e.g. introductions, endings or open instrumental parts)
- Re-working of a melody could be demonstrated by altering any existing singing parts (e.g. verses, choruses, bridges)
- For both ad-lib and re-working of a melody, the candidate must demonstrate an awareness of harmony, melody, phrasing, use of rhythms and incorporation of any appropriate expression in a stylistically appropriate manner. Range and content will be expected to increase progressively as you move through the grades
- The first parts of a song (typically first verse and chorus) are to be presented exactly as notated to demonstrate accuracy of written detail. To achieve the above ad-libbing/re-working requirements, it would be fine to deviate thereafter. This will show you can first portray the original, then you are able to adapt appropriately with individual colour
- Improvisation can be a good place to demonstrate the head voice, which can often be omitted, reducing the technical content of a piece at a particular grade

NOTATION

All notation is to be performed as written as the examiner will be assessing accuracy of notated detail. The improvisation requirements from Grade 3 are an exception to this, the specifics of which are detailed above.

In the male vocal books the supporting tests and corresponding exam versions are written one octave higher than they sound. This is common practice and avoids excessive use of ledger lines.

USE OF MICROPHONES

- At Grades 1-3 the use of a microphone is optional, although candidates may perform with a microphone if they feel it will enhance their performance
- At Grades 4-5 the use of microphone is obligatory for all Performance Pieces
- At Grades 6-8 all sections of the exam are to be performed with a microphone
- Candidates are required to provide their own microphone and lead for the examination

MARKING SCHEME

All Rockscool exams are marked out of **100**

GRADE EXAMS

Grades 1-5 (marks)

Performance Piece (20)
Performance Piece (20)
Performance Piece (20)
Technical Exercises (15)
Sight Reading/Improvisation & Interpretation (10)
Ear Tests (10)
General Musicianship Questions (5)

Grades 6-8 (marks)

Performance Piece (20)
Performance Piece (20)
Performance Piece (20)
Technical Exercises (15)
Quick Study Piece (10)
Ear Tests (10)
General Musicianship Questions (5)

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Performance Piece 1 (20)
Performance Piece 2 (20)
Performance Piece 3 (20)
Performance Piece 4 (20)
Performance Piece 5 (20)

CLASSIFICATION BANDS

The classification bands for **Grade Examinations** are as follows:

Pass: 60%–73%

Merit: 74%–89%

Distinction: 90% and above

The classification bands for **Performance Certificates** are as follows:

Pass: 60%–74%

Merit: 75%–89%

Distinction: 90% and above

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

For the full Assessment Criteria for vocals exams, please see **page 49**

Grade I

The Grade I vocals exam is for candidates who have mastered the key basic skills in vocal performance. There are two types of exam: Grade Exams and Performance Certificates. Please see the 'Examinations' section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is not mandatory at Grade I, but candidates may use one if they feel it will enhance their performance.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

A Sight Reading test OR an Improvisation & Interpretation test must be completed at the candidate's choice. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Rhythmic Recall (Test 2). The Rhythmic Recall will also require identification of the correct rhythm from two choices given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Four** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece) and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade I exam lasts **25 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade I there are **four** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 70bpm
4/4 time signature

The major scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note between A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or to hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 70bpm
4/4 and 3/4 time signatures

Two different patterns of a major arpeggio need to be prepared and the examiner will select one of these to be performed in the exam. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click and any starting note between A–E may be selected by the candidate. The chosen starting note will be played before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following intervals must be prepared:

- Major 2nd interval
- Major 3rd interval

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these intervals in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range of A–C (female) and D–F (male). The candidate will then be required to sing the root note followed by the major 2nd or major 3rd at the examiner's choice. The candidate may choose to sing along to a metronome click throughout or to hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: TECHNICAL STUDIES

Tempo: 85–120bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following studies must be prepared:

- Rhythmic: Rhythmic accuracy
- Melodic: Dynamic change

The examiner will ask the candidate to perform one of the above studies in the exam. The examiner will decide which, so **both** must be prepared before the exam. The Rhythmic Study starts with a four-beat count-in and consists of a four-bar rhythm spoken with lyrics. The Melodic Study starts with the root note followed by a four-beat count-in. The exercise consists of a four-bar melody to be sung with lyrics and a dynamic change. Both tests need to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade I a choice between Sight Reading OR Improvisation and Interpretation will be offered. A previously unseen test will be used in the exam and an example of this can be found in the Grade I book.

SIGHT READING

Key:

- **Female: C major**
- **Male: C major**

Tempo: 70bpm

Range: Up to a Major 3rd

At Grade I the Sight Reading test consists of whole notes (semi-breves), half notes (minims) and quarter notes (crotchets) in 4/4. The test is four bars long and starts with the root note. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation time and will offer the option of practising with a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in at the start of the practice time. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note and the same choice is available when performing the test.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key:

- **Female: C major**
- **Male: C major**

Tempo: 70-80bpm

At Grade I the examiner will give the candidate a chord sequence in the key of C major. The candidate must improvise a melody over the backing track. The test is four-bars long and will be heard three times. The first and second time is for rehearsal and the third time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam.

Each playthrough will begin with the root note and a four-beat count-in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished the root note and count-in of the second and third playthroughs will start immediately.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Rhythmic Recall (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Tempo: 85bpm

The examiner will play three notes in sequence. The candidate needs to identify whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first note and whether the third note is higher or lower than the second. The test will be heard twice, each time with a four-beat vocal count-in. Answers can include the words "higher/ Lower" or "up/ down" as appropriate.

RHYTHMIC RECALL

Part 1: Rhythmic Recall

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played on a single note to a drum backing. The test will be heard twice, each time with a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the rhythm must be sung back. For this exercise 'da' or 'ba' vocal sounds must be used.

It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

The test is made up of quarter notes (crotchets), eighth notes (quavers) and quarter note rests.

Part 2: Identification

The candidate will then be asked to identify the rhythm heard in part 1 from two printed examples shown by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Four** of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be about the voice.

Music Knowledge

Part 1 | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask four music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed by the candidate in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative.

The candidate will be asked to *identify*:

- The treble clef
- The time signature
- Whole (semi-breve), half (minim), quarter (crotchet) and eighth (quaver) note values
- A rest in the piece

Part 2 | Your Voice

The examiner will also ask one question about the voice. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- Where is your diaphragm?
- Where is your larynx?
- What is the difference between head voice and chest voice?
- Why is it important to warm up before singing?

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 1 exam lasts **25 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 2

The Grade 2 vocals exam is for candidates who have mastered the solid basic skills in vocal performance. There are two types of exam: Grade Exams and Performance Certificates. Please see the Examinations section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is not mandatory at Grade 2 but candidates may use one if they feel it will enhance their performance.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

A Sight Reading test OR an Improvisation & Interpretation test must be completed at the candidate's choice. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Rhythmic Recall (Test 2). The Rhythmic Recall will also require identification of the correct rhythm from two choices given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Four** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece) and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 2 exam lasts **25 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 2 there are **four** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 80bpm
4/4 time signature

A natural minor scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note between A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or to hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 80bpm
4/4 and 3/4 time signatures

Two different patterns of a minor arpeggio need to be prepared and the examiner will select one of these to be performed in the exam. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click and any starting note between A–E may be selected by the candidate. The chosen starting note will be played before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following intervals must be prepared:

- Major 3rd interval
- Minor 3rd interval

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these intervals in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range of A–C (female) and D–F (male). The candidate will then be required to sing the root note followed by the major 3rd or minor 3rd at the examiner's choice. The candidate may choose to sing along to a metronome click throughout or to hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: TECHNICAL STUDIES

Tempo: 85–120bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following studies must be prepared:

- Rhythmic: Rhythmic accuracy
- Melodic: Dynamic change

The examiner will ask the candidate to perform one of the above studies in the exam. The examiner will decide which, so **both** must be prepared before the exam. The Rhythmic Study starts with a four-beat count-in and consists of a four-bar rhythm spoken with lyrics. The Melodic Study starts with the root note followed by a four-beat count-in. The exercise consists of a four-bar melody to be sung with lyrics and dynamic changes.

Both tests need to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 2 a choice between Sight Reading OR Improvisation and Interpretation will be offered. A previously unseen test will be used in the exam and an example of this can be found in the Grade 2 book.

SIGHT READING

Key:

- **Female: F major or A minor**
- **Male: C major or A minor**

Tempo: 70bpm

Range: Up to a major 3rd

At Grade 2 the Sight Reading test consists of whole notes (semi-breves), half notes (minims), quarter notes (crotchets) and quarter note rests in 4/4. The test is four bars long, starts with the root note and is in one of the above keys. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation time and will offer the option of practising with a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in at the start of the practice time. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note and the same choice is available when performing the test.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key:

- **Female: A minor**
- **Male: A minor**

Tempo: 80-90bpm

At Grade 2 the examiner will give the candidate a chord sequence in the key of A minor. The candidate must improvise a melody over the backing track. The test is four-bars long and will be heard three times. The first and second time is for rehearsal and the third time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam.

Each playthrough will begin with the root note and a four-beat count-in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second and third playthroughs will start immediately.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Rhythmic Recall (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: C major**
- **Male: C major**

Tempo: 85bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody with a drum backing. The melody will use the first three notes of the C major scale and the first note will be the root note. The test will be heard twice, each time with the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short break to practise after each playthrough. Next a vocal count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising. This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

RHYTHMIC RECALL

Tempo: 90bpm

Part 1: Rhythmic Recall

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played on a single note to a drum backing. The test will be heard twice, each time with a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the rhythm must be sung back. For this exercise 'da' or 'ba' vocal sounds must be used.

It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

The test is made up of quarter notes (crotchets), eighth notes (quavers) and quarter note rests.

Part 2: Identification

The candidate will then be asked to identify the rhythm heard in part 1 from two printed examples shown by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Four** of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about the voice.

Music Knowledge

Part 1 | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask four music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed by the candidate in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative.

The candidate will be asked to identify:

- Any pitch name (it is not required to state flat, sharp or natural)
- Whole (semi-breve), half (minim), quarter (crotchet), eighth (quaver) and 16th (semi-quaver) note values
- Any rest value

The candidate will be asked to identify and explain:

- The meaning of the 4/4 time signature marking
- The meaning of repeat marks, first and second time bars
- The meaning of staccato marks
- The meaning of slurs

Part 2 | Your Voice

The examiner will also ask one question about the voice. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- What is the meaning of 'diction'?
- What is the meaning of 'tone'?
- During a song, when would be a better time to take a breath?
- Why is posture important when singing?

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 2 exam lasts **25 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 3

The Grade 3 vocals exam is for candidates who have established the basic skills, preliminary techniques and the beginnings of stylistic awareness with some individuality. There are two types of exam: the Grade Exam and the Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section on page 3 for further details. The use of a microphone is not mandatory at **Grade 3** but candidates may use one if they feel it will enhance their performance.

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as Free Choice Pieces, need to incorporate improvisation. This needs to include vocal ad-libbing of 2-4 bars and the re-working of the melody line in 4 bars of the candidate's choice. **These bars need to be highlighted on the sheet music and shown to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.** Please see the Improvisation Requirements section on **page 5** for further details.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

A Sight Reading test OR an Improvisation & Interpretation test must be completed at the candidate's choice. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Rhythmic Recall (Test 2). The Rhythmic Recall will also require identification of the correct rhythm from two choices given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Four** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece) and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 3 exam lasts **30 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 3 there are **four** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 90bpm
4/4 time signature

A major and natural minor scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note from A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 90bpm
3/4 time signature

A major and minor arpeggio must be prepared and the examiner will select one of these to be performed in the exam. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click and any starting note between A–E may be selected by the candidate. The root note will be heard, followed by a one-bar (three click) count-in.

The test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following intervals must be prepared:

- Perfect 4th interval
- Perfect 5th interval

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these intervals in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range A–C (female) and D–F (male). The candidate will then be required to sing the root note followed by the perfect 4th or perfect 5th at the examiner's choice. The candidate may choose to sing along to a metronome click throughout or to hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: TECHNICAL STUDIES

Tempo: 95–100bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following studies must be prepared:

- Rhythmic: Rhythmic Accuracy
- Melodic: Quick dynamic changes and bends

The examiner will ask the candidate to perform one of the above studies in the exam. The examiner will decide which, so **both** must be prepared before the exam. The Rhythmic Study starts with a four beat count-in and consists of a four-bar rhythm spoken with lyrics. The Melodic study starts with the root note followed by a four-beat count-in and will make use of quick dynamic changes and bends.

Both tests need to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 3 a choice between Sight Reading OR Improvisation and Interpretation will be offered. A previously unseen test will be used in the exam and an example of this can be found in the Grade 3 book.

SIGHT READING

Key:

- **Female: C major or D minor**
- **Male: F major or E minor**

Tempo: 75-85bpm

Range: Up to a perfect 5th

At Grade 3 the Sight Reading test consists of whole notes (semi-breves), half notes (minims), quarter notes (crotchets), eighth notes (quavers) and quarter note rests in 4/4. The test is four-bars long, starts with the root note and is in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which). The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation time and will offer the option of practising with a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in at the start of the practice time. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note and the same choice is available when performing the test. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key:

- **Female: G major or E minor**
- **Male: G major or E minor**

Tempo: 80-90bpm

At Grade 3 the examiner will give the candidate a chord sequence in the key of G major or E minor (the examiner will decide which). The candidate must improvise a melody over the backing track and the chord sequence will be heard three times. The first and second time is for rehearsal and the third time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam.

Each playthrough will begin with the root note and a four-beat count-in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second and third playthroughs will start immediately.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Rhythmic Recall (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: C major or A natural minor scale**
- **Male: F major or A natural minor scale**

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody played to a drum backing. It will use a range of up to the first five notes of the above scales (the examiner will decide which) and the first note will be the root note. The test will be heard twice, each time with a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

RHYTHMIC RECALL

Tempo: 90bpm

Part 1: Rhythmic Recall

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played on a single note to a drum backing. The test will be heard twice and each time the test is played it is preceded by the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap for to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the rhythm must be sung back. For this exercise 'da' or 'ba' vocal sounds must be used.

It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

The test is made up of quarter notes (crotchets), eighth notes (quavers) and equivalent rests.

Part 2: Identification

The candidate will then be asked to identify the rhythm heard in part 1 from two printed examples shown by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Four** of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about the voice.

Music Knowledge

Part 1 | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask four music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed by the candidate in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative.

The candidate will be asked to identify:

- Any pitch name (flat, sharp or natural must also be stated)
- Whole (semi-breve), half (minim), quarter (crochet), eighth (quaver), triplet eighth (triplet quaver) and 16th (semi-quaver) note values
- Any rest value
- Recognition of any interval up to a fifth between two adjacent notes (it is not required to state major, minor or perfect)

The candidate will be asked to identify and explain:

- The meaning of the 4/4 time signature marking
- The meaning of repeat marks, first and second time bars
- The meaning of *staccato* marks
- The meaning of slurs
- The meaning of *crescendo/diminuendo*
- The meaning of **D.C.**, **D.S.**, **al Coda** and **al Fine** markings
- The meaning of *ad lib*

Part 2 | Your Voice

The examiner will also ask you one question about the voice. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- What is the meaning of the 'break'?
- What is the meaning of 'transition'?
- How do you support a long sustained note?
- Give an example of each of the following:
 - a) A type of food that would be good to eat before a performance?
 - b) A type of food that would not be good to eat before a performance?

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 3 exam lasts **30 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 4

The Grade 4 vocals exam is for candidates who have mastered the basic skills, preliminary techniques and acquired the beginnings of stylistic awareness with some individuality. There are two types of exam: the Grade Exam and the Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is mandatory for all Performance Pieces at Grade 4.

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as Free Choice Pieces, need to incorporate improvisation. At Grade 4 this needs to include vocal ad-libbing of 4-8 bars and the re-working of the melody line in 4-8 bars of the candidate's choice. **These bars need to be highlighted on the sheet music and shown to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.** Please see the Improvisation Requirements section on **page 5** for further details.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

A Sight Reading test OR an Improvisation & Interpretation test must be completed at the candidate's choice. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Harmony Vocals (Test 2). The Harmony Vocals test needs to include the use of lyrics which will be given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Four** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece) and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice or microphone. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 4 exam lasts **30 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 4 there are **five** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 80bpm

4/4 time signature

A major pentatonic scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note from A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 80bpm

4/4 time signature

A major and major (ascending) with dominant 7 (descending) arpeggio must be prepared and the examiner will select one of these to be performed in the exam. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click and any starting note between A-E may be selected by the candidate. The root note will be heard, followed by a one-bar (four-click) count-in.

The test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group the following intervals must be prepared:

- Major 6th interval
- Major 7th interval

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these intervals in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range of A–C (female) and D-F (male). The candidate will then be required to sing the root note followed by the major 6th or major 7th at the examiner's choice. The candidate can choose to sing to a metronome click throughout or to hear a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: MELODIC STUDY

Tempo: 115bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group the melodic study for slides and trilldowns must be prepared. This exercise is an eight-bar melody that must be sung to lyrics after the root note and four-beat count-in is heard. Candidates are required to perform the study with the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

GROUP E: BACKING VOCALS

Tempo: 115bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group, **both** backing vocal parts need to be prepared. This is a two-part harmony test and the candidate will be asked to perform one part in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The chosen part must be sung alongside the other part on the recording. The test needs to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 4 a choice between Sight Reading OR Improvisation and Interpretation will be offered. A previously unseen test will be used in the exam and an example of this can be found in the Grade 4 book.

SIGHT READING

Key:

- **Female: D major, Bb major, B minor or D minor**
- **Male: D major, Bb major, E minor or D minor**

Tempo: 80-90bpm

Range: Up to an octave

At Grade 4 the Sight Reading test will feature lyrics and cover a range of up to an octave. The test will be in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which) and will start with the root note. At this grade there is an element of improvisation in order to prepare candidates for the Quick Study Piece at Level 3 (Grade 6 upwards). Bars 5 and 6 are a repeat of bars 1 and 2 and a melody will need to be improvised in the final two bars. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation time, after which the test must be performed.

During the practice time candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note. The same choice will be given when performing the test.

The improvised bars in this test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key:

- **Female: D major, Bb major, E minor or D minor**
- **Male: D major, Bb major, D minor or A minor**

Tempo: 95bpm

At Grade 4 the examiner will give the candidate a chord sequence in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which) and the candidate must improvise a melody over the backing track. At this grade there is also an element of sight reading to prepare candidates for the Quick Study Piece at Level 3. This consists of a two-bar section featuring lyrics at the beginning of the test. The examiner will allow 30 seconds to practise, after which the backing track will be played twice. The first time is for rehearsal and the second time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam. The backing track will begin with a root note and a four-beat count-in on both playthroughs and is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second playthrough will start immediately.

The examiner will offer the option of practising with a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in at the start of the practice time. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note.

The improvised bars in this test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Harmony Vocals (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: D major or B natural minor scale**
- **Male: G major or E natural minor scale**

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody played to a drum backing. It will use up to the first six notes of one of the above scales (the examiner will decide which) and the first note will be the root note. The test will be heard twice, each time starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

HARMONY VOCALS

Key:

- **Female: C major or A major**
- **Male: D major or F major**

Tempo: 90-100bpm

The examiner will play a three-bar melody in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which) and this will be based on the I-IV chords. The recorded vocal part will sing the root note of each chord and candidates need to harmonise a major 3rd above this part using the same rhythm. The examiner will give the candidate the lyrics.

The test will be heard twice, starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in each time it is played. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the harmony line must be performed. It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Four** of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about the voice or the microphone.

Music Knowledge

Part I | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask four music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed by the candidate in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative.

The candidate will be asked to identify:

- Any pitch name (an appropriate flat, sharp or natural must also be stated)
- Whole (semi-breve), half (minim), quarter (crotchet), eighth (quaver), triplet eighth (triplet quaver), 16th (semi-quaver) note values and adjacent note value combinations
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth and 16th note rests and adjacent rest combinations
- Recognition of any interval up to a 7th between two adjacent notes (it is not required to state major, minor or perfect)

The candidate will be asked to identify and explain:

- The meaning of any time signature
- The meaning of '*ad lib*'
- The meaning of any dynamic marking
- The meaning of the tempo marking

Part 2 | Your Voice and the Microphone

The examiner will also ask one question about the voice or the microphone. They will decide which. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- How do you ensure consistent vocal tone?
- How do you create breathy (aspirate) tone?
- When would you use vibrato?
- How does a microphone amplify sound?

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 4 exam lasts **30 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 5

The Grade 5 vocals exam is for candidates who have acquired intermediate skills and techniques and have developed an increasing sense of stylistic conviction and individuality. There are two types of exam: the Grade Exam and the Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is mandatory for all Performance Pieces at Grade 5.

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as Free Choice Pieces, need to incorporate improvisation. At Grade 5 this needs to include vocal ad-libbing of 4-8 bars and the re-working of the melody line in 4-8 bars of the candidate's choice. **These bars need to be highlighted on the sheet music and shown to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.** Please see the Improvisation Requirements section on **page 5** for further details.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

A Sight Reading test OR an Improvisation & Interpretation test must be completed at the candidate's choice. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Harmony Vocals (Test 2). The Harmony Vocals test needs to include the use of lyrics which will be given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Four** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece) and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice or microphone. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 5 exam lasts **30 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 5 there are **five** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 80bpm
4/4 time signature

A minor pentatonic scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note from A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 80bpm
3/4 time signature

A major (ascending) and dominant 7 (descending) arpeggio must be prepared. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click track and any starting note between A–E may be selected by the candidate. The root note will be heard, followed by a one-bar (three click) count-in.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the following intervals must be prepared:

- Minor 6th interval
- Minor 7th interval

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these intervals in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range A–C (female) and D–F (male). Candidates will then be required to sing the root note and then the minor 6th or minor 7th at the examiner's choice. The candidate can choose to sing to a metronome click throughout or to hear a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: MELODIC STUDY

Tempo: 125bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group the melodic study for melismas and scoops must be prepared. This exercise is an eight-bar melody sung to lyrics and starts with the root note followed by a four-beat count. Candidates are required to perform the study with the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

GROUP E: BACKING VOCALS

Tempo: 120bpm
4/4 time signature

In this group, **both** backing vocal parts need to be prepared. This is a two-part harmony test and the candidate will be asked to perform one part in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The chosen part must be sung alongside the other part on the recording. The test needs to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 5 a choice between Sight Reading OR Improvisation and Interpretation will be offered. A previously unseen test will be used in the exam and an example of this can be found in the Grade 5 book.

SIGHT READING

Key:

- **Female: D major, Bb major, B minor or D minor**
- **Male: D major, Bb major, E minor or D minor**

Tempo: 85-95bpm

Range: Up to an octave

At Grade 5 the Sight Reading test will feature lyrics and cover a range of up to an octave. The test will be in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which) and will start with the root note. At this grade there is an element of improvisation in order to prepare candidates for the Quick Study Piece at Level 3 (Grade 6 upwards). Bars 5 and 6 are a repeat of bars 1 and 2 and a melody will need to be improvised in the final two bars. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation time, after which the test must be performed.

During the practice time candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note. The same choice will be given when performing the test.

The improvised bars in this test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key:

- **Female: D major, Bb major, E minor or D minor**
- **Male: D major, Bb major, E minor or D minor**

Tempo: 100bpm

At Grade 5 the examiner will give the candidate a chord sequence in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which) and the candidate must improvise a melody over the backing track. At this grade there is also an element of sight reading to prepare candidates for the Quick Study Piece at Level 3. This consists of a two-bar section featuring lyrics at the beginning of the test. The examiner will allow 30 seconds to practise, after which the backing track will be played twice. The first time is for rehearsal and the second time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam. The backing track will begin with a root note and a four-beat count-in on both playthroughs and is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second playthrough will start immediately.

The examiner will offer the option of practising with a metronome click throughout or a four-beat count-in at the start of the practice time. Whichever option is chosen, the practice time will start with the examiner playing the root note.

The improvised bars in this test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Harmony Vocals (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: Bb major or A natural minor scale**
- **Male: D major or C natural minor scale**

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody played to a drum backing. It will use one of the above scales (the examiner will decide which) and the first note will be the root note. The test will be heard twice, each time starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

HARMONY VOCALS

Key:

- **Female: A major or F major**
- **Male: C major or A major**

Tempo: 90-110bpm

The examiner will play a four-bar melody in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which) and this will be based on the I-IV-V chords. The recorded vocal part will sing the root note or 3rd of each chord and candidates need to harmonise a diatonic 3rd above this part using the same rhythm. The examiner will give the candidate the lyrics.

The test will be heard twice, starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in each time it is played. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the harmony line must be performed. It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Four** of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about the voice or the microphone.

Music Knowledge

Part I | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask four music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed by the candidate in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative.

The candidate will be asked to identify:

- Any pitch name (an appropriate flat, sharp or natural must also be stated)
- Whole (semi-breve), half (minim), quarter (crotchet), eighth (quaver), triplet eighth (triplet quaver), 16th (semi-quaver) note values and adjacent note value combinations
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth and 16th-note rests and adjacent rest combinations
- Recognition of any interval up to an octave between two adjacent notes (it is not required to state major, minor or perfect)

The candidate will be asked to identify and explain:

- The meaning of any time signature
- The meaning of '*ad lib*'
- The meaning of any dynamic marking
- The meaning of the tempo marking
- The meaning of the key signature (stating either major or relative minor)

- The meaning of the swung rhythm marking

Part 2 | Your Voice and the Microphone

The examiner will also ask one question about the voice or the microphone. They will decide which. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- Using your articulators (mouth/lips/tongue/teeth/jaw), how can you modify a bright 'ee' sound to produce a less bright tone?
- How would you prevent straining during prolonged use of louder dynamics?
- Suggest two exercises that can help develop control over dynamics across your range
- Explain how you would use microphone technique to be able to sing at different volumes

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 5 exam lasts **30 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 6

The Grade 6 vocals exam is for candidates who have begun to develop advanced technical control and a competent grasp of stylistic techniques and personalisation. There are two types of exam: the Grade Exam and the Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is mandatory in all sections of the exam at Grade 6.

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as Free Choice Pieces, need to incorporate improvisation. At Grade 6 this needs to include vocal ad-libbing of 8-12 bars and the re-working of the melody line in 8 bars of the candidate's choice. **These bars need to be highlighted on the sheet music and shown to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.** Please see the Improvisation Requirements section on **page 5** for further details.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

At this grade candidates will be asked to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP). This will consist of four-bars of melody and eight-bars of improvisation. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Harmony Vocals (Test 2). The Harmony Vocals test needs to include the use of lyrics which will be given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Three** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece), **one** question will be asked on the use of improvisation in the piece, and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice or microphone. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 6 exam lasts **40 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Quick Study Piece
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 6 there are **five** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 100bpm

4/4 time signature

A blues scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note from A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 100bpm

4/4 time signature

A major and diminished arpeggio must be prepared. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click track and any starting note between C–G may be selected by the candidate. The root note will be heard, followed by a one-bar (four-click) count-in. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group the following interval sequences must be prepared:

- Major 7th and major 6th sequence
- Minor 7th and minor 6th sequence

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these sequences in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range A–C (female) and D–F (male). Candidates will then be required to sing the 1st-major 7th, 1st-major 6th-1st in sequence or the 1st-minor 7th, 1st-minor 6th-1st in sequence. This will be at the examiner's choice.

The candidate can choose to sing to a metronome click throughout or to hear a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: BACKING VOCALS

Tempo: 120bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group **all three** backing vocal parts need to be prepared. This is a three-part harmony test and the candidate will be asked to perform one part in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The chosen part must be sung alongside the other two parts on the recording. The test needs to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

GROUP E: STYLISTIC STUDY

Tempo: Range of Tempo are used-please refer to “Technical work” from P46

4/4 time signature

Candidates will need to choose and perform **one** Stylistic Study from the group of styles listed below. This choice will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. For example, if the Jazz and Blues stylistic study is chosen the examiner will give the candidate a QSP from the Jazz and Blues group.

- Pop and Musical Theatre
- Soul and R'n'B
- Jazz and Blues
- Rock and Indie

QUICK STUDY PIECE

Tempo: 70-160bpm

At this grade candidates will be asked to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP). This will consist of four-bars of melody and eight-bars of improvisation. Bars 1–4 of the test will be a notated melody and the candidate must sing all the written detail, including the lyrics. In bars 5–8 candidates will need to improvise a variation of bars 1–4, developing *both* the lyrics and melody as they feel appropriate. In bars 9–12 candidates are required to improvise freely, with no reference to bars 1–4 needed. These bars can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

The examiner will give the candidate the sheet music and then a full mix version of the track will be heard, including the notated parts. This first playthrough will be preceded by the root note and a one-bar count-in. After the full mix candidates will have three minutes to practise. The root note will be played at the start of this practice time and then again after 90 seconds. During the practice time, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one-bar count-in at the beginning.

At the end of the three minutes, the backing track will be played twice more with the notated parts now absent. The first time is for rehearsal and the second time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam. Again, the root note will be heard and then a one-bar count-in before each playthrough. The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second playthrough will start immediately.

The QSP style will be from one of the following four groups. These match the groups of the Stylistics Studies in the Technical Exercises section.

- Pop and Musical Theatre
- Soul and R'n'B
- Jazz and Blues
- Rock and Indie

The style of the QSP given to the candidate will be from the same group as the candidate's choice of Stylistic Study. The examiner will decide the specific style from the group chosen.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Harmony Vocals (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: A major and C natural minor scale**
- **Male: E major or D natural minor scale**

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody played to a drum backing. It will use one of the above scales (the examiner will decide which) and the first note will be the root note or the fifth. The test will be heard twice, each time starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

HARMONY VOCALS

Key:

- **Female: C major or A major**
- **Male: G major or A major**

Tempo: 90-120bpm

The examiner will play a four-bar melody in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which), based on the I–IV–V–VI chords. The recorded vocal part will sing the root, 3rd or 5th of each chord and candidates need to harmonise a diatonic 3rd or 4th above this part using the same rhythm. The examiner will give the candidate the lyrics.

The test will be heard twice, starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in each time it is played. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the harmony line must be performed. It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Three** of these questions will be on general music knowledge of the piece, **one** will be on improvisation and **one** will be on the candidate's understanding of the voice or microphone.

Music Knowledge

Part 1 | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask three music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed by the candidate in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative.

The candidate will be asked to *identify and explain*:

- Any notation used in the chosen piece
- Recognition of any interval up to an octave between two adjacent notes (candidates will need to state major, minor or perfect)

Part 2 | Improvisation

Candidates will be asked to briefly describe and demonstrate their approach to how they would improvise any part of the chosen song. This should be done with reference to melody, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics and expression. Candidates can choose the part.

Part 3 | Your Voice and the Microphone

The examiner will also ask you one question about the voice or the microphone. They will decide which. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- Name three effective resonators for singing
- Explain the difference between 'aspirate onset' and 'glottal onset'
- Which exercises might be safe to perform when your voice is tired or you have a sore throat?
- How can you balance your sound on microphone when switching between chest voice (low register) and head/falsetto voice (high register)?

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 6 exam lasts **40 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 7

The Grade 7 vocals exam is for candidates who have a developed advanced technical control and a thorough grasp of extended stylistic techniques and personalisation. There are two types of exam: the Grade Exam and the Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is mandatory in all sections of the exam at Grade 7.

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as Free Choice Pieces, need to incorporate improvisation. At Grade 7 this needs to include vocal ad-libbing of 8-12 bars and the re-working of the melody line in 8 bars of the candidate's choice. *These bars need to be highlighted on the sheet music and shown to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.* Please see the Improvisation Requirements section on **page 5** for further details.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

At this grade candidates will be asked to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP). This will consist of four bars of melody and eight bars of improvisation. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Harmony Vocals (Test 2). The Harmony Vocals test needs to include the use of lyrics which will be given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Three** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece), **one** question will be asked on the use of improvisation in the piece, and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice or microphone. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 7 exam lasts **40 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Quick Study Piece
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 7 there are **five** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group.

Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 100bpm

4/4 time signature

A harmonic minor scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note from A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 100bpm

3/4 time signature

An augmented arpeggio must be prepared. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click track and any starting note between C–G may be selected by the candidate. The root note will be heard, followed by a one-bar (four-click) count-in. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group the following interval sequences must be prepared:

- Major 3rd and major 2nd intervals
- Minor 3rd and minor 2nd intervals

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these sequences in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range A–C (female) and D–F (male). Candidates will then be required to sing the 1st–major 3rd, 1st–major 2nd–1st in sequence, or the 1st–minor 3rd, 1st–minor 2nd–1st in sequence. This will be at the examiner's choice. The candidate can choose to sing to a metronome click throughout or to hear a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: BACKING VOCALS

Tempo: 120bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group, **all three** backing vocal parts need to be prepared. This is a three-part harmony test and the candidate will be asked to perform one part in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The chosen part must be sung alongside the other two parts on the recording. The test needs to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

GROUP E: STYLISTIC STUDY

Tempo: Range of Tempo are used—please refer to “Technical work” from P46

4/4 time signature

Candidates will need to choose and perform **one** Stylistic Study from the group of styles listed below. This choice will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. For example, if the Jazz and Blues stylistic study is chosen, the examiner will give the candidate a QSP from the Jazz and Blues group.

- Pop and Musical Theatre
- Soul and R'n'B
- Jazz and Blues
- Rock and Indie

QUICK STUDY PIECE

Tempo: 70-160bpm

At this grade candidates will be asked to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP). This will consist of four-bars of melody and eight-bars of improvisation. Bars 1–4 of the test will be a notated melody and the candidate must sing all the written detail, including the lyrics. In bars 5–8 candidates will need to improvise a variation of bars 1–4, developing *both* the lyrics and melody as they feel appropriate. In bars 9–12 candidates are required to improvise freely, with no reference to bars 1–4 needed. These bars can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

The examiner will give the candidate the sheet music and then a full mix version of the track will be heard, including the notated parts. This first playthrough will be preceded by the root note and a one-bar count-in. After the full mix, candidates will have three minutes to practise. The root note will be played at the start of this practice time and then again after 90 seconds. During the practice time, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one-bar count-in at the beginning.

At the end of the three minutes, the backing track will be played twice more with the notated parts now absent. The first time is for rehearsal and the second time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam. Again, the root note will be heard and then a one-bar count-in before each playthrough. The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second playthrough will start immediately.

The QSP style will be from one of the following four groups. These match the groups of the Stylistics Studies in the Technical Exercises section.

- Pop and Musical Theatre
- Soul and R'n'B
- Jazz and Blues
- Rock and Indie

The style of the QSP given to the candidate will be from the same group as the candidate's choice of Stylistic Study. The examiner will decide the specific style from the group chosen.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Harmony Vocals (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: B major or D natural minor scale**
- **Male: D major or E natural minor scale**

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody played to a drum backing. It will use one of the above scales (the examiner will decide which) and the first note will be the root note or the 5th. The test will be heard twice, each time starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

HARMONY VOCALS

Key:

- **Female: A major or E minor**
- **Male: E major or B minor**

Tempo: 90-130bpm

The examiner will play a four-bar melody in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which), based on any diatonic chords. The recorded vocal part will sing the root, 3rd or 5th of each chord and candidates need to harmonise a diatonic 3rd or 4th above this part using the same rhythm. The examiner will give the candidate the lyrics.

The test will be heard twice, starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in each time it is played. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the harmony line must be performed. It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Three** of these questions will be on general music knowledge of the piece, **one** will be on improvisation and **one** will be on the candidate's understanding of the voice or microphone.

Music Knowledge

Part 1 | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask three music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative

The candidate will be asked to *identify and explain*:

- Any notation used in the chosen piece
- Recognition of any interval up to an octave between two adjacent notes (candidates will need to state major, minor or perfect)

Part 2 | Improvisation

Candidates will be asked to briefly describe and demonstrate their approach to how they would improvise any part of the chosen song. This should be done with reference to melody, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics and expression. Candidates can choose the part.

Part 3 | Your Voice and the Microphone

The examiner will also ask you one question about the voice or the microphone. They will decide which. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- What type of exercise might you use to practise 'flipping between registers', including the pitches you would use in the exercise for your voice?
- Give two examples of vocal effects you might employ while singing in the rock style
- Explain the difference between 'warm-ups' and 'technical practice', including one example of the type of exercise used for each
- What equalization settings might you use to correct a singer with a very 'nasal' sound?

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 7 exam lasts **40 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces

For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Grade 8

The Grade 8 vocals exam is for candidates who have developed advanced technical control and a thorough grasp of extended stylistic techniques and personalisation. There are two types of exam: the Grade Exam and the Performance Certificate. Please

see the Examinations section on **page 3** for further details. The use of a microphone is mandatory in all sections of the exam at Grade 8.

From Grade 3 all songs, whether from the grade book or chosen as Free Choice Pieces, need to incorporate improvisation. At Grade 8 this needs to include vocal ad-libbing of 12-16 bars and the re-working of the melody line in 8 bars of the candidate's choice. **These bars need to be highlighted on the sheet music and shown to the examiner at the beginning of the exam.** Please see the Improvisation Requirements section on page 5 for further details.

GRADE EXAMS

Prepared work:

Candidates will need to perform three Performance Pieces and the Technical Exercises for the grade. These are to be performed at the beginning of the exam and can be in either order, at the candidate's choice. The examiner will only ask for a selection of the Technical Exercises in the exam.

Unprepared work:

At this grade candidates will be asked to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP). This will consist of four bars of melody and eight bars of improvisation. This is followed by two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) then Harmony Vocals (Test 2). The Harmony Vocals test needs to include the use of lyrics which will be given by the examiner.

For the final part of the exam, **five** General Musicianship Questions will be asked. **Three** questions will be asked on one of the pieces performed, (the candidate will be asked to choose which piece), **one** question will be asked on the use of improvisation in the piece, and **one** question will be asked on understanding of the voice or microphone. All questions will be at the examiner's choice.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 8 exam lasts **40 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- Performance Pieces*
- Technical Exercises *
- Quick Study Piece
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 8 there are **five** groups of Technical Exercises. The examiner will ask for a selection from each group. Please see from **page 46** for reference also.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 100bpm
4/4 time signature

A chromatic scale must be prepared. The candidate may select any starting note from A–E and may choose to sing along to a metronome click or hear four clicks before the test starts. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts.

This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 100bpm

4/4 time signature

A diminished 7 arpeggio must be prepared. This test **must** be performed to a metronome click track and any starting note between C–G may be selected by the candidate. The root note will be heard, followed by a one-bar (four-click) count-in. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP C: INTERVALS

Tempo: 90bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group the following interval sequences must be prepared:

- Major 7th, minor 7th and octave intervals
- Major 3rd and minor 3rd intervals

The candidate will be asked to perform one of these sequences in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The examiner will choose a starting note within the range A–C (female) and D–F (male). Candidates will then be required to sing the 1st–major 7th, 1st–minor 7th, 1st–octave–1st in sequence or the 1st–major 3rd, 1st–minor 3rd–1st in sequence. This will be at the examiner's choice. The candidate can choose to sing to a metronome click throughout or to hear a four-beat count-in. Whichever option is chosen, the starting note will be heard before the count starts. This test can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

GROUP D: BACKING VOCALS

Tempo: 130bpm

4/4 time signature

In this group, **all three** backing vocal parts need to be prepared. This is a three-part harmony test and the candidate will be asked to perform one part in the exam, as chosen by the examiner. The chosen part must be sung alongside the other two parts on the recording. The test needs to be performed to the appropriate backing track which can be found on the download card.

GROUP E: STYLISTIC STUDY

Tempo: Range of Tempo are used—please refer to “Technical work” from P46

4/4 time signature

Candidates will need to choose and perform **one** Stylistic Study from the group of styles listed below. This choice will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. For example, if the Jazz and Blues stylistic study is chosen, the examiner will give the candidate a QSP from the Jazz and Blues group.

- Pop and Musical Theatre
- Soul and R'n'B
- Jazz and Blues
- Rock and Indie

QUICK STUDY PIECE

Tempo: 70–160bpm

At this grade candidates will be asked to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP). This will consist of four-bars of melody and eight-bars of improvisation. Bars 1–4 of the test will be a notated melody and the candidate must sing all the written detail, including the lyrics. In bars 5–8 candidates will need to improvise a variation of bars 1–4, developing *both* the lyrics and melody as they feel appropriate. In bars 9–12 candidates are required to improvise freely, with no reference to bars 1–4 needed. These bars can be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. Improvised lyrics and vocal ad-libbing are permitted.

The examiner will give the candidate the sheet music and then a full mix version of the track will be heard, including the notated parts. This first playthrough will be preceded by the root note and a one-bar count-in. After the full mix, candidates will have three minutes to practise. The root note will be played at the start of this practice time and then again after 90 seconds. During the practice time, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one-bar count-in at the beginning.

At the end of the three minutes, the backing track will be played twice more with the notated parts now absent. The first time is for rehearsal and the second time is for the candidate to perform the final version for the exam. Again, the root note will be heard and then a one-bar count-in before each playthrough. The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second playthrough will start immediately.

The QSP style will be from one of the following four groups. These match the groups of the Stylistics Studies in the Technical Exercises section.

- Pop and Musical Theatre
- Soul and R'n'B
- Jazz and Blues
- Rock and Indie

The style of the QSP given to the candidate will be from the same group as the candidate's choice of Stylistic Study. The examiner will decide the specific style from the group chosen.

EAR TESTS

There are two Ear Tests: Melodic Recall (Test 1) and Harmony Vocals (Test 2).

MELODIC RECALL

Key:

- **Female: B major or D natural minor scale**
- **Male: D major or E natural minor scale**

Tempo: 90bpm

The examiner will play a two-bar melody played to a drum backing. It will use one of the above scales (the examiner will decide which) and the first note will be the root, 3rd or the 5th. The test will be heard twice, each time starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the melody must be sung to the drum backing.

Candidates are permitted to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

This test may be performed using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

HARMONY VOCALS

Key:

- **Female: A major or B minor**
- **Male: D major or E minor**

Tempo: 90–130bpm

The examiner will play a four-bar melody in one of the above keys (the examiner will decide which), based on any diatonic chords. The recorded vocal part will sing the root, 3rd or 5th of each chord and candidates need to harmonise a diatonic 3rd or 4th above this part using the same rhythm. The examiner will give the candidate the lyrics.

The test will be heard twice, starting with the root note and a four-beat count-in each time it is played. There will be a short gap to practise after each playthrough. Next a **vocal** count-in will be heard, after which the harmony line must be performed. It is acceptable to sing over the track as it is being played as well as practising after the first two playthroughs. The length of time available after the second playthrough is pre-recorded on the audio track, so the vocal count-in may begin while the candidate is still practising.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam **five** questions will be asked. **Three** of these questions will be on general music knowledge of the piece, **one** will be on improvisation and **one** will be on the candidate's understanding of the voice or microphone.

Music Knowledge

Part 1 | General Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask three music knowledge questions. The questions will be based on one of the pieces (including Free Choice Pieces) performed in the exam. The candidate can choose which one.

If there are handwritten notes on the piece chosen, the examiner may ask the candidate to choose an alternative

The candidate will be asked to identify and explain:

- Any notation used in the chosen piece
- Recognition of intervals up to a 10th between two adjacent notes (candidates will need to state major, minor or perfect)

Part 2 | Improvisation

Candidates will be asked to briefly describe and demonstrate their approach to how they would improvise any part of the chosen song. This should be done with reference to melody, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics and expression. Candidates can choose the part.

Part 3 | Your Voice and the Microphone

The examiner will also ask one question about the voice or the microphone. They will decide which. Brief demonstrations to assist answers are acceptable.

Candidates will be asked one of the following questions:

- What is 'melisma' and what exercises can help you develop it?
- Describe techniques you might employ to build emotional intensity in a soul/R&B style ballad
- Give two examples of exercises designed to develop intensity/power in a singer's 'mix' voice
- Explain the difference between a dynamic and a condenser microphone, including one example each of their uses

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The Grade 8 exam lasts **40 minutes** and the candidate chooses to sing **five** pieces only.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Free Choice Pieces may be performed in the examination:

- Grade exam: **Two** Free Choice Pieces
- Performance certificate: **Three** Free Choice Pieces











For a list of pre-approved Free Choice Pieces please visit the website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

TECHNICAL WORK
















GRADES 1, 2 & 3

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Group A Scales	Major scale	Natural minor scale	Major and natural minor scales
Tempo	♩ = 70bpm	♩ = 80bpm	♩ = 90bpm
Time signature	4/4	4/4	4/4
Starting note range	A-E	A-E	A-E
Group B: Arpeggios			
	2 different versions of the A major arpeggio	2 different versions of the A minor arpeggio	A major and A minor arpeggios
Tempo	♩ = 70bpm	♩ = 80bpm	♩ = 90bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4	3/4
Starting note range	A-E	A-E	A-E
Group C: Intervals			
	Major 2nd & major 3rd intervals	Major 3rd & minor 3rd intervals	Perfect 4th & perfect 5th intervals
Tempo	♩ = 90bpm	♩ = 90bpm	♩ = 90bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4	4/4
Starting note range	Female: A-C Male: D-F	Female: A-C Male: D-F	Female: A-C Male: D-F
Group D: Technical Studies			
	Rhythmic accuracy & dynamic change	Rhythmic accuracy & dynamic change	Rhythmic accuracy & quick dynamic changes and bends
Tempo	♩ = 90-120bpm	♩ = outside the range of 90-120bpm	♩ = 90-120bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4	4/4

GRADES 4 & 5







	Grade 4	Grade 5
Group A Scales	Major pentatonic scale	Minor pentatonic scale
Tempo	 = 80bpm	 = 80bpm
Time signature	4/4	4/4
Starting note range	A-E	A-E
Group B: Arpeggios		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major arpeggio A major (ascending) with E7 (descending) arpeggio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major arpeggio (ascending) with E7 (descending) arpeggio
Tempo	 = 80bpm	 = 80bpm
Time Signature	4/4	3/4
Starting note range	A-E	A-E
Group C: Intervals		
	Major 6th & major 7th intervals	Minor 6th & minor 7th intervals
Tempo	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4
Starting note range	Female: A-C Male: D-F	Female: A-C Male: D-F
Group D: Melodic Study		
Tempo	 = 115bpm	 = 115bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4
Style	Slides and trill downs	Melisma's and scoops
Group E: Backing Vocals		
Tempo	 = 115bpm	 = 120bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4
What to prepare	Both backing vocals	Both backing vocals

GRADES 6, 7 & 8





	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Group A Scales	Blues scale	Harmonic scale	Chromatic scale
Tempo	 = 100bpm	 = 100bpm	 = 100bpm
Time signature	4/4	4/4	4/4
Starting note range	A-E	A-E	A-E
Group B: Arpeggios	C major and C diminished arpeggio sequence	C augmented arpeggio	C diminished7 arpeggio
Tempo	 = 100bpm	 = 100bpm	 = 100bpm
Time Signature	4/4	3/4	4/4
Starting note range	C-G	C-G	C-G
Group C: Intervals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major 7th and 6th intervals Minor 7th and minor 6th intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major 3rd and major 2nd intervals Minor 3rd and minor 2nd intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major 7th, minor 7th, and octave intervals Major 3rd, and minor 3rd intervals
Tempo	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4	4/4
Starting note range	Female: A-C Male: D-F	Female: A-C Male: D-F	Female: A-C Male: D-F
Group D: Backing Vocals			
Tempo	 = 120bpm	 = 120bpm	 = 130bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4	4/4
What to prepare	All 3 need to be prepared	All 3 need to be prepared	All 3 need to be prepared
Group E: Stylistic Study			
Tempo	 = This will be varied range of Tempo between 85-120bpm	 = This will be varied range of Tempo between 85-120bpm	 = This will be varied range of Tempo between 85-120bpm
Time Signature	4/4	4/4	4/4
Styles	Pop & Musical Theatre Soul and R 'n' B Jazz and Blues Rock and Indie	Pop & Musical Theatre Soul and R 'n' B Jazz and Blues Rock and Indie	Pop & Musical Theatre Soul and R 'n' B Jazz and Blues Rock and Indie

SIGHT READING AND IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Grades 1, 2 & 3




	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Sight Reading			
Key	Female: C major Male: C major	Female: F major or A minor Male: C major or A minor	Female: C major or D minor Male: F major or E minor
Tempo	 = 70bpm	 = 70bpm	 = 75-85bpm
Range	Up to a major 3rd	Up to a major 3rd	Up to a perfect 5th
Length	4 bars	4 bars	4 bars
Improvisation & Interpretation			
Key	Female: C major Male: C major	Female: A minor Male: A minor	Female: G major or E minor Male: G major or E minor
Tempo	 = 70bpm	 = 80-90bpm	 = 80-90bpm
Length	4 bars	4 bars	4 bars

Grades 4 & 5

	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sight Reading		
Key	Female: D major, Bb major, B minor, or D minor Male: D major, Bb major, E minor, or D minor	Female: D major, Bb major, B minor, or D minor Male: D major, Bb major, E minor, or D minor
Tempo	 = 80-90bpm	 = 85-95bpm
Range	Up to an octave	Up to an octave
Length	8 bars	8 bars
Improvisation & Interpretation		
Key	Female: D major, Bb major, B minor, or D minor Male: D major, Bb major, D minor, or A minor	Female: D major, Bb major, E minor, or D minor Male: D major, Bb major, E minor, or D minor
Tempo	 = 95bpm	 = 100bpm
Length	8 bars	8 bars







QUICK STUDY PIECE

Grades 6, 7 & 8





	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Tempo	 = 70-160bpm	 = 70-160bpm	 = 70-160bpm
Length	12 bars	12 bars	12 bars
Styles	Pop and Musical Theatre Soul and R 'n' B Jazz and Blues Rock and Indie	Pop and Musical Theatre Soul and R 'n' B Jazz and Blues Rock and Indie	Pop and Musical Theatre Soul and R 'n' B Jazz and Blues Rock and Indie

EAR TESTS







Grades 1, 2 & 3

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Test 1: Melodic Recall			
Key	No set key	C major	Female: C major or A natural minor scale Male: F major or A natural minor scale
Tempo	 = 85bpm	 = 85bpm	 = 90bpm
What to identify/recall	3 notes in a sequence: Recognition of higher/ lower pitches	2 bar melody using first 3 notes of the C major scale. The first note will be the root note.	2 bar melody with a range of up to 5 notes of the above scales. The first note will be the root note.
Test 2: Rhythmic Recall			
Tempo	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm
What to recall	2-bar rhythm sung using 'da' or 'ba' to a drum backing	2-bar rhythm sung using 'da' or 'ba' to a drum backing	2-bar rhythm sung using 'da' or 'ba' to a drum backing

Grades 4 & 5

	Grade 4	Grade 5
Test 1: Melodic Recall		
Key	Female: D major or B natural minor scale Male: G major or E natural minor scale	Female: Bb major or A natural minor scale Male: D major or C natural minor scale
Tempo	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm
What to recall	2 bar melody with a range of up to 6 notes of the above scales. The first note will be the root note.	2 bar melody with the whole range of the above scales. The first note will be the root note.
Test 2: Harmony Vocals		
Key	Female: C major or A major Male: D major or F major	Female: A major or F major Male: C major or A major
Tempo	 = 90-100bpm	 = 90-110bpm
What to harmonise	Major 3rd above the recorded vocal part	Diatonic 3rd above the recorded vocal part

Grades 6, 7 & 8

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Test 1: Melodic Recall			
Key	Female: A major or C natural minor scale Male: E major or D natural minor scale	Female: B major or D natural minor scale Male: D major or E natural minor scale	Female: B major or D natural minor scale Male: D major or E natural minor scale
Tempo	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm	 = 90bpm
What to recall	2 bar melody using the whole range of the above scales. The 1st note will be the root or the 5th	2 bar melody using the whole range of the above scales. The 1st note will be the root or the 5th	2 bar melody using the whole range of the above scales. The 1st note will be the root, 3rd or 5th
Test 2: Harmony Vocals			
Key	Female: C major or A major Male: G major or A major	Female: A major or E minor Male: E major or B minor	Female: A major or B minor Male: D major or E minor
Tempo	 = 90-120bpm	 = 90-130bpm	 = 90-130bpm
What to harmonise	Diatonic 3rd or 4th above the recorded part, using the same rhythm	Diatonic 3rd or 4th above the recorded part, using the same rhythm	Diatonic 3rd or 4th above the recorded part, using the same rhythm

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

PREPARED WORK

	Grade 1-Grade 3	Grade 4-Grade 5	Grade 6-Grade 8
Distinction Pieces: (18-20) Technical Exercises: (13-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently secure basic techniques Highly secure sense of rhythm/pulse Solid and appropriate tonal quality throughout, dynamic control evident Notation accurately detailed Consistent pitch and intonation throughout Strong sync and continuity throughout (Grade 3 only) Very secure stylistic detailing (Grade 3 only) Very secure improvisation with clear sense of harmony/melody Highly confident, assured presentation of lyrics and mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very consistent and highly secure techniques Strong sense of rhythm/pulse throughout Confident use of diction, articulation and phrasing Assured and appropriate tonal quality throughout, consistently controlled dynamic changes Notation accurately detailed Very secure pitch and intonation throughout Consistently accurate sync/continuity throughout Stylistic awareness detailed throughout Accomplished, structured and musical improvisation with a high degree of shape, harmony and melody Highly confident and convincing performance Strong personal interpretation Confident microphone technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effortless control of advanced techniques Innate musical sense of rhythm/pulse Highly assured, appropriate use of diction, articulation and phrasing Highly accomplished and appropriate tone sustained throughout, musical control of dynamics Notation accurately detailed Effortless, exact pitch and intonation throughout Seamless sync and continuity throughout Authentic stylistic awareness detailed throughout, Innate improvisation demonstrating strong structure, harmony, melody, shaping and musicality Highly convincing professional performance, Accomplished personal interpretation Highly assured microphone technique
Merit Pieces: (15-17) Technical Exercises: (11-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure basic techniques throughout Secure rhythm/pulse throughout, minor slips Appropriate and reliable tonal quality Good notation accuracy Secure pitch/intonation, minor slips Well synchronised, good sense of continuity (Grade 3 only) Secure stylistic detailing (Grade 3 only) Secure improvisation, with shaping and sense of harmony/melody demonstrated Confident presentation overall, good communication of lyrics and mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure techniques throughout Secure rhythm and pulse throughout Appropriate use of diction, articulation and phrasing Appropriate and reliable tonal quality throughout, appropriate to style Good notational/harmonic accuracy Secure pitch/intonation throughout Well synchronised, secure continuity throughout Stylistic detailing well considered, confident delivery of lyrics and mood Stylistic improvisation, consistent harmonic content, secure melodic development and shaping evident Confident sense of communication in performance Clear personal interpretation evident Confident microphone technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure advanced techniques throughout Musical sense of rhythm/pulse throughout Assured, appropriate use of diction, articulation, and phrasing Generally accomplished and appropriate tonal quality sustained, appropriate to style Strong notational/harmonic accuracy Very secure pitch/intonation throughout Well synchronised, strong continuity throughout Stylistic detailing well considered, very confident delivery of lyrics and mood Convincing, stylistic improvisation, appropriate harmonic content, musical melodic development and strong sense of shape Highly confident communication in performance Strong sense of personal interpretation Confident microphone technique
Pass Pieces: (12-14) Technical Exercises: (9-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairly secure basic techniques, with some lapses Rhythm and pulse mainly well controlled with slips not affecting continuity Generally secure and appropriate tonal quality with occasional lapses Mainly accurate notation with small slips Generally secure pitch/intonation, Mostly secure sync/continuity (Grade 3 only) Some sense of stylistic awareness (Grade 3 only) Some appropriate improvisation with occasional errors in harmony/melody Mostly confident presentation, generally reliable communication of lyrics and mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly secure techniques evident with some lapses Generally secure rhythm and pulse Mostly appropriate use of diction, articulation and phrasing Generally secure tonal quality, appropriate to style Notational and harmonic accuracy evident with minor slips not affecting continuity Largely secure pitch/intonation with small slips only Good sync/continuity evident with occasional slips Stylistic awareness evident displaying mainly confident delivery of lyrics and mood Basic improvisation with generally suitable use of harmony/melody demonstrated. Adequately stylistic Mainly confident communication in performance Some personal interpretation Satisfactory microphone technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced techniques generally evident, with minor lapses Largely secure rhythm and pulse Appropriate use of diction, articulation and phrasing Mostly controlled tonal quality, appropriate to style Notational and harmonic accuracy generally evident with minor slips not affecting continuity Secure in pitch/intonation Secure sync/continuity evident throughout, minor deviations promptly recovered Stylistic direction generally evident with largely confident delivery of lyrics and mood Largely appropriate, stylistic improvisation with suitable use of harmony/melody and shaping Confident communication in performance Fair personal interpretation Adequate microphone technique
Below Pass 1 Pieces: (7-11) Technical Exercises: (4-8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure basic techniques evident with breaks in continuity and/or restarts Rhythm/pulse errors causing a lack of fluency Poorly controlled tone Several notational inaccuracies Errors in pitch/intonation Sync errors with several lapses in continuity (Grade 3 only) Limited style awareness evident (Grade 3 only) Uncertain improvisation with insecure harmony/melody Uncertain communication of lyrics or mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Techniques generally hesitant and insecure, with breaks in continuity and/or restarts Inappropriate use of diction, articulation and phrasing Rhythm/pulse generally errors causing a lack of fluency Poorly controlled tone Notational/harmonic work generally inaccurate Errors in pitch/intonation Sync errors, with lapses in continuity Stylistic direction inappropriate resulting in limited communication Uncertain improvisation with insecurity of harmony/melody. Inappropriate stylistically Hesitant communication in performance Limited personal interpretation Insecure microphone technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecurity of advanced techniques evident Inappropriate use of diction, articulation and phrasing Rhythm/pulse errors Poorly controlled tone Inaccuracy of notational/harmonic work Inaccuracy of pitch /intonation Sync/continuity lapses Stylistic direction hesitant or inappropriate resulting in poor communication Limited sense of musical structure, harmony or melody in improvisation. Inappropriate stylistically Generally hesitant communication in performance Limited personal interpretation Insecure microphone technique
Below Pass 2 Pieces: (0-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent basic technical errors resulting in numerous stops/restarts Many errors in rhythm/pulse throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent basic technical errors resulting in numerous stops/restarts Poor use of diction/articulation Wayward rhythm/pulse throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure techniques resulting in stops/restarts Insecure diction/articulation Poor rhythm/pulse throughout

Technical Exercises: (0-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little/no accuracy of notation Poor tonal quality Consistent pitch/intonation errors No sync with many breaks in continuity. (Grade 3 only) Stylistically unaware throughout (Grade 3 only) No improvisation Highly uncertain presentation with poor communication of lyrics and mood <p>Some parts incomplete / omitted (up to 40%)</p> <p>“0” will be awarded with no attempt made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent notational and harmonic errors Poor and inappropriate tonal quality Consistent pitch/intonation errors No sync with many breaks in continuity Stylistically unaware throughout No improvisation Highly nervous presentation with poor communication of style, lyrics and mood Little or no personal interpretation Very poor microphone technique or microphone not used Some parts incomplete / omitted (up to 40%) <p>“0” will be awarded with no attempt made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous notational and harmonic errors Limited and inappropriate tonal quality Numerous pitch/intonation errors Insecure sync/continuity Stylistically unaware throughout Uncertain/no improvisation Nervous presentation with poor communication of style, lyrics and mood Little or no personal interpretation Very poor microphone technique or microphone not used Some parts incomplete / omitted (up to 25%) <p>“0” will be awarded with no attempt made</p>
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UNPREPARED WORK

	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-5	Grades 6-8
Distinction	Sight-reading or Improvisation (9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate/convincing use of basic techniques Secure accuracy of notation and pitch Strong sense of rhythm, pulse and use of tone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very confident performance Musical and stylistic development in improvisation 	Sight-reading or Improvisation (9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate/convincing use of techniques Consistent accuracy of notation and pitch Consistently strong sense of rhythm, pulse, use of tone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musical phrasing and stylistic detailing shown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convincing and assured performance Musical development in improvisation 	Quick Study Piece (9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assured use of advanced stylistic techniques Consistent, instinctive exactness of notation/pitch Fluent performance with a clear understanding of rhythm, pulse and use of tone Highly stylistic in shape, phrasing and communication throughout Convincing and accomplished performance Highly musical development in improvisation
	Ear Tests (9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident, immediate and highly accurate responses with strong sync Very confident performance 	Ear Tests (9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident, immediate and highly accurate responses with strong sync Very confident performance 	Ear Tests (9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident, immediate and highly accurate responses with strong sync Very confident performance
	GMQ (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All questions answered correctly 	GMQ (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All questions answered correctly 	GMQ (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All questions answered correctly
Merit	Sight Reading or improvisation (7-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure basic techniques Largely secure notation and pitch Largely accurate rhythm, pulse and use of tone Phrasing evident Confident performance Secure stylistic development in improvisation 	Sight Reading or improvisation (7-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure techniques Largely secure notation and pitch Largely accurate rhythm, pulse and use of tone Secure sense of phrasing and stylistic detailing Confident performance Secure/appropriate development in improvisation 	Quick Study Piece (7-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, appropriate use of advanced techniques Secure notation and pitch Strong sense of rhythm, pulse and use of tone Stylistic in shape, phrasing and communication Assured performance Fluent, highly appropriate development/improvisation
	Ear tests (7-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly accurate responses with secure sync Confident performance 	Ear tests (7-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly accurate responses with secure sync Confident performance 	Ear tests (7-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly accurate responses with secure sync Confident performance
	GMQ (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four correct answers given 	GMQ (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four correct answers given 	GMQ (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four correct answers given
Pass	Sight reading or improvisation (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory basic techniques Generally secure notation and pitch, with slips Rhythm, pulse and use of tone generally secure Fairly well shaped phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly confident performance Mainly appropriate stylistic development in improvisation 	Sight reading or improvisation (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory techniques Generally secure notation and pitch, with slips Rhythm, pulse and use of tone generally secure Reasonable phrasing and stylistic detailing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly confident performance Mainly fluent/appropriate development in improvisation 	Quick Study Piece (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced techniques generally evident Largely secure notation and pitch, with slips Rhythm, pulse and use of tone largely secure. Generally stylistic in shape and phrasing with reasonably confident communication Generally confident performance Basic improvisation and development
	Ear Tests (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accurate responses, mainly secure sync Mainly confident performance 	Ear Tests (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accurate responses, mainly secure sync. Mainly confident performance 	Ear Tests (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accurate responses, mainly secure sync Mainly confident performance
	GMQ (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three correct answers given 	GMQ (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three correct answers given 	GMQ (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three correct answers given
Below Pass I	Sight Reading or improvisation (3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure basic techniques Numerous notation/pitch slips Restarts required 	Sight Reading or improvisation (3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure techniques Numerous notation/pitch slips Restarts required 	Quick Study Piece (3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced techniques poorly controlled Limited pitch accuracy, many notational errors Restarts required

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaccurate rhythm, pulse inaccuracies Limited tone control Hesitant performance Unsuitable improvisation or development. Limited stylistic content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhythm and pulse show several inaccuracies Limited tone control Limited phrasing and stylistic detailing Hesitant performance Unsuitable improvisation or development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure rhythm, pulse and less appropriate use of tone Unsuitable sense of style, phrasing and communication Hesitant performance Limited improvisation and development
	Ear Tests (3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors with insecure sync in places Uncertain performance 	Ear Tests (3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors with insecure sync in places Uncertain performance 	Ear Tests (3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors with insecure sync in places Hesitant performance
	GMQ (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two correct answers given 	GMQ (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two correct answers given 	GMQ (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two correct answers given
Below Pass 2	Sight Reading or improvisation (0-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure basic techniques Very uncertain attempt made with numerous/notable notation and pitch inaccuracies Some parts incomplete/omitted (up to 40%) Little sense of pulse, rhythmic accuracy Poorly controlled tone Notably hesitant performance Little / no improvisation or development <p>“0” will be awarded if no attempt is made</p>	Sight Reading or improvisation (0-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure techniques Very uncertain attempt made with numerous/notable notation and pitch inaccuracies Some parts incomplete/omitted (up to 40%) Little sense of pulse, rhythmic accuracy Poorly controlled tone Notably hesitant performance Little / no improvisation or development <p>“0” will be awarded if no attempt is made</p>	Quick Study Piece (0-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No attempt at advanced techniques Very uncertain attempt made with numerous/notable notation and pitch inaccuracies Some parts incomplete/omitted (up to 40%) Wayward rhythm, pulse Poor use of tone Poor sense of style, phrasing and communication Highly tentative performance Little/no improvisation <p>“0” will be awarded if no attempt is made</p>
	Ear Tests (0-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly inaccurate or no response attempted 	Ear Tests (0-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly inaccurate or no response attempted 	Ear Tests (0-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly inaccurate or no response attempted
	GMQ (0-1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil or one correct answer <p>“0” will be awarded if no attempt is made</p>	GMQ (0-1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil or one correct answer <p>“0” will be awarded if no attempt is made</p>	GMQ (0-1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil or one correct answer <p>“0” will be awarded if no attempt is made</p>

Exam Regulations

1. Rockschoool exams are open to all candidates, irrespective of age and without previously having taken any other grade in the same subject in accordance with our Equal Opportunities policy.
2. Full payment and relevant documentation must reach the offices of Rockschoool on or before the chosen exam period's closing date. If late entries are received, a **£15** fee will be applied to each candidate. The late fee is **non-refundable** and **no guarantee** is made that an exam will be scheduled in the current exam period if the late fee is paid. Fees will be charged for any payments made with a dishonoured cheque to cover administrative costs and bank charges.
3. Rockschoool reserves the right to withhold the release of examination results and certificates until full payment has cleared. **Failure to make full payment inclusive of late fees at least two weeks prior to the exam will result in the exam being cancelled.**
4. The dates of the exam periods are as given and may include any date between the start and end of that period inclusive of weekends, school days and school holiday periods. On application, candidates may give dates within an examination period when they are unavailable. However, the scheduling of exams is dependent on many factors and therefore Rockschoool cannot guarantee to avoid all such dates.
5. It is the responsibility of the applicant/candidate to read and to abide by these regulations ensuring the correct payment has been made, the accuracy of information supplied and that those connected with the examination are aware of all relevant information.
6. Names on certificates will be as on candidate's acknowledgement letter. A **£10** fee will be charged if:
 - a) Any amendments to the name are requested by the candidate after the date of the exam.
 - b) A replacement certificate is needed due to loss or error in the information given, either by the teacher or candidate.
7. Cancellation of an exam will result in loss of the exam fee. Exam entries may not be transferred from one candidate to another. Full refunds will only be given for medical reasons and on production of a medical certificate. Partial refunds **may** be given under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of Rockschoool.
8. Any changes to an exam date or time after it has been scheduled will incur a sliding scale of fees: More than one month to the exam - **£15**; within fourteen days of the exam - **£25**. Please note that any changes to a schedule can only be made by an authorised Rockschoool Exams Officer and are subject to the availability of an alternative exam slot in the period.
9. If a candidate wishes to defer their exam once it has been scheduled they will incur a charge of half the original exam entry fee.
10. Rockschoool reserves the right to defer exams until the next available exam period. After one deferral, an exam is guaranteed at an exam centre chosen by Rockschoool. This may not be your local centre.
11. Photocopying of any material to facilitate page turns in the exams is allowed with the copies being retained by the examiner.
12. Candidates must bring in two copies of music for any Free Choice piece(s). One **must** be an original copy of the piece to be performed, and one must be a second copy for the examiner, which may be a photocopy. If there is no music available, a zero mark may be given for the piece. Any queries in writing should be addressed to the Chief Examiner at least two weeks prior to the exam date. Free Choice backing tracks provided by the candidate must be without the examined part. If an unacceptable backing track is submitted, a zero mark may be given for the piece.
13. No teacher, or other person, may be present during the preparation of a candidate's Quick Study Piece. Any assistance given to a candidate may result in disqualification from the examination.
14. Only the examiner and candidate are allowed to be present in the examination room, with the exception of moderators appointed by Rockschoool and teachers/assistants of special needs candidates, agreed by Rockschoool in advance.
15. Any candidates with special educational needs must notify the Rockschoool office of any special provision needed prior to the exam and provide medical acknowledgement where possible.
16. All band exams are for the advertised instruments only. No backing CDs may be used in the exam.
17. On occasion an examiner may conclude an element of an exam when enough has been heard to reach a balanced assessment.
18. Entries will be accepted by Rockschoool only in accordance with the conditions and regulations stated and in all matters the decision of Rockschoool must be accepted as final.
19. Rockschoool operates a quality assured appeals process. All appeals must be made in writing no later than 30 days after receipt of result. There are three criteria for formal appeals. These are:
 - a) Appeals in respect of errors in procedure
 - b) Appeals in respect of errors in matching comments to marks awarded
 - c) Appeals against Rockschoool's decisions on reasonable adjustments or special considerations requests

Second levels of appeal will be charged at a standard fee of **£25**, payable to Rockschoool Ltd. Any successful appeals will be refunded in full. Third levels of appeal will be charged at a standard fee of **£50**, payable to Rockschoool Ltd. Any successful appeals will be refunded in full. Full details of Rockschoool Ltd's appeal process are available from the Rockschoool office or website (www.rockschoool.co.uk).

All fees quoted are inclusive of VAT and effective as of 1st January 2014