

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC, LONDON

SYLLABUS FOR GRADE AND DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS IN POPULAR SOLO PIANO

PREPARATORY DIVISION

Grade A – Preliminary

Scales 20 marks

Majors C, G and F

One octave, ascending and descending, hands separately

Triad Formation 5 marks

To play, on the piano, the triads of C, G and F major in root position or first inversion as requested by the Examiner

Solos 60 marks

Two contrasting solos from the list below

AND

One own choice solo of similar standard

Viva Voce Theory 15 marks

Very simple questions relating to the staff, treble and bass clefs, names and values of notes, quaver to semibreve; words and signs appearing on the music performed

Solo List

Love Me Tender

From The Complete Piano Player, Book 1
(Wise)

Mary's Boy Child

I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing

Streets of London

Old Macdonald

Scarlet Ribbons

Grade B – Lower Primary

Scales 20 marks

Majors C, G, D and F

One octave, ascending and descending, hands together

Triad Formation 5 marks

To play, on the piano, the triads of C, G, D and F major in root position or first inversion; left hand only, as requested by the Examiner

Solos 60 marks
Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)
AND
One own choice solo of similar standard (20)

Viva Voce Theory 15 marks
Simple questions relating to the staff; treble and bass clefs; names and values of notes, quaver to semibreve; words and signs appearing on the music performed

Solo List

Annie's Song From The Complete Piano Player, Book 1
Super Trouper (Wise)
Singin' in the Rain

Danny Boy From The Complete Piano Player, Book 2
Let Him Go, Let Him Tarry (Wise)
Wooden Heart
Puff the Magic Dragon

Christopher Norton:
Any ONE of the following:
Two-Handed Blues From Microjazz Collection 1
Stairway
Struttin'

LOWER DIVISION

Grade 1 – Primary

Scales 10 marks
Majors C, G, D and F
Two octaves, similar motion, hands together

Triad Formation 5 marks
To play, on the piano, the triads of C, G, D and F major in root position, first inversion or second inversion; left hand only, as requested by the Examiner

Solos 55 marks
Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)
AND
One own choice solo of similar standard (15)

Sight Reading 10 marks
Of Grade B difficulty, or easier

Viva Voce Theory

10 marks

Questions as for Grade B; names and values of all notes; rests; and simple time

Ear Tests

10 marks

- To clap or tap the notes of a melody not exceeding four bars in 2/4 or 3/4 time, consisting of dotted minims, minims, crotchets and quavers only, after it has been played by the Examiner on the piano. The key note will be played before each note to be identified
- To name any of the first five degrees of the major scale of C when played by the Examiner on the piano. The key note will be played before each note to be identified.
- To say whether a simple harmonic phrase is in a major or minor key after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano.

Solo List

Strangers in the Night

From The Complete Piano Player, Book 1
(Wise)

Sailing

From The Complete Piano Player, Book 2

A Hard Day's Night

(Wise)

Laughing Samba

Under the Bridges of Paris

My Own True Love

Christopher Norton:

Any ONE of the following:

Ragtime

From Microjazz Collection 1
Boosey & Hawkes)

Country Ballad

Tut Tuttin'

Walking Together

Tram Stop

Cowboy Song

A Day in Majorca

Riviera

Grade 2 – Elementary

Scales

10 marks

Majors A, F, B flat and E flat

Triad Formation

5 marks

To play on the piano the tonic, subdominant and dominant triads of the keys of C, G, D and F major in root position, first inversion or second inversion; left hand only, as requested by the Examiner

Solos 55 marks
Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)
AND
One own choice solo of similar standard (15)

Sight Reading 10 marks
Of Grade B difficulty

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks
Questions as for earlier Grades; and major key signatures

Ear Tests 10 marks

- To clap or tap the note values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 2/4 or 3/4 time consisting of dotted minims, minims, dotted crotchets, crotchets and quavers only, after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano
- To identify any note of the major scale of C after the key note has been played by the Examiner
- To say whether a simple harmonic phrase is in a major or minor key after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano

Solo List

The Winner Takes It All From The Complete Piano Player, Book 2
Take Me Home, Country Roads (Wise)
By the Time I get to Phoenix
Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer
Bright Eyes
Let It Be

Christopher Norton:

Any ONE of the following:

Blues No 1

From Microjazz Collection 2
(Boosey & Hawkes)

Get in Step

Intercity Stomp

Reggae

Disco Drive

Grade 3 – Junior

Scales and Arpeggios 10 marks

Two octaves, similar motion, hand together

Either of the following groups:

Group 1: Majors G, A, B, B flat and A flat

Minors B, C sharp, and D

Group 2: Majors D, E, F, E flat and D flat
Minors E, F sharp and G sharp

Minor scales may be in harmonic or melodic form

Triad Formation 5 marks

To play, on the piano, the primary and secondary triads in root position and inversions; left hand only, in any major key up to and including two sharps and two flats

Solos 55 marks

Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)

AND

One own choice solo of similar standard (15)

Sight Reading 10 marks

Of Grade 1 difficulty

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; compound time; minor key signatures; and the formation of both forms of the minor scale

Ear Tests 10 marks

- To clap or tap the note values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 2/4 or 3/4 time played twice by the Examiner on the piano, and to say whether it is in duple or triple time
- To name three diatonic notes played as a melody and chosen from the major scale of C, F or G. The key note will be stated and played by the Examiner
- To say whether a harmonic phrase is in a major or minor key, and discuss the closing cadence

Solo List

Spanish Eyes From The Complete Piano Player, Book 3
Smile (Wise)

Blue Moon

Over the Rainbow

Imagine

Yellow Submarine

When the Saints From Jazz and Blues Style File
OR (Chester)

St Louis Blues

Bare Necessities
OR
Mickey Mouse March

From Disney at the Piano
(Hal Leonard)

Christopher Norton:
Chant
OR
Coconut Rag

From Microjazz 2
(Boosey & Hawkes)

Grade 4 – Pre-Intermediate

Scales and Arpeggios

10 marks

Major scales, two octaves, similar and contrary motion
Minor (harmonic or melodic) scales, two octaves, similar motion
Arpeggios, in the major keys only, hands separately

Either of the following groups:

Group 1: Major A, E flat, A flat and D flat
Minor C, F sharp and C sharp

Group 2: Major A, E, B flat and E flat
Minor F, F sharp and B flat

Triad and Chord Formation

5 marks

To play on the piano the primary and secondary triads in root position and first inversion, left hand only; and the supertonic, dominant and submediant 7ths, left hand only, of any major key up to and including two sharps and two flats

Solos

55 marks

Two contrasting solos from the list below

(40)

AND

One own choice solo of similar standard

(15)

Sight Reading

10 marks

Of Grade 2 difficulty

Viva Voce Theory

10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; and general vocabulary of musical terms

Ear Tests

10 marks

- To clap or tap the note values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 2/4 or 3/4 time after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano. To beat time (conduct) while the same melody is played again and to say whether it is in duple or triple time

Solos 55 marks

Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)

AND

One own choice solo of similar standard (15)

Sight Reading and Improvisation 15 marks

To play at sight music of Grade 2/3 difficulty (10)

To improvise a melody over a printed four-bar chord sequence, including chords I, II, IV, V, V7 and VI in root position and first inversion only, in any major key up to and including three sharps and three flats (5)

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; and diatonic intervals within the octave

Ear Tests 10 marks

- To clap or tap the note values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 2/4 or 3/4 time after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano. To beat time (conduct) while the same melody is played again and to say whether it is in duple or triple time
- To hum or sing a four-bar melody in a major key after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano; the melody will be in 2/4, 3/4 or 6/8 time.
- To say whether a triad played by the Examiner is major, minor or augmented
- To sing the top, middle or lowest note of a major or minor triad after it has been played by the Examiner, and to sing up all three notes after the chord has been played again

Solo List

Laura From The Complete Piano Player, Book 5
Evergreen (Wise)

The 59th Bridge Song

The Entertainer

Pink Panther

Theme from ET

Ballade pour Adeline

Either ONE of the following:

Colours of the Wind

From Disney at the Piano

The Time of Your Life

(Hal Leonard)

Either ONE of the following:

Take the 'A' Train

From Jazz and Blues Style File

Song For My Father (Chester)

Alan Haughton:
Either ONE of the following:
Baroque and Roll More Rhythm and Rag
Hoe Down (Associated Board)

Christopher Norton:
Either ONE of the following:
Mechanics Rag From Microjazz III
Steam-Train Blues (Boosey & Hawkes)

Grade 6 – Senior

Scales and Arpeggios 10 marks

Major and harmonic minor scales in three octaves, similar motion;
Two octaves, contrary motion

Melodic minor scales, similar motion only

Arpeggios in three octaves, similar motion; two octaves, contrary motion

Chromatic scale, from any note, three octaves, similar motion

One of the following groups:

Group 1: Major and relative minors of G and D flat

Group 2: Major and relative minors of D and A flat

Group 3: Major and relative minors of A and E flat

Solos 55 marks

Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)

AND

One own choice solo of similar standard (15)

Sight Reading and Improvisation 15 marks

To play at sight a piece of music of Grade 3 difficulty (10)

To improvise a melody over a printed four-bar chord sequence in any major key up to and including five sharps and five flats (5)

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; including chromatic intervals and inversions

Ear Tests 10 marks

- To clap or tap the note values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 2/4, 3/4 or 6/8 time after it has been played twice by the

Examiner on the piano. To beat time (conduct) while the same melody is played again and to say whether it is in duple or triple time

- To hum or sing a four-bar melody in a minor key after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano; the melody will be in 2/4, 3/4 or 6/8 time.
- To say whether a triad played by the Examiner is major, minor, augmented or diminished.
- To sing the three notes of a major or minor chord as directed after the lowest note only has been played by the Examiner; and, when told the letter-name of the lowest note, to give the letter-names of the other two

Solo List

Either ONE of the following:

Fine and Mellow From Jazz and Blues Style File
Lullaby of Birdland (Chester)

Any ONE of the following:

Take Five From The Complete Piano Player Style Book
James Bond Theme (Wise)
Maria Elena

Either ONE of the following:

Diagon Alley From Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone
Nimbus 2000 (Warner)

The Lion Sleeps Tonight From Favourite Listening for Piano Solo
(Warner)

Main Theme from The Belles of St Trinian's From Film Music for Solo Piano
(Chester)

Either ONE of the following:

March of the Siamese Children From Rodgers and Hammerstein at the Piano
You'll Never Walk Alone (Williamson)

Alan Haughton:

Rainy Day Rag From Rhythm and Rag
(Associated Board)

Christopher Norton:

Either ONE of the following:

Beguine From Microjazz II
Mongoose Crawl (Associated Board)

Gerard Hengeveld:

Either ONE of the following:

Argentijnse Tango Slow Foxtrot	From Melodie en Rhythme (Music Sales)
Stardust	From Popular Piano Solos, Book 5 (Wise)
Williams: The Dream of Olwen	Theme from the film 'While I Live' (Wright)

Grade 7 – Advanced Senior

Scales and Arpeggios 10 marks
Major scales in four octaves, similar motion, in 8ths and 3rds; two octaves, contrary motion, in 8ths only; one octave, similar motion, in double 8ths

Harmonic minor scales, four octaves, similar motion, in 8ths; two octaves, contrary motion, in 8ths; one octave, similar motion, in double 8ths

Arpeggios with inversions, three octaves, similar motion; root position only. two octaves, contrary motion

Any one of the following groups:

Group 1: Major C and E flat;
Minor C and B

Group 2: Major B flat and F sharp;
Minor F and F sharp

Group 3: Major E flat and F sharp
Minor G and C sharp

Solos 55 marks
Two contrasting solos from the list below (40)
AND
One own choice solo of similar standard (15)

Sight Reading and Improvisation 15 marks
To play at sight a piece of music of Grade 4 difficulty (8)

To improvise a melody over a printed four-bar chord sequence in any minor key up to and including five sharps and five flats (7)

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks
Questions as for earlier Grades; cadences; general graces and embellishments

Ear Tests

10 marks

- To clap or tap the notes values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 6/8 or 9/8 time after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano. To beat time (conduct) while the same melody is played again and to say whether it is in duple or triple time
- To sing or play from memory the upper part of a simple two-part phrase in a major key after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano; the key will be stated
- To say whether a harmonised phrase in a major or minor key played twice by the Examiner modulates at the end or remains in the tonic key
- To identify a chord played by the Examiner as a seventh (major or minor), a ninth (major or minor) or an eleventh. The chord will be in root position only. The candidate will then be required to name the notes of the chord after being given the letter-name of the lowest note

Solo List

Either ONE of the following:

Maple Leaf Rag From Jazz and Blues Style File
Honky Tonk Train Blues (Chester)

Any ONE of the following:

I Finally Found Someone From Favourite Easy Listening for Piano
Over The Rainbow (Warner)

Didn't We Almost Have It All
Theme: Somewhere in Time From Film Music for Solo Piano
(Chester)

Nevin:

Nola From The Complete Piano Style Book
(Wise)

Joplin:

Any ONE of the following:
The Easy Winners (Chappell)
Peacherine Rag
Palm Leaf Rag

Williams:

Any ONE of the following:
Fluffy's Harp From Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Hedwig's Theme (Warner)
Voldemort

Rodgers:

Some Enchanted Evening From Rodgers and Hammerstein at the Piano
(Williamson)

Norton:

Any ONE of the following:

Barbed Wire Blues

Boogie

Spring Song

From Microjazz II
(Boosey & Hawkes)

Haughton:

Any ONE of the following:

Boogie On Down

From Rhythm and Rag
(Associated Board)

Bread and Butter

From More Rhythm and Rag
(Associated Board)

You and Me

From Rhythm and Rag
(Associated Board)

Carmichael:

March of the Hoodlums

From Hoagy Carmichael Centennial Collection
(Hal Leonard)

Any ONE of the following:

Bach Gammon

From The Piano Solos of Richard Clayderman Anthology
(AMSCO)

Triste Coeur

La Vraie Musique de l'Amour

Rota:

Theme from The Glass Mountain

(Prowse)

Grade 8 – Students' Graduate

There is a written Theory of Music requirement as part of this Grade.

Scales and Arpeggios

15 marks

Major and relative minor scales up to and including five sharps and five flats; four octaves, similar motion; two octaves, contrary motion. Major scales also to be played in 3rds, similar motion

Major and minor scales will be examined piano to forte, and forte to piano

Chromatic scale, four octaves, similar motion; two octaves, contrary motion, in double 8ths

Arpeggios with inversions, three octaves, similar motion; root position only, two octaves, contrary motion. Dominant 7th arpeggios in the keys of D, B flat, E and E flat, root position only

Recital

100 marks

To play a prepared programme of five contrasting pieces. One of the pieces performed must be selected from the list below. The programme must be submitted to the College four weeks before the date of the examination

Solo List

Separate Lives From Favourite Easy Listening for Piano
(Warner)

Either ONE of the following:

Barbaric From Hoagy Carmichael Centennial Collection
Cosmics (Hal Leonard)

Either ONE of the following:

Chronicle Scherzo (Citizen Kane) Film Music for Solo Piano
The Heart Takes Pleasure First (Chester)

Joplin:

Cascades Rag Any publisher

Norton:

Either ONE of the following:

Hungarian Stomp From Microjazz II
Love Song (Boosey & Hawkes)

Addinsell:

Theme from The Warsaw Concerto (Prowse)

Bath:

Theme from The Cornish Rhapsody (Prowse)

Any ONE of the following:

Concerto des Etoiles From The Piano Solos of Richard Clayderman Anthology
(AMSCO)

Feelings

Le Voyage dans la Nuit

Monti:

Czardas (No 1) (Ricordi)

Richardson:

Theme from The London Fantasia (Wright)

Sight Reading and Improvisation

To play at sight a piece of music of Grade 4/5 difficulty 15 marks
(5)

To improvise a short piece on an eight-bar chord sequence provided by the Examiner (10)

Ear Tests

10 marks

- To clap or tap the note values of a melody not exceeding four bars in 6/8 or 9/8 time after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano. To beat time (conduct) while the same melody is played again and to say whether it is in duple or triple time

- To sing or play from memory the lower part of a simple two-part phrase in a major or minor key after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano; and, when told the letter-name of the lowest note of a four-note chord, to give the letter-names of the remaining three
- To recognise a modulation at the end of a harmonised phrase in a major key played by the Examiner on the piano as going to the dominant, the relative minor or supertonic minor

DIPLOMA DIVISION

Associate Diploma (ANCM)

This is available as Teacher or Performer. The Teacher diploma includes a written theory paper and has a pass mark, in the practical examination, of 100 out of a possible 150. The theory pass mark is 75 out of 100. The pass mark for Performer, using the same solos list, is 115 out of a possible 150 marks.

EITHER

Scales and Arpeggios 20 marks

Candidates must be prepared to play any major or minor scale in similar motion, four octaves in 8ths and 3rds; major and harmonic minor in contrary motion, and from the 3rd; major and harmonic minor, similar motion, two octaves, in double 8ths and double 3rds. Arpeggios with inversions, three octaves, similar motion, root position only, two octaves, contrary motion; dominant and diminished 7ths, root position only, in all keys.

OR

Improvisation and Chord Formation 20 marks

To improvise a melody in ABA form, on a twelve-bar chord sequence, in a major or minor key or in a mode. The chord sequence will be in printed form. (15 marks)

AND

To play on the piano any diatonic and chromatic chords up to and including the dominant 13th in root position and inversions, at the request of the Examiner. (5 marks)

Solos 100 marks

To perform a programme of five own choice contrasting 'light' solos. The programme must be submitted to the College for approval four weeks before the examination.

Sight Reading or Extemporisation 15 marks

EITHER

To play at sight music of Grade 6 difficulty.

OR

To extemporise a short 'light' piano piece on a theme given by the Examiner

Viva Voce and Aural Tests 15 marks

All rudiments, intervals and inversions, attendant keys, cadences, general embellishments (demonstration at the keyboard), sonata form, identification of triads, chord progression, 'blues', whole tone and pentatonic scales, modes, etc.

Licentiate Diploma (LNCM)

Candidates must have previously passed the Associate or other examination of similar standard.

Written Theory 100 marks

Candidates will be required to work a paper on harmony up to and including dominant and chromatic 7ths; add three parts to a given melody or bass; suspensions; modulations; etc. (Grade 6 Theory of Music standard).

Candidates having previously passed the Associate (Teacher) theory paper will be exempt from Licentiate theory.

Solos 90 marks

Three own choice contrasting pieces. The candidate should be prepared to discuss with the Examiner the works performed.

**Original Composition/
Original Arrangement of a Popular Song** 30 marks

A written copy of the composition/arrangement should be given to the Examiner at the start of the examination together with a signed statement that this is the candidate's own unaided work.

Musicianship 30 marks

EITHER

TWO of the following tests:

- Sight Reading – music of Grade 6 difficulty
- Transposition of a simple accompaniment up or down a tone or semitone
- Improvisation of a piano accompaniment to a given 'popular' melody (chord indications will be given)

OR

To extemporise for two to four minutes on a theme given by the Examiner.

Fellowship Diploma (FNCM)

Candidates must have previously passed the Licentiate or examination of similar standard.

Candidates are required to perform a programme of 35-40 minutes' duration. The items selected should show a contrast of style, and one item must be performed from memory. Each item must be introduced by the candidate before its performance. Credit will be given for the quality of choice of each piece and for the construction, compilation and presentation of the programme as a whole.

The proposed Fellowship programme must be submitted to the College for approval four weeks before entry.

The Examiner's Report will take the form of a critique. No marks as such will be awarded, and the result will be notified as successful or unsuccessful.