

**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC, LONDON**

**SYLLABUS OF REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRIC GUITAR PLAYING**

**General Guidance**

- \* As well as fulfilling the requirements for each Grade, the candidate must also be able to hold the guitar properly, have good technique in both left and right hands and must have a good posture.
- \* The candidate will be encouraged to develop his/her own style of playing whenever possible.
- \* All theory questions should be 'guitar related'; eg. the bass clef is not used so only a limited knowledge is required; performance directions will also be relevant to guitar.
- \* An accompanying guitarist is permitted. They must only play parts of the song the candidate is not required to play, and must make no other input into the examination. The accompanying guitarist must only be in the Examination Room for the duration of the performance section. In the event of an accompanist being required, he/she will be in the Examination Room only whilst actually accompanying.
- \* Most books containing the music in this syllabus are available from [www.musicroom.com](http://www.musicroom.com) or [www.musicsales.com](http://www.musicsales.com). Online sources such as [www.ultimateguitar.com](http://www.ultimateguitar.com) may be used, but the teacher/candidate must ensure the music's accuracy and suitability. Sheet music is permitted for the examination, and a copy should be provided for the Examiner.
- \* TG (Total Guitar) is an indication that the solo is available from Future Publications Limited.

**LOWER DIVISION**

**Grade 1 - Primary**

Scales 10 marks  
To play and describe the formation of the Ionian scales of C, G, F and E major.

Chords 10 marks  
To perform the following chords cleanly and be able to demonstrate clean changes between these chords:

Major: C, G, D, A, E and F  
Minor: D, A and E

Techniques 10 marks  
To demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of sliding, bending ( $\frac{1}{2}$  and full step), hammer on/pull off, and basic vibrato.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks  
To answer questions on basic time values, bars and bar lines, letter names of notes, treble clef and bass clefs, sharps and flats.

Original Composition 20 marks  
To play an original composition in a style of the candidate's choice. A minimum of four studied chords must be used. A chord sheet should be provided for the Examiner. The composition should be about one minute in length.

Song Playing 30 marks  
Two of the following:  
God Save the Queen  
Lit - Lipstick and Bruises - introduction only (TG98-Jly 02)  
John Williams - The Imperial March (Darth Vader's Theme) (TG99-Aug 02)  
Blink 182 - Stay Together for the Kids - introduction only (TG95-Apr 02)  
Metallica - Mama Said (complete song) (Music Sales Ltd)

Ear Tests 10 marks  
a) To clap or tap the notes of a melody not exceeding four bars in  $\frac{2}{4}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, consisting of dotted minims, minims, crotchets and quavers only, after it has been played twice by the Examiner on the piano.  
  
b) 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.  
  
c) 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.

## **Grade 2 - Elementary**

Scales 10 marks  
To play and describe the formation of the minor pentatonic scales of C, G, A and B.

Chords 10 marks  
To demonstrate the formation and playing of barre chords and power chords. Both major and minor are required, with root notes on both the 5th and 6th string.

Techniques 10 marks  
To demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of fast sliding, bending ( $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  steps), quick use of hammer on/pull off, harmonics on the 12th fret and palm muting.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks  
Questions as for Grade 1; major key signatures, simple time, accidentals.

Original Composition 20 marks

To play two original compositions in a style of the candidate's choice, each lasting about one minute. The first should demonstrate at least four power or barre chords. The second should use minor pentatonic scales in a key of the candidate's choice; all techniques studied thus far must be used.

Song Playing 30 marks

Three of the following:

Traditional - Greensleeves (simple version)

Metallica - Welcome Home (Sanitarium) - end palm muted riff only from 3m45s  
(Amsco/Wise Publications)

Dr Hook - Better Love Next Time - melodic lead intro only  
(IMP Ltd and TG106-Feb 03)

Michael Jackson – Beat It - both guitar parts, minus the solo (Alfred Publishing)

Ear Tests 10 marks

a) 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.

b) To identify any note of the major scale of C after the key note has been played by the Examiner.

c) 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.

**Grade 3 - Junior**

Scales 10 marks

To play and describe the formation of the Dorian and Lydian forms of the scales of C, G, D and E.

Chords 10 marks

To play and demonstrate an understanding of '7' chords. Open and barre 7 chords are required.

Techniques 10 marks

To demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of the use of capo, advanced sliding, advanced bending (uni-bends etc), advanced use of hammer on/pull off and advanced use of vibrato.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; compound time, minor key signatures, both forms of the minor scale, questions on octave transposition, upbeat starts and performance directions.

Original Composition 20 marks

To play three original compositions in a style of the candidate's choice. The first should last about two minutes incorporating the use of '7' chords with major and minor chords. The second should also be of about two minutes duration and incorporate all techniques studied thus far. The third piece, using a capo, should last about one minute.

Song Playing 30 marks

Four of the following:

- Metallica - Hero of the Day (Intro riff) (Wise Publications)  
Aerosmith - Crying (Intro riff plus chords of one verse and chorus) (IMP Ltd)  
Papa Roach - Last Resort (Intro/main riff) (Cherry Lane Music Publishing)  
Nirvana - Smells Like Teen Spirit (full song inc solo) (EMI Music Publishing)  
Guns n'Roses - Civil War (Intro plus one verse and chorus) (IMP Ltd)

Ear Tests 10 marks

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) To say whether a harmonic phrase is in a major or minor key, and discuss the closing cadence.

**Grade 4 - Pre-Intermediate**

Scales 10 marks

To play and describe the formation of the Mixolydian and harmonic minor scales of C, G, D, E, F, F sharp and G sharp.

Chords 10 marks

To demonstrate fast changing between open and barre chords.

Techniques 10 marks

To demonstrate finger picking to a high level of ability.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; dots, double dots, general vocabulary of musical terms.

Original Composition 20 marks

To play two original compositions in a style of the candidate's choice. One piece should be of a minimum duration of 1½ minutes using open, barre and power chords. The second piece should be of two minutes duration using two studied scales of this Grade, and incorporating finger picking and at least five other techniques at an advanced level.

Song Playing 40 marks

Four of the following:

- Queen - Somebody to Love - Guitar Solo (IMP Ltd and TG104-Jan 03)  
Sex Pistols - Anarchy in the UK (IMP Ltd)  
Metallica - Nothing Else Matters (full song, rhythm guitar)  
(Amsco/Wise Publications)  
Bon Jovi - Dead or Alive (Music Sales Ltd)  
Nirvana - Come As You Are (EMI Music Publishing)  
Guns n'Roses - Nightrain (first 90 seconds of song, rhythm guitar part)  
(IMP Ltd)  
Guns n'Roses - Don't Cry (full song, intro then rhythm guitar parts) (IMP Ltd)  
Red Hot Chilli Peppers – Scar Tissue (full song minus solo) (Hal Leonard)

**STUDENTS' DIVISION**

**Grade 5 - Intermediate**

Scales 10 marks

To play and describe the formation of the Jazz melodic minor and Lydian flat 7 scales of C, D, A, B and F.

Techniques 10 marks

To demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of alternate tunings: drop D, A (7 string) + C sharp; open tunings C, D, A, F (including DADGAD; advanced use of all techniques studied thus far; use of a whammy bar if applicable; tapping and harmonics on the 7th, 9th and 5th fret.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; diatonic intervals within the octave, simple questions on guitar instrument acoustics.

Original Composition 30 marks

To play four original compositions in a style of the candidate's choice. Two of the pieces, each of about one minute in duration, should each use one of the types of scales listed for this Grade. The third piece, in any key, should use any scales studied in Grades 1 to 4, and at least five techniques studied thus far. The fourth, of about 3 minutes duration, should use either drop or open tunings.

Song Playing 40 marks

Four of the following:

- Joe Satriani - Satch Boogie (Cherry Lane Music and TG106-Feb 03)  
Metallica - Fade to Black (lead and rhythm parts) (Wise Publications)  
Slayer - Seasons in the Abyss (Cherry Lane Music)  
Colin Reed - The Pink Panther Theme (must be finger picked) (IMP Ltd)  
Van Halen - Running with the Devil (no solo required) (IMP Ltd)  
Colin Reed - Auld Lang Syne (TG105-Jan 03)

Guns n'Roses - Sweet Child o'Mine (no solo required; intro riff and verse, chorus chords and lead guitar before solo) (IMP Ltd)

## **Grade 6 - Senior**

Scales and Arpeggios 10 marks

To play the scales of F and E major; F and E minor (harmonic or melodic form) - three octaves. Chromatic scales starting on C, D and E flat, three octaves.

To play the arpeggios of C, D and E flat major; and D, F and E flat minor - three octaves.

Techniques 10 marks

To demonstrate an understanding in the techniques of hybrid picking and pinch harmonics.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; chromatic intervals within the octave, simple questions on guitar instrument acoustics.

Original Composition 30 marks

To play an original composition of about three minutes in duration, using hybrid picking, pinch harmonics and other techniques. Arpeggios studied for this Grade should be used throughout the piece.

Song Playing 40 marks

Two of the following: (full songs – lead and rhythm parts)

Guns n'Roses - The Garden (IMP Ltd)

Steve Hackett - Horizons (IMP Ltd)

Bon Jovi - Lay Your Hands On Me (Music Sales Ltd)

Dire Straits - Money For Nothing (finger picked) (Wise Publications)

## **Grade 7 - Advanced Senior**

Scales and Arpeggios 10 marks

To play the scales of G and F sharp major and minor (harmonic or melodic form) - three octaves. Double-stop scales of G major in 3rds and E major in octaves,

To play the arpeggios of F sharp major and minor - three octaves.

Techniques 10 marks

To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the techniques of advanced hybrid picking and pinch harmonics. 4 note tapping.

Viva Voce Theory 10 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; triads, cadences, general graces and embellishments.

Original Composition 30 marks

To play one original composition in F sharp major or minor using all three techniques required for this Grade and any others of the candidate's choice. The relevant arpeggio should also be used.

Song Playing 40 marks

Two of the following: (full songs)

Aerosmith - Eat The Rich (IMP Ltd)

Guns n'Roses - Get in the Ring (IMP Ltd)

Aerosmith - Fever (IMP Ltd)

Dire Straits - Sultans of Swing (finger picked) (Wise Publications)

ACDC - Back in Black (Amsco/Wise Publications and TG97-June 02)

**Grade 8 - Student's Graduate**

There is a written theory requirement as part of this Grade. 100 marks

Scales and Arpeggios 25 marks

To play double-stop scales and chromatic scale in E in octaves.

To play the arpeggios of Bb and B majors and minors in three octaves.

Techniques 15 marks

No new techniques are required for this Grade but the candidate must demonstrate a knowledge of all techniques studied.

Viva Voce Theory 15 marks

Questions as for earlier Grades; all rudiments of music, simple chord progression, variety of questions on guitar instrument acoustics, general discussion with Examiner.

Original Compositions 45 marks

To play three original pieces each of three minutes duration, in three different styles and three different keys. All should use as many techniques as possible and a variety of scales and arpeggios.

Song Playing 50 marks

All of the following:

Zakk Wylde - Speedball (TG95-Apr 02)

Eddy Van Halen - Eruption (IMP Ltd)

Guns n'Roses - Paradise City (IMP Ltd)

Metallica - ... and Justice For All (Wise Publications)

**DIPLOMA DIVISION**

**DipNCM**

This diploma is available in all practical subjects. Candidates must have passed Grade 8 and also Grade 5 in Theory of Music – or examinations of equivalent standard.

Copies of all relevant documentation, together with programme notes on the items to be performed should be forwarded to the College for approval at least one month before formal entry.

The examination consists of a Recital, Sight Reading, and a Viva Voce/Discussion with the Examiner.

Recital 100 marks  
Candidates are required to perform a programme of five items, showing contrast of style and period. The length of the recital should be approximately 25 minutes. A high standard of performance is required.

At least two of the items should be of Associate standard. The remaining three items may include:

- An original composition by the candidate.
- An item chosen from the jazz, blues or 'popular' repertoire.
- An item performed in ensemble, eg string quartet, piano trio, vocal quartet, the total number of performers not exceeding four.

Credit will be given for the quality of choice of each item and the compilation and presentation of the programme as a whole.

Sight Reading 20 marks  
Music of Grade 6/7 standard.

Viva Voce 20 marks  
All rudiments of music and questions on the forms, stylistic features, harmonic language and composers of the pieces performed.

Discussion with Examiner 10 marks  
Discussion on the candidate's music-making activities, compositions and presentation skills, etc.

**Associate Diploma (ANCM)**  
Scales and Arpeggios 25 marks  
Candidates must be prepared to play any scale or arpeggio studied in Grades 1-8 in any position. The time between instruction and performance must be five seconds or less. The candidate must perform 8 different scales and 8 different arpeggios of the Examiner's choice.

Solos 100 marks  
The candidate is to perform all pieces from Grade 8 and discuss each solo with the Examiner.

Written 25 marks  
A written paper, of not less than 1000 words, based on one of the Grade 8 solos must be submitted, and handed to the Examiner.

### **Licentiate (LNCM)**

Candidates must have previously passed Grade 5 in Theory of Music. A copy of the Examiner's Report should be forwarded to the College at least one month before formal entry.

#### **Performance**

100 marks

Four pieces must be performed. Two must be solos – the third should be played with an accompanist and the fourth must be in an ensemble.

They should be the candidate's own choice and must be approved by the College/Examiner four weeks before formal entry.

One piece will be discussed in detail with the Examiner.

#### **Written**

50 marks

A written paper, of not less than 2000 words, based on two of the pieces played must be submitted and handed to the Examiner.

### **Fellowship (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 influence. One item must be played from memory and one piece must be an original arrangement of a piece from the Classical, Baroque or Romantic period. Credit will be given for the quality of choice of each piece and for the construction and compilation of the programme as a whole. The proposed Fellowship programme must be submitted to the College for approval four weeks before formal entry.

## **MEDAL EXAMINATIONS**

Examinations for Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals are held in most subjects. Details are as follows:

### **Initial Bronze**

- Two solos from the Grade 1 List
- One solo own choice of similar standard.

### **Junior Bronze**

- Two solos from the Grade 3 List
- One solo own choice of similar standard.

### **Intermediate Bronze**

- Two solos from the Grade 5 List
- One solo own choice of similar standard

### **Intermediate Silver**

Two solos from the Grade 6 List  
One solo own choice of similar standard

**Intermediate Gold**

Two solos from the Grade 7 List  
One solo own choice of similar standard

**Senior Bronze**

Two solos from the Grade 8 List  
One own choice solo of similar standard

Examinations for Senior Silver and Senior Gold Medals are no currently available in Electric Guitar playing.

**Marks**

Marks are awarded as follows:

Listed Solos	60 marks
Own Choice Solo	20 marks
Discussion with Examiner	20 marks

The pass mark is 80. No award of Honours or Distinction is made in the Medal Division, but a high standard of performance is expected.