

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC & ARTS, LONDON

Grade Examinations in Jazz/Blues Guitar playing

General Guidance

Grades

The examinations are offered in Grade B, and Grades 1 to 8.

Examination Components

- All Grades – Chords and Triads (harmony)
- All Grades - Rhythm Playing and Rhythm Analyses
- All Grades – Scales and Arpeggios, and Technical Work
- All Grades – Jazz and Blues Performance Repertoire
- Grade 2 to 8 – Lead Playing and Improvisation
- Grades 3 to 8 – Aural Tests (Ear Training) and Spoken Tests

Scales and Arpeggios

All scales and arpeggios must be played from memory ascending and descending, unless otherwise stated in the Grade requirements. They should be played fluently and accurately, and without errors or hesitation

The degree of fluency, competence and quality of performance should improve through the Grades.

Performance Solos

Copies of all solos/pieces for each Grade, and authored by Carlos Viegas, are obtainable from the NCM Secretary's Office. Candidates may enter for any Grade provided they have the knowledge and experience required, although it is recommended that Grade examinations are more beneficial if taken in sequence

EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Grade B

Harmony

Major chords of C and G as open chords

Minor chords of A and E as open chords

Major triads of C and G as open triads in one fingerboard position

Minor triads of A and E as open triads in one fingerboard position

Rhythm Analyses

Rhythm charts using the following notes in 4/4 time:

Whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, whole note rests, half note rests, quarter note rests

Technical Work

The following scales, open strings in one octave and one fingerboard position

C major, A minor, G major, E minor

Solo Performance

One own choice 'pop' or 'blues' song using the chords and rhythm charts for this Grade.

The song 'Everybody Hurts' played as the original arrangement with fingerpicking or flatpicking.

Grade 1

Harmony

As for the previous Grade plus:

Major seventh chords of C and G

Minor seventh chords of A and E

Bar chords

Major and minor triads from the previous Grade

All chords and triads should be played in two fingerboard positions

Intervals of Major and minor second; and major and minor third

Rhythm Analyses

All as the previous Grade plus eighth notes and eighth note rests

Technical Work

All as the previous Grade plus:

C pentatonic major scale	C major seventh arpeggio
A pentatonic minor scale	G major seventh arpeggio
G pentatonic major scale	A minor seventh arpeggio
E pentatonic minor scale	E minor seventh arpeggio

All the above in open strings in one octave and one fingerboard position; half note bending and vibrato

Solo Performance

One own choice 'pop' or 'blues' song which includes the chords and rhythm charts studied at this Grade and the previous Grade; and the performance of the folk-blues piece 'Blues Folk Theme in C Major' by Carlos Viegas.

Grade 2

Harmony

Requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Major chords of D, F, D Maj7, F Maj7

Minor chords of B, D, B Min7, D Min7

Dominant seventh chords of C7, G7, D7, A7

All chords to be played in three fingerboard positions

Major and minor triads as for previous Grades in three fingerboard positions

Major blues progressions

I – IV – V progression

Perfect fourth and perfect fifth intervals

Rhythm Analysis

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Sixteenth notes; sixteenth note rests

Dotted notes and dotted rests

$\frac{3}{4}$ time signature

Technical Work

All requirements from Grade 1 plus the following:

Fretted Strings in one octave and one fingerboard position for the following scales:

D major, D pentatonic major, F major, F pentatonic major, B minor, B pentatonic minor, D minor, D pentatonic minor.

Whole tone bending

Solo Performance

Folk-blues piece 'Folk in A Major' (Carlos Viegas)

Folk-blues piece 'Folk in D Major' (Carlos Viegas)

Improvisation

To perform major and minor pentatonics over each of the chords in the I-IV-V progression.

To improvise a guitar solo over a chord from one of the songs/pieces performed in this Grade using the scales and arpeggios from this Grade – and from previous Grades.

Grade 3

Harmony

The following chords in three fingerboard positions:

Major seventh chords of C, G, D, F and B flat

Minor seventh chords of A, E, B, D and G

Dominant seventh chords of C, G, D, A and F

Diminished triads in one fingerboard positions

I-IV-V progressions by 3rds

12 bar blues progression

b5 and #5 intervals

Rhythm Analyses

All requirements from previous Grades plus 2/4 and 6/8 time signatures

Technical Work

All scales and arpeggios from Grades 1 and 2 in two fingerboard positions.
Blues scales: C, G, D, F and B flat in one octave and two fingerboard positions
Major and minor seventh arpeggios in one octave and one fingerboard positions
Dominant seventh arpeggios in one octave and one fingerboard position
Diatonic scales in thirds
Slides
Legato technique

Aural and Spoken Tests

Viva Voce – questions on the guitar fingerboard for recognizing any note up to the fifth fret.

To identify all intervals by ear up to a major third.

To identify major, minor or diminished chords or triads by ear.

Solo Performance

The jazz-blues standard 'Watermelon Man' by Herbie Hancock (backing tracks for should be provided by the candidate).

The blues piece 'Rhythm and Blues in E' by Carlos Viegas

Improvisation

Blues scales and major pentatonics over all chords in the I-IV-V progression.

A guitar solo over a chord chart from one of the songs/pieces played in the Grade, using the scales and arpeggios for the Grade and from previous Grades.

Grade 4

Harmony

Major and minor triads in four fingerboard positions

Diminished triads, major seventh, minor seventh chords and dominant seventh chords in three fingerboard positions

Minor seventh b5 chords, Sus 2 chords and Sus 4 chords in one fingerboard positions.

Minor blues progressions

Major and minor sixth, and major and minor seventh intervals

Rhythm Analyses

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Dotted notes (syncopation)

Tied notes (syncopation)

Straight Feels vs Swing Feels

Technical Work

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Major scales, major pentatonic scales, natural minor scales and minor pentatonic scales in two octaves, in two fingerboard positions

Harmonic minor scale in one octave in two fingerboard positions

Major seventh, minor seventh and dominant seventh arpeggios in one octave in two fingerboard positions.

Minor seventh b5 arpeggios in one octave in one fingerboard position

Octave playing (jazz idiom) starting from any string.

Aural and Spoken Tests

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Viva Voce questions on the guitar fingerboard for recognizing any note up to the seventh fret.

To identify all intervals by ear up to a perfect fifth.

To identify major, minor and diminished chords or triads; and major, minor and dominant seventh chords by ear.

Solo Performance

To play the jazz-blues standard 'Freddie Da Freeloader' by Miles Davis (backing tracks for this solo should be provided by the candidate), the blues piece 'Blues Folk in E No 1' by Carlos Viegas.

Improvisation

To perform blues and major pentatonics over all chords in the I-IV-V progression by thirds.

To improvise a guitar solo over the 12 bar blues progression.

To improvise a guitar solo over a chord chart from one of the songs/pieces performed at this Grade, using the scales and arpeggios from this Grade and from previous Grades.

Grade 5

Harmony

Major and minor sixth chords.

Diminished seventh chords.

First and second inversions of major and minor triads.

Dominant seventh chords from the harmonic minor scale.

II-V-I jazz progression.

All intervals from previous Grades starting from any string.

Rhythm Analyses

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Triplets, 9/8 time signature, 12/8 time signature, guitar swing chord comping.

Technical Work

Blues scales: C/G/D/A/E/F/Bb/Eb/Ab in two octaves and three fingerboard positions.

Dorian modal scales: D/A/E/B/F#/G/C/F/Bb/Eb in one octave and two fingerboard positions.

Major, minor and dominant seventh arpeggios in two octaves and two fingerboard positions.

Mixolydian modal scales: G/D/A/E/B/C/F/Bb/Eb in one octave and two fingerboard positions.

Major, minor and dominant seventh arpeggios in two octaves and two fingerboard positions.

Minor seventh b5 arpeggios in two octave and one fingerboard position.

Scale patterns: Sequence of three notes with double notes (downward only).

Aural Tests/Spoken Tests

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Viva Voce – questions about the guitar fingerboard for recognizing any note up to the 12th fret.

Identifying all intervals by ear up to a perfect fifth including diminished fourths, augmented fourths, diminished fifths and augmented fifths.

Identifying major, minor and diminished chords or triads, major and minor seventh, sus 4, dominant and minor seventh b5 chords, all by ear.

Recognising the chord changes from the I-IV-V and II-V-I progressions by ear.

Solo Performance

The jazz standard 'Autumn Leaves' by Joseph Kosma (backing tracks to be provided by the candidate).

The jazz-blues standard 'Tenor Madness' by Sonny Rollins (backing tracks to be provided by the candidate).

The performance of the blues piece 'Blues Folk in G' by Carlos Viegas.

Improvisation

The performance of Dorian, Mixolydian and Ionian (first degree of the major scale) modal scales over all chords in II-V-I progression.

The improvisation of a guitar solo over a chord chart from one of the song/pieces performed for this Grade, using the scales and arpeggios from this Grade and from previous Grades.

Grade 6

Harmony

All requirements from the previous Grades plus the following:

All triads from the harmonic minor scale

Major, minor and dominant seventh chords; major and minor seventh chords; minor seventh b5 chords. Major seventh #5 chords and diminished seventh chords from the harmonic minor scale – in four fingerboard positions.

Major, minor and dominant ninth chords

First and second inversions of diminished and augmented triads

II-V-I jazz progressions by fourths

II-V-I jazz progressions by fourths using the tritone substitution on the V degree

Rhythm Analysis

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Syncopated rhythms from a variety of rhythm charts

32nd notes, 32nd note rests, 64th notes, 64th note rests

Technical Work

Blues scale in two octaves and in four fingerboard positions

Dorian modal scales in two octaves and in two fingerboard positions

Mixolydian modal scales in two octaves and in two fingerboard positions

Lydian modal scales in two octave and in one fingerboard position

Chromatic scale starting from any root

The Examiner may ask the candidate to play the scales either 'straight' or 'swung'.

Aural Tests/Spoken Tests

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Identifying all intervals by ear up to a major and minor seventh, including all major, minor, diminished and augmented intervals.

Identifying major, minor, diminished and augmented chords or triads, major and minor seventh, sus 2, sus 4, dominant seventh and minor seventh b5 chords, all by ear.

Solo Performance

The performance of the jazz standard 'Tune Up' by Miles Davis, the blues piece 'Blues' Folk in E No 2' by Carlos Viegas, the folk-blues piece 'Blues Folk in G' by Carlos Viegas and the jazz piece 'Jazz Theme No 1, by Carlos Viegas.

Backing tracks for 'Tune Up' should be provided by the candidate.

Improvisation

The improvisation of a guitar solo over II-V-I progressions by fourths using all scales, modes and arpeggios studied at this Grade and from previous Grades.

Grade 7

Harmony

Minor and dominant eleventh chords, dominant seventh b5 chords and #5 chords, and minor seventh b5 and #5 chords.

First, second and third inversions of dominant seventh chords, major seventh chords and minor seventh chords.

Rhythm Analyses

All requirements from previous Grades plus 5/4 time signature

Technical Work

All scales, modes and arpeggios from previous Grades in two octaves and three fingerboard positions.

Phrygian modal scale in two octaves and two fingerboard positions.

Whole tone symmetric scale in two octaves and two fingerboard positions.

Aural Tests/Spoken Tests

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

Identifying all intervals by ear up to a major and minor seventh including all major, minor, diminished and augmented intervals.

Identifying all chords from previous Grades by ear.

Identifying the chord changes from a given chord progression by ear.

Solo Performance

The performance of the jazz standard 'Oleo' by Sonny Rollins; the jazz-blues standard 'All Blues' by Miles Davis; the folk-blues piece 'Folk in E' by Carlos Viegas, and the jazz piece 'Jazz Theme No 2' by Carlos Viegas.

Backing tracks for 'Oleo' and 'All Blues' should be provided by the candidate.

Grade 8

Harmony

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

All chords and triads in three fingerboard positions.

Dominant seventh b9 chords, dominant seventh #9 chords, minor seventh b9 chords, major seventh #11 chords and dominant seventh #11 chords all in two fingerboard positions.

'Slash' chords and 'Add' chords.

Rhythm Analyses

All requirements from previous Grades, but with greater complexity, plus 2/2 and 3/8 time signatures.

Technical Work

All requirements from previous Grades plus the following:

All scales and arpeggios in two octaves and four fingerboard positions.

Locrian modal scale, Phrygian major modal scale, jazz melodic minor scale, diminished scale and half-diminished scale – all in two octaves and two fingerboard positions.

Aural Tests/Spoken Tests

All requirements as previous Grades but with greater complexity, plus the following:

Identifying major, minor, pentatonic, blues and modal scales from the harmonized major scale.

Solo Performance

The performance of the jazz-blues standard 'Angel Eyes' by Dennis/Brent, the jazz standard 'Ornithology' by Charlie Parker, the jazz-funk piece 'Soul Funk in A minor' by Carlos Viegas, and the jazz piece 'Jazz Theme No 3' by Carlos Viegas.

Backing tracks for 'Angel Eyes' and 'Ornithology' should be provided by the candidate.

Post Grade 8 Study

At the date of issue this is the only syllabus of graded Jazz/Blues Guitar examinations published by any Examination Board. For successful Grade 8 candidates an Associate diploma examination will be available from the College in the near future.