

rockschool®

Free Choice Piece
PIANO



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Please read through the following section if you are thinking of performing any songs not published in the Rockscool Popular Piano grade books.

For all grades:

The appropriate grade book must be brought to the exam.

Candidates are allowed to perform only a certain number of free choice pieces in their exam. For a grade exam two out of three pieces may be free choice pieces, for Performance Certificate three out of five may be free choice pieces.

Candidates will need to bring a copy of the sheet music for the examiner and a backing track (without the examined part) for all Free Choice Pieces.

All Free choice pieces must be performed to a backing track except in cases where pieces have been selected from previous Rockscool syllabi that does not have a backing track.

Backing tracks for Free choice pieces may be provided on CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB. Please note that the audio cannot be streamed from a device and must be a downloaded audio file for accessible playback on the exam day.

Selecting Free choice pieces:

The following checklist has been devised to help you assess whether or not the repertoire you have chosen meets the criteria established for Performance Pieces in the grade you are taking.

* Indicates that noted point should be included in the piece.

Other points are discretionary, depending on other elements of the piece chosen. If not all requirements are included in the notation, candidates are welcome to add these to the score for assessment.

If after reading this guide you still require help to determine if your chosen piece is suitable for the grade, please forward a copy of the sheet music to freechoicepieces@rslawards.com

Note! Please allow **four weeks** for a decision regarding the suitability of the submitted piece.



PIANO DEBUT

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 45sec-3min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand coordination*

The piece must demonstrate ability to form chords of two or three notes*

The piece must demonstrate simple phrases in each hand with some parts hands together*

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece should demonstrate use of legato/staccato

RHYTHM REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain a mixture of:

Semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchets (quarter) notes

Whole, half and quarter note rests



PIANO GRADE 1

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 1min-3min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand coordination*

The piece must demonstrate ability to play chords in one hand and melody in the other*

The piece must demonstrate simple walking bass patterns*

The piece must demonstrate the ability to move between hand positions*

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece should demonstrate use of legato/staccato

The piece should demonstrate use of a range of dynamics (p, mf, f)

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain a mixture of:

Semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchets (quarter) and quavers (eighth) notes

Whole, half and quarter note rests



PIANO GRADE 2

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 1min-3min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination*

The piece must demonstrate a variety of hand positions*

The piece must demonstrate simple voice leading*

The piece should demonstrate octave stretches

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate use of legato/staccato*

The piece must demonstrate a range of dynamics (p-ff)*

The piece should demonstrate accented and/or grace notes

The piece should demonstrate use of sustain pedal

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain a mixture of:

The piece should contain a mixture of semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchets (quarter) and quavers (eighth) and semi quavers (sixteenth)



PIANO GRADE 3

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 1.30min-4min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate secure physical techniques*

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination*

The piece should demonstrate stride, barrelhouse left hand patterns or simple New Orleans right hand voicing

The piece should demonstrate two note right hand licks with static top line

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate a greater range of dynamic changes as appropriate ff-pp*

The piece must demonstrate ability to accent some notes*

The piece should demonstrate more advanced grace notes

The piece should demonstrate trills (3rds) and /or glissando

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain a mixture of semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchets (quarter) and quavers (eighth) and semi quavers (sixteenth) and their dotted values.



PIANO GRADE 4

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 2min-4min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate secure physical techniques*

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination*

Other techniques to include:

- 5 note chords (split 3 & 2 or 4 & 1 for Shearing locked hand style)
- Adjacent 6ths RH
- Voice leading (triads)
- Spread chords
- LH stride (5th in bass, 3 note chords)
- LH running quavers, occasional semiquavers
- LH arpeggiated quavers
- other style appropriate techniques

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate a greater range of dynamic changes as appropriate ff-pp*

The piece must demonstrate ability to accent some notes within phrases*

The piece should demonstrate more advanced grace notes

The piece should demonstrate trills (3rds and 6ths) and /or glissando

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain a mixture of semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchets (quarter) and quavers (eighth) and semi quavers (sixteenth) and their dotted values.

Also swung eighths and shuffle blues patterns



PIANO GRADE 5

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 2min-4min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate fluent physical techniques*

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination*

Other techniques to include:

- 6ths and simple octave lines
- RH/LH cross over
- More advanced stride/boogie techniques
- More advanced voice leading
- Thicker RH textures and counterpoint
- other style appropriate techniques

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate ability to control and be aware of a wide range of dynamics (pp to ff) +sf*

The piece must demonstrate use of legato and staccato*

The piece must demonstrate ability to accent some notes within phrases*

The piece must demonstrate more advanced grace notes*

The piece should demonstrate trills (3rds and 6ths) and /or glissando

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain a mixture of semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchets (quarter), crotchet triplets and quavers (eighth) and semi quavers (sixteenth) and their dotted values.

Also a demonstration of more sophisticated semiquaver syncopation



PIANO GRADE 6

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 2.30min-5min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate fluent and timed physical techniques*

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination*

Other techniques to include:

- Sophisticated syncopated and contrapuntal rhythms
- Walking and rhythmically independent bass lines and chord melody
- Smooth movement between chords, 3rds, 6ths and single notes
- Ability to articulate sophisticated octave lines (including 16th notes)
- other style appropriate techniques

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate ability to control and be aware of a wide range of dynamics (pp to ff) +sf*

The piece must demonstrate use of legato and staccato*

The piece must demonstrate ability to accent some notes within phrases*

The piece must demonstrate more advanced grace notes*

The piece should demonstrate trills (3rds and 6ths) and /or glissando*

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain note values in almost any combination but have considerable amount of 16th notes, dotted note combinations and triplets of all varieties.



PIANO GRADE 7

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 2.30min-5min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate fluent and timed physical techniques*

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination*

Songs should if possible contain at least one change of key signature

Other techniques to include:

- Sophisticated syncopated and contrapuntal rhythms
- Walking and rhythmically independent bass lines and chord melody
- Smooth movement between chords, 3rds, 6ths and single notes
- Ability to articulate sophisticated octave lines (including 16th notes)
- other style appropriate techniques

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate ability to control and be aware of a wide range of dynamics (pp to ff) +sf*

The piece must demonstrate use of legato and staccato*

The piece must demonstrate ability to accent some notes within phrases*

The piece must demonstrate more advanced grace notes*

The piece should demonstrate trills (3rds and 6ths) and /or glissando*

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain note values in almost any combination but have considerable amount of 16th notes, dotted note combinations and triplets of all varieties.

Songs should contain at least one change of time signature



PIANO GRADE 8

Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam *

The piece must be performed to a backing track *

For this grade the backing track should be between 3min-5min long *

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB *

Section B: Performance Elements

PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate fluent and timed physical techniques*

The piece must demonstrate appropriate high level of LH/RH co-ordination*

The piece must demonstrate ability to move very smoothly and quickly between chords, 3rds and 6ths and single notes*

The piece should demonstrate ability to articulate a wide range of intervals including sophisticated octave lines (including octave semiquavers) where appropriate

Songs should if possible contain at least two changes of key signature

Other techniques to include:

- Sophisticated syncopated and contrapuntal rhythms
- Walking and rhythmically independent bass lines and chord melody
- Smooth movement between chords, 3rds, 6ths and single notes
- Ability to articulate sophisticated octave lines (including 16th notes)
- LH 10ths (can be broken)
- other style appropriate techniques

EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate ability to control and be aware of a wide range of dynamics (pp to ff) +sf*

The piece must demonstrate use of legato and staccato*

The piece must demonstrate ability to accent some notes within phrases*

The piece must demonstrate more advanced grace notes*

The piece should demonstrate trills (3rds and 6ths) and /or glissando*

RHYTHMIC REQUIREMENTS

The piece should contain note values in almost any combination but have considerable amount of 16th notes, dotted note combinations and triplets of all varieties.

Sophisticated syncopated and contrapuntal rhythms in wide range of styles including walking and rhythmically independent bass lines and chord melody

Songs should if possible contain at least two changes of time signature