

# RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR SAMPLE PACK

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## WELCOME TO THE RSL CLASSICAL REPERTOIRE SAMPLE BOOKLET FOR GUITAR

This interactive booklet is designed to give a flavour of the pieces of music contained within the graded music exam syllabus and information on the musical skills and understanding that have been benchmarked at each grade. This sits alongside the Syllabus Guide which provides full details of the graded examinations run by RSL Awards for Classical Guitar.

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Purchase your digital copies of the full RSL Classical syllabus books including access to Replay, the interactive sheet music tool, on the RSL Awards shop [here...](#)



Please visit the RSL shop pages linked at each Grade by clicking the "Buy Now" button to hear the audio previews.

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## THE RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR BOOKS ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE KEY SECTIONS:

### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Each graded exam book contains all the material you need to learn at each grade and has been benchmarked according to a set of criteria which are contained in this booklet.

The repertoire is also supported by a Fact File and Performance Notes. These Fact Files cover the background information on each piece of music, the composer and the compositional style. The Performance Notes look at the song from the performers' perspective, focusing on the technical considerations the learner will encounter as they navigate each track.

The books also contain links to download exemplar audio recordings and backing tracks, giving students and teachers everything they need to prepare for their exam.

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are either two or three groups of technical exercise at each grade:

**Group A:** Scales & Double-Stopped Exercises

**Group B:** Arpeggios & Broken Chords

**Group C:** Technical Study

The Technical Exercises are designed to gradually increase and expand upon the learner's physical and expressive facility on the instrument, in accordance with each grade level. Candidates will be marked on tone quality and consistency, maintenance of pulse, and accuracy.

### SUPPORTING TESTS

There are three types of unprepared supporting test in the exam:

1. *Either* a Sight Reading test; *or* a Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test. The candidate chooses which they'd like to take in their exam.

Sight Reading tests develop the candidate's ability to read and perform previously unseen material.

Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation tests require candidates to perform improvised passages of melody or chordal accompaniment to a backing track, supported by a chord chart. These tests are in contemporary music styles, and offer an alternative route for students interested in contemporary music.

2. Ear Tests: Melodic and rhythmic recall (Debut – Grade 3), melodic and harmonic recall (Grades 4–8).
3. General Musicianship Questions (GMQs): Five questions asked by the examiner relating to the student's understanding of music and their instrument.

**Note:** The grade book contains examples of the supporting tests – equivalent 'unseen' examples will be provided for the examination.



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## REPertoire:

The pieces of music in the graded exam book have been carefully selected to cater for a wide range of musical tastes. The syllabus includes ten pieces at each grade, selected to give students a fun, engaging and rewarding learning experience. Please refer to the syllabus guide and our website for **more details**.

Across the graded syllabus, students will find repertoire from a diverse selection of composers from both the past and present day, whose work is representative of the music of its time. This music sought to break boundaries and reflect the composer's own cultural heritage. These books contain works from the Western Classical tradition, jazz tradition, contemporary Classical, Classical crossover and, at each grade, pieces in popular music styles.

Learners also have the opportunity to use Free Choice Pieces alongside this specified repertoire and the benchmarking criteria in this booklet should be used to identify whether the piece they want to use meets the required standard for the grade chosen. These pieces can be taken from a wide range of genres and can include any piece from other UK-recognised exam boards.

This is also available on our **website**.

## AUDIO:

Audio is provided in the form of exemplar recordings of the pieces, technical studies and supporting tests (where applicable). Audio files are supplied in MP3 format to enable playback on a wide range of compatible devices. Digital versions of the book include audio files in the download. Physical versions of the book include a code to download the audio at [rslawards.com/downloads](http://rslawards.com/downloads).

Students and teachers can instantly access their favourite graded music materials from their desktop, tablet or smartphone and, with Replay, have access to an interactive sheet music player with a range of playback and practice functions.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The books also contain information on exam procedures, including online examination entry, marking schemes, information on Free Choice Pieces and any performance and technical guidance for each grade.







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## EXAMS:

When they are ready, candidates can enter for the following types of exam:

### Graded Music Exam

Candidates perform three pieces, a selection of technical exercises, and a series of unseen tests.

### Performance Certificate

Candidates perform five pieces only.

Exams can be booked as a face-to-face exam or recorded digital exam and are also available in some centres as a live-streamed digital exam.

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Learners can take their exam at one of our Public Exam Venues or, should your venue meet certain criteria, we can convene a private exam day at your venue for your students. Find out more [here](#)...

## ASSESSMENT:

Candidates are assessed against specific Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria which are detailed in full in the Syllabus Guide and on our [website](#).

We have also included a summary of the Assessment Criteria in this booklet.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

There are three learning outcomes in RSL Awards graded music exams:

1. Be able to perform music in a range of musical styles.
2. Be able to demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to set technical demands.
3. Be able to demonstrate musical understanding through a range of set tests.

## WHAT ARE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA?

- Assessment Criteria define how we assess the learning outcomes.
- They are applied to evidence musical outcomes at each grade progressively.
- Each criterion is equally weighted.
- Each is considered / marked separately.
- The combination gives the total mark for each piece/ supporting test.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

### 1. Command of Instrument

The quality of the sound produced from the instrument, including the consistency of sound/tone, control of sound/tone commensurate with grade.

### 2. Sync or Pulse

Alignment of the performance to backing track, metronome or applied to a solo performance, observing notation markings. For unaccompanied pieces candidates should maintain a secure internal pulse and adjust the pulse where instructed within the music.

### 3. Accuracy and Understanding

Representing the written notation accurately, except by instruction through performance notes, or interpreting the written part with equivalent skills demonstrated. Secure understanding of musical structure evidenced through transitions of phrases, bars and sections.

### 4. Style and Expression

An expressive and commanding performance of the notated material dictated by the demands of the performance piece.

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GUITAR DEBUT

# GUITAR

DEBUT

## FEATURING

Laura Snowden  
Mauro Giuliani  
Gustav Holst  
Beyoncé  
Frozen 2  
Fernando Sor  
Ludwig van Beethoven  
Bill Withers  
The Lumineers  
Yvon Rivoal

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR DEBUT MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to one page, 50 secs – 2 minutes
Key(s)	C major, A minor, G major
Position	Open and first position
Rhythmic Values	Semibreves, minims, crotchets, quavers, associated rests. Occasional simple dotted rhythms may appear.
Time Signatures	$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ c
Dynamics	<i>f, mf, mp, p</i>
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	Simple/sparse
Harmonic/Textural Features	Separated bass and melody ( <i>tirando</i> )
Melodic Features	Single-line melodies ( <i>apoyando</i> )
Rhythmic Features	Basic rhythms, simple groupings
Technical Features	Single-line melodies (played <i>apoyando</i> ) Separated bass and melody playing ( <i>tirando</i> )

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.



# Jupiter



**Composer:** Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

**Nationality:** English

**Source:** *The Planets*, Op. 32 (1914-1917)

'Jupiter' is taken from Gustav Holst's widely acclaimed orchestral suite, *The Planets*. The suite contains seven movements, each named after a planet, and features 'Jupiter' at the centre. Although composition began in 1914, it wasn't until 1918 that the suite was performed in its entirety at Queen's Hall in London during a private concert hosted by Adrian Boult. It is believed that Holst held Boult partly responsible for the success that *The Planets* went on to receive and was forever grateful for his inclusion of the suite.

*The Planets* brought Gustav Holst worldwide fame and is known globally as one of the most significant orchestral suites of the 20th century. Modern composers such as Hans Zimmer and John Williams cite *The Planets* as greatly influential to their award-winning film scores.

## Performance Notes



This piece is in A-A-B-A form, where A is the main theme repeated three times and B is the secondary theme that provides an uplift to the piece. You will see that the dynamics suggested (*mf* and *f*) will help shape the performance. Aim to use alternating rest strokes with the first (*i*) and second (*m*) fingers throughout, other than the areas where the fourth string is used (low D and E notes) where the thumb (*p*) could prove ideal. In bar 15 the third finger (*a*) is suggested as you are ascending the three upper strings. Although much of this piece consists of quavers (8th notes), aim to make the notes last as long as possible (*legato*) to reflect its grandiose nature.



# 'Jupiter' from *The Planets*

Gustav Holst

$\text{♩} = 60$

*mf*

*i* *m* *i* *m* *i* *m*

5

*f* *i* *m* *i* *a* *m* *i*

9

*i* *m* *a* *i* *m* *i* *m* *mf*

13

*i* *m*

18

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# Ojos Azules



**Arranger:** Yvon Rivoal  
**Nationality:** French  
**Source:** *Chansons et Danses d'Amérique Latine Vol. D*

'Ojos Azules' is a traditional song native to the Andean region of South America. It has a particularly close stylistic resemblance to Peruvian music, but is equally common in Bolivian, Chilean and Argentinian repertoire. Initially known as 'Ojos Bonitos' (Pretty Eyes), it was renamed to 'Ojos Azules' (Blue Eyes) following a set of altered lyrics written by Bolivian composer Gilberto Rojas Enriquez in 1947.

This arrangement is by French composer, educator and concert guitarist Yvon Rivoal. Rivoal's career began at the age of twelve as an accompanist, shortly going on to teaching. Despite his professional focus on classical music, he drew influence from contemporary pop genres and jazz. Later on in Rivoal's career, he held a position of Director at National Music School of Saint-Nazaire.

## Performance Notes



'Ojos Azules' (Blue Eyes) is written as a duet and is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, centred in the key of A minor. A slow, steady pace is indicated by the tempo description (*Lento*) and encourages *legato* playing and a secure fretting hand, particularly when connecting with the high A on the first string. This arrangement is in four sections and includes a number of dynamic changes (such as *diminuendo*), encouraging development of secure picking hand technique in order to control the gradual decrease in volume. The repeated sections in the piece (bars 6–11 and bars 12–17) provide opportunities to develop immediate dynamic changes (*forte* to *piano*), and also to work on timing within an ensemble, such as the *rallentando* in bar 17 and again in the last two bars of the piece. There is also the opportunity to develop ensemble playing and time-keeping skills in the opening three bars and final section of the piece, where melody and accompaniment are mainly played in intervals of thirds and are in rhythmic unison.



# Ojos Azules

Arranged by Yvon Rivoal

**Lent** **cédez...**

Assessed Part *mf* *m i m 4 i m i m a i m*

Duet Part *mf*

**a tempo** (♩ = 96)

*i* *m* *f-p*

*f* *p* (second time)

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# Technical Exercises

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There are two groups of technical exercises at Debut:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Technical Studies

For group A, the examiner will request a selection of scales to be performed. For group B, you may choose **one** technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales

All scales must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending as shown
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 70$

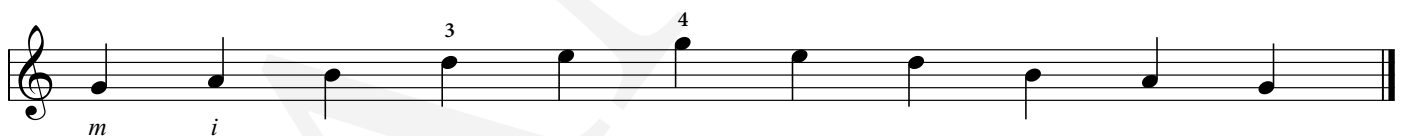
C major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



A minor, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



G major pentatonic, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



# Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation

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In the exam, you have a choice between either a Sight Reading test or a Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test. The examiner will ask you which one you wish to choose before commencing. Once you have decided you cannot change your mind.

In the Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test, the examiner will give you a five-bar chord progression in the key of C major. The tempo is ♩=65.

At Debut, you only need to improvise single-note melodies in the key of C major. The chord symbols show the chord progression of the backing track only. The test will start and end on the tonic chord, and will only contain chords I, IV and V.

You will first be given 90 seconds to practise, before which you will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one-bar count-in at the beginning. Following the initial practice time, the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is for you to practise and the second time is for you to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one-bar count-in.

The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

## Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation | Example

Indie Folk ♩ = 65

C F G C

Please note: The test shown is an example. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam



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# GUITAR

GRADE 1

GUITAR GRADE 1



## FEATURING

Laura Snowden  
Helen Sanderson  
Nick Powlesland  
Peter Nuttall  
Gary Ryan  
John Dowland  
Ed Sheeran  
Leonard Cohen  
David Guetta feat. Sia  
Calvin Harris feat. Rihanna

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 1 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to one page, 1 min 10 secs – 2 mins 30 secs
Key(s)	E minor Occasional accidentals
Position	Open and first position, occasional second position
Rhythmic Values	Dotted crotchets (dotted quarter notes), simple ties
Time Signatures	$\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{12}{8}$ $\text{♩}$
Dynamics	<i>f, mf, mp, p</i> , $\ll$ , $\gg$
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	Simple/sparse
Melodic Features	Occasional accidentals Small intervallic transitions, simple string crossing
Harmonic/Textural Features	Bass and melodic notes played together Chords with up to two fingers on the fingerboard, very occasional three-fingered basic chords
Rhythmic Features	Simple syncopation
Technical Features	Bass and melodic notes played together Mainly open string bass notes in two-part texture Fingered bass notes Natural harmonics Simple spread chords with picking hand across six strings

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.

# Perfect



**Artist:** Ed Sheeran

**Album:** ÷ (2017)

**Genre:** Pop

'Perfect' was the fourth single to be released from Ed Sheeran's chart-topping album ÷ (*Divide*). The track was well-received globally, topping the charts in both the UK and the US as well as an impressive 16 other countries worldwide. 'Perfect' gave Sheeran his second UK number 1 single from the album, with 'Shape of You' already having topped the charts on its release. 'Perfect' achieved incredible sales globally and was certified 4 x Platinum in the UK and 8 x Platinum in the US.

Despite its later release, 'Perfect' was actually the first song to be written for the album. After first writing the song, Sheeran set out to produce it with the help of Will Hicks (Grammy-nominated British producer) and instrumental assistance from his brother Matthew Sheeran. Until now, the brothers had never collaborated, but with their grandmother being elderly they decided to fulfil her final wish to see them work together. In light of this, Matthew provided the strings arrangement for the recording of 'Perfect'.

## Performance Notes



$\frac{12}{8}$  is a compound time signature where each of the four beats in a bar equals a dotted crotchet (dotted quarter-note/crotchet, made up of three quaver/8th-note subdivisions). There are a lot of fun and interesting elements in this piece, from dotted crotchets to busier quaver triplets that add energy to the phrases. At bar 5 there are some string jumps which may be best tackled with the given picking directions: thumb (*p*) for the low strings, and *m, i* (or *i, m* at bar 7) for the higher strings. In the chorus, the higher strings are featured, enabling the melody to ring out. Opting for an *mf* dynamic (moderately loud), use rest strokes so all notes are clear and rounded. Bar 14 contains helpful fretting-hand fingerings to navigate the ascending melody, mirroring how a D major chord would be fretted. Bring the piece to a controlled close by reducing the volume to *mp* (moderately quiet).



# Perfect

Ed Sheeran

Acoustic pop ♩. = 60

Verse

Assessed Part

Duet Part

*p* *i* *m* *i* *m*

*mf*

*p*

3

*mf*

Pre-chorus

*p* *m* *i*

*mp*

5

*p* *i* *m*

1 2

7

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# In My Heart



**Composer:** Laura Snowden  
**Nationality:** British/French

Guitarist and composer Laura Snowden was born in York to a French mother and English father, and grew up in Cornwall, Devon and Sussex with Celtic folk music. At the age of sixteen she was awarded a scholarship to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School, following a donation from the Rolling Stones. She then went on to study at the Royal College of Music, where she studied with Julian Bream, a hugely important figure in the world of classical guitar. While studying with Bream, she gave two concerts at Wigmore Hall featuring premieres of his recent commissions. This led to international recognition and festival debuts across Europe, China and the US. Her eclectic musical output has ranged from playing on Lorne Balfe's soundtrack for the Marvel film *Black Widow* to recording Lisa Streich's guitar concerto *Augenlider* with the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester.

As a composer, Laura's music has been performed at Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall and Sadlers Wells, commissioned by the Park Lane Group, Birmingham Symphony Hall and International Guitar Foundation, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Scotland and Hong Kong Radio 4.

## Performance Notes



To perform this lovely piece, aim for clarity and richness in your tone. While accuracy in the fretting hand is key, the quality of the notes you produce will largely be shaped by your picking-hand technique. For a bold, rich sonority, opt for rest strokes and aim to alternate between your first (*i*) and second (*m*) fingers. With the fretting hand, you can use the 'one finger per fret' rule – but note that the fourth finger is given to the G (bar 3, beat 4), which follows the previous D (beat 3), played with the third finger. You can explore subtle dynamic rises and falls for each four-bar phrase in this piece, giving nuance and shape to your performance. Be sure to observe the *ritardando* (*rit.*) in the penultimate bar, as this subtly underpins the concluding A minor harmony, outlined by the beautiful arpeggio in the accompanying part.



# In My Heart

Laura Snowden

Lyrical and expressive ♩ = c.58

Assessed Part

Duet Part

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# Technical Exercises

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There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 1:

- Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise
- Group B: Arpeggios
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection of scales and arpeggios to be performed. For group C, you may choose **one** technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise

All exercises in Group A must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves shown in each example
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 75$  bpm

### Major Scales

G major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



F major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



C major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



# General Musicianship Questions

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In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions, divided between two topics as detailed below.

## Music Knowledge

At Grade 1 you will be asked three questions based on your choice of a piece of music that you have played in the exam.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the treble clef
- identify the time signature
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note) and quaver (8th note) values

You will also be asked one question on chord construction:

- explain the difference between a major and minor chord

## Instrument Knowledge

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument, drawn from the following:

- identify two of the following parts of your guitar: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, nut or bridge, sound hole
- identify the pitches of open strings (in standard tuning)

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GUITAR GRADE 2

# GUITAR

GRADE 2

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## FEATURING

Laura Snowden  
Nathanael Diesel  
Lee Sollory  
George Frideric Handel  
Antonio Vivaldi  
Ignatius Sancho  
Edvard Grieg  
Taylor Swift  
Nina Simone  
A Star Is Born

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## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 2 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to one page, 1 min 20 secs – 2 mins 40 secs
Key(s)	D major, D minor More frequent accidentals
Position	Second position, use of 4th finger
Rhythmic Values	Semiquavers (16th notes), dotted quavers (dotted 8th notes)
Time Signatures	As previous grades
Dynamics	<i>ff</i> , <i>sfz</i>
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	Staccato, slurs, accents
Melodic Features	More frequent accidentals More frequent string crossing
Harmonic/Textural Features	Developing rhythms between bass notes and melody lines Chords with up to three fingers on the fingerboard
Rhythmic Features	Simple syncopation Fermata
Technical Features	<i>Ponticello</i> , <i>sul tasto</i>

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.



# Spring



**Composer:** Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

**Nationality:** Italian

**Source:** *The Four Seasons* (1723)

This arrangement is an excerpt from 'Allegro', the first movement of 'Spring' from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Published in 1723, *The Four Seasons* features four concertos, each inspired by one of the four seasons of the year. One of Antonio Vivaldi's most famous works, *The Four Seasons* suite remains a favourite to this day and is regularly performed across the world. In addition to the instrumentation, Vivaldi also published a series of accompanying sonnets for each concerto.

Antonio Vivaldi was an Italian composer, teacher and violinist. He is widely considered one of the most influential Baroque composers, and is believed to have even had an influence on renowned composer J.S. Bach. Throughout his life, Vivaldi composed hundreds of concertos, and more than 40 operas. He was also a catholic priest, and wrote many sacred works for an all-female music ensemble while working in an orphanage as a violin instructor.

## Performance Notes



This is one of the most well-known pieces from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and should be played quickly and brightly (*Allegro*). This arrangement is in D major, oriented mostly around second position, helping to promote technical security in this area of the fretboard. The tonal and dynamic markings throughout the piece give variation to the repeats, adding shape and direction to the performance, and *ponticello* (playing close to the bridge) is also introduced, bringing bright tones and adding further colour. Technical control is very important when navigating these expressive techniques, while making sure a secure pulse is maintained. A strong and mobile picking hand is helpful in maintaining the steady crotchet (quarter note) beats throughout, keeping the bass line notes clear and accurate to support the melodic line played above.



# 'Spring' from *The Four Seasons*

Antonio Vivaldi

Allegro

II  
pont.  
*f*

5  
*p*

9  
*cresc.*  
*f*

13  
pont.  
*mp*  
*cresc.*

17  
pont.  
*f*  
*mp*

21  
norm.  
*cresc.*  
*f*

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# Le Douze de Décembre



**Composer:** Ignatius Sancho (c.1729–1780)

**Nationality:** British

**Source:** *Minuets, Cotillons & Country Dances* (1775)

'Le Douze Décembre' is taken from Ignatius Sancho's collection *Minuets, Cotillons & Country Dances* – a collection of both English and French titled pieces with step-by-step dance instructions. One of 24 compositions, the piece was written in a style that was popular in 18th century Britain.

Ignatius Sancho was the first composer of African descent to be published in the European classical music tradition. He released four collections of music, alongside a collection of letters focussing on political issues. These letters were published two years after his death as *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African*, and became one of the earliest published accounts of slavery written in English. Sancho became an important figure in the abolitionist movement of the late 18th century and was the first black British person to vote in a general election.

## Performance Notes



For a secure performance of this piece, it may be beneficial to take smaller phrases and practise them slowly before bringing up to the suggested tempo (*Moderato*). As the piece is arranged in D major and largely in second position, you can use your D major scale and arpeggio from the technical exercises section of this book to help with finger dexterity. Try to maintain a steady tempo, as this will benefit both the right and left hands in fretting accuracy and maintaining an even tone. Similarly, a strict tempo will negate the temptation to rush the quaver patterns that appear throughout this piece. There are a number of *staccato* notes included in this arrangement, and keeping the picking hand relaxed will provide a strong *staccato* technique while maintaining a good tone and accurate rhythm. Dynamics in the score will require flexibility in the picking hand, and will provide colour, shape and direction to your performance.

# Le Douze de Décembre

Ignatius Sancho

Moderato

5

9

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# Technical Exercises

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There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 2:

- Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise
- Group B: Arpeggios
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection to be performed. For group C, you may choose **one** technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise

All exercises in Group A must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves shown in each example
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 80$  bpm

D major, to the 12th, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



D harmonic minor, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



C major, *tirando*, thumb only





# Sight Reading

In the exam, you have a choice between either a Sight Reading test or a Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test. The examiner will ask you which one you wish to choose before commencing. Once you have decided you cannot change your mind.

The examiner will give you a previously unseen test to be performed unaccompanied. You will have 90 seconds to prepare, after which the examiner will ask you to commence the test.

While the assessed part of the test is not played to a metronome click, you may ask to hear the minimum tempo on a metronome at the start of or throughout your practice time. Additionally, you may ask to hear a few seconds of the tempo on a metronome before the assessed part of the test begins.

The sight reading test will be up to eight bars long, in one of the following keys:

- C major
- A minor
- G major

## Sight Reading | Example 1

Moderato

*f* *p*

## Sight Reading | Example 2

Waltz

*p* *f*

## Sight Reading | Example 3

March

*p* *f*

Please note: The tests shown are examples. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.

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GUITAR GRADE 3

# GUITAR

GRADE 3



## FEATURING

Laura Snowden  
Leo Brouwer  
Nick Powlesland  
Francisco Tárrega  
Ferdinando Carulli  
Henry Mancini  
Ignatius Sancho  
Yvon Rivoal  
Coldplay  
Pharrell Williams

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


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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 3 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to two pages, 1 min 40 secs – 2 mins 50 secs
Key(s)	Bb major, G minor, A major
Position	3rd position up to 5th position
Rhythmic Values	Quaver (8th note) triplets
Time Signatures	 Simple and/or infrequent changes
Dynamics	<i>pp</i> , <i>cresc. poco a poco</i>
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	As previous grades
Harmonic/Textural Features	Four-note chords Melody and accompanying chord tones using <i>i m a</i> combined with basslines ( <i>p</i> )
Melodic Features	More frequent accidentals More frequent string crossing at faster tempo
Rhythmic Features	More frequent syncopation Fermata
Technical Features	Glissando Muted notes Vibrato Simple percussive passages (using body of guitar) Spread chords Linking melody notes with one finger on the same string

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.

# The Pink Panther

**Composer:** Henry Mancini (1924-1994)

**Nationality:** American

**Source:** *The Pink Panther* (1963)

'The Pink Panther' was written by American composer Henry Mancini for the 1963 film *The Pink Panther*. The instrumental piece was actually written before the famous opening animation was drawn and was so aligned to the artist's vision that it was actually used as reference while the character was created.

Henry Mancini's composition was hugely successful and was nominated for the Academy Award® for Best Original Score at the 1964 Oscars Ceremony, losing out to the Sherman Brothers' original score for *Mary Poppins*.

Mancini was a composer, arranger, conductor and musician. He is best known for his work in soundtracks and is a highly regarded film score composer. His accolades comprise 20 Grammy Awards (including a Lifetime Achievement Award), four Oscars and a Golden Globe.

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## Performance Notes



This Henry Mancini piece exudes a sophisticated and mysterious atmosphere whenever played. The fingerings are supplied for the iconic ascending motif in fourths. When the main theme begins in bar 6, aim to make this melodic line sound clean and precise. Bars 7-8 are mostly quaver (8th note) based so keep your timing even as you let the melody notes sustain. Use a 'one finger per fret' approach (*i.e.* first finger at the 1st fret, second finger at the 2nd fret, *etc.*) and listen carefully to the C to B pull-off (first finger to open B string) which should have an even volume. The two triplets have further pull-offs so again, aim for even rhythm and volume. In bar 11, be sure to appreciate the arch of the melodic phrase; the higher notes (G-B-E-E<sup>b</sup>) ascend then descend while the lower notes chromatically ascend. It can be worth playing this phrase in isolation for your own musical understanding as well as smoothing out technical hurdles. While the piece is labelled *mf* throughout, look to explore ways to enhance the dynamics with some volume drops (*e.g.* the ascending fourths motif) and perhaps a brash *f* or even *ff* for the film-noir soaked final chord of Em(maj<sup>9</sup>).

# The Pink Panther

Henry Mancini

Moderately (♩ =  $\overset{\frown}{\text{3}}$ )

4

7

10

14

18

21b

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# Estudio



**Composer:** Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909)

**Nationality:** Spanish

'Estudio' is a musical study written by Spanish composer Francisco Tárrega. While only 19 of Tárrega's compositions were published in his lifetime, Tárrega composed many original works, several of which were written for his students. In addition, Tárrega would frequently rearrange other composers' works for solo guitar, and he also transcribed several of Bach's pieces for classical guitar.

Following an accident in childhood which led to Tárrega partially losing his eyesight, his family moved to Barcelona where he attended music classes. He would later run away from home several times to try and start his music career by performing in small venues and playing with a family of travellers before being brought back home. Tárrega then began studying at the Madrid Royal Conservatory in 1874. According to his family's advice, he had initially intended to pursue a career as a pianist before being persuaded to instead focus on guitar by his composition tutor Emilio Arrieta. After many years performing across Europe, composing and transposing music for guitar, Tárrega was afflicted with paralysis on the right side of his body and eventually passed away after finishing his last original work. Tárrega remains a highly influential figure in the world of classical guitar and its application as a recital instrument.

## Performance Notes



This short E minor study in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time promotes the development of picking-hand technique, with the repeated *ami* pattern strengthening the fingers and improving accuracy and independence. Notes played with *a* should be projected and sustained where possible to provide a *legato* melodic line. To achieve this, aim to keep the accompanying notes balanced in volume and articulation, and be sure to use the tips of the fretting-hand fingers to ensure accuracy and clarity. In particular, pay attention to the notes played on strings two and three, as these can sometimes become muted or unclear. Strength in the fretting hand is required for the half barre in bar 10, and it may help to practise both the transition in and out of this passage in isolation at first. The repeated sections allow for variation in dynamics and tone, giving shape and direction to the performance.

# Estudio

Francisco Tárrega

♩ = 100

The musical score is written in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 3/4 time. It consists of five systems of music. The first system (measures 1-3) includes fingering (1, 2, 3, 4), breath marks (a), and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second system (measures 4-6) includes fingering (3, 4) and a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system (measures 7-9) includes fingering (3, 4, 3), a repeat sign, and dynamic markings of *mp* and *mf*. The fourth system (measures 10-12) includes fingering (3, 1, 1, 4, 3, 1, 2, 4, 1, 2, 4, 1, 3, 0, 0, 2) and dynamic markings of *p* and *mp*. The fifth system (measures 13-15) includes fingering (4, 4, 3, 3, 4) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A large watermark 'SAMPLE' is visible across the score.

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# Technical Exercises

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 3:

- Group A: Scales and Double-Stopped Exercises
- Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection of scales and arpeggios to be performed. For group C, you may choose one technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercises

All exercises in Group A must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves shown in each example
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 65 \text{ bpm}$

### Major and minor scales

C major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



G major, *tirando*, thumb and fingers



E harmonic minor, *tirando*, thumb and fingers



B harmonic minor, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



**Group C: Technical Studies**

In this section, you will need to perform your choice of one of the following three studies below. The examiner will ask you which study you have prepared.

Study 1: Two-note barre, position shifts, right-hand fingering, bass control

**Moderato**

III *a i m* 1/2 CIII *i m a* 1/2 CI *i m a* *m i* *a m i* *m i m*

*mf* *mp*

IV *a i m i* V *m i m* I *i m a* *m i m i*

*f* *p*

Study 2: Phrasing, two-part harmony

**Andante**

sempre l.v. V *m* *p mp* *poco rit.* II *mf*

**a tempo** *rit.*

*mp* *mf*

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# GUITAR

GRADE 4

GUITAR GRADE 4

## FEATURING

Andrew York  
Gabriel Fauré  
David Cottam  
Tatiana Stachak  
Helen Sanderson  
Robert Johnson  
Madame Sidney Pratten  
Star Wars (Main Theme)  
Red Hot Chili Peppers  
Metallica

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL VIOLIN GRADE 4 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to two pages, 1 min 45 secs – 3 mins
Key(s)	E major
Position	5th position up to 7th position, occasional movement to 9th position
Rhythmic Values	Semiquaver (16th note) triplets
Time Signatures	As previous grades, with more changes
Dynamics	As previous grades, with more changes
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	As previous grades
Melodic Features	Larger intervallic transitions on one string Melodic lines may be split across strings to facilitate position shifts
Harmonic/Textural Features	Developing textures using <i>p i m a</i>
Rhythmic Features	More frequent syncopation Fermata
Technical Features	Occasional partial barre Pizzicato Spread chords from high to low strings Rasgueado Tambora More developed legato technique Occasional half barre

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.



# Garden Steps



**Composer:** Andrew York

**Nationality:** American

**Source:** *Seven in Essence* (1992)

'Garden Steps' features in Andrew York's book titled *Seven in Essence*, a book published in 1992 consisting of seven intermediate pieces written for classical guitar.

Andrew York picked up guitar at a young age, and has written over 50 works for ensembles of various sizes, adopting multiple styles and influences throughout his career, including folk, classical and jazz. He gained wider critical acclaim after a performance of one of his pieces by Australian guitarist John Williams, which led to recorded releases of several of his works. York has also won a Grammy award for his contributions as a member of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, and his repertoire continues to be played by popular modern classical guitar players.

## Performance Notes



'Garden Steps' is the third piece of seven in *Seven in Essence* for solo guitar by Andrew York. The piece is in D major and moves between the D and A major chord shapes (the tonic and the dominant), using different picking patterns for textural variety. This piece is a good exercise for the *a* finger, e.g., in the opening bars, aim to allow the melodic line to sing out. The arpeggiated patterns provide an additional challenge for the *a* finger (e.g. bars 9-11). The accents found on page 2 help to give shape and articulation to the rhythmic patterns. Pay careful attention to the tied notes throughout as these will help you to deliver a smooth, *legato* feel, whilst keeping the texture light.



# Garden Steps

Andrew York

mf

5

9

13

17

CII

CII

l.v.

l.v.

sim.

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# West Coast



**Composer:** Helen Sanderson

**Nationality:** English

'West Coast' was written by Helen Sanderson and features as one of many educational pieces she has composed for the classical guitar community.

Helen Sanderson was born in Worcester, and went on to study at the Royal College of Music in London. She has since performed recitals at many locations in the UK including the Southbank Centre, Kings Place and St George's Bristol, and has also toured extensively throughout America and Europe. She holds the position of Head of Guitar Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and was the first female guitarist in Britain to head a conservatoire department. She is also co-founder of Guitar Circus – a charity founded in 2006 which organises the World Youth Guitar Festival.

In addition to her work as an educator, composer and performer, Sanderson has undertaken research in the USA on whole-class guitar programmes. Her academic contributions to guitar education earned her the Churchill Fellowship and – in combination with her other work – has since made her a sought-after masterclass artist and competition adjudicator.

## Performance Notes



This piece makes good use of moveable chord patterns in the fretting hand and takes full advantage of the open strings ringing on, providing a sonorous and rippling effect with the repeated picking-hand patterns. In order to maintain the flow of arpeggiated figures throughout this piece, it is essential to develop dexterity and control in the picking hand, whilst cleanly executing the shifting chord positions in the fretting hand. Using the tips of the fingers will lead to a clear tone and will help with overall technical security, particularly when ensuring that there is no unintentional muting of over-ringing open strings. While the repeated E notes throughout help to centre the piece firmly in E major, this music requires the performer to travel across the fretboard up to the 12th fret (for the natural harmonics). The swells and dips in dynamics throughout the piece give a sense of movement, whilst the texture is light throughout, so subtle application of expressive techniques will be key to an engaging and convincing performance of this piece.

# West Coast

Helen Sanderson

Moderato ♩ = 104

*a m i a m i a*

mp

mp mf mp

VII V f

IV III IV p poco a poco cresc.

n.h. XII ff mp

rit.

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# Technical Exercises

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 4:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection of scales and arpeggios to be performed. For group C, you may choose one technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales

All scales must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves shown in each example
- At a minimum tempo of ♩=80 bpm

### Major and minor scales

D major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



A major, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



F# harmonic minor, *tirando*, thumb and fingers



C melodic minor, *tirando* or *apoyando* (candidate choice), fingers only



# General Musicianship Questions

---

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions, divided between two topics as detailed below.

## Music Knowledge

At Grade 4 you will be asked three questions based on your choice of a piece of music that you have played in the exam.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the names of pitches
- explain the meaning of the time signature and key signature markings
- explain the meaning of repeat marks, first and second time bars, **D.C.**, **D.S.**, **al Coda** and **al Fine** markings
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note), quaver (8th note), quaver triplet (8th-note triplet) and semiquaver (16th note) values, and their associated rests

You will also be asked one question on chord construction:

- explain the construction of major<sup>7</sup>, minor<sup>7</sup> or dominant<sup>7</sup> chords

## Technical Knowledge

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding a technical consideration of your piece, in relation to:

- Picking hand: Strumming or picking technique for a short phrase (up to one bar) – demonstration is acceptable
- Fretting hand: Fretting position and fingering used to play a short phrase (up to one bar) – demonstration is acceptable

The examiner will choose the section of music and will ask you to give a brief explanation as to why the technique was appropriate for the chosen section.

*(Note: Demonstrations are acceptable to support an explanation, but must have the spoken understanding).*



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# GUITAR

GRADE 5

## FEATURING

Laura Snowden  
Tatiana Stachak  
Leo Brouwer  
Matteo Carcassi  
Francisco Tárrega  
Eduardo Sainz de la Maza  
Norah Jones  
Eva Cassidy  
Giorgio Serci  
Sting

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 5 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to two pages, 2 mins - 3 mins 15 secs
Key(s)	As previous grades
Position	7th position, up to 9th position
Rhythmic Values	Demisemiquavers (32nd notes)
Time Signatures	As previous grades
Dynamics	As previous grades, frequent changes and nuances
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	Ornamentation, more frequent and developed use of slurs Changes in expression and timbre
Melodic Features	Occasional improvisation/development passages Some chromaticism
Harmonic/Textural Features	Three-part texture
Rhythmic Features	Cross-rhythms and frequent syncopation
Technical Features	Dropped D tuning Simple campanella Improvisation/development passages Half barre, very occasional full barre Occasional/simple artificial harmonics Nuanced transitions from <i>sul pont.</i> to <i>sul tast</i> o and vice versa

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.

# Lágrima



**Composer:** Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909)

**Nationality:** Spanish

**Date:** c.1891

'Lágrima' ('Teardrop') is a prelude composed by Spanish guitarist Francisco Tárrega. The piece is one of Tárrega's most performed and best-known works, highlighted by its simple and atmospheric sound.

Following an accident in childhood which led to Tárrega partially losing his eyesight, his family moved to Barcelona where he attended music classes. He would later run away from home several times to try and start his music career by performing in small venues and playing with a family of travellers before being brought back home.

After many years performing across Europe, composing and arranging music for guitar, Tárrega was afflicted with paralysis on the right side of his body and eventually passed away after he finished composing his last original work. To this date he remains a highly influential figure in the world of classical guitar and its application as a recital instrument.

## Performance Notes



'Lágrima' is one of Tárrega's most performed pieces. This piece is quite short (16 bars) and played *Andante* and *legato*. There are three sections moving from E major to E minor, returning to E major when repeating the first section. The piece is relatively simple rhythmically, mainly written in quavers (8th notes) and crotchets (quarter notes), however, there are some challenges. For instance, accurate placement of fingers (keeping them on their tips where possible) and secure fretting is key to producing clear melodic lines, for example bar 5, and anticipating fretting hand stretches will help produce a good sense of control. With picking technique, consider the balance of sound between melody and accompaniment, ensuring the melody is not overpowered by the thumb. Furthermore, the double stops in bar 10 should be struck simultaneously, avoiding splitting the notes even slightly. Control needs to be demonstrated when playing the *ritardando* in bars 8 and 10, and also the *a tempo* in bar 11. The repeated sections do allow scope to vary the dynamic colour and tone to produce depth and direction to the performance.



# Lagrima

Francisco Tárrega

Andante

First system of musical notation (measures 1-3). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes fingerings (3, 2, 4) and a first ending bracket.

Second system of musical notation (measures 4-6). It includes a first ending bracket labeled 'CIX' and a second ending bracket labeled 'CVII'. Fingerings (4, 3, 4, 3, 3, 2, 1, 4, 2) and a circled '4' are present.

Third system of musical notation (measures 7-9). It includes a first ending bracket labeled 'CII' and a 'Fin.' marking. Fingerings (2, 4, 0) and a circled '2' are present.

Fourth system of musical notation (measures 10-12). It includes a 'rit.' marking, a 'a tempo' marking, and a first ending bracket labeled 'CVII'. Fingerings (4, 2, 4, 2) and circled numbers (4, 5, 4) are present.

Fifth system of musical notation (measures 13-15). It includes a 'rit.' marking and a 'D.C. hasta Fin.' marking. Fingerings (2, 4, 3, 4, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1, 0, 4, 2, 3) and a circled '2' are present.

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# Country Étude



**Composer:** Tatiana Stachak  
**Nationality:** Polish  
**Source:** *Characteristic Études vol. 2*

'Country Étude' features in Tatiana Stachak's book titled *Characteristic Études vol. 2*. The pieces in this book explore different areas of classical guitar playing and help with developing a student's technique, with 'Country Étude' primarily focusing on *legato*.

Tatiana Stachak was first introduced to the guitar at the age of twelve. Her brother purchased the instrument as a gift during a period when musical instruments in Poland were scarce. She then began working as a music teacher at just 19 years old.

Tatiana Stachak has continued to contribute to the classical guitar world both in Poland and internationally, having won and placed highly in many guitar competitions. She has also amassed a large body of educational works, published in multiple languages.

## Performance Notes



This charming piece provides a number of technical challenges from the outset, with a *glissando* followed by rolled chords and slides which should be rhythmically controlled, underpinned with secure picking and fretting accuracy. Accurate finger placement is also crucial (in particular when playing the slurs) to achieve a *legato* feel, giving a sense of fluidity to the melodic line throughout. There are a number of opportunities to add colour and dynamic changes; for example, in bar 21 the score directs the player to move their picking hand as close to the bridge as possible (*sul pont.*), creating a brighter and sharper sound (*ponticello*). Furthermore, anticipation and control of the tempo changes such as the *con anima* section (bars 21–28) and the *molto ritardando* in the final two bars will produce a confident and assured performance.

# Country Étude

Tatiana Stachak

Moderato ♩ = 96-110

*mp* *p* *p* *mf cantabile* *p* *p*

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# Technical Exercises

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 5:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection of scales and arpeggios to be performed. For group C, you may choose one technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales

All scales must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves shown in each example
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 96$  bpm
- *Tirando* or *apoyando* (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)
- Fingers only, except for harmonised scales which should be played with thumb and fingers.

## Major and minor scales

E major, two octaves



B $\flat$  major, two octaves



C harmonic minor, two octaves



G melodic minor, two octaves



Sight Reading | Example 3

Andante

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It is marked 'Andante'. The piece consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and contains a second ending bracket labeled 'II'. The second staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The third staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, often with dotted rhythms. The bass line is indicated by stems and dots below the staff.

Please note: The tests shown are examples. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.

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# GUITAR

GRADE 6



## FEATURING

Naoko Ikeda  
Yvonne Bloor  
Florence Price  
Frantz Casseus  
Celso Machado  
Augustin Barrios  
Julio Salvador Sagreras  
José González  
Toy Story  
Seal

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 6 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to two pages, 2 mins – 3 mins 30 secs
Key(s)	As previous grades
Position	All positions, more frequent changes
Rhythmic Values	As previous grades
Time Signatures	As previous grades, hemiola, irregular time signatures
Dynamics	Any
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	Wider changes in stylistic expression and timbre
Melodic Features	Large intervallic leaps, advanced treatment of melody with position shifts Chromaticism Improvisation over more advanced harmonic changes
Harmonic/Textural Features	Advanced chords, extensions, advanced texture
Rhythmic Features	Cross-rhythms and frequent syncopation
Technical Features	Artificial harmonics with bass accompaniment

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.

# The Deserted Garden



**Composer:** Florence Price (1887–1953)

**Nationality:** American

**Date:** 1933

'The Deserted Garden' was originally written for violin and piano by American composer and pianist Florence Price. The piece contains a variety of themes, combining western classical traditions with the blues music of the American South.

Florence Price was born in 1887 to a mixed-race family. She was initially taught music by her mother, giving her first piano performance at just four years old and having her first published composition when she was eleven. Price then went on to compose a variety of works, including orchestral pieces, solo and chamber works, and music for silent films and radio advertisements.

## Performance Notes



Written by the American composer Florence Price, this pretty piece has been arranged many times for different instrument combinations, *e.g.*, as a duet for violin and piano, violin and harp, and also guitar and cello. This particular arrangement is in D minor and requires the sixth string to be tuned a tone lower from E to D. The harmony throughout the music is quite dense at times, requiring careful reading of the score. Following on from a steady-paced and expressive first section, the second section picks up the pace to create a sense of urgency. This section also orientates the reader around the higher positions on the fretboard, developing skills and confidence in position work. There are many dynamic and expressive markings throughout the piece including articulations such as *staccato*, *tenuto*, *accents*, and the *Tambora* to bring the performance to an elegant close.



# The Deserted Garden

Florence Price

Andante con espressione ♩ = 60

⑥=D

*mp* *mf*

To Coda ☉

*p* *mf*

più mosso

*mf* *mp* *mf*

poco rit. D.C. al Coda

*p*

☉ CODA

[Tambora]

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# Promise



**Composer:** Yvonne Bloor  
**Nationality:** British

'Promise' is a solo guitar work written by British classical composer Yvonne Bloor. The piece is the title track of Bloor's debut solo album *Promise*, which received positive reviews from classical music critics.

Yvonne Bloor is a Leicester-based guitar musician, composer and teacher. Having received a master's degree in solo guitar performance, Bloor has performed in multiple venues across the UK and abroad, including performances for charity gigs to support the local community. Bloor has composed and published numerous compositions, and has had one of her pieces added as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee time capsule.

## Performance Notes



This piece is in D major and the sixth string is to be tuned down a step from E to D. Although this piece is written in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time, the opening figure's note groupings mask the simple time signature and create a feeling of a rapid ascent while moving up the fretboard. Observe the suggested picking-hand combinations above the staff to help with clear execution of the notes. Bloor makes use of the open strings to enhance a *legato* feel. A secure but relaxed fretting hand is required to provide smooth melodic lines, along with a strong and confident picking hand to accurately sweep across the strings in the arpeggiated patterns throughout the piece. Triplet crotchet (triplet quarter-note) figures are repeated throughout, requiring secure rhythm and tempo to play these passages with confidence and conviction. Detailed rhythmic study in the early stages of learning this piece will improve technique and the performance overall.

# Promise

Yvonne Bloor

♩ = c.146

Musical notation for the first system of 'Promise'. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as c.146. The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and fret numbers (0-4) for the guitar. The lyrics 'p m i p m i' are written above the notes. Chord diagrams for II, V, and II are shown above the staff.

Musical notation for the first ending of 'Promise'. It starts at measure 5. The notation includes fingerings and fret numbers. The lyrics 'p i m i p m i p' are written above the notes. Chord diagrams for VII, V, and II are shown above the staff.

Musical notation for the second ending of 'Promise'. It starts at measure 9. The notation includes fingerings and fret numbers. A chord diagram for V is shown above the staff.

Musical notation for the third system of 'Promise'. It starts at measure 13. The notation includes fingerings and fret numbers. Chord diagrams for VII, II, and V are shown above the staff.

Musical notation for the fourth system of 'Promise'. It starts at measure 17. The notation includes fingerings and fret numbers. Chord diagrams for VII and II are shown above the staff.

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# Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation

In the exam, you have a choice between either a Sight Reading test or a Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test. The examiner will ask you which one you wish to choose before commencing. Once you have decided you cannot change your mind.

In the Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test, the examiner will give you one of the following, to be performed to a backing track.

At Grade 6, you may improvise either melodic lines or a chordal accompaniment (*candidate choice*). The backing track will meet the following criteria:

- A repeated 8-bar blues in C minor or C# minor, containing occasional non-diatonic chords
- A 16-bar test in a contemporary genre (pop, soul, rock etc.) in E $\flat$  major or E major, including II-V-I progressions and occasional secondary dominant chords

You will first be given 90 seconds to practise, before which you will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one-bar count-in at the beginning. Following the initial practice time, the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is for you to practise and the second time is for you to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one-bar count-in.

The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

## Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation | Example 1

Soul/Motown  $\text{♩} = 105$

5

9

13

Please note: The test shown is an example. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam

# Ear Tests

There are two Ear Tests in this grade. The examiner will play each test to you twice. You will find one example of each type of test printed below.

## Test 1: Melodic Recall

The examiner will play you a two-bar melody with a metronome click, using the E<sup>b</sup> major scale or the C<sup>#</sup> harmonic minor scale. The examiner will state the key before playing the test for the first time. The first note of the melody will be the root note or the fifth, and the first interval will be **either** ascending **or** descending. You will hear the test twice, after which you must play back the melody on your instrument.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, root note, four clicks, melody. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will then hear the four clicks and root note for the third time, followed by a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is ♩=90.



## Test 2: Harmonic Recall

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a four-bar chord sequence in the key of D major played to a metronome click. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II<sup>m</sup>, III<sup>m</sup>, IV, V and VI<sup>m</sup> chords and may occur in any combination. Chord V may be a major chord or a dominant 7th chord. You will be asked to identify the chord sequence, stating the progression either with the chord names (e.g. D, Em) or numerals (e.g. I, II<sup>m</sup>).

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, tonic, four clicks, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will then be asked to state the chord progression. The tempo is ♩=90.



*Please note: The tests shown are examples. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.*

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GRADE 7

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Fernando Sor  
Heitor Villa-Lobos  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
Alicia Keys  
João Gilberto  
PinkPantheress  
Madame Sidney Pratten  
Charlie Haden and Pat Metheny

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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 7 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to three pages, 2mins 30secs -4 mins
Key(s)	Eb major, Ab major, relative minors
Position	All positions, more frequent changes and more emphasis on higher position work
Rhythmic Values	Any
Time Signatures	As previous grades, more complex time signatures and changes
Dynamics	Any
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	Wider contrasts in expression and timbre, with advanced stylistic features
Melodic Features	Melodic improvisation over advanced harmonic changes Regularly occurring chromaticism Arpeggios spanning considerable range
Harmonic/Textural Features	Advanced extended and non-diatonic harmony
Rhythmic Features	Cross-rhythms and frequent syncopation
Technical Features	Increasing variety of technical demands Increasing frequency of full barre

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.



# Prélude No. 3



**Composer:** Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

**Nationality:** Brazilian

**Source:** *Cinq Préludes*, W419 (1940)

'Prélude No. 3' was written in 1940 by Brazilian composer, conductor and multi-instrumentalist Heitor Villa-Lobos. The piece was originally published with the subtitle 'Homenagem a Bach' ('Homage to Bach'), dedicated to the renowned baroque composer who had a great influence on Villa-Lobos' musical development since he first studied cello as a child, and several of his compositions take direct inspiration from Bach's works.

Villa-Lobos started learning music in his childhood, studying cello at the age of 6. He grew up in a time of great social and political change in Brazil, which led to a greater prominence of folk music within Brazilian society. Brazilian folk music became a primary interest of Villa-Lobos', and from the age of 18 he decided to spend several years travelling around South America, exploring the diverse range of folk traditions while playing cello to support himself. When he returned to his home city of Rio de Janeiro, he had developed an in-depth knowledge of musical traditions and cultures throughout Brazil, which greatly influenced his music compositions. Villa-Lobos' distinctive music was known for blending together European classical music with Brazilian folk music, giving his music a recognisable style that continues to be popular with guitarists to this day.

## Performance Notes



The connection with Bach is particularly evident in the descending melodic passages found within the second section of this prelude, which should be played at a steady pace and with expression, using the full palette of dynamic colour as indicated on the score and keeping a keen eye on tempo directions. A relaxed and flexible picking hand will be beneficial throughout the piece, enabling the performer to execute the chords clearly with *p* in-between the ascending passages in the opening bars. The second section is built on a series of descending melodic passages and some *rubato* could be introduced to add shape and direction.



# Prelude No. 3

Heitor Villa-Lobos

Andante rall. a tempo

The musical score is written for guitar and consists of several systems of music. It begins with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The first system includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and tempo markings of *Andante*, *rall.*, and *a tempo*. The score features various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and fingering numbers (1-4). There are also performance instructions such as "[le même doigté]" and section markers like "II" and "VIII". The piece concludes with a *rall.* and *rit.* marking.

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# Forgotten



**Composer:** Catharina Josepha Pratten (c.1824–1895)

**Nationality:** German

**Source:** *Madame R. Sidney Pratten's Repertoire for the Guitar*

'Forgotten' was written by German virtuoso guitarist Catharina Pratten (also known as Madame Sidney Pratten). It was composed and published as an 'impromptu' for the guitar, which is a short solo piece with an improvisatory character.

Pratten primarily wrote music for guitar, and created compositions in a variety of styles and forms during her lifetime. In addition to this, she was a renowned performer, and began touring Europe with her father at the age of 8, later going on to host concerts with other prolific classical musicians of the time such as the Spanish guitar virtuoso Francisco Tárrega. She founded and ran her own guitar school, and also taught two of Queen Victoria's daughters. Her extensive teaching work not only acquired local and national recognition, but also helped to expand the popularity of guitar in 19th century Britain.

## Performance Notes



'Forgotten' is a very expressive piece giving the performer plenty of scope to explore the colours and dynamics the guitar has to offer. The opening *Prelude* involves phrases with swells of dynamic contrast, and anticipation through the use of *rallentando* and *fermata* (pause) before moving into the piece's main section. In the first full bar after the *Prelude*, the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time can almost be felt as one beat per bar during the descending patterns, and requires a secure fretting hand to maintain a smooth melodic line. The repeated chords, *e.g.*, in bars 13–16, add suspense where they are played gradually louder. Control should be demonstrated here to keep contact in the picking hand consistent and with a smooth increase in volume. Some ornamentation is also included, *e.g.*, in bars 2 and 4, and the mordents add effective articulation to the ends of the two descending phrases. *Glissandos* are introduced in this piece and while a secure and confident fretting hand is required, technique should be relaxed enough to allow the hand to glide smoothly up and down the fretboard.





# Technical Exercises

---

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 7:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Arpeggios and Broken Chords
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection from each group to be performed. For group C, you may choose **one** technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales

**All Scales** must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 144$
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves as shown in each example
- *Tirando* or *apoyando* (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)
- Fingers only

### Two-octave scales:

Root 6 major and minor scales need to be prepared in the keys of G–B (chromatically)

Root 5 major and minor scales need to be prepared in the keys of C–E (chromatically)

Chromatic scale is played starting on A only

### Three-octave scales:

Need to be prepared in the keys shown only

## Two-Octave Scales

Major scale, root 6th, two octaves (B major shown)



Major scale, root 5th, two octaves (D<sup>b</sup> major shown)



Group C: Technical Studies

In this section, you will need to perform your choice of one of the following three studies below. The examiner will ask you which study you have prepared.

Study 1: Time signature changes

Moderato

III I IV

l.v. *p* *mp* *p* *p* *p*

III V

5 *p* *p* *i* *a* *m* *i* *a* *i* *p* *p* *i* *m* *i* *m* *i* *p* *p* *i* ⑥

9 *mp*

IV II IV

13 *mf*

17 *mp*



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Giorgio Serci  
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# GUITAR SAMPLE PACK



## RSL CLASSICAL GUITAR GRADE 8 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Component*	Parameters
Duration†	Up to four pages, 3 mins – 4 mins 30 secs
Key(s)	Any key
Position	As previous grades
Rhythmic Values	Any
Time Signatures	Any simple, compound or complex time signatures and combinations
Dynamics	Any
Expressive Techniques and Articulation	As previous grades
Melodic Features	Advanced melodic improvisation at fast tempo <i>Cadenza</i> Frequent chromaticism Arpeggios spanning full range of instrument
Harmonic/Textural Features	As previous grades
Rhythmic Features	Advanced stylistic syncopation and rhythmic groupings
Technical Features	Frequent variety of advanced technical components Advanced use of full barre Bartok <i>pizzicato</i>

\* All components are cumulative. See previous grades.

† Please note: pagination may be extended for duets or scores containing more than one part, tablature etc.

# Cavatina



**Composer:** Stanley Myers (1930–1993)

**Nationality:** British

**Source:** *The Walking Stick* (1970)

'Cavatina' is a piece by British composer and conductor Stanley Myers. It was initially written for the film *The Walking Stick*, but was later made popular by a version featured in the film *The Deer Hunter*, both versions being performed by Australian guitarist John Williams. After receiving commercial recognition and success, the song's popularity led to multiple covers and arrangements of the theme, including versions written and performed by instrumental rock group The Shadows which peaked at number 9 in the UK charts.

Stanley Myers is known primarily for his film and television compositions, having composed music for over 60 film and television scores, and being a collaborator and mentor of prolific film composer Hans Zimmer. He was also nominated for a BAFTA for Best Film Music for his work on *Wish You Were Here* (1987).

## Performance Notes



This is a beautiful piece that showcases the full sonorous quality of the guitar. This new RSL arrangement differs from the popular arrangement by John Williams, drawing on elements from the film soundtrack (originally performed as a duet) and some alternative chordal voicings, but makes many of the same demands on the performer. Throughout the music, the barre chords allow the melodic line to sing out while the arpeggiated chords help to provide harmonic and textural support. This piece promotes the development of a strong technique to maintain clearly-fretted barre chords and accurately-located strings in the picking hand while keeping a balance in volume between melody and accompaniment. To achieve this, slow isolated practice will help to develop fluent chord changes and deliver a smooth melodic line. This skill can be gradually built up by initially practising small phrases and then increasingly larger passages of music until the whole piece is manageable. Dynamics and expressive techniques are left open to the performer, and there is scope to add further colour and tone variation to give phrases shape and direction, creating a colourful performance of this popular piece.

# Cavatina

Stanley Myers

The musical score is written for guitar in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fret numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) are indicated below the notes. A Coda symbol (a circle with a cross) is placed above the first staff. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a measure rest. The third staff starts at measure 9 and includes a measure rest. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 and includes a measure rest. The fifth staff starts at measure 17 and includes a measure rest. The sixth staff starts at measure 21 and includes a measure rest. The score concludes with a Coda symbol. Section markers CIX, CVII, III, CII, and CII are placed above the staves. The text 'To Coda' is written above the final measure of the fourth staff.

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# Rebolicho



**Composer:** João Pernambuco (1883–1947)

**Nationality:** Brazilian

'Rebolicho' is a guitar piece written by Brazilian musician João Pernambuco. The piece is a choro, a style of music originating from 19th century Brazil. Pernambuco was primarily known for choro pieces but wrote for a wide range of musical styles, including choros, waltzes and jongsos.

João Teixeira Guimarães, commonly known as João Pernambuco (named after the state in Brazil in which he grew up), started learning viola and guitar in his childhood. He later moved to Rio de Janeiro where he met many Brazilian musicians, including the renowned composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. Despite being allegedly unable to write or read music notation, João Pernambuco contributed a large volume of works during his lifetime, many of which were transcribed and notated by fellow Brazilian musicians.

## Performance Notes



This Brazilian dance utilises the full range of the fretboard and, combined with its fairly quick pace, is fun to play but does present some challenges to the performer.

Rhythmic precision will be key to producing an engaging performance, and this can be achieved with slow practice whilst internalising the pulse, particularly to bring out the semiquaver–quaver–semiquaver rhythms (16th note, 8th note, 16th note) which are such a feature of this style of dance music. A strong thumb technique is needed to clearly execute the rhythm in bars 1 and 9, for example. To deal with the quick semiquaver runs, fluency in the picking hand can be gradually built up over a number of practices, increasing the speed slightly each time. Keeping notes balanced will require mindful practice and close listening. The repeated sections provide scope to include dynamic changes and tone colour giving shape to phrases. Furthermore, keep a keen eye on accidentals and the key changes within the piece which change twice, ensuring pitch accuracy throughout.







# Technical Exercises

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 8:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection from each group to be performed. For group C, you may choose **one** technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

## Group A: Scales

**All Scales** must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- At a minimum tempo of  $\text{♩} = 144$
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves as shown for each example
- *Tirando* or *apoyando* (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)
- Fingers only

### Two-octave scales:

Root 6 and root 5 scales need to be prepared in any key  
Chromatic scale is played starting on G only

### Three-octave scales:

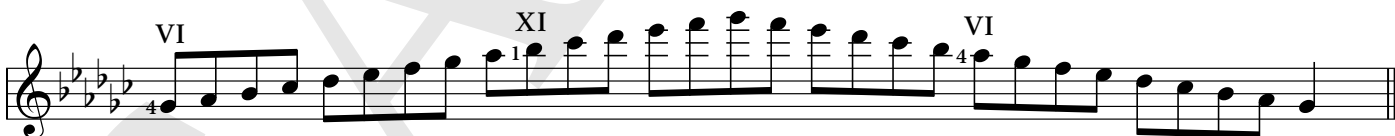
Need to be prepared in the keys E–G chromatically.

### Two-Octave Scales

Major scale, root 6th, two octaves (F# major shown)



Major scale, root 5th, two octaves (G $\flat$  major shown)



# General Musicianship Questions

---

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions, divided between two topics as detailed below.

## Music Knowledge

At Grade 8 you will be asked four questions based on your choice of a piece of music that you have played in the exam.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- explain the meaning of any tempo markings found on your score
- identify the key signature and give the relative major or minor key
- identify any pitches in a melodic sequence found on your score, as chosen by the examiner
- identify rhythmic values (notes and/or rests) from any rhythmic values found on your score, as chosen by the examiner.
- identify and explain any expressive markings in your piece
- briefly explain and demonstrate one stylistic and one technical consideration in preparation and performance of the chosen piece

## General Music and Instrument Knowledge

At Grade 8 you will be asked to do one of the following:

- state the chord progressions of any of the following cadences in the keys of C, D, F or G major, as chosen by the examiner: perfect, imperfect, plagal or deceptive
- explain how to play artificial harmonics

*(Note: Demonstrations are acceptable to support an explanation, but must have the spoken understanding).*

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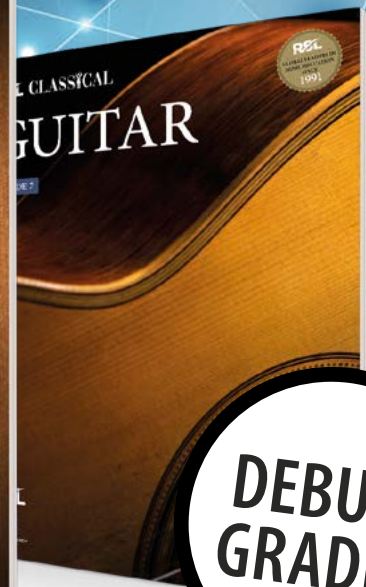
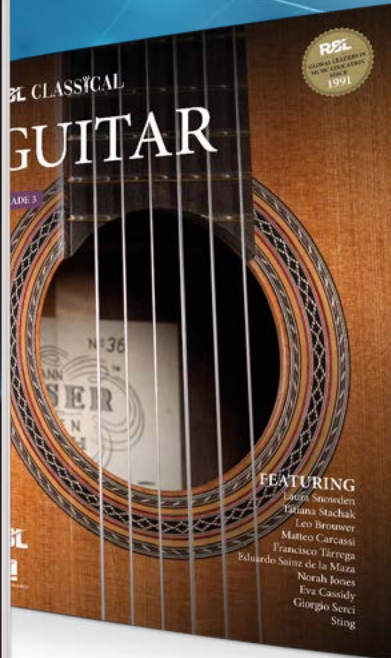
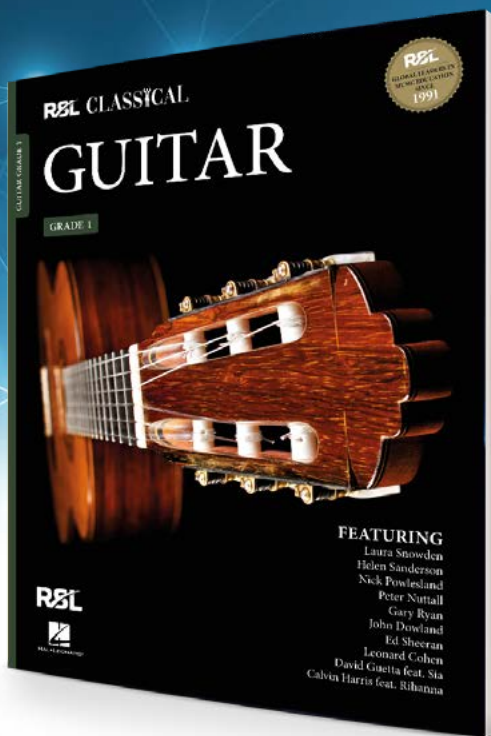


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