

- Prerequisite** ABRSM Grade 8 in any Practical subject *or* a permitted substitution (see p. 18).
- To be submitted with your entry** When you enter for the diploma, you must submit three copies and one recording of an **Arrangement** for your ensemble. If you are an instrumental director, your Arrangement must be of one of the original piano works listed under DipABRSM on p. 28. If you are a choral director, your Arrangement must be of a folk song of your choice lasting 2–3 minutes. Full details regarding the Arrangement and recording are given on pp. 28–29.
- To be submitted on the day of the exam** Two copies of **Programme Notes**, written by you and illuminating in your own words the repertoire you have chosen to rehearse and perform with your ensemble, must be presented to the examiners at the start of the exam. Full details regarding the Programme Notes, including length, are given on pp. 24–26.
- Timing** 60 minutes are allocated to the DipABRSM, of which 30–35 minutes are devoted to the Rehearsal and Performance, and up to 18 minutes to the Viva Voce.

SECTION 1 REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

- Number and duration of works** You should be prepared to rehearse and perform with your ensemble a set number of contrasting movements/works (see below), whose combined total duration is 15–20 minutes. Instrumental directors must choose *two* movements/works, while choral directors must choose at least *two or three* movements/works (accompanied or unaccompanied, or a combination).
- Of the total 30–35 minutes' duration of this section, 20 minutes are allotted to rehearsal, with the remainder allotted to performance.
- Examination music and programming** Lists of suitable instrumental and choral works are given on pp. 38–46. However, you are free to create your programme either partly or entirely from works *not* listed on these pages but comparable in level with them. In such cases you must seek approval of your choices from ABRSM, at least six weeks before entry, by writing to the Syllabus Director. In the case of unpublished works you should enclose a copy of the score(s).
- In your choice of repertoire, you should aim to present a programme that is balanced, coherent and containing stylistic contrast. It should also be appropriate to the venue. You are free to choose any edition of the full score of the works listed on pp. 38–46 or of any alternative work(s) approved by ABRSM. Please note that on the day of the exam you will need to provide the examiners with a full score of each work that you have chosen.
- Your ensemble** You must provide your own ensemble, which in most cases will number at least 20 players or singers. It is not the standard of the ensemble itself that will form the basis of the examiners' appraisal but the quality of your rehearsal and directing techniques and your understanding of the various styles. That said, you should ensure that you have an ensemble that allows you to reveal the full range of your skills and that can cope with the demands of the chosen repertoire.
- Other requirements** Candidates not meeting the syllabus requirements in any way, such as failing to achieve platform times or not being prepared to rehearse and/or perform the required number of movements/works or the whole of a work, will be liable to penalty. In addition, candidates may not bring into the exam room any material or equipment unconnected with their exam; any infringement of this rule may lead to disqualification.

SECTION 1

PREPARATION GUIDANCE FOR REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

The examiners will first select the works, or sections of works, that they wish to see rehearsed. This is your opportunity to show how you deal with problems as they arise and to show the personal impact you are able to make. The examiners will be looking for evidence of your technical command – not just your use of gesture but your ability to choose, control and indicate tempo, phrasing, balance, dynamics and timbre. Your aural skill in recognizing and responding to intonation and balance problems or reading errors within the ensemble will also be assessed. At the same time your understanding of technical problems facing individual members of your ensemble will be scrutinized. Additionally, your rapport with the ensemble and its response to you will be taken into account.

After the Rehearsal, the examiners will choose which works/movements are to be performed. As well as judging your technique and overall command of the ensemble and your interpretation of the music, the examiners will be looking to see how you respond practically to the experiences of the Rehearsal.

In preparing for the exam, you may find it helpful to attend rehearsals and performances on a regular basis in order to learn from approaches taken by professional directors. Critical listening and comparison of interpretations on record will also be helpful, as will reading about orchestration/part-writing and conducting techniques – there is a list of recommended texts on ABRSM's website (www.abrsm.org/diplomas), also available from ABRSM's office in London. Finally, get to know not only the scores within your programme but also their general context within each composer's output and the musical era.

SECTION 2.1 VIVA VOCE

The Viva Voce, which follows the Rehearsal and Performance, is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge, approach and understanding to the examiners. Questions will cover the Rehearsal and Performance, your Programme Notes and Arrangement, as well as other aspects of directing. The Viva Voce lasts up to 18 minutes.

Typical areas of discussion in the Viva Voce:

- **Musical outlook:** questions designed to put you at ease and to lead into the discussion, including: choice of repertoire, the challenges presented and the preparation involved; knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with your area of study.
- **Technique:** knowledge and understanding of the techniques required to direct DipABRSM repertoire, including: the basic physical gestures used to choose and indicate tempo, phrasing, balance, dynamics and timbre; the use of comment; your personal style and influences and how these could be further adapted or developed; score and part preparation; communication to the ensemble of your interpretation of the music, balanced against the need to listen to its members' ideas and to draw on their experience; understanding the technical problems facing individual members of the ensemble.
- **Rehearsal and Performance:** warm-ups; rehearsal techniques chosen for the exam and discussion of other approaches; problem solving and responding to work in progress, including aural skill in recognizing and responding to intonation and balance problems or reading errors; ability to advise helpfully to address technical problems within your ensemble and other problems that arose in the Rehearsal; planning and objectives; providing effective feedback; negotiation skills and rapport; time management; applying the experiences of the Rehearsal to achieving the best possible performance; critical reflection on both the Rehearsal and Performance.

- **Repertoire and Programme Notes:** knowledge of the repertoire directed, including biographical information about each composer and the context of each work in the composer's life and output; details of commission (if any); the process of composition and first performance; knowledge of the general musical trends of the era and the place of each work in the context of the core repertoire.
- **Musical language and form:** understanding of the structure of each work and the features of its musical language.
- **Style and interpretation:** understanding of style, technique and ensemble; knowledge of the works directed in the context of the ensemble itself: historical developments, idiom, core repertoire and technical demands; the interpretation of notation and ways to communicate the composer's intentions; performance practices including original instrumentation; approaches to performance, including the use of physical space, and communication with an audience.
- **Arrangement:** instrumentation/part-writing; language and form; evaluating the Arrangement's practicality and musical effectiveness.
- **Professional values and practice:** understanding of the legal framework relating to directing, including child protection, maintaining a safe rehearsing and performing environment, the physical well-being of the ensemble, and equal opportunities for all members.
- **Any further points** you wish to draw to the examiners' attention before the conclusion.

SECTION 2.1

PREPARATION GUIDANCE FOR VIVA VOCE

The tone and manner of the Viva Voce will be as relaxed as possible and the examiners will make every effort to put you at ease. The opening questions will be informal, progressing to topics on which you are likely to be knowledgeable, then on to more challenging questions. All the questions will be clearly and directly expressed by the examiners; some will be open-ended, others will be more specific. You will not be penalized if you ask for clarification of a question, and the examiners will not be concerned by short periods of silence when an answer is being considered.

You may opt not to answer a question because, for example, you feel you might expose an area of fundamental ignorance. If this happens, the examiners will assist you with a number of helpful prompts. They will form a judgement as to whether your incapacity to offer an answer to a particular question or series of questions is a significant factor in the assessment of your overall performance in the exam.

Appendix 1 contains a number of specimen questions and indicative responses, showing the types of question examiners might ask in the Viva Voce and an indication of appropriate responses.

If you are not fluent in English you are strongly advised to bring an interpreter (see Language and interpreters, p. 36).

SECTION 2.2 ARRANGEMENT

See pp. 24 and 28–29 for requirements and details regarding the Instrumental or Choral Arrangement.