

AURAL TESTS: included in the Practical exams for all subjects

Listening lies at the heart of all good music-making. Developing aural awareness is fundamental to musical training because having a ‘musical ear’ impacts on all aspects of musicianship. Singing, both silently in the head and out loud, is one of the best ways to develop the ‘musical ear’. It connects the internal imagining of sound, the ‘inner ear’, with the external creation of it, without the necessity of mechanically having to ‘find the note’ on an instrument (important though that connection is). By integrating aural activities in imaginative ways in the lesson, preparation for the aural tests within an exam will be a natural extension of what is already an essential part of the learning experience.

In the exam

Aural tests are an integral part of all Practical graded exams.

The tests are administered by the examiner from the piano. For any test that requires a sung response, pitch rather than vocal quality is the object. The examiner will be happy to adapt to the vocal range of the candidate, whose responses may be sung to any vowel (or consonant followed by a vowel), hummed or whistled (and at a different octave, if appropriate).

Assessment

A number of tests allow for a second attempt or for an additional playing by the examiner, if necessary. Also, where there is hesitation on the part of the candidate, the examiner will be ready to prompt, if necessary. In any such cases, this will affect the assessment.

Further information on how the aural tests are assessed can be found in the guide for candidates, teachers and parents, *These Music Exams*, available to download from www.abrsm.org/exams.

Specimen tests

Examples of the tests are given in *Specimen Aural Tests* and *Aural Training in Practice*, available for purchase from music retailers and from www.abrsm.org/publications. See also ‘Minor modifications (from 2011)’ below.

Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates

Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates may opt to respond to alternative tests in place of the standard tests, if requested at the time of entry. The syllabus for these tests is available free on request from ABRSM (E accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk). Examples of the alternative tests are available for purchase from Allegro Music (T +44 (0)1885 490375; E sales@allegro.co.uk). The minor modifications (from 2011) do not affect the alternative aural tests.

Minor modifications (from 2011)

Minor modifications to some aural tests take effect worldwide from 1 January 2011. Full details are available at www.abrsm.org/aural. Revised editions of *Specimen Aural Tests* and *Aural Training in Practice*, reflecting the modified parameters and containing new practice material, are available for purchase from music retailers and from www.abrsm.org/

publications. (*Specimen Aural Tests* available July 2010; *Aural Training in Practice* available January 2011.) Descriptions of the aural tests, including modifications, are given on the following pages. Please note that rewording for greater clarity has been made to many of the descriptions, even where the tests are unchanged.