

PERCUSSION (*Subject Code: 44*): Syllabus requirements

Syllabus validity

This syllabus is valid from 1990 until further notice.

Venues

Percussion exams are held at Visits, i.e. premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner. They may be held independently of other exams or as part of a larger Visit that includes other subjects/grades. For full details about Visits, see Reg. 7 in the *Examination Information & Regulations*, in particular the requirements to:

- arrange for a steward to be present
- provide a suitable piano for the Aural tests
- provide transport for the examiner, if requested (without cost to ABRSM)

Instruments

Candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument *and*, at their choice, either timpani or snare drum.

Tuned percussion

Candidates may play the requirements on:

- xylophone
- marimba
- vibraphone (*with motor off*)
- glockenspiel (*Grades 1 and 2 only; the instrument's range must be sufficient to cover the range of the scale requirements and the chosen piece*)

Timpani

Hand- or pedal-tuned drums may be used.

The different roll notations should be played according to the guidelines contained in the exam books published by ABRSM. Candidates may, if they wish, omit damping crotchet and quarter rests in Grades 1–3, although they should damp the longer rests and at the end of a piece or study. From Grade 4, rests should be damped whenever feasible. In order to accommodate hand-tuned drums, tuning changes in the studies and pieces have been arranged to occur at pauses so they can be negotiated as smoothly as possible.

Snare drum

Candidates may use either traditional or matched grip. The different roll notations should be played according to the guidelines contained in the exam books published by ABRSM.

Teachers/candidates must ensure that the instruments are set up in advance of the exam so it can begin at the scheduled time. Candidates are expected to use the correct sticks and mallets for the instruments they have chosen to play.

Scales and arpeggios (*Tuned percussion*)

Examiners will usually ask for at least one type of scale/arpeggio required at each grade.

All scales and arpeggios should:

- be played from memory
- ascend and descend according to the specified range (and pattern)

- be played without undue accentuation and at a pace that is consistent with accuracy and distinctness
- be played with the repeat indications (as printed in the syllabus) duly noted and observed

Accompanied pieces (*Tuned percussion*)

In all grades, a selection of the tuned percussion exam pieces published by ABRSM are provided with optional piano accompaniments. If choosing to play these pieces accompanied, candidates must provide their own accompanist, who may remain in the exam room *only* while engaged in accompanying. The candidate's teacher may act as accompanist; under no circumstances will the examiner do so. For any of the tuned percussion pieces, candidates are free to use a piano accompaniment contained in any other published edition, provided it matches the main features and extent of the solo part.

Tuning (*Timpani*)

Tuning in Grades 1 and 2 may be done by the teacher (the examiner will not do so). In all other grades candidates must tune the timpani themselves. Candidates should also provide their own tuning forks or other pitch sources, and these may be used only before the beginning of each study or piece.

Sight-reading

The examiner will direct candidates to play a test *either* for tuned percussion *or* for the other instrument being used in the exam.

Candidates will be given a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the sight-reading test before they are required to perform it for assessment. Specimen sight-reading tests are included in the exam books published by ABRSM.

Aural tests

The standard aural tests as set for all other Practical subjects will be given, but candidates may choose to play (instead of clap) the pulse-clapping test (Grades 1–3) if they prefer.

Performance and assessment

When marking, examiners will be assessing not only the accuracy of notes and rhythm, but also other elements inherent in a good performance, including quality of touch, variety and gradation of tone, suitable choice of tempo, and expression, phrasing and accent. Further details of assessment criteria are given in *These Music Exams*, available free of charge from music retailers and from www.abrsm.org/exams.

Marking scheme

Schedule of maximum marks for all grades:

Tuned percussion	
Scales and arpeggios	21
Piece 1	30
Timpani or Snare drum	
Study	30
Piece 2	30
Sight-reading	21
Aural tests	18
Total	150

Percussion GRADE 1

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory, in the following keys:

C, G, F majors; A, E, D minors (one octave)

Scales: in the above keys (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice):

(i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example below:



(ii) even notes, as example below:



Arpeggios: the common chords of the above keys:

(i) even notes, as example below:



(ii) even notes with repeated tonic, as example below:



ONE PIECE (or set combination): chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 **Anon.** American Shaker melody 'Simple Gifts'

2 **Anon.** John Brown's Body

and

Anon. Deck the hall with boughs of holly

3 **Anon.** Men of Harlech*

and

S. C. Foster Oh! Susanna*

4 **Anon.** Waltzing Matilda

and

Hook The Lass of Richmond Hill

5 **Haydn** Scherzo: from Sonata in F, Hob. XVI/9*

} *Graded Music for Tuned Percussion, Book 1*
(ABRSM)

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 1 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 March Past

2 Fanfare

3 Allegretto

4 Prelude

} *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

* Published with optional piano accompaniment † Specimen Sight-Reading Tests included in the *Graded Music* books

§ Specimen Aural Tests published by ABRSM

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 1 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1 Marking Time | } | <i>Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 1 (ABRSM)</i> |
| 2 On Parade | | |
| 3 Stick together | | |
| 4 Two Step | | |
| 5 Tempo Timekeeper | | |
| 6 Step lightly | | |

SIGHT-READING†: a short piece in simple time, either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. The test for tuned percussion will be within the keys, notes and overall range of the scale requirements set for the grade. Some accidentals, dotted and tied notes may be included. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE§: see pp. 98 and 99

Percussion GRADE 2

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory, in the following keys:

D, B \flat majors; B, G minors (one octave)

Scales: in the above keys (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice):

(i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes, as example in Grade 1

Arpeggios: the common chords of the above keys:

(i) even notes, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes with repeated tonic, as example in Grade 1

ONE PIECE (or set combination): chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 **Anon.** The Ash Grove

and

H. C. Work Marching through Georgia

2 **J. S. Bach** Menuet in G, BWV Anh.116*

3 **Bizet** 'Je vais danser en votre honneur': from *Carmen*

and

Sullivan 'Poor wand'ring one': from *The Pirates of Penzance*

4 **Handel** Bourrée: from *Music for the Royal Fireworks*

5 **Léhar** Gold and Silver Waltz, Op. 75*

and

Johann Strauss Beliebte Annen-Polka, Op. 137*

} *Graded Music for Tuned Percussion, Book 1*
(ABRSM)

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 2 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 Step Three

2 Alla Marcia

3 Contrasts

4 Rondino

} *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 2 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 Beat it out

2 Mind the Accent

3 Three Step

4 Ben marcato

5 Flam and Drag

} *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 1 (ABRSM)*

SIGHT-READING[†]: a short piece in simple time, either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. The test for tuned percussion will be within the keys, notes and overall range of the scale requirements set up to and including this grade. Some accidentals, dotted and tied notes may be included. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE[§]: see pp. 98 and 99

* Published with optional piano accompaniment † Specimen Sight-Reading Tests included in the *Graded Music* books

§ Specimen Aural Tests published by ABRSM

Percussion GRADE 3

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory, in the following keys:

A, E♭ majors; F♯, C minors (one octave)

Scales: in the above keys (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice):

(i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes, as example in Grade 1

Arpeggios: the common chords of the above keys:

(i) even notes, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes with repeated tonic, as example in Grade 1

ONE PIECE (or set combination): chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 Anon. Greensleeves

and

Anon. The White Cockade

2 Anon. 'Put up your dagger, Jamie'*

and

Anon. Londonderry Air*

3 J. S. Bach Menuet in D minor, BWV Anh.132

4 Beethoven Minuet in G, WoO 10 No. 2*

5 Delibes Waltz: from *Coppelia*

6 J. L. Dussek Minuetto: from Sonatina in G, Op. 19 No. 1

7 Kevin Hathway 3 Short Pieces

8 Hummel Gigue in D

} *Graded Music for Tuned Percussion, Book 2*
(ABRSM)

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 3 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 Maestoso and Allegro

2 Mazurka

3 Rondo vivace

4 Galop

} *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 3 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

1 Rhythmic Accents

2 Slow Waltz

3 Marche grandioso

4 Five Stroke

5 Flam Waltz

6 Three Wheeler

} *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

SIGHT-READING†: a short piece in simple time, either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. The test for tuned percussion will be within the keys, notes and overall range of the scale requirements set up to and including this grade. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE§: see pp. 98 and 100

Percussion GRADE 4

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory, in the following keys:

E, A \flat majors; C \sharp , F minors (one octave)

Scales: in the above keys (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice):

(i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes, as example in Grade 1

Arpeggios: the common chords of the above keys:

(i) even notes, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes with repeated tonic, as example in Grade 1

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 **Camidge** Scherzando: from Sonata No. 1 in G
- 2 **Clementi** Allegro: from Sonatina in C, Op. 36 No. 1
- 3 **Gossec** Gavotte
- 4 **Kevin Hathway** Prelude
- 5 **Mozart** Minuetto and Trio: from *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525*
- 6 **Johann and Josef Strauss** Pizzicato Polka*
- 7 **Tchaikovsky** Dance of the Reeds: from *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71

} *Graded Music for Tuned Percussion, Book 2*
(ABRSM)

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 4 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 6/8 Variations
 - 2 Alleluia
 - 3 Waltz
 - 4 Prelude and Scherzo
- } *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 4 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Mazurka
 - 2 Vienna Woods
 - 3 Amazing Grace Notes
 - 4 Rock steady
 - 5 Interrupted Waltz
 - 6 Con spirito
 - 7 Constant Quaver
- } *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 2 (ABRSM)*

SIGHT-READING†: a short piece in simple or compound time, either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. The test for tuned percussion will be within the keys, notes and overall range of the scale requirements set up to and including this grade. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE§: see pp. 98 and 100

* Published with optional piano accompaniment † Specimen Sight-Reading Tests included in the *Graded Music* books

§ Specimen Aural Tests published by ABRSM

Percussion GRADE 5

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory, in the following keys:

B, D \flat majors; G \sharp , B \flat minors (one octave)

G, F major *scales only* (two octaves)

Scales: in the above keys (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice):

- (i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1, but two-octave scales without repeat
- (ii) one-octave scales in even notes, as example in Grade 1; two-octave scales in even notes, as example below:



Chromatic scale: starting on C, as example below (one octave):



Arpeggios: the common chords of the one-octave keys as set above:

- (i) even notes, as example in Grade 1
- (ii) even notes with repeated tonic, as example in Grade 1

Dominant sevenths: in the keys of C, G and F, as example below (one octave):



Diminished sevenths: starting on C, E \flat , F \sharp and A, even notes, as example below (one octave):



ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Anon. 2 Scottish Dances: The De'il among the Tailors *and* Meg Merrilees
- 2 J. S. Bach Invention No. 4 in D minor, BWV 775
- 3 Clementi Allegretto: from Sonatina in G, Op. 36 No. 2*
- 4 Dvořák Humoresque, Op. 101 No. 7*
- 5 Gossec Tambourin: from *Le Camp de Grand-Pré*
- 6 Schubert Moment Musical (Air Russe), Op. 94 No. 3, D. 780/3
- 7 Steibelt Rondo in G

*Graded Music for Tuned Percussion,
Book 3 (ABRSM)*

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 5 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 3 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Sea Storm
- 2 Beethoven Plus
- 3 Marche Funèbre
- 4 Fives and Threes

Graded Music for Timpani, Book 3 (ABRSM)

(continued overleaf)

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 5 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 3 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 Sophisticated Syncopation | } | <i>Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 3 (ABRSM)</i> |
| 2 Radetsky | | |
| 3 Tarantella | | |
| 4 Alborada | | |
| 5 Allegro energico | | |

SIGHT-READING†: a short piece in simple or compound time, either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. The test for tuned percussion will be in any one of the keys of the scale requirements set up to and including this grade. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE§: see pp. 98 and 101

* Published with optional piano accompaniment † Specimen Sight-Reading Tests included in the *Graded Music* books

§ Specimen Aural Tests published by ABRSM

Percussion GRADE 6

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY: Grade 5 (or above) in Theory of Music, Practical Musicianship or any solo Jazz subject.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory, in the following keys:

F \sharp , C \sharp majors; E \flat minor (one octave)

D, B \flat major *scales only*; B, G minor *scales only* (two octaves)

Scales: in the above keys (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice):

(i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1, but two-octave scales without repeat

(ii) one-octave scales in even notes, as example in Grade 1; two-octave scales in even notes, as example in Grade 5

Chromatic scales: starting on any natural, as example in Grade 5 (one octave)

Arpeggios: the common chords of the one-octave keys as set above:

(i) even notes, as example in Grade 1

(ii) even notes with repeated tonic, as example in Grade 1

Dominant sevenths: in the keys of D, A, B \flat and E \flat , as example in Grade 5 (one octave)

Diminished sevenths: starting on D \flat , E, G and B \flat , as example in Grade 5 (one octave)

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 J. S. Bach Invention No. 10 in G, BWV 781 | } <i>Graded Music for Tuned Percussion, Book 3 (ABRSM)</i> |
| 2 Handel Allegro: from Sonata in F, Op. 1 No. 12* | |
| 3 Joplin Maple Leaf Rag* | |
| 4 Mendelssohn Song without Words, Op. 102 No. 3 | |
| 5 Johann Strauss Radetsky March, Op. 228 | |
| 6 Telemann Vivace: from Fantasia No. 5 in F (1st Dozen) | |

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 6 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 3 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1 Unsquare Dance | } <i>Graded Music for Timpani, Book 3 (ABRSM)</i> |
| 2 Square Dance | |
| 3 Diversions | |
| 4 Scherzoid | |

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 6 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 3 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 Malvern March | } <i>Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 3 (ABRSM)</i> |
| 2 Con anima | |
| 3 Fanfare and Dance | |
| 4 Waltz Variations | |
| 5 Midsummer Dream | |
| 6 Con forza | |

SIGHT-READING[†]: a piece either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE[§]: see pp. 98 and 101

Percussion GRADE 7

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY: Grade 5 (or above) in Theory of Music, Practical Musicianship or any solo Jazz subject.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory:

Scales: in all keys, major and minor (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice) (two octaves):

- (i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1, but without repeat
- (ii) even notes, as example in Grade 5

Chromatic scales: starting on any accidental, as example in Grade 5 (one octave)

Arpeggios: the common chords of all keys, major and minor (two octaves):

- (i) even notes, as example below:



- (ii) broken chords, as example below:



Dominant sevenths: in the keys of E, B, A \flat and D \flat , as example in Grade 5 (one octave)

Diminished sevenths: starting on D, F, A \flat and B, as example in Grade 5 (one octave)

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 **J. S. Bach** Bourrée anglaise: from Flute Sonata in A minor, BWV 1013
- 2 **Handel** Allegro: from Sonata in E, Op. 1 No. 15
- 3 **Joplin** The Favourite *and* Ragtime Two Step
- 4 **Kreisler** Liebesfreud*
- 5 **Johann Strauss** Thunder and Lightning Polka, Op. 324
- 6 **Vivaldi** Presto: from Concerto in A minor, Op. 3 No. 6*

} *Graded Music for Tuned Percussion,
Book 4 (ABRSM)*

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 7 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Tchaikovsky Plus
- 2 Conflict in Verona
- 3 Impulse
- 4 Soliloquy

} *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 7 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Contemporary Patterns
- 2 Scherzo Caprice
- 3 Light Infantry
- 4 Allegro giocoso
- 5 Prelude and Scherzo

} *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

* Published with optional piano accompaniment † Specimen Sight-Reading Tests included in the *Graded Music* books

§ Specimen Aural Tests published by ABRSM

Percussion: GRADE 7

SIGHT-READING†: a piece either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE§: see pp. 98 and 102

Percussion GRADE 8

All candidates are required to perform on one tuned percussion instrument **and**, at their choice, *either* timpani *or* snare drum.

PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY: Grade 5 (or above) in Theory of Music, Practical Musicianship or any solo Jazz subject.

TUNED PERCUSSION

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS: from memory:

Scales: in all keys, major and minor (minors in melodic *or* harmonic form at candidate's choice) (two octaves):

(i) with a crotchet beat on the tonic, as example in Grade 1, but without repeat

(ii) even notes, as example in Grade 5

Chromatic scales: starting on any note, as example in Grade 5 (two octaves)

Arpeggios: the common chords of all keys, major and minor (two octaves):

(i) even notes, as example in Grade 7

(ii) broken chords, as example in Grade 7

Dominant sevenths: in all keys, as example in Grade 5, but with only one repeat (two octaves)

Diminished sevenths: starting on any note, as example in Grade 5, but with only one repeat (two octaves)

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 **J. S. Bach** Gigue: from Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004
- 2 **Bizet** Danse Bohème: from *Carmen*
- 3 **George Botsford** Black and White Rag*
- 4 **Kreisler** Schön Rosmarin
- 5 **Monti** Czardas
- 6 **Mozart** Alla Turca: from Sonata in A, K. 331*
- 7 **Johann and Josef Strauss** Pizzicato Polka
- 8 **Vivaldi** Allegro: from Concerto in A minor, Op. 3 No. 6

} *Graded Music for Tuned Percussion, Book 4*
(ABRSM)

TIMPANI

STUDY: No. 8 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Bacchanale
- 2 Modern Times
- 3 Burlesque
- 4 Waltz Variations

} *Graded Music for Timpani, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

SNARE DRUM

STUDY: No. 8 as published for the grade. *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

ONE PIECE: chosen by the candidate from the following list:

- 1 Sicilienne
- 2 Overture to Accents
- 3 A Bar from Mars
- 4 Scheherazadia

} *Graded Music for Snare Drum, Book 4 (ABRSM)*

SIGHT-READING†: a piece either for tuned percussion or the other instrument offered by the candidate, as directed by the examiner. See also p. 73.

AURAL TESTS FOR THE GRADE§: see pp. 98 and 103