

OTHER EXAM ELEMENTS (all solo subjects)

QUICK STUDY

In this section of the exam, the test is to play an unfamiliar piece of music, either from staff notation or by ear, and to improvise a response. Practice tests and guidelines are given in the books of quick studies for each instrument published by ABRSM Publishing; the CD for each instrument at each grade also contains exemplars of the tests. The marking scheme and assessment criteria for the quick study are given on pp. 50–1.

GRADE 1

To play *either* at sight *or* by ear, at the choice of the candidate, a two-bar passage (with one hand only for pianists) and to improvise a two-bar continuation based on the scale indicated and used for bars 1 and 2. This scale will be any one of those set for this grade. The first two bars will be fully notated in 4/4 time and written within the range of a 4th. Chord symbols will also be provided. Candidates choosing:

- 1 to play the first two bars *at sight* will first be given the pulse followed by a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 and 2 exactly as written, following on with the improvised two-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause. Guideline pitches for the improvised response will be given.

OR

- 2 to play the first two bars *by ear* will hear them played three times by the examiner. Before the first playing is counted in, the scale used for the passage will be stated, an initial chord played and the starting note sounded and named, all as appropriate for the candidate's instrument. There will be a short interval after the second and third playing of the passage when candidates may try out what they have heard. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 and 2 exactly as heard, following on with the improvised two-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause.

GRADE 2

To play *either* at sight *or* by ear, at the choice of the candidate, a two-bar passage (with one hand only for pianists) and to improvise a two-bar continuation based on the scale indicated and used for bars 1 and 2. This scale will be any one of those set up to and including this grade. The first two bars will be fully notated in 4/4 time and written within the range of a 5th. Chord symbols will also be provided. Candidates choosing:

- 1 to play the first two bars *at sight* will first be given the pulse followed by a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 and 2 exactly as written, following on with the improvised two-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause. Guideline pitches for the improvised response will be given.

OR

- 2 to play the first two bars *by ear* will hear them played three times by the examiner. Before the first playing is counted in, the scale used for the passage will be stated, an initial chord played and the starting note sounded and named, all as appropriate for the candidate's instrument. There will be a short interval after the second and third playing of the passage when candidates may try out what they have heard. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 and 2 exactly as heard, following on with the improvised two-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause.

GRADE 3

To play *either* at sight *or* by ear, at the choice of the candidate, a four-bar passage (with one hand only for pianists) and to improvise a four-bar continuation based on the scale indicated and used for bars 1 to 4. This scale will be any one of those set up to and including this grade. The first four bars will be fully notated in 4/4 time and written within the range of a 6th. Chord symbols will also be provided. Candidates choosing:

- 1 to play the first four bars *at sight* will first be given the pulse followed by a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 to 4 exactly as written, following on with the improvised four-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause. Guideline pitches for the improvised response will be given.

OR

- 2 to play the first four bars *by ear* will hear them played three times by the examiner. Before the first playing is counted in, the scale used for the passage will be stated, an initial chord played and the starting note sounded and named, all as appropriate for the candidate's instrument. There will be a short interval after the second and third playing of the passage when candidates may try out what they have heard. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 to 4 exactly as heard, following on with the improvised four-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause.

GRADE 4

To play *either* at sight *or* by ear, at the choice of the candidate, a four-bar passage (with both hands for pianists, the left hand playing a very simple bass line) and to improvise a four-bar continuation based on the scale indicated and used for bars 1 to 4. This scale will be any one of those set up to and including this grade. The first four bars will be fully notated in 3 or 4 time and written within the range of an octave (in the right hand for pianists). Chord symbols will also be provided. Candidates choosing:

- 1 to play the first four bars *at sight* will first be given the pulse followed by a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 to 4 exactly as written, following on with the improvised four-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause. Guideline pitches for the improvised response will be given.

OR

- 2 to play the first four bars *by ear* will hear them played three times by the examiner. Before the first playing is counted in, the scale used for the passage will be stated, an initial chord played and the starting note sounded and named, all as appropriate for

the candidate's instrument (for pianists both the right- and left-hand starting notes will be sounded and named and the bass line played as an introductory groove to the first playing). There will be a short interval after the second and third playing of the passage when candidates may try out what they have heard. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 to 4 exactly as heard, following on with the improvised four-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause.

GRADE 5

To play *either* at sight *or* by ear, at the choice of the candidate, a four-bar passage (with both hands for pianists, with the possibility of the right-hand part including two-note chords, and with the left hand playing a simple bass line) and to improvise a four-bar continuation based on the scale indicated and used for bars 1 to 4. This scale will be any one of those set up to and including this grade. The first four bars will be fully notated in 3 or 4 time and written within the range of a 10th (in the right hand for pianists). Chord symbols will also be provided. Candidates choosing:

1 to play the first four bars *at sight* will first be given the pulse followed by a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 to 4 exactly as written, following on with the improvised four-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause. Guideline pitches for the improvised response will be given.

OR

2 to play the first four bars *by ear* will hear them played three times by the examiner. Before the first playing is counted in, the scale used for the passage will be stated, an initial chord played and the starting note sounded and named, all as appropriate for the candidate's instrument (for pianists both the right- and left-hand starting notes will be sounded and named and the bass line played as an introductory groove to the first playing). There will be a short interval after the second and third playing of the passage when candidates may try out what they have heard. The examiner will then count in the candidate, who should play bars 1 to 4 exactly as heard, following on with the improvised four-bar response in strict time without an intervening pause.

AURAL TESTS

This section of the exam tests the all-round aural awareness and musicianship skills of the candidate. Practice tests and guidelines are given in the books of aural tests for each instrument published by ABRSM Publishing; the CD for each instrument at each grade also contains exemplars of the tests. The marking scheme and assessment criteria for aural tests are given on p. 51.

For any test which requires a 'sung' response, pitch rather than vocal quality is the object, and candidates may hum or whistle, rather than sing, the response.

GRADE 1

A1 To clap the pulse of a passage of music in 3 or 4 time played by the examiner. The examiner will commence playing the passage, and the candidate will be expected to join in as soon as possible by clapping the beat.

A2 To clap on the last beat of each bar while the same passage is played again. The examiner will first state the time and count in the candidate.