Perfecting Performance

John Holmes, Chief Examiner

Developing Core Musical Skills
What is performance?
‘Performing is an act of giving. If we perform with artistry and skill - at any level - and with unconditional generosity, then everyone is the better for it.’

Paul Harris
What is performing?

Thinking

Art

Doing

Craft
Combining complementary capabilities

Imagination, creativity, expression; understanding emotional meaning and message.

Cognition, linguistic and mathematical precision; measuring, analysing, reasoning.
Doing
Controlling
Delivering;

Technique

Art
Thinking
Feeling
Interpreting;

Decisions

Craft
Doing
Controlling
Delivering;
Making music makes you smarter!

- Perception and awareness
- Communication and confidence
- Creativity, imagination and ideas
- Expression of feelings and emotions
- Fine motor control
- Eye/hand coordination
- Analysis and reasoning
- Integration of action and response with knowledge and understanding
What is musical performance?

Personal communication and creative expression supported by skills, knowledge and understanding
The art and craft of performance
### Marking criteria (all instruments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Pieces</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction 27–30</td>
<td>Highly accurate notes and intonation</td>
<td>Fluent, with flexibility where appropriate</td>
<td>Well projected</td>
<td>Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail</td>
<td>Assured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit 24–26</td>
<td>Largely accurate notes and intonation</td>
<td>Sustained, effective tempo</td>
<td>Mainly controlled and consistent</td>
<td>Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass 20–23</td>
<td>Generally correct notes</td>
<td>Suitable tempo</td>
<td>Generally reliable</td>
<td>Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail</td>
<td>Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Pass 17–19</td>
<td>Frequent note errors</td>
<td>Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo</td>
<td>Uneven and/or unreliable</td>
<td>Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed</td>
<td>Insecure, inadequate recovery from slips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>Largely inaccurate notes and/or intonation</td>
<td>Erratic tempo and/or pulse</td>
<td>Serious lack of tonal control</td>
<td>Musical shape and detail largely unrealised</td>
<td>Lacking continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–12</td>
<td>Highly inaccurate notes and/or intonation</td>
<td>Incoherent tempo and/or pulse</td>
<td>No tonal control</td>
<td>No shape or detail</td>
<td>Unable to continue for more than a short section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No work offered</td>
<td>No work offered</td>
<td>No work offered</td>
<td>No work offered</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Tone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly accurate notes and intonation</td>
<td>Fluent with flexibility where appropriate, Rhythmic character well conveyed</td>
<td>Well projected, Sensitive use of tonal qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely accurate notes and intonation</td>
<td>Sustained, effective tempo, Good sense of rhythm</td>
<td>Mainly controlled and consistent, Good tonal awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally correct notes</td>
<td>Suitable tempo, Generally stable pulse, Overall rhythmic accuracy</td>
<td>Generally reliable, Adequate tonal awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail</td>
<td>Assured, Fully committed, Vivid communication of character and style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail</td>
<td>Positive, Carrying musical conviction, Character and style communicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail</td>
<td>Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips, Some musical involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thinking

Art

Doing

Craft

Flexibility

Sensitivity

Character

Style

Conviction

Involvement

Awareness

Expression
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch</th>
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<th>Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</td>
<td>Good sense of rhythm</td>
<td>Good tonal awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitable tempo</td>
<td>Generally reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generally stable pulse</td>
<td>Adequate tonal awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall rhythmic accuracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shape**

- Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail
- Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail
- Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail

**Performance**

- Assured
- Fully committed
- Vivid communication of character and style
- Positive
- Carrying musical conviction
- Character and style communicated
- Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips
- Some musical involvement
Thinking

Art

Doing

Craft

Accuracy of notes
intonation

Stability of pulse

Projection

Fluency

Rhythmic accuracy
Art
- Thinking
- Craft

Doing
- Rhythmic accuracy
- Stability of pulse
- Projection
- Fluency
- Rhythmic accuracy

Art
- Character
- Style
- Conviction
- Involvement
- Awareness
- Expression

Craft
- Flexibility
- Sensitivity
- Accuracy of notes
- Intonation
- Fluency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</tr>
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<td>and consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes</td>
<td>Suitable tempo</td>
<td>Good tonal awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiently reliable</td>
<td>Generally stable pulse</td>
<td>Generally reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intonation to maintain</td>
<td>Overall rhythmic accuracy</td>
<td>Adequate tonal awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tonality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>detail</td>
<td>Vivid communication of character and style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well-realised detail</td>
<td>Carrying musical conviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some realisation of</td>
<td>Character and style communicated</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>detail</td>
<td>slips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some musical involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thinking

Art

Doing

Craft

Flexibility
Sensitivity
Character
Style
Conviction
Involvement
Awareness
Expression

Shaping

Realisation
Accuracy of notes intonation
Stability of pulse

Assurance
Projection
Fluency

Commitment

Communication
Rhythmic accuracy
Performing skills at Grade 8
Grade criteria:

**Pitch:** Accuracy, clarity and definition of notes and/or intonation

**Time:** Suitability of tempo, stability of pulse, sense of rhythm

**Tone:** Control and projection of the sound, sensitivity and awareness in use of tonal qualities

**Shape:** Effectiveness and clarity of musical shaping and detailing

**Performance:** Overall command, involvement with the music, musical communication
Graded music exam

Candidate: Peter

Presented by: Piano Grade 8

[Fill in the examination marks and comments]

A1: This was performed with authority and confidence, showing good musical detail and firm direction. At times the effect became a little restless, with shaping not always totally sympathetic to the musical line, but articulation was crisp, with positive rhythmic character. Played with real commitment.

[Mark: 28/20]

A3: Played with energy and conviction, and capturing much of the musical drama. There was a strong sense of stylistic idea, supported by musical shaping of phrases and good dynamic contrasts. The tone became a little hard at times, and there were some note errors and losses of rhythmic precision but communication was positive.

[Mark: 26/20]

A4: Sensitive paced, imaginative playing, with a natural sense of phrasing and feel for the expressive idiom, Good use of rubato, mostly well achieved cantabile tone, and convincing control of texture and balance. There were some briefly wayward harmonies and moments of unventontonal.

[Mark: 26/20]

 scales and arpeggios

Largely fluent, confident playing, with a high degree of overall accuracy and control. There were some note errors, and one retake needed in the 3rds and 7ths, but legato staccato was good, with musical shaping.

[Mark: 21/14]

Sight-reading

The playing showed a firm grasp of all the essential elements, with reliable continuity. One small stumble, some misread notes, but detail was often shown.

[Mark: 19/14]

Aural tests

Accurate, perceptive and confident responses throughout, with particularly good awareness shown in the final test relating to musical features.

[Mark: 18/12]

Additional comments if needed: Congratulations on this excellent all-round success. Your playing showed a very effective blend between musical understanding and ideas with effective, willing technical responses.

Total: 136/150

Maximum (Pass) 150

Examiner code: [Fill in examiner code]

This form records the result of an exam held on [Date]

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
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Registered office: 25 Portland Place, London W1B 1LU Telephone +44 1800 760 540 Email: abern@abdn.org.uk www.abrsm.org
At times the effect became a little relentless, with shaping not always totally sympathetic to the musical line.

This was performed with authority and confidence; showing good musical detail and firm direction.

Played with real commitment, but articulation was crisp, with positive rhythmic character.
Thinking

Art

Played with energy and conviction and capturing much of the musical drama.

There was a strong sense of stylistic idea, supported by musical shaping of phrases and good dynamic contrasts.

Doing

Craft

The tone became a little hard at times and there were some note errors and losses of rhythmic precision.

but communication was positive.
Sensitively paced, imaginative playing
with a natural sense of phrasing and feel
for the expressive idiom.

Good use of rubato
mostly well achieved cantabile tone,
and convincing control of texture and balance.

There were some briefly wayward harmonies
and moments of uneven tonal control.
There is no ABRSM way to play
Chopin; Nocturne in B, Op.32 No.1

Arrau

Ashkenazy

Rubinstein
Break time
Introduction to ARSM
What is ARSM?
What is ARSM?

• A new post-Grade 8 qualification
• A performance-only Diploma
• Awarded by ABRSM, endorsed by the four Royal Schools of Music
What is ARSM?

• For candidates of any age who have passed Grade 8
• For all instruments currently examined in Grades
• For all countries where Grades are currently offered
• A letter-bearing Diploma; successful candidates can add ARSM after their name
• Designed to attract and be accessible to a wide range of candidates
30 minute programme (+/- 2 mins)

40 minute exam time allocation
Own choice repertoire
Grade 8 standard or above
(max 10 mins)

ARSM repertoire
(at least 20 mins)
Programme and repertoire

• Prior approval of programme not required
• For woodwind, brass and singing candidates, a break of up to 3 mins can be included
• Candidates hand completed programme form, including timings, to the examiner; (copies of music not required)
ARSM programme form

Please complete this form and bring it with you to your exam. Include full details of your programme, in the order you are presenting it, and hand the form to the examiner before you begin. Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful exam!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Instrument/Voice</th>
<th>Violin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARSM list me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Place/Song to be performed</td>
<td>Approx. timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer (and arranger if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Includes work title, numbers or other catalogue numbers, detail of individual movements/mechanics, or application</td>
<td>(0' 00&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozart</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata in B flat, K 376</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mark form

Associate of the Royal Schools of Music

Candidate

Subject

Pieces or Songs

Performance as a whole

This form records the result of an exam held on: / / Examiner code: / / Total

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A body registered in England & Wales under Company No. 10051782.
Registered office: 17, New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE.
Registered office: 1 Newmark House, Fleet, GU14 7JE.
Telephone: +44 (0)207 405 4090. Email: abrsm@abrsm.org. www.abrsm.org.
Resources for the ARSM exam

• ARSM Syllabus
• Programme form
• Marking criteria
• ARSM Repertoire list
• ARSM ‘On Your Marks’ videos
• FAQ responses

• All available at: www.abrsm.org/newdiploma
Why take ARSM?

• An accessible first Diploma qualification
• Sense of purpose and direction to post Grade 8 learning and progress
• Opportunity to put together and perform your own programme of music
• Feedback from an ABRSM examiner
Grade 8

30 minute exam

3 pieces from syllabus lists

Skills, knowledge & understanding assessed separately in supporting tests (scales, sight-reading & aural)

ARSM

30 minute programme

Pieces from ARSM list plus

Optional 30% own choice at Grade 8 standard (or above)

Skills, knowledge & understanding brought together and assessed within the performance context
Grade 8

Each exam section marked individually

ARSM

One mark for all items in the programme

then

One mark for the Performance as a whole

(Pre-requisite for ARSM and/or DipABRSM)

(Does not serve as a pre-requisite for DipABRSM)
How will it be examined?
How will it be examined?

- Same examiner team as for Grades
- One ‘Generalist’ examiner
- Audio recordings not involved
How will it be examined?

- The chosen works combine to form a programme, so are marked ‘as one’ (unlike the ‘itemised’ approach of Grade exams, where pieces are marked separately)
Basis of assessment:

• Grade criteria for the pieces combined with

• new set of criteria for the performance as a whole
Criteria for the performance as a whole

Grade criteria (pieces)
30 marks

20 marks

Total mark out of 50
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pieces/Songs</th>
<th>Whole Performance</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
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</table>

**Total**

**Distinction**

**Merit**

**Pass**
Marking out of 30
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARSM list no.</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Piece/Song to be performed</th>
<th>Approx. timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>J S Bach</td>
<td>Partita no. 2 in D minor: Sarabande and Gigue</td>
<td>5'30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beethoven</td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>9'30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Brahms</td>
<td>Scherzo in C minor</td>
<td>7'00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Elgar</td>
<td>Sonata in E minor, op. 82, first movement</td>
<td>8'00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
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<td>Elgar</td>
<td>Sonata in E minor, op. 82, first movement</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Programme length: 30’00
Associate of the Royal Schools of Music

Candidate

Subject Violin

Pieces or Songs

Bach...

Beethoven...

Brahms...

Elgar...

Performance as a whole

This form records the result of an exam held on: / / Examiner code: Total

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. A company registered in England & Wales No. 196395.
Marking out of 20
### Criteria for the performance as a whole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distinction</strong></td>
<td>Consistently well-projected and involved; showing</td>
<td>Consistently effective stylistic characterisation;</td>
<td>Consistently assured and controlled; technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>strong performance commitment and conviction</td>
<td>interpretative demands of the programme well met</td>
<td>challenges of the programme well met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective sequence and pacing of chosen programme;</td>
<td>Consistently good awareness and control of textures</td>
<td>Consistently effective instrument management, fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistently good performance awareness and</td>
<td>and ensemble, with effective blending and balancing</td>
<td>responsive to the performance situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merit</strong></td>
<td>Mainly well-projected and involved, showing</td>
<td>Mostly effective stylistic realisation; interpretative</td>
<td>Effectively controlled; most technical challenges of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>positive performance commitment</td>
<td>demands of the programme largely well met</td>
<td>programme well met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Largely effective sequence and pacing of chosen</td>
<td>Mainly good awareness and control of textures and</td>
<td>Mostly effective instrument management, mainly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>programme; mainly good performance awareness and</td>
<td>ensemble, with appropriate blending and balancing</td>
<td>responsive to the performance situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td>Projection and involvement sufficient to maintain</td>
<td>Sufficient stylistic realisation to meet the</td>
<td>Generally controlled; technical challenges of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>an overall sense of performance</td>
<td>interpretative demands of the programme</td>
<td>programme securely met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sequence and pacing of chosen programme shows</td>
<td>Adequate awareness and control of textures and</td>
<td>Sufficiently reliable instrument management to meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adequate performance awareness and control</td>
<td>ensemble, with sufficient blending and balancing</td>
<td>the demands of the performance situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Below Pass</strong></td>
<td>Insufficient projection or sense of involvement to</td>
<td>Stylistic realisation not equal to the interpretative</td>
<td>Consistency of control insufficient to meet the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>maintain a sense of performance</td>
<td>demands of the programme</td>
<td>technical challenges of the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sequence and/or pacing of chosen programme shows</td>
<td>Insufficient awareness or control of textures and</td>
<td>Insufficiently reliable instrument management to meet the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inadequate performance awareness or control</td>
<td>ensemble, and/or unsuitable blending and balancing</td>
<td>demands of the performance situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Sense of performance largely absent</td>
<td>Stylistic realisation and/or control of textures and</td>
<td>Very insecure technical control and/or instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ensemble largely absent</td>
<td>management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You and your listener:</strong></td>
<td><strong>You and your music:</strong></td>
<td><strong>You and your instrument:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection and musical involvement</td>
<td>Stylistic realisation and characterisation</td>
<td>Technical assurance and control</td>
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<td>Performance commitment and personal conviction</td>
<td>Interpretative demands of programme</td>
<td>Technical challenges of programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequencing and pacing of programme</td>
<td>Awareness and control of textures and ensemble</td>
<td>Instrument management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance awareness and control</td>
<td>Blending and balancing</td>
<td>Awareness and command of the performance situation</td>
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Doing

Craft

Thinking

Art

Performance awareness and control

Technical assurance and control

Projection and musical involvement

Technical challenges of programme

Performance commitment and personal conviction

Sequencing and pacing of programme

Stylistic realisation and characterisation

Interpretative demands of programme

Instrument management

Awareness and control of textures and ensemble

Blending and balancing

Awareness and command of the performance situation
Well managed and consistent performance
Strong musical involvement and projection
Interpretative insights shown across the programme

Some flaws and inconsistencies in delivery
Sometimes tone and attack were a little forced
This felt a very well managed and consistent performance, with a sense of strong musical involvement and projection. In terms of delivery, there were some flaws and inconsistencies, but these were always well covered or assimilated. Sometimes tone and attack felt a little forced, but interpretative qualities were always involving.
Thank you

Further questions: teachersupport@abrsm.ac.uk