
Grade 8 Popular Music Vocals

Component 1: Musicianship

10 marks

Major scale to range of major 13th - first very slowly and then at a fast tempo

Chromatic scale - 1 octave ascending - first very slowly and then at a fast tempo

Minor *arpeggio* ascending with natural minor *scale* descending

Major 9th and minor 9th arpeggio - 1 octave ascending and descending

Intervals: any diatonic interval from the major scale up to and including one octave, plus minor 2nd, minor 3rd, diminished 5th, minor 6th and minor 7th

Key/pitch to be chosen by *the candidate*, and stated to the examiner. The examiner will then provide the tonic note before candidate sings from memory – using any vowel sound(s) or sol-fa syllables (such as ‘lah’). A ‘neutral’ (non-stylised) voice should be used during this section of the exam, avoiding excessive vibrato.

Consonant and vowel sounds should be accurate and distinct, and where a single consonant or vowel is used its clarity should be maintained.

Tempos are at the candidate’s discretion – subject to the guidelines given in the examination handbook.

All scales and arpeggios may be requested by the examiner to be sung either legato or articulated.

Component 2: Performance

60 marks

See Section 2.6, ‘Performance Component’.

Introduce and perform from memory THREE songs, plus a verse and chorus (or any significant section) of one of the songs performed again *unaccompanied*, lasting no longer than 18 minutes in total. (Timings should take account of gaps between songs.)

Component 3: Musical Knowledge

10 marks

See Section 2.7, ‘Musical Knowledge Component’.

Candidates who have not passed the Popular Music Theory Grade 8 exam, and candidates not choosing the option described in Section 2.7, will be asked a selection of questions, appropriate to the grade, covering some or all of the following topics. Candidates’ responses should demonstrate a ‘practical’ understanding of the topics as follows:

- Note values – to include 16th notes (semiquavers) and dotted notes
- All key signatures
- Construction and interval spellings of the blues scale, major 9th and minor 9th chords
- Transposition of a major or minor key chord progression

Component 4: Aural Awareness

10 marks

Repetition of rhythm: To clap back a complex 4 bar rhythm in 3/4, 6/8, 4/4 or 5/4 time. The rhythm will contain no note value shorter than a sixteenth note, but may include triplets and tied notes. Either the third bar will be a repeat of the first bar, or the fourth bar will be a repeat of the second.

Keeping time and recognition of time signatures: To clap the main pulse, and accent the first beat of each bar, during the playing of a four bar melody in either 3/4, 6/8, 12/8, 4/4 or 5/4 time. To identify the time signature. The melody may not begin on the first beat of the bar, and may include triplets and ties.

Harmonisation of a melodic phrase: The examiner will play, up to 5 times, the tonic chord followed by a 2 bar phrase in either 4/4 or 6/8 time. The phrase may be in a major or minor key and will contain no interval greater than a major 6th and no note value shorter than a 16th note. The candidate should join in on the final playing singing a suitable harmony line.

Recognition of intervals: To identify any interval, when played consecutively, from a minor 2nd up to and including a perfect 11th, plus a major 13th.

Recognition of cadences: To identify two cadences (chosen from perfect, plagal, imperfect or interrupted) during an eight bar chord progression in a major key.

Component 5: Specialism

10 marks

Candidates should choose one of the following two options:

a) Sight singing of a quick study piece

The candidate will be shown two short melodies and will be allowed 2 minutes to study and try them. The candidate will then be asked to sing one of the melodies – of the candidate's choosing. The candidate should choose the piece that best suits their vocal range. The examiner will provide accompaniment, in the form of block chords – played either on keyboard or guitar.

This will be 12 bars in length. The key signature will be limited to 2 sharps or 2 flats, or less. The rhythmic range will be limited to eighth notes or longer, and may include ties and triplets. The time signature will be limited to 3/4, 6/8 or 4/4. The pitch range will be limited to a major 10th. The melody may be in a major or minor key, and may include some accidentals. There will be no interval leaps greater than an octave.

b) Improvisation

The examiner will play a chord progression, in 4/4 time, in a major or minor key, on a keyboard or guitar. This will be in the form of block chords, with a straightforward rhythmic groove. During the first playing the candidate should listen to the progression, before improvising over two further cycles of the progression. The improvisation may be sung using any syllables, vowels, words or phrases of the candidate's choosing.

The chord progression will be 12 bars in length, and may contain up to 2 chords per bar. The candidate will be given a copy of the chord progression.

The LCM 'Popular Music Vocals Handbook' contains:

- *the notation and desired tempos for all Musicianship requirements;*
- *specimen questions for the Musical Knowledge component;*
- *examples of the Aural Awareness requirements;*
- *examples and advice for both Specialism options.*

See Section 3.1 for further details.