

rockschool®

DRUMS

SYLLABUS GUIDE

2012 - 2018



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Rockscool 2012-2018 syllabus for Drums. This syllabus guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded examinations run by Rockscool.

The Rockscool website, www.rockschool.co.uk has detailed information on all aspects of our examinations, including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes and assessment criteria as well as notated and audio examples to help you prepare for the examination.

This Syllabus Guide covers the following examinations:

- Graded Examinations Debut – Grade 8
- Performance Certificates Debut – Grade 8
- Band Exams Grades 3, 5 and 8

EXAMINATIONS

Rockscool offers two types of graded music examination, Grade Examinations and Performance Certificate.

GRADE EXAMINATIONS

Grade Examinations are available at every grade

Debut - Grade 8 and consist of the following elements:

- 3 Performance Pieces: Debut - Grade 8
- Technical Exercises: Debut - Grade 8
- Sight Reading: Debut to Grade 5 or Improvisation & Interpretation: Grade 1 – Grade 5
- Quick Study Piece: Grade 6 - 8
- Ear Tests: Debut - Grade 8
- General Musicianship Questions: Debut - Grade 8

These elements fall into two categories: Prepared work and Unprepared work. Prepared work consists of the three pieces and technical exercises. Unprepared work consists of Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation, (Quick Study Piece at Grades 6 - 8), Ear Tests and General Musicianship Questions.

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Performance Certificates are available at every grade

Debut - Grade 8 and consist of the following elements:

- 5 performance Pieces: Debut – Grade 8

BAND EXAMS

Band Exams are available for Guitar, Bass and Drums

at grades 3, 5 and 8 and consist of the following elements:

- 5 Performance Pieces: Grades 3, 5 and 8

EXAMINATION STRUCTURE

The examination structure for the grade examinations is shown below:

- 1st - pieces or technical exercises
- 2nd - technical exercises or pieces
- 3rd - Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation or Quick Study Piece
- 4th - Ear Tests
- 5th - General Musicianship Questions

EXAMINATION TIMINGS

Examination Timings for Grade Exams & Performance Certificates

- Debut: 15 minutes
- Grade 1: 20 minutes
- Grade 2: 20 minutes
- Grade 3: 25 minutes
- Grade 4: 25 minutes
- Grade 5: 25 minutes
- Grade 6: 30 minutes
- Grade 7: 30 minutes
- Grade 8: 30 minutes

Examination Timings for Band Exams

- Grade 3: 40 minutes
- Grade 5: 40 minutes
- Grade 8: 45 minutes

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Candidates are able to play a number of free choice pieces in the examination:

- Grade Examinations: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance Certificates: 3 free choice pieces

Visit www.rockschool.co.uk for grade specific criteria. For guitar and drums, 'Hot Rock' offer examination graded pieces with specially tailored backing tracks in specific graded books.

NOTATION

All notated work is to be played as written. There should be no changes or arrangement (unless previously agreed with Rockscool). Each piece is specifically written for the grade to assess key notation issues regarding pitch, rhythm or technique. ■

DEBUT

The Debut Bass exam is for candidates who have been learning a short time and have learnt the basic skills. There are two types of exam available at Debut, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates play 3 pieces that last a maximum of 1 minute and Technical Exercises cover the preliminary areas.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to use the drums for a simple sight reading test and two ear tests that begin to develop fill playback and groove recall. The final part of the exam is a set of 5 simple questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore simple theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Debut exam lasts 15 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Sight Reading. The candidate is given a simple previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two simple tests. Fill playback and Groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Debut the pieces last up to a maximum of 1 minute. This is to enable the candidate to remain focused and concentrate on the basic requirements of notation and control. Simple groove work and coordination and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along

to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Debut there are four groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 70 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE STROKES

In eighth notes

GROUP B: DOUBLE STROKES

In eighth notes

GROUP C: PARADIDDLES

In eighth notes

GROUP D: FILL

In the exam you will be asked to play the Fill exercise from the Grade Debut book to a backing track. The groove is shown in bars 1-3 and the examiner will choose one fill from a set of four to be played in bar 4.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 80 bpm

At Debut you will be offered a previously unseen Sight Reading test that is in the form of a four bar rhythm played on the snare drum. This is a previously unseen test and an example is shown in the Debut grade book. The test is 4 bars long made up of half and quarter notes and quarter note rests. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the

snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test is made up of quarter and eighth notes. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from two printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo 80 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the hi hat, snare and bass drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Debut you will be asked to identify:

- Drum voices on the stave
- Quarter note and eighth note values

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Debut you will be asked to identify:

- The following parts of the drum kit – bass drum, snare, high tom, medium tom, floor tom, hi-hat, ride cymbal and crash cymbal

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rocks school team will advise you. ■

GRADE 1

The Grade 1 Drum exam is for candidates who have been learning for a relatively short period and have mastered the key basic skills. There are two types of exam available at Grade 1, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play either a 4 bar sight reading test, or a 4 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that begin to develop fill playback and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 simple questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 1 exam lasts 20 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. The candidate is given a simple previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two simple tests. Fill playback and recognition and Groove recall
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 1 the pieces last up to a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds. Pieces are over two pages and the length of piece is designed to enable the candidate to remain focused on the requirements of notation, technical control, coordination, balance and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 1 there are four groups of technical work.

The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 70 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

In eighth notes alternate bars

GROUP B: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

In sixteenth notes alternate bars

GROUP C: PARADIDDLES

Single paradiddle in sixteenth notes

GROUP D: FILL

In the exam you will be asked to play the Fill exercise from the Grade 1 book to a backing track. The groove is shown in bars 1-3 and the examiner will choose one fill from a set of four to be played in bar 4.

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 1 you have the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. The tests are previously unseen and an example can be found in the Grade 1 book.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 80 bpm

At Grade 1 you will be offered a Sight Reading test that is in the form of a four bar rhythm played on the snare drum. The test is made up of half and quarter notes and quarter note rests. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Tempo: 70-80 bpm

At Grade 1 the test is four bars long and the candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time. The test is in the form of a notated one bar groove that should be developed and a one bar fill. The examiner will offer the metronome as a guide or throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test is made up of quarter and eighth notes and quarter note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from two printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the hi hat, snare and bass drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 1 you will be asked to identify:

- Drum voices on the stave
- Quarter note and eighth note values
- A rest in the piece

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 1 you will be asked to identify:

- The following parts of the drum kit – bass drum, snare, high tom, medium tom, floor tom, hi-hat, ride cymbal and crash cymbal
- Two main drum kit makes

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Candidates also have the opportunity of playing from the Hot Rock Drums Grade 1.

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rockscool team will advise you. ■

GRADE 2

The Grade 2 Drum exam is for candidates who have been learning approximately one year to eighteen months and have established the key basic skills along with solid basic techniques. There are two types of exam available at Grade 2, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play either a 4 bar sight reading test, or a 4 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop fill playback and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 2 exam lasts 20 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. The candidate is given a simple previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two simple tests. Fill playback and recognition and Groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 2 the pieces last up to a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds. Pieces are over two pages and the length of piece is designed to the candidate to remain focused on the requirements of notation accuracy, technical control, coordination, balance and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 2 there are five groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 70 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

In eighth and sixteenth notes alternate bars

GROUP B: PARADIDDLES

Single paradiddles in sixteenth notes using the whole kit

GROUP C: FLAMS

In quarter notes

GROUP D: TRIPLETS

In eighth notes with alternate sticking

GROUP E: FILL

In the exam you will be asked to play the Fill exercise from the Grade 2 book to a backing track. The groove is shown in bars 1-3 and the examiner will choose one fill from a set of four to be played in bar 4.

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 2 you have the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. The tests are previously unseen and an example can be found in the Grade 2 book.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 70 bpm

At Grade 2 you will be offered a Sight Reading test that is in the form of a four bar rhythm played on the snare drum. The test is made up of quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and quarter and eighth note rests. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practise time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION AND INTERPRETATION

Tempo: 70-80 bpm

At Grade 2 the test is four bars long and the candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time. The test is in the form of a notated one bar groove that should be developed and a one bar fill. The examiner will offer the metronome as a guide or throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test is made up of quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and quarter note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from two printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the hi hat (open and closed), snare and bass drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 2 you will be asked to identify:

- Drum voices on the staff
- The meaning of time signature marking
- Quarter, dotted eighth note, eighth note and 16th note values
- Rest values
- Repeat markings including first and second time bars

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 2 you will be asked to identify:

- The following parts of the drum kit - bass drum, snare, high tom, medium tom, floor tom, hi-hat, ride cymbal and crash cymbal
- The following parts of the drumstick - tip, neck, shaft and butt
- Two main drum kit makes

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Candidates also have the opportunity of playing from the Hot Rock Drums Grade 2.

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rocks school team will advise you. ■

GRADE 3

The Grade 3 Drum exam is for candidates who have been learning approximately eighteen months to two years and have established the basic skills and the beginnings of stylistic awareness through controlled balance, technique and coordination of the kit and the introduction of solo and development work. There are two types of exam available at Grade 3, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play either a 4 bar sight reading test, or a 4 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop fill playback and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 3 exam lasts 25 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Sight Reading. The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two tests. Fill playback and groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 3 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes. Pieces are over two pages and the length of piece is designed to enable the candidate to remain focused on the requirements of notation, technical control, balance of kit, coordination, solo and improvisation work and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 3 there are six groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 75 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE STROKES

In eighth, eighth note triplets and sixteenth notes

GROUP B: DOUBLE STROKES

In eighth and sixteenth notes using snare and toms

GROUP C: PARADIDDLES

Single paradiddles in sixteenth notes using the whole kit

GROUP D: FLAMS AND DRAGS

In quarter notes

GROUP E: TRIPLETS

In eighth notes with accents on snare and toms

GROUP F: FILL

Tempo: 80 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the Fill exercise from the Grade 3 book to a backing track. The groove is shown in bars 1-3 and the examiner will choose one fill from a set of four to be played in bar 4.

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 3 you have the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. The tests are previously unseen and an example can be found in the Grade 3 book.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 70-80 bpm

At Grade 3 you will be offered a Sight Reading test that is in the form of a four bar rhythm played on the snare drum and is made up of quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and quarter and eighth note rests. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Tempo: 80-100 bpm

At Grade 3 the test is four bars long and the candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time. The test is in the form of a notated one bar groove that should be developed and a one bar fill. The examiner will offer the metronome as a guide or throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test is made up of quarter, eighth, eighth note triplets and sixteenth notes and quarter note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from two printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the crash, hi hat (open and closed), snare and bass drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 3 you will be asked to identify:

- Drum voices on the snare
- The meaning of time signature marking
- Quarter, dotted eighth note, eighth note, triplet eighth notes and 16th note values
- Rest values
- Repeat markings including first and second time bars

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 3 you will be asked to identify:

- The following parts of the drum kit – bass drum, snare, high tom, medium tom, floor tom, hi-hat, ride cymbal and crash cymbal
- The following parts of the drumstick – tip, neck, shaft and butt
- Two main drum kit makes
- Two main cymbal makes

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Candidates also have the opportunity of playing from the Hot Rock Drums Grade 3.

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rocks school team will advise you. ■

GRADE 4

The Grade 4 Drum exam is for candidates who have been learning approximately two - two and half years and have mastered the basic skills, preliminary techniques and have acquired the beginnings of stylistic awareness. Grade 4 develops further stylistic conviction and understanding through developed solo and improvisation work and more complex groove patterns. There are two types of exam available at Grade 4, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play either an 8 bar sight reading test, or an 8 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop fill playback and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 4 exam lasts 25 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Sight Reading. The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two tests. Fill playback recognition and Groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 4 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds. The pieces are over two pages and are designed so the candidate can retain focus and concentration. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, stylistic sense of groove, technical control including execution of stylistic drum techniques, developing solo and improvisation elements and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 4 level there are five groups of technical work.

The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 75 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

Eighth, eighth note triplets and sixteenth notes. To be played first time with singles and with doubles on the repeat

GROUP B: PARADIDDLES

Sixteenth notes using the whole kit Triple Paradiddle.
Sixteenth notes using the whole kit

GROUP C: FLAMS AND RUFFS

Flam tap and ruffs in quarter notes

GROUP D: HANDS AND FEET PATTERNS

Four patterns

GROUP E: FILL

Tempo: 80 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the Fill exercise from the Grade 4 book to a backing track. The groove is shown in bars 1-3 and the examiner will choose one fill from a set of four to be played in bar 4. The candidate is to play the repeat.

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 4 you have the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. The tests are previously unseen and an example can be found in the Grade 4 book.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 70-80 bpm

At Grade 4 there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar development. At Grade 4 the notation consists of quarter, dotted quarter, eighth, dotted eighth and sixteenth notes and quarter note and eighth note rests in 4/4. The test is 8 bars long and is on the whole kit. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Tempo: 80-120 bpm

In Grade 4, the improvisation and interpretation test contains a small amount of sight reading. This consists of a two bar groove at the beginning of the test. You will be asked to play the notation as indicated and complete the test developing the groove and ending with a two bar drum solo. This is played to a backing track of eight bars.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test is made up of quarter, eighth, eighth note triplets and dotted eighth and sixteenth notes. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from three printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80-120 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the crash, hi hat (open and closed), ride, bell of ride, cross stick, snare and bass drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing. You will then be required to identify the style of the groove from a set of three listed by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 4 you will be asked to identify:

- › Drum voices on the snare
- › The meaning of the time signature marking
- › The meaning of bpm markings
- › Repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al fine markings
- › All note values used in the chosen piece
- › Equivalent rests
- › One type of rudiment that can be used stylistically in the solo or development section of the piece
- › Use of drum voices, rhythms and techniques in drum solo sections

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 4 you will be asked to identify/explain:

- › Any part of the drum kit and drumstick
- › How to tune the drum kit
- › Cross stick, choke cymbal, bell of ride and accent

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- › Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- › Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Candidates also have the opportunity of playing from the Hot Rock Drums Grade 4.

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rocks school team will advise you. ■

GRADE 5

The Grade 5 Drum exam is for candidates who have the intermediate skills and techniques and have developed an increasing sense of stylistic conviction. This is demonstrated through instrumental techniques, rhythmic complexity, coordination and balance of the kit and maturing solo and improvisation work. There are two types of exam available at Grade 5, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play either an 8 bar sight reading test, or an 8 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop fill playback and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 5 exam lasts 25 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Sight Reading. The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two tests. Fill playback and recognition and Groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 5 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds. The pieces are over two pages and are designed so the candidate can retain focus and concentrate on notation accuracy, stylistic sense of groove, technical control including execution of stylistic drum techniques,

developing solo and improvisation elements, sync and the communication of the music through performance.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 5 there are six groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 80 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

Eighth, eighth note triplets and sixteenth notes.
To be played first time with singles and with doubles on the repeat

GROUP B: PARADIDDLES

Single paradiddle in sixteenth notes using the whole kit (bass drum follows the right hand)
Triple Paradiddle Sixteenth notes using the whole kit (bass drum follows the right hand)

GROUP C: FLAMS AND RUFFS

Flam accent and single drag tap

GROUP D: ROLLS

Five stroke roll phrase (75bpm)

GROUP E: HANDS AND FEET PATTERNS

Four patterns

GROUP F: FILL

Tempo: 90 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the Fill exercise from the Grade 5 book to a backing track. The groove is shown in bars 1-3 and the examiner will choose one fill from a set of four to be played in bar 4. The candidate is to perform the repeat.

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 5 you have the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. The tests are previously unseen and an example can be found in the Grade 5 book.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 80-120 bpm

At Grade 5 there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar development. At Grade 5 the notation consists of quarter, dotted quarter, eighth, dotted eighth and sixteenth notes and quarter note and eighth note rests in 4/4. The test is 8 bars long and is on the whole kit. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Tempo: 80-120 bpm

In Grade 5, the improvisation and interpretation test contains a small amount of sight reading. This consists of a two bar groove at the beginning of the test. You will be asked to play the notation as indicated and complete the test developing the groove and ending with a two bar drum solo. This is played to a backing track of eight bars.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test is made up of quarter, eighth, eighth note triplets, dotted eighth and sixteenth notes. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from three printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80-120 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the crash, hi hat (open and closed), ride, bell of ride, cross stick, snare and bass drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the

groove back with the metronome backing. You will then be required to identify the style of the groove from an asset of three listed by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 5 you will be asked to identify:

- › Drum voices on the snare
- › The meaning of the time signature marking
- › The meaning of bpm markings
- › Repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al fine markings
- › Stylistic drum notation
- › All note values used in the chosen piece
- › Equivalent rests
- › One type of rudiment that can be used stylistically in the solo or development section of the piece
- › Use of drum voices, rhythms and techniques in drum solo sections

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 5 you will be asked to identify/explain:

- › Any part of the drum kit and drumstick
- › How to tune the drum kit
- › Cross stick, choke cymbal, bell of ride and accent

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- › Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- › Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Candidates also have the opportunity of playing from the Hot Rock Drums Grade 5.

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rocks school team will advise you. ■

GRADE 6

The Grade 6 Drum exam is for candidates who have begun to develop advanced technical control and have a competent grasp of stylistic techniques. At Grade 6 this is shown through mature stylistic conviction, execution of rhythmic complexity, creative and stylistic solo and improvisation work as well as a secure sense of communication and performance. There are two types of exam available at Grade 6, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play a previously unseen Quick Study Piece. There are also two ear tests that continue to develop fill playback and recognition and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 6 exam lasts 30 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Quick Study Piece. The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two tests. Fill playback and recognition and groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 6 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds. The pieces are over four pages. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, execution of stylistic

techniques, technical control, maturing solo and improvisation elements and a clear sense of ownership and communication of the music.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 6 there are five groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

Tempo: 80 bpm

GROUP A: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

Single and double strokes in triplet eighth notes, 16th notes and 16th note sextuplets played alternately as a continuous exercise. To be played first time with singles and with doubles on the repeat.

GROUP B: PARADIDDLES

Flam paradiddle in 16th notes and paradiddle-diddle in sextuplets

GROUP C: RATAMACUES

Single ratamacue.

GROUP D: ROLLS

Five stroke roll phrase with accents on toms.
Nine stroke roll phrase.

GROUP E: STYLISTIC STUDIES

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Your choice of style will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- Rock/Metal: half open hi-hat, busy 16th-note bass drum pattern
- Funk: snare drum ghost notes, quick open/closed hi-hats
- Jazz/Latin/Blues: polyrhythm, advanced co-ordination

QUICK STUDY PIECE

At Grade 6 you will be asked to prepare and play a short Quick Study Piece. The style of your QSP is determined by the stylistic study you selected in the technical exercise section. You will be shown the test and played the track with the notated parts played. Any bars that require improvisation will not be demonstrated. You will then have three minutes to study the test. The backing track will be played twice more. You are allowed to practise during the first run through of the backing track, with the notated parts now absent, before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and it is up to you to create your own interpretation of the music in the parts marked for improvisation.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test will be made up of all values and combinations from quarter note to 16th note sextuplet and quarter and eighth note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from three printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL TEMPO

Tempo: 80-120 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the whole kit with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will

be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing. You will then be required to identify the style of the groove from a set of four listed by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 6 you will be asked to explain:

- Any notation used in the chosen piece
- Any dynamic marking found in the piece
- What makes the drum groove stylistically appropriate
- Use of drum voices, rhythms and techniques in drum solo sections

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 6 you will be asked to explain and demonstrate:

- Care and maintenance of drums
- How to tune the drum kit according to the style of one of the pieces played
- How to convincingly produce: cross stick, choke cymbal, bell of ride, rim-shots, ghost notes, half open hi-hat, accents

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rockscool team will advise you. ■

GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Drum exam is for candidates who have developed advanced technical control and have a thorough grasp of extended stylistic techniques. At Grade 7 this is shown through mature stylistic conviction, execution of rhythmic complexity, mature and creative stylistic solo and improvisation work as well as a commanding sense of communication and performance. There are two types of exam available at Grade 7, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 3 minutes 10 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play a previously unseen Quick Study Piece. There are also two ear tests that continue to develop fill playback and recognition and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 7 exam lasts 30 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Quick Study Piece. The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two tests. Fill playback and recognition and groove recall.
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 7 the pieces last up to a maximum of 3 minutes 10 seconds. The pieces are over four pages. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, commanding execution of stylistic techniques and technical control, mature and creative solo and improvisation elements and a clear

sense of ownership and communication of the music through performance.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 7 there are seven groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES

(65bpm) Single strokes in quarter notes, eighth notes, eighth-note triplets, 16th notes, quintuplet 16th notes, sextuplet 16th notes, septuplet 16th notes and 32nd notes.

GROUP B: PARADIDDLES

(80bpm) Flam paradiddle in 16th notes and paradiddle-diddle in sextuplets with accents on toms.

GROUP C: FLAMS

(80bpm) Pataflafla

GROUP D: RATAMACUES

(80bpm) Single and double ratamacue

GROUP E: ROLLS

(85bpm) Seven stroke roll phrase. Nine stroke roll phrase with accents on toms.

GROUP F: STYLISTIC STUDIES

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Your choice of style will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece.

- Rock/Metal: bell of ride 7/8 pattern, five stroke roll
- Funk: linear funk, nine stroke roll
- Jazz/Latin/Blues: bell of ride 6/8 pattern, splashed hi-hats

QUICK STUDY PIECE

At grade 7 you will be asked to prepare and play a Quick Study Piece. The style of your QSP is determined by the stylistic study you selected in the technical exercise section. You will be shown the test and played the track with the notated parts played. Any bars that require improvisation will not be demonstrated. You will then have three minutes to study the test. The backing track will be played twice more. You are allowed to practise during the first run through of the backing track, with the notated parts now absent, before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and it is up to you to create your own interpretation of the music in the parts marked for improvisation.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test will be made up of all values and combinations from quarter note to 16th note sextuplet and quarter, eighth and sixteenth note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from three printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80-140 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the whole kit with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing. You will then be required to identify the style of the groove from a set of four listed by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 7 you will be asked to explain:

- Any notation used in the chosen piece
- Any dynamic marking found in the piece
- What makes the drum groove stylistically appropriate
- Use of drum voices, rhythms and techniques in drum solo sections

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 7 you will be asked to explain and demonstrate:

- Care and maintenance of drums
- How to tune the drum kit according to the style of one of the pieces played
- How to convincingly produce: cross stick, choke cymbal, bell of ride, rim-shots, ghost notes, half open hi-hat, accents

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 3 minutes 10 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rocks school team will advise you. ■

GRADE 8

The Grade 8 Drum exam is for candidates who have mastered advanced technical control and have a thorough grasp of extended stylistic techniques. At Grade 8 this is shown through mature stylistic conviction, consummate execution of rhythmic complexity, mature and creative stylistic solo and improvisation work as well as a commanding sense of communication and performance. There are two types of exam available at Grade 8, Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. Please see the Examinations section for an explanation of the differences.

GRADE EXAM

Prepared work: candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 3 minutes 45 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

Unprepared work: candidates are required to play a previously unseen Quick Study Piece. There are also two ear tests that continue to develop fill playback and recognition and groove recall and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 8 exam lasts 30 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1st item - Pieces or Technical Exercises.
The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
- 2nd item - Technical Exercises or Pieces.
The candidate will perform the element not chosen above.
- 3rd item - Quick Study Piece. The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play.
- 4th item - Ear Tests. The candidate responds to two tests. Fill playback and recognition and groove recall
- 5th item - General Musicianship Questions.
The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice.

PIECES

At Grade 8 the pieces last up to a maximum of 3 minutes 45 seconds. The pieces are over four pages. Emphasis is on command of complex notation accuracy, execution of stylistic techniques and technical control, mature and creative solo and improvisation elements

and a clear sense of ownership and communication of the music through performance.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 8 there are six groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SINGLE STROKES

(65bpm): Single strokes in quarter notes, eighth notes, eighth-note triplets, 16th notes, quintuplet 16th notes, sextuplet 16th notes, septuplet 16th notes, 32nd notes, nontuplet 32nd notes and double quintuplet 32nd notes

GROUP B: PARADIDDLES

(90bpm) Paradiddle-diddle and alternative paradiddle-diddle in sextuplets around the kit.

GROUP C: TRIPLETS

(85bpm) Swiss Army Triplet and Pataflafla

GROUP D: RATAMACUES

(85bpm) Triple ratamacue

GROUP E: ROLLS

(90bpm) Seven stroke roll phrase with accent on the toms. Combined rolls.

GROUP F: STYLISTIC STUDIES

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Your choice of style will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece.

- Rock/Metal: rhythmic displacement, 5/4 coordination
- Funk: linear funk with 32nd notes, stepped hi hat
- Jazz/Latin/Blues: 3-2 and 2-3 clave

QUICK STUDY PIECE

At grade 8 you will be asked to prepare and play a Quick Study Piece. The style of your QSP is determined by the stylistic study you selected in the technical exercise section. You will be shown the test and played the track with the notated parts played. Any bars that require improvisation will not be demonstrated. You will then have three minutes to study the test. The backing track will be played twice more. You are allowed to practise during the first run through of the backing track, with the notated parts now absent, before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and it is up to you to create your own interpretation of the music in the parts marked for improvisation.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Fill Playback and Recognition and Groove Recall.

FILL PLAYBACK AND RECOGNITION

Tempo: 70 bpm

The examiner will play you a one bar fill played on the snare drum with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. The test will be made up of all values and combinations from quarter note to 16th note sextuplet and quarter, eighth and sixteenth note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the fill back with the metronome backing. The candidate will then be required to identify the test from three printed examples.

GROOVE RECALL

Tempo: 80-160 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar groove that is repeated played on the whole kit with a metronome backing. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the groove back with the metronome backing. You will then be required to identify the style of the groove from a set of four listed by the examiner.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in

the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 8 you will be asked to explain:

- Any notation used in the chosen piece
- Any dynamic marking found in the piece
- What makes the drum groove stylistically appropriate
- Use of drum voices, rhythms and techniques in drum solo sections

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 8 you will be asked to explain and demonstrate:

- Care and maintenance of drums
- How to tune the drum kit according to the style of one of the pieces played
- How to convincingly produce: cross stick, choke cymbal, bell of ride, rim-shots, ghost notes, half open hi-hat, accents

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 3 minutes 45 seconds each.

FREE CHOICE PIECE/OWN CHOICE PIECE
















There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance certificate: 3 free choice pieces






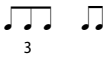

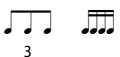
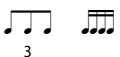
Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website www.rockschool.co.uk. If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rockschool.co.uk and a member of the Rockscool team will advise you. ■

TECHNICAL WORK


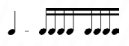
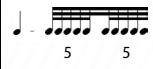
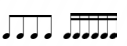




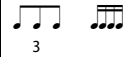
DEBUT GRADE 1, 2 & 3

	Debut	1	2	3
Tempo	♩ = 70	♩ = 70	♩ = 70	♩ = 75
Group A	Single Strokes 	Single & Double Strokes 	Single & Double Strokes 	Single Strokes 
Group B	Double Strokes 	Single & Double Strokes 	Single Paradiddle with Accent 	Double Strokes 
Group C	Paradiddles 	Paradiddles 	Flams 	Single Paradiddle Accents on Snare & Tom 
Group D	Fill	Fill	Triplets 	Flams & Drags 
Group E	×	×	Fill	Triplets. Accents on Snare & Toms 
Group F	×	×	×	Fill

GRADE 4 & 5

	4	5
Tempo	♩ = 75-80	♩ = 80
Group A	Single & Double Strokes 	Single & Double Strokes 
Group B	Paradiddles: Single & Triplet 	Paradiddles: Single & Triplet 
Group C	Flams: Flam Tap & Ruffs 	Flams: Flam Accent & Single Drag Tap 
Group D	Hands & Feet Pattern 	Rolls: 5 Stroke Roll Phrase 
Group E	Fill	Hands & Feet Pattern 
Group F	×	Fill

GRADE 6, 7 & 8

	6	7	8
Tempo	♩ = 80	♩ = 65-85	♩ = 65-90
Group A	Single & Double Strokes 	Single 	Single 
Group B	Paradiddles: Flam Paradiddle, Paradiddle-diddle 	Paradiddles: Flam Paradiddle, Paradiddle-diddle 	Paradiddles: Paradiddle-diddle, Alternative Paradiddle-diddle 
Group C	Ratamacue Single 	Flams Pataflafla 	Triplets: Swiss Army Triplet & Pataflafla 
Group D	Rolls: 5 & 9 Stroke Roll Phrase	Ratamacue: Double & Single	Ratamacue: Triple
Group E	Stylistic Study Rock/Metal Funk Jazz/Latin/Blues	Rolls: 7 & 9 Stroke Roll Phrase	Rolls: 7 Stroke Roll Phrase With Accent on Toms, Combined Rolls
Group F		Stylistic Study Rock/Metal Funk Jazz/Latin/Blues	Stylistic Study Rock/Metal Funk Jazz/Latin/Blues

SIGHT READING AND IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

DEBUT GRADE 1, 2 & 3

	Debut	1	2	3
Sight Reading				
Tempo	♩ = 80	♩ = 80	♩ = 70	♩ = 70-80
Notation	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
Length (Bars)	4	4	4	4
Drums used	Snare	Snare	Snare	Snare
Improvisation & Interpretation				
Tempo	×	♩ = 80	♩ = 80	♩ = 80-100
Notation	×	♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
Length	×	4	4	4
Drums used	×	Hi-hat, Snare, Bass	Hi-hat, Snare, Bass	Crash, Hi-hat, Snare, Bass

QUICK STUDY PIECE

GRADE 6, 7 & 8

	6	7	8
Tempo	♩ = 80-120	♩ = 80-120	♩ = 80-120
Styles	Rock/Metal Funk Jazz/Latin/Blues	Rock/Metal Funk Jazz/Latin/Blues	Rock/Metal Funk Jazz/Latin/Blues
Length (Bars)	12	12	12
Sight reading (Bars)	6	6	6
Solo/Improvisation (Bars)	6	6	6
Preparation/Practice	1 listen with Bass + 3 minutes practice + 1 run through	1 listen with Bass + 3 minutes practice + 1 run through	1 listen with Bass + 3 minutes practice + 1 run through

EAR TESTS

DEBUT GRADE 1, 2 & 3

	Debut	1	2	3
Test 1 - Fill Playback				
Tempo	♩ = 70	♩ = 70	♩ = 70	♩ = 70
Notation	♪ ♪	♪ ♪ ⁂	♪ ♪ ♪ ⁂	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ⁂ 3
Length (Bars)	1	1	1	1
Drums used	Snare	Snare	Snare	Snare
Test 2 - Groove Recall				
Tempo	♩ = 80	♩ = 80	♩ = 80	♩ = 80
Notation	♪ ♪	♪ ♪	♪ ♪	♪ ♪ 7
Length (Bars)	2 repeated	2 repeated	2 repeated	2 repeated
Drums used	Hi-hat, Snare, Drums	Hi-hat, Snare, Drums	Hi-hat (open/closed), Snare, Drums	Crash, Hi-hat (open/closed), Snare, Drums

GRADE 4 & 5

	4	5
Test 1 - Fill Playback		
Tempo	♩ = 70	♩ = 70
Notation	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ⁂ 7 3	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ⁂ 7 3
Length (Bars)	1	1
Drums used	Snare	Snare
Test 2 - Groove Recall		
Tempo	♩ = 80-120	♩ = 80-120
Notation	♪ ♪ ♪ ⁂	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 3
Length (Bars)	2 repeated	2 repeated
Drums used	Crash, Hi-hat (open/closed), Ride, Bell of ride, Cross stick Snare, Drums	Crash, Hi-hat (open/closed), Ride, Bell of ride, Cross stick Snare, Toms, Drums

GRADE 6, 7 & 8

	6	7	8
Test 1 - Fill Playback			
Tempo	♩ = 70	♩ = 70	♩ = 70
Notation			
Length (Bars)	1	1	1
Drums used	Snare	Snare	Snare
Test 2 - Groove Recall			
Tempo	♩ = 80-140	♩ = 80-140	♩ = 80-160
Notation			
Length (Bars)	2 repeated	2 repeated	2 repeated
Tempo	Whole kit	Whole kit	Whole kit <hr/> Time Signatures 4 5 6 7 4 4 8 8

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

PREPARED WORK

	Debut - Grade 2	Grade 3 - Grade 5	Grade 8 - Grade 8
Distinction Pieces 18-20 Technical exercises 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and secure basic techniques • Consistent rhythm / pulse • Notation accuracy detailed throughout • Consistent sync • Highly confident and assured presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and secure techniques • Consistent rhythm / pulse • Notation / harmonic accuracy detailed throughout • Stylistic direction detailed throughout • Convincing and stylistic solo / improv • Consistent sync • Highly confident and assured stylistic performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and secure advanced techniques • Consistent rhythm / pulse • Notation / harmonic accuracy detailed throughout • Stylistic direction detailed throughout • Advanced solo / improv with stylistic conviction • Consistent sync • Comprehensive understanding of complete musical structure • Convincing communication through stylistic performance
Merit Pieces 15-17 Technical exercises 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure basic techniques overall • Secure rhythm / pulse overall • Notation accuracy observed overall • Mainly synchronised • Confident presentation overall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure techniques overall • Secure rhythm / pulse overall • Notation / harmonic accuracy observed overall • Stylistic direction observed overall • Stylistic solo / improv overall • Mainly synchronised • A sense of stylistic performance overall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure advanced techniques overall • Secure rhythm / pulse overall • Detailed notation / harmonic accuracy observed overall • Stylistic direction observed overall • Convincing and stylistic solo / improv overall • Mainly synchronised • Secure understanding of complete musical structure • Good sense of communication through stylistic performance
Pass Pieces 12-14 Technical exercises 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic techniques evident • Rhythm / pulse evident • Notation accuracy evident • Sync evident • Some confidence in presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some secure techniques evident • Generally secure rhythm / pulse • Some notation / harmonic accuracy evident • Some stylistic direction evident • Adequate solo / improv • Sync evident • Some sense of stylistic performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some advanced techniques shown • Generally secure rhythm / pulse • Notation / harmonic accuracy observed • Some stylistic direction observed • Solo / improv with some stylistic conviction • Sync evident • General understanding of musical structure • Some sense of communication through stylistic performance
Below Pass 1 Pieces 6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic techniques not shown • Rhythm/pulse largely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques hesitant and/or incorrect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced techniques hesitant and/or incorrect

Technical exercises 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inaccurate • Notation accuracy largely inaccurate • Sync not achieved • Unsure in presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythm/pulse mostly inaccurate • Notation/harmonic work hesitant and /or incorrect • Stylistic direction hesitant and/or incorrect • Solo/improv limited in stylistic understanding • Sync largely not achieved • Sense of stylistic performance not achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythm/pulse mostly inaccurate • Notation/harmonic work hesitant and /or incorrect • Stylistic direction hesitant and/or incorrect • Solo/improv limited in stylistic understanding • Sync largely not achieved • Hesitant in understanding of musical structure • Communicating of stylistic performance not achieved
Below Pass 2 Pieces 0-5 Technical exercises 0-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete performance • No attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete performance • No attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete performance • No attempt

UNPREPARED WORK

Debut - Grade 8	
Distinction Sight/Improv QSP/Ear Tests 9-10 GMQ 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notation/pitch accuracy correct throughout • Consistent rhythm/pulse • Convincing improv/solo throughout • Consistent sync • Accurate responses
Merit Sight/Improv QSP/Ear Tests 7-8 GMQ 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notation/pitch correct overall • Secure rhythm/pulse overall • Improv/Solo convincing overall • Mainly synchronised • Accurate responses overall
Pass Sight/Improv QSP/Ear Tests 6 GMQ 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notation/pitch accuracy evident • Rhythm/pulse evident • Improv/solo evident and generally appropriate • Sync evident • Adequate Responses
Below Pass 1 Sight/Improv QSP/Ear Tests 3-5 GMQ 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notation/pitch largely inaccurate • Rhythm/pulse largely inaccurate • Improv/solo largely absent or inappropriate • Sync largely absent • Responses vague or incorrect
Below Pass 2 Sight/Improv QSP/Ear Tests 0-2 GMQ 0-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attempt • Responses not offered