



rockschool

GUITAR BASS DRUMS



SYLLABUS GUIDE

2006-2012



rockschool

GUITAR
BASS
DRUMS

Syllabus Guide

2006-2012

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Welcome to the Guitar, Bass and Drums Syllabus

Welcome to the Rockscool 2006 syllabus for electric guitar, bass and drums. This Syllabus Guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded examinations run by Rockscool.

If you have any queries about the syllabus for electric guitar, bass and drums, popular piano, and vocals or any of the Awards, Certificates and Diplomas for Music Practitioners and for Music Educators, or our instrumental and teaching diplomas, then please do not hesitate to call us on **020 8332 6303** or email us at **info@rockscool.co.uk**. The Rockscool website, **www.rockscool.co.uk**, has detailed information on all aspects of our examinations, including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes and marking criteria as well as notated and audio examples of all the types of tests used in the exams and handy tips on how to get the most out of the performance pieces. Companion Guides are also available for Vocals, Guitar, Bass and Drums.

This Syllabus Guide covers the following examinations:

- Grade examinations offered by Rockscool at Grades 1-8
- Performance Certificates offered by Rockscool at Debut and Grades 1-8
- Band exams at Grades 3, 5, 8

In the Guide, the examination requirements for each grade are shown in *italics*.

Examinations

Grade Examinations

Rockschool's graded examinations are made up of the following elements:

- Performance pieces (Debut and Grades 1-8)
- Technical exercises (Grades 1-8)
- Sight Reading **or** Improvisation & Interpretation (Grades 1-5 only)
- Quick study piece (Grades 6-8 only)
- Ear tests (Grades 1-8)
- General musicianship questions (Grades 1-8)

Performance Certificates

Rockschool's performance certificates are available at every grade and consist of the following elements:

- **Debut:** 5 pieces to be selected from the debut pack. No own choice is allowable at this level.
- **Grades 1-8:** 5 performance pieces to be selected from the appropriate grade book or 3 pieces from the appropriate grade book and 2 own choice. For information on criteria for own choice please visit the website at: www.rockschool.co.uk

Band Exams

Rockschool's band exams are available at grades 3, 5 & 8 for guitar, bass and drums and consist of the following elements:

- **Grades 3, 5 and 8:** 5 performance pieces to be selected from the appropriate grade book or 3 pieces from the appropriate grade book and 2 own choice. For information on criteria for own choice please visit the website at: www.rockschool.co.uk

Syllabus Guide for Electric Guitar

Performance Pieces

Rockschool's electric guitar grades are designed to showcase instrumental performance across a range of popular styles. The performances are the benchmark by which the grades are measured and the printed performance repertoire reflects the general standards which players should be able to attain if they are successfully to complete the exam. All the repertoire pieces performed in the exam should be played to a CD backing track.

The performance characteristics of each grade are printed in the relevant grade books and are reproduced below. The grade descriptions assume competence in the areas described in grades lower down the sequence.

- **Debut:** in Debut Guitar you will be concentrating on playing tunes. A player of Debut standard should be able to play up to 20 bars of music in 4/4 time, using simple first position melodies composed of whole, half and quarter notes and associated rests, as well as a range of basic first position chords. The pieces very often use open strings and melodies move mainly between adjacent strings.
- **Grade 1:** a player of Grade 1 standard should be able to play up to 32 bars of music using first position chords and melodies composed of whole, half, quarter and eighth notes and associated rests, tied notes, and dotted half and quarter notes. Performances should include basic legato and staccato playing where marked.
- **Grade 2:** in this grade you are beginning to acquire a range of physical and expressive techniques, including palm muting and the use of double stops on adjacent strings, simple legato and staccato and slides, as well as simple dynamics. In this grade you will also begin to work on your stylistic appreciation.
- **Grade 3:** this grade continues the foundation work started in Grade 2. As a player you will be encountering syncopated eighth and sixteenth note strumming as well as developing the palette of expressive techniques to include fretting hand vibrato, hammer ons and pull offs, slides and simple bends. The pieces of music are now longer, covering two pages and you should be developing your stylistic awareness, taking into account amp and pick up settings for each song.
- **Grade 4:** in this grade you use a range of physical and expressive techniques with confidence, damping and the use of double stops and adjacent strings, legato and staccato, slides, fretting hand vibrato, hammer ons and pull offs, and accents, and you are experimenting with a range of dynamics from very quiet to very loud. In this grade you are continuing to develop your ability to play with stylistic authority.
- **Grade 5:** you will be confident in a range of physical and expressive techniques. You will be able to demonstrate your abilities across a number of styles and have control over tone and sound adjustments to suit the playing style of your choice. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.
- **Grade 6:** in this grade you are developing the confidence of the advanced player across the range of physical and expressive techniques. You will start experimenting with a range of techniques across a number of musical styles. There is a greater emphasis on personal expression and you

will display your own musical personality through ad libbing and soloing. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.

- **Grade 7:** in this grade you are now confident in your abilities across the range of physical and expressive techniques. You will be experimenting with a range of these techniques across a number of styles. You will also be comfortable with a range of rhythms and time signatures other than common time. Your solos will be musically expressive and you will have the confidence to apply modal ideas in a number of soloing contexts. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.
- **Grade 8:** you will play effortlessly with a wide range of physical and expressive techniques at your command. You will be able to use these at will across a range of styles and musical contexts. You will be comfortable playing pieces employing a number of different time signatures (including changes from bar to bar) and you will display mastery of a number of musical styles. Your solos will be highly musical and employ techniques across the range. You will also be highly sensitive to all aspects of musical presentation. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over four pages.

Exam Requirements

Debut: candidates are asked to perform five out of the six pieces printed in the Debut examination pack. No free choice option is allowed.

Grades 1-8: candidates are asked to perform **either** three out of the six pieces printed in the grade packs, **or** two pieces from the grade pack and one brought into the exam by the candidate. This may be either a self-composed piece or a piece of established popular repertoire. If a backing track is used it must be a music minus version (without the guitar part).

Candidates taking Grade 2 and above can adapt the performance pieces to suit their playing style. This is permitted so long as these adaptations keep within the style of the piece. Candidates are required, in any case, to include improvisation passages in addition to those indicated by the score from grade 3.

Guidelines are published by Rockschool for those candidates who wish either to write a piece of their own for performance in the exam or to use as a guide when choosing a piece of established repertoire. Visit the website at www.rockschool.co.uk.

Technical Exercises

The range of technical exercises to be played by candidates is published in each book. These are played to a tempo set for the candidate by the examiner. Candidates can choose to play along with the metronome click or without it. TAB fingerings for guitarists and bass players are offered in the examples as a guide, but candidates may use their own fingering patterns when playing the exercises.

Candidates are asked to prepare the exercises in the keys (where appropriate) and the tempos indicated. The final exercise should be played along to the backing track on the CD

Exam Requirements

Grade 1

These should be played at 80 beats per minute (bpm) in a straight feel: quarter notes.

Group A Scales 1 octave

- *C major scale*
- *A natural minor scale*
- *E & A minor pentatonic scales*

Group B Chords:

- *Power chords: B5, A5, G5 Two note chords to be played as a continuous sequence*
- *Major chords: A, D & E*
- *Minor chords: Am, Dm & Em*

Group C Riff. The riff is played over a four bar backing track. The initial riff pattern is given and candidates are asked to complete the riff by playing the same pattern over a different chord in the subsequent three bars.

Grade 2

These should be played at 100 bpm in a straight feel: quarter notes

Group A Scales 1 octave

- *C & G major scales*
- *E & A natural minor scale*
- *C & G minor pentatonic scales*

Group B Chords:

- *Power chords: B5, A5, G5 Three note chords to be played as a continuous sequence*
- *Major chords: C, F & G*
- *Minor chords: Am7, Dm7 & Em7*

Group C Riff. The riff is played over an eight bar backing track. The initial riff pattern is given (two bars) and candidates are asked to complete the riff by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 3

These should be played at 60 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes

Group A Scales 2 octaves to be prepared in the keys of G, A and B

- *Major scales*
- *Natural minor scale*
- *Minor pentatonic scales*
- *Blues Scales*

Group B Arpeggios 2 octaves to be prepared in the keys of G, A and B

- *Major arpeggios*
- *Minor arpeggios*

Group C Chords:

- *Barre chords: G, Am, Bm to be played as a continuous sequence*
- *Dominant 7 chords: A7, C7, D7 & E7 to be prepared in open position or in barre chord form*

Group D Riff. The riff is played over an eight bar backing track. The initial riff pattern is given

(two bars) and candidates are asked to complete the riff by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 4

These should be played at 80 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes

Group A Scales 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys of G-B, root note 6th string and C-E, root note 5th string

- Major scales
- Natural minor scale
- Major pentatonic scales
- Minor pentatonic scales
- Blues Scales

Group B Arpeggios 2 octaves to be prepared in the same keys as the scales above

- Minor 7 arpeggios
- Dominant 7 arpeggios

Group C Chords

- Extended barre chords: Bm7, A7, G. Play as a continuous sequence

Group D Riff. The riff is played over an eight bar backing track. The initial riff pattern is given (two bars) and candidates are asked to complete the riff by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 5

These should be played at 100 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes

Group A Scales 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys of G-B, root note 6th string

- Minor pentatonic scales: The candidate must prepare all positions and the examiner will ask two consecutive positions

Group B Arpeggios 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys C-E, root note 5th string

- Major arpeggios
- Minor arpeggios
- Minor 7 arpeggios
- Dominant 7 arpeggios

Group C Chords

- Root 5th string barre chords: C, Dm, Em7, F, G. Play as a continuous sequence

Group D Legato Study. Candidates should prepare the eight bar legato study to be performed with the backing track.

Grade 6

These should be played at 60 bpm in a straight feel: sixteenth notes

Group A Scales & Modes 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys of G-B, root note 6th string

- Ionian, Dorian and Phrygian modes. The candidate should prepare all and they will be asked to play as pairs: Ionian-Dorian or Dorian-Phrygian
- Diminished scales

- *Harmonic Minor scales*

Group B Arpeggios 2 octaves to be prepared in the keys as above, root note 6th string

- *Major 7 arpeggios*
- *Minor 7b5 arpeggios*
- *Diminished 7 arpeggios*
- *Dominant 7 triplet arpeggios*

Group C Chords: play as a continuous sequence. Candidates should prepare both sequences and the examiner will select one

- *Root 6th string chords: Gmaj7, Bbdim, F#7b5, Gmaj7. Sequence to be prepared chromatically in keys G-B*
- *Root 5th string chords: Cmaj7, Ebdim, Bm7b5, Cmaj7. Sequence to be prepared chromatically in keys C-E*

Group D Tapping Study. Candidates should prepare the eight bar tapping study to be performed with the backing track.

Grade 7

These should be played at 70 bpm in a straight feel: sixteenth notes

Group A Scales & Modes 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys of G-B, root note 6th string

- *Lydian, Mixolydian and Aeolian modes. To be prepared consecutively*
- *Chromatic scales*
- *Whole Tone scales*

Group B Arpeggios 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys C-E, root note 5th string

- *Major 7 arpeggios*
- *Minor 7 arpeggios*
- *Dominant 7 arpeggios*
- *Diminished 7 triplet arpeggios*

Group C Chords: play as a continuous sequence. Candidates should prepare both sequences and the examiner will select one.

- *Sequence 1 Root 6th string chords: Gmaj9, Em9, Am9, D9. Sequence to be prepared chromatically in keys G-B*
- *Sequence 2 Root 5th string chords: Cmaj9, Am9, Dm9, G9. Sequence to be prepared chromatically in keys C-E*

Group D Harmonics Study. Candidates should prepare the eight bar harmonics study. To be played with the backing track

Grade 8

These should be played at 80 bpm in a straight feel: sixteenth notes

Group A Scales & Modes 2 octaves to be prepared chromatically in the keys of G-B, root note 6th string

- *Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian & Aeolian modes. To be played as three consecutive scales from a note and mode given by the examiner.*

Group B Arpeggios 2 octaves to be prepared in the keys as above, root note 6th string

- Dominant 7#5 arpeggios
- Dominant 7b5 arpeggios
- Minor 7#5 arpeggios

Group C Chords: play as a continuous sequence. Candidates should prepare both sequences and the examiner will select one.

- Sequence 1 Root 6th string chords: Am7#5, D7b5, D7#5, G. Sequence to be prepared chromatically in keys G-B
- Sequence 2 Root 5th string chords: Dm7#5, G7b5, G7#5, C. Sequence to be prepared chromatically in keys C-E

Group D Sweep picking study. Candidates should prepare the eight bar sweep picking study. To be played with the backing track

Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation (Grades 1-5 only)

Candidates attempting Grades 1-5 inclusive have a choice of taking either the sight reading or the improvisation & interpretation test. Examples of the type of tests required in the exam are printed in the grade packs. Further examples can be found in the Companion Guide.

Please note that at Grades 4 and 5, the sight reading and improvisation & interpretation tests contain a small amount of the other skill. The requirements are shown for each grade below.

Exam Requirements: Sight Reading

Candidates will be asked to prepare a sight reading test which is given to them by the examiner. The test may be in one of the following styles: blues and rock (Grades 1-3) or blues, funk, rock or jazz (Grades 4-5). The examiner will allow the candidate 90 seconds to prepare the test and will set the tempo on a metronome. The candidate can choose to play with or without the metronome for the duration of the test. TAB fingerings are given along with standard notation in all sight reading tests.

Grade 1: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time. (C major & A minor)

Grade 2: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time. (C major, A minor, G major, E minor)

Grade 3: 8 bars, 70-90 bpm, common time. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade. The test may include hammer ons.

Grade 4: At this Grade there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar ending. The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. 8 bars, 70-90 bpm, time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade. The test may include hammer on, pull offs bend up and slides.

Grade 5: At this Grade there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar ending. The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. 12 bars, 60-90 bpm, time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade. The test may include hammer ons, pull offs, bend up, slides and vibrato.

Exam Requirements: Improvisation & Interpretation

Candidates will be asked to prepare an improvisation & interpretation test which is given to them by the examiner. The test may be in one of the following styles: blues and rock (Grades 1-3) or blues, funk, rock or jazz (Grades 4-5).

Grades 1-2: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised line to a backing track of four bars. The candidate may choose to play either rhythmic chords or a melodic lead line. The candidate is allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is then allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session. Grade 1: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time. (C major & A minor) Grade 2: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time. (C major, G major, A minor, E minor).

Grade 3: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised line to a backing track of eight bars. The candidate may choose to play either rhythmic chords or a melodic lead line. The candidate is allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is then allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session. 8 bars, 70-90 bpm, common time. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade.

Grades 4-5: in these grades there is a small element of sight reading. This takes the form of a two bar chord rhythm at the beginning of the test. The candidate will be asked to play the chords in the rhythms indicated and to complete the test using an improvised line made up of chords and lead where indicated. This is played to a backing track of no more than eight bars. The candidate is allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is then allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session. Grade 4: 8 bars, 70-90 bpm, time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Grade 5: 12 bars, 60-90 bpm, time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade.

Quick Study Piece (Grades 6-8 only)

Candidate attempting any of these grades will be asked to perform a Quick Study Piece (QSP). This is given to the candidate 20 minutes before they enter the exam room and candidates entered for these grades are asked to arrive at the exam centre at least ten minutes before they are given their QSP to practise.

Candidates will be asked to perform from a paper outline and a CD given to them by the examiner. The outline is in the form of a 'lead sheet' or 'session chart' and will contain information on style, tempo and length, along with other musical information such as dynamics and marked solo passages. TAB fingerings are also included where appropriate.

The CD contains a backing track to be used for both practise and performance in the examination. Each QSP will be in the style of rock, funk, blues or jazz. The performance should reflect the style of the piece and candidates should use the spaces in the music to develop their musical ideas.

Exam Requirements: Quick Study Piece

Grade 6: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 4 performance. Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Grade 7: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 5 performance. Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Grade 8: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 6 performance. Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Ear Tests (Grades 1-8)

Candidates will be asked to take two ear tests in the exam. The tests are played on CD and use real instrument sounds. Each test is played to the candidate by the examiner twice and the candidate plays each test to a drum backing. Candidates may use their instrument while the CD is playing.

Exam Requirements: Test 1 – Melodic Recall

Grade 1: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a two bar melody composed from the first three notes of the C major scale (C, D & E). Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 90bpm.

Grade 2: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a two bar melody composed from the C or G minor pentatonic scales. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 90bpm.

Grade 3: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the G major or G minor pentatonic scales. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 80bpm. The test may include hammer ons and pull offs.

Grade 4: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the C major or C minor scales. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to

practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 80bpm. The test may include hammer on, pull offs and slides.

Grade 5: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the G, A or B minor pentatonic scales. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 80bpm. The test may include hammer ons, pull offs, slides, vibrato and bends.

Grade 6: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the G, A or B Ionian mode. Candidates will hear the tonic note and will hear the test twice with drum and bass backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum and bass backing. The test is continuous. 70-90bpm. The test may include hammer ons, pull offs, slides, vibrato and bends.

Grade 7: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the G, A or B Aeolian mode. Candidates will hear the tonic note and will hear the test twice with drum and bass backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum and bass backing. The test is continuous. 70-90bpm. The test may include hammer ons, pull offs, slides, vibrato and bends.

Grade 8: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the G, A or B Dorian or Mixolydian mode. Candidates will hear the tonic note and will hear the test twice with drum and bass backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum and bass backing. The test is continuous. 70-100bp. The test may include hammer ons, pull offs, slides, vibrato and bends.

Exam Requirements: Test 2 – Rhythmic Recall

Grade 1: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a two bar rhythm on the bottom E string on the guitar. The rhythm is played twice with a drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the rhythm with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 90 bpm

Grade 2: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a two bar rhythm played on an open E minor 7 chord on the guitar. The rhythm is played twice with a drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the rhythm with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 90 bpm

Exam Requirements: Test 2 – Chord and Rhythm Recall

Grades 3-5: The test will include chord types and keys used in the technical work up to and including the appropriate grade. Candidates are asked play back on their instrument a four bar rhythmic chord sequence played on the guitar. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the piece

is played twice with a drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and the test will recommence. The candidate is required to play the rhythmic chord sequence with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 80 bpm.

Grades 6-8: The test will include chord types and keys used in the technical work up to and including the appropriate grade. Candidates are asked play back on their instrument a four bar rhythmic chord sequence played on the guitar. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the piece is played twice with a drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and the test will recommence. The candidate is required to play the rhythmic chord sequence with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 60-90 bpm.

General Musicianship Questions

Each Rockschoool grade finishes with five General Musicianship Questions. These questions are asked of the candidate orally by the examiner, who uses a performance piece played by the candidate as a starting point.

Exam Requirements

Grades 1-6: candidates will be asked questions in two main areas: (i) music notation and (ii) knowledge of the instrument.

Grades 7 and 8: in addition to the above candidates will also be asked a third category: history and styles.

A complete list of the topics covered in the music notation and theory category is printed in each book. Sample questions may be found on the Rockschoool website and in the Companion Guide. All questions concerning instrument knowledge will deal with the instrument played by the candidate.

Syllabus Guide for Bass

Performance Pieces

Rockschool's bass grades are designed to showcase instrumental performance across a range of popular styles. The performances are the benchmark by which the grades are measured and the printed performance repertoire reflects the general standards which players should be able to attain if they are successfully to complete the exam. All the repertoire pieces performed in the exam should be played to a CD backing track.

The performance characteristics of each grade are printed in the relevant grade books and are reproduced below. The grade descriptions assume competence in the areas described in grades lower down the sequence.

- **Debut:** in Debut Bass you will be concentrating on playing tunes. A player of Debut standard should be able to play up to 20 bars of music in 4/4 time, using simple first position grooves composed of whole, half and quarter notes and associated rests. The pieces very often use open strings and the grooves move mainly between adjacent strings.
- **Grade 1:** a player of Grade 1 standard should be able to play up to 32 bars of music using first position grooves composed of whole, half, quarter and eighth notes and associated rests, tied notes, and dotted half and quarter notes. Performances should include basic legato and staccato playing where marked.
- **Grade 2:** in this grade you are beginning to acquire a range of physical and expressive techniques, including staccato and slides, as well as simple dynamics. In this grade you will also begin to work on your stylistic appreciation.
- **Grade 3:** in this grade you will be encountering syncopated eighth and sixteenth notes as well as developing the palette of expressive techniques to include slapped and pulled notes, fretting hand vibrato, hammer ons and pull offs, slides and simple bends. The pieces of music are now longer, covering two pages and you should be developing your stylistic awareness, taking into account tone settings for each song.
- **Grade 4:** in this grade you use a range of physical and expressive techniques with confidence, legato and staccato, slides, hammer ons and pull offs, slaps and pulls and accents and you are experimenting with a range of dynamics from very quiet to very loud. In this grade you are continuing to develop your ability to play with stylistic authority.
- **Grade 5:** as a player you will be confident in a range of physical and expressive techniques, including the use of double stops. You will be able to demonstrate your abilities across a number of styles and have control over tone and sound adjustments to suit the playing style of your choice. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.
- **Grade 6:** in this grade you are developing the confidence of the advanced player across the range of physical and expressive techniques. You will start experimenting with a range of techniques across a number of musical styles. There is a greater emphasis on personal expression and you will display your own musical personality through ad libbing and soloing. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.

- **Grade 7:** in this grade you are now confident in your abilities across the range of physical and expressive techniques. You will be experimenting with a range of these techniques across a number of styles. You will also be comfortable with a range of rhythms and time signatures other than common time. Your solos will be musically expressive and you will have the confidence to apply modal ideas in a number of soloing contexts. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.
- **Grade 8:** you will play effortlessly with a wide range of physical and expressive techniques at your command. You will be able to use these at will across a range of styles and musical contexts. You will be comfortable playing pieces employing a number of different time signatures (including changes from bar to bar) and you will display mastery of a number of musical styles. Your solos will be highly musical and employ techniques across the range. You will also be highly sensitive to all aspects of musical presentation. Please note that some of the tunes may now be written out over three pages.

Exam Requirements

Debut: candidates are asked to perform five out of the six pieces printed in the Debut examination pack. No free choice option is allowed.

Grades 1-8: candidates are asked to perform **either** three out of the six pieces printed in the grade packs, **or** two pieces from the grade pack and one brought into the exam by the candidate. This may be either a self-composed piece or a piece of established popular repertoire. If a backing track is used it must be a music minus version (without the bass part).

Candidates taking Grade 2 and above can adapt the performance pieces to suit their playing style. This is permitted so long as these adaptations keep within the style of the piece. Candidates are required, in any case, to include improvisation passages in addition to those indicated by the score from grade 3.

Guidelines are published by Rockschool for those candidates who wish either to write a piece of their own for performance in the exam or to use as a guide when choosing a piece of established repertoire.

Technical Exercises

The range of technical exercises to be played by candidates is published in each book. These are played to a tempo set for the candidate by the examiner. Candidates can choose to play along with the metronome click or without it. TAB fingerings for guitarists and bass players are offered in the examples as a guide, but candidates may use their own fingering patterns when playing the exercises.

Candidates are asked to prepare all the exercises in the keys (where appropriate) and the tempos indicated. The final exercise/study should be played along to the backing track provided on the CD.

Exam Requirements

Grade 1

These should be played at 70 beats per minute (bpm) in a straight feel: quarter notes. Groups A and B should be prepared in the keys of E, A & G.

Group A Scales 1 octave

- Major scale
- Minor pentatonic scale

Group B Arpeggios:

- Major arpeggios:
- Minor arpeggios:

Group C Bassline. The bassline is played over a four bar backing track. The initial riff pattern is given in the first bar and candidates are asked to complete the line by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 2

These should be played at 80 bpm in a straight feel: quarter notes. Groups A and B should be prepared in the keys of A, G, C & B.

Group A Scales 1 octave

- Major scale
- Natural minor scale
- Minor pentatonic scale

Group B Arpeggios:

- Major arpeggios:
- Minor arpeggios:

Group C Bassline. The bassline is played over an eight bar backing track. The initial riff pattern is given in the first two bars and candidates are asked to complete the line by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 3

These should be played at 85 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes. Groups A and B should be prepared in the keys of G, C, B, D & F.

Group A Scales 1 octave

- Major scale
- Natural minor scale
- Major pentatonic scale
- Blues scale

Group B Arpeggios:

- Major arpeggios
- Minor arpeggios
- Minor 7 arpeggios
- Dominant 7 arpeggios

Group C Bassline. The bassline is played over an eight bar backing track. The initial riff pattern

is given in the first bar and candidates are asked to complete the line by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 4

These should be played at 85 bpm in a straight feel: major scale and major arpeggio quarter notes, all others eighth notes. Groups A and B should be prepared in the keys of B, D, Bb, F# & Eb.

Group A Scales & Modes 1 octave

- Major scale prepared slap (quarter notes)
- Harmonic minor scale
- Dorian mode

Group B Arpeggios

- Major arpeggios prepared pop (quarter notes)
- Minor arpeggios
- Major 7 arpeggios
- Minor 7 arpeggios
- Dominant 7 arpeggios

Group C Bassline. The bassline is played over a backing track. The initial riff pattern is given in the first bar and candidates are asked to complete the line by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 5

These should be played at 90 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes. Groups A and B should be prepared in the keys of D, Bb, F#, Ab & C#.

Group A Scales & Modes 1 octave

- Major scale, prepared slap & muted slap
- Minor pentatonic scale prepared hammer on and pull off
- Dorian mode
- Mixolydian mode

Group B Arpeggios

- Major arpeggios prepared pop & muted pop
- Major 7 arpeggios
- Minor 7b5 arpeggios
- Dominant 9 arpeggios
- Diminished 7 arpeggios

Group C Bassline. The bassline is played over a backing track. The initial riff pattern is given in the first bar and candidates are asked to complete the line by moving the same pattern on to the indicated root of a different chord over the subsequent bars.

Grade 6

These should be played at 100 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes. Groups A and B should be prepared chromatically in the keys E-G inclusive.

Group A Scales 2 octaves

- Major scale

- *Minor pentatonic scale, shape 2*
- *Minor pentatonic scale, shape 3*
- *Natural minor scale*
- *Chromatic scale with ghost notes*

Group B Chords & Arpeggios,

- *Chords: major, minor, dominant 7, minor 7 to be plucked or strummed*
- *Minor 7b5 arpeggios*
- *Dominant 9 arpeggios*
- *Diminished 7 arpeggios*

Group C Bassline. The bassline is played over a backing track. The initial riff pattern is given in the first two bars and candidates are asked to complete the line by playing the same pattern over a different chord in subsequent bars.

Grade 7

These should be played at 120 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes. Groups A and B should be prepared chromatically in the keys G#-B inclusive.

Group A Scales & Modes, 2 octaves

- *Major scale*
- *Mixolydian scale*
- *Minor pentatonic scale*
- *Jazz melodic minor scale*

Group B Chords & Arpeggios

- *Chords: dominant 7, major 7, minor 7, major 6 to be plucked or strummed*
- *Major arpeggios 2 octaves*
- *Minor arpeggios 2 octaves*
- *Dominant 7 arpeggios 2 octaves*
- *Minor 7 arpeggios 2 octaves*

Group C Bassline. At this grade, candidates will be asked to play one of two walking root 5th bassline patterns to an eight bar backing track. The pattern will be chosen by the examiner.

Grade 8

These should be played at 140 bpm in a straight feel: eighth notes. Groups A and B should be prepared chromatically in the keys C-Eb inclusive.

Group A Scales & Modes, 2 octaves

- *Major scale*
- *Dorian scale*
- *Superlocrian (altered) scale*
- *Diminished (whole tone/half tone) scale*

Group B Arpeggios

- *Major arpeggio inversion (all inversions)*
- *Minor arpeggio inversion (all inversions)*

Group C Harmonics. At this grade, candidates will be asked to perform the Harmonics study to a backing track.

Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation (Grades 1-5 only)

Candidates attempting Grades 1-5 inclusive have a choice of taking either the sight reading or the improvisation & interpretation test. Examples of the type of tests required in the exam are printed in the grade packs. Further examples can be found in the Companion Guide.

Please note that at Grades 4 and 5, the sight reading and improvisation & interpretation tests contain a small amount of the other skill. The requirements are shown for each grade below.

Exam Requirements: Sight Reading

Candidates will be asked to prepare a sight reading test which is given to them by the examiner. The test may be in one of the following styles: blues and rock (Grades 1-3) or blues, funk, rock or jazz (Grades 4-5). The examiner will allow the candidate 90 seconds to prepare the test and will set the tempo on a metronome. The candidate can choose to play with or without the metronome for the duration of the test. TAB fingerings are given along with standard notation in all sight reading tests.

Grade 1: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time. (A & E minor pentatonic)

Grade 2: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time. (C & A major, C & A minor)

Grade 3: 8 bars, 60-90 bpm, common time. (G, F, C major; G, F, C minor)

Grade 4: At this Grade there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar ending. The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. 8 bars, 60-90 bpm, time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade.

Grade 5: At this Grade there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar ending. The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. 12 bars, 60-90 bpm, time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade.

Exam Requirements: Improvisation & Interpretation

Candidates will be asked to prepare an improvisation & interpretation test which is given to them by the examiner. The test may be in one of the following styles: blues and rock (Grades 1-3) or blues, funk, rock or jazz (Grades 4-5).

Grades 1-2: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised line to a backing track of four bars. The candidate is then allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session. Grade 1: 70 bpm, common time. Grade 2: 70 bpm, common time. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade.

Grade 3: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised line to a backing track of eight bars. The candidate is then allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session. Grade 3: 8 bars, 70-90 bpm, common time. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade

Grades 4-5: : in these grades there is a small element of sight reading. This takes the form of a two bar bass line at the beginning of the test. The candidate will be asked to play the bassline as indicated and to complete the test using an improvised line made up from the chord symbols provided. The candidate is then allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session. Grade 4: 8 bars, 70-90 bpm 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Grade 5: 12 bars 60-90 bpm, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4. Keys to be taken from the technical exercises at this grade.

Quick Study Piece (Grades 6-8 only)

Candidate attempting any of these grades will be asked to perform a Quick Study Piece (QSP). This is given to the candidate 20 minutes before they enter the exam room and candidates entered for these grades are asked to arrive at the exam centre at least ten minutes before they are given their QSP to practise.

Candidates will be asked to perform from a paper outline and a CD given to them by the examiner. The outline is in the form of a 'lead sheet' or 'session chart' and will contain information on style, tempo and length, along with other musical information such as dynamics and marked solo passages. TAB fingerings are also included where appropriate.

The CD contains a backing track to be used for both practise and performance in the examination. Each QSP will be in the style of rock, funk, blues or jazz. The performance should reflect the style of the piece and candidates should use the spaces in the music to develop their musical ideas.

Exam Requirements: Quick Study Piece

Grade 6: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 4 performance.

Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Grade 7: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 5 performance.

Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Grade 8: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 6 performance.

Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Ear Tests (Grades 1-8)

Candidates will be asked to take two ear tests in the exam. The tests are played on CD and use real instrument sounds. Each test is played to the candidate by the examiner twice and the candidate plays each test to either a drum backing (Grades 1-5) or to a guitar and drum backing (Grades 6-8). Candidates may use their instrument while the CD is playing.

Exam Requirements: Test 1 – Melodic Recall

Grade 1: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a two bar melody composed from the first three notes of the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G & A). Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 70 bpm.

Grade 2: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a two bar melody composed from the C major scale. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 70 bpm.

Grade 3: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the F major pentatonic scale. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing. The test is continuous. 80 bpm.

Grade 4: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the F# minor scale. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. The melody may contain an element of slap **or** pop. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing and to include the appropriate technical aspects in their response. The test is continuous. 80bpm.

Grade 5: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a four bar melody composed from the F# major pentatonic scales. Candidates will hear the tonic note and told the starting note and will hear the test twice with drum backing. The melody may contain an element of slap **and** pop. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the melody with the drum backing and to include the appropriate technical aspects in their response. The test is continuous. 80bpm.

Grade 6: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a bass line of four bars scored for guitar, bass and drums composed in the keys of the technical exercises at grade 6. Candidates will be told the key, hear the tonic and the test twice with full band backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the bass line with the guitar and drum backing. The test is continuous. 70-90bpm

Grade 7: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a bass line of four bars scored for guitar, bass and drums composed in the keys of the technical exercises at grade 7. Candidates will be told the key, hear the tonic and the test twice with full band backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the bass line with the guitar and drum backing. The test is continuous. 70-90bpm.

Grade 8: candidates are asked to play back on their instrument a bass line of four bars scored for guitar, bass and drums composed in the keys of the technical exercises at grade 8. Candidates will be told the key, hear the tonic and the test twice with drum backing. There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and then the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the bass line with the guitar and drum backing. The test is continuous. 70-90bpm.

Exam Requirements: Test 2 – Rhythmic Recall

Grade 1: candidates are asked to play back a two bar rhythm played on CD on the bottom E string on the bass. The rhythm is played twice. 70 bpm.

Grade 2: candidates are asked to play back a two bar rhythm played on CD on the bottom E string on the bass. The rhythm is played twice. 70 bpm.

Exam Requirements: Test 2 – Harmonic Recall

Grade 3: candidates are asked to play back on the bass the root notes of a four bar chord sequence played on CD. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the sequence is played twice with a drum backing. (There is a short break in the test for the candidate to practise and the test will recommence and the candidate is required to play the root notes with the drum backing.) In the keys of F major or minor and consisting of chords I, IV, V. The test is continuous. 80 bpm.

Grade 4-5: candidates are asked play back on the bass the root notes in the given rhythm of a four bar rhythmic chord sequence played on CD. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the sequence is played twice with a drum backing. There is a short practice break and the test will recommence. The candidate is required to play the rhythmic root notes with the drum backing. Grade 4: keys of F# major or minor and consisting of chords I, IV, V. Grade 5: keys of F# or Bb major or minor and consisting of chords I, II, IV, V. The test is continuous. 80 bpm.

Exam Requirements: Test 2 – Harmonic Recognition & Recall

Grade 6: candidates are asked play back on the bass the root notes and identify the chord types from a four bar chord sequence played on CD. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the sequence is played twice. 60 - 90 bpm. Keys of the technical exercises at grade 6.

Grade 7: candidates are asked play back on the bass the root notes and identify the chord types from a four bar chord sequence played on CD. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the sequence is played twice. 60 - 90 bpm. Keys of the technical exercises at grade 7.

Grade 8: candidates are asked play back on the bass the root notes and identify the chord types from a four bar chord sequence played on CD. Candidates are told the tonic chord and the sequence is played twice. 60 - 90 bpm. Keys of the technical exercises at grade 8.

General Musicianship Questions

Each Rockschooll grade finishes with five General Musicianship Questions. These questions are asked of the candidate orally by the examiner, who uses a performance piece played by the candidate as a starting point.

Exam Requirements

Grades 1-6: candidates will be asked questions in two main areas: (i) music notation and (ii) knowledge of the instrument.

Grade 7 and 8: in addition to the above candidates will also be asked a third category: history and styles.

A complete list of the topics covered in the music notation and theory category is printed in each book. Sample questions may be found on the Rockschooll website and in the Companion Guide. All questions concerning instrument knowledge will deal with the instrument played by the candidate.

Syllabus Guide for Drums

Performance Pieces

Rockschool's drum grades are designed to showcase instrumental performance across a range of popular styles. The performances are the benchmark by which the grades are measured and the printed performance repertoire reflects the general standards which players should be able to attain if they are successfully to complete the exam. All the repertoire pieces performed in the exam should be played to a CD backing track.

The performance characteristics of each grade are printed in the relevant grade books and are reproduced below. The grade descriptions assume competence in the areas described in grades lower down the sequence.

- **Debut:** in Debut Drums you will be concentrating on playing tunes. A player of Debut standard should be able to play up to 20 bars of music in 4/4 time, using simple grooves composed of quarter and eighth notes and associated rests. The hi hat remains closed at all times during the pieces. There are simple fills notated and can be found at the ends of each four bar pattern. These pieces will only consist hi hat, snare and bass drum.
- **Grade 1:** A player of Grade 1 standard should be able to play up to 32 bars of music composed of quarter and eighth notes and associated rests. There are simple notated fills usually played at the end of a four or eight bar section as well as some variations in the basic groove. Some hi hats are played open and crash and ride cymbals are also played.
- **Grade 2:** in this grade you are beginning to develop your groove playing while building a solid technical foundation for the future. Grooves feature development and variation and you may be asked to show this in your playing. Notated fills feature at the end of four or eight bar sections. In this grade you will also begin to work on your stylistic appreciation. Basic dynamics will be used.
- **Grade 3:** this grade continues the foundation work started in Grade 2. As a player you will be encountering syncopated eighth and sixteenth note grooves and a greater degree of hand-foot co-ordination around the kit. The pieces of music are now longer, covering two pages, giving you opportunities for inventive fills (with the use of toms) which feature at the end of four or eight bar sections as well as the start of some pieces. Graduated dynamics will be used in the pieces.
- **Grade 4:** in this grade you will use a range of physical and expressive techniques with confidence including those drawn from the technical exercise section of the exam. The rhythms are more complex with sixteenth and dotted notes and the syncopations are now also more complex. You will be experimenting with a range of dynamics from very quiet to very loud. It is at this grade that you are continuing to develop your ability to play with stylistic sensitivity and authority.
- **Grade 5:** as a player you will be confident in a range of physical and expressive techniques. You will be able to demonstrate your abilities across a number of styles and have control over sound and volume adjustments to suit the playing styles of your choice.
- **Grade 6:** in this grade you are developing the confidence of the advanced player across the range of physical and expressive techniques. You will start experimenting with a range of techniques across a number of musical styles. There is a greater emphasis on personal expression and you will display your own musical personality through ad libbing and soloing.

- **Grade 7:** in this grade you are now confident in your abilities across the range of physical and expressive techniques. You will be experimenting with a range of these techniques across a number of styles. You will also be comfortable with a range of rhythms and time signatures other than common time. Your solos will be musically expressive and you will have the confidence to apply varied rhythmic ideas around the kit in a number of soloing contexts.
- **Grade 8:** you will play effortlessly with a wide range of physical and expressive techniques at your command. You will be able to use these at will across a range of styles and musical contexts. You will be comfortable playing pieces employing a number of different time signatures (including changes from bar to bar) and you will display mastery of a number of musical styles. Your solos will be highly musical and employ techniques across the range. You will also be highly sensitive to all aspects of musical presentation.

Exam Requirements

Debut: candidates are asked to perform five out of the six pieces printed in the Debut examination pack. No free choice option is allowed.

Grades 1-8: candidates are asked to perform **either** three out of the six pieces printed in the grade packs, **or** two pieces from the grade pack and one brought into the exam by the candidate. This may be either a self-composed piece or a piece of established popular repertoire. If a backing track is used it must be a music minus version (without the drum part).

Candidates taking Grade 2 and above can adapt the performance pieces to suit their playing style. This is permitted so long as these adaptations keep within the style of the piece. Candidates are required, in any case, to include improvisation passages in addition to those indicated by the score from Grade 3.

Guidelines are published by Rockschoool for those candidates who wish either to write a piece of their own for performance in the exam or to use as a guide when choosing a piece of established repertoire.

Technical Exercises

The range of technical exercises to be played by candidates is published in each book. These are played to a tempo set for the candidate by the examiner. From grade 1 to 3 candidates can choose to play along with the metronome click or without it **but from grade 4 playing with the metronome is compulsory. Sticking is offered in the examples as a guide, but in some cases candidates may use their own sticking patterns when playing the exercises. The exercises should be played with sticks, the use of hot rods, brushes and other bitters is not allowed.**

Candidates are asked to prepare all the exercises at the tempos indicated. The final exercise should be played along to the backing track provided on the CD.

Exam Requirements

Groups A-D

Grade 1: Groups A-D played on the snare drum

Group A: Single Strokes – in eighth notes and triplet eighth notes. 70 bpm.

Group B: Double Strokes – in eighth notes. 70 bpm.

Group C: Paradiddles -standard paradiddle in sixteenth notes. 70 bpm.

Group D: Triplets – standard triplet in eighth notes. 70 bpm.

Group E: Fill – candidates are asked to play a one bar groove repeated consisting of three notated bars (kick drum, snare and hi hat) in a rock style and one of the four notated fills nominated by the examiner. This is played to a backing track. 80 bpm.

Grade 2:

Group A: Single Strokes – in eighth & sixteenth notes. 70 bpm

Group B: Double Strokes – in eighth & sixteenth notes. 70 bpm

Group C: Paradiddles – standard & inverted paradiddles in sixteenth notes. 70 bpm

Group D: Flams – flams in quarter notes. 70 bpm

Group E: Triplets – standard triplet in eighth notes incorporating toms. 70 bpm

Group F: Fill – candidates are asked to play a one bar groove repeated consisting of three notated bars (kick drum, snare and hi hat) in a rock style and one of the four notated fills nominated by the examiner. This is played to a backing track. 75 bpm.

Grade 3

Group A: Single Strokes – in eighth, triplet eighth & sixteenth notes. Played as a continuous sequence. 75 bpm.

Group B: Double Strokes – in sixteenth notes. 70 bpm.

Group C: Paradiddles – standard & inverted paradiddles in sixteenth notes, snare drum and moving around the toms. 70 bpm.

Group D: Flams & Drags – flams & drags in quarter notes. 70 bpm.

Group E: Triplets – standard & reversed triplets in eighth notes incorporating toms. 70 bpm.

Group F: Fill – candidates are asked to play a one bar groove repeated consisting of three notated bars (kick drum, snare and hi hat) in a hip hop style and one of the four notated fills nominated by the examiner. This is played to a backing track. 75 bpm.

Grade 4

Group A: Single & Double Strokes – in eighth, triplet eighth & sixteenth notes. Played as a continuous sequence. The examiner will nominate stroke which should be played. 75 bpm.

Group B: Paradiddles – standard & inverted paradiddle using kick drum, snare and hi hat. 75 bpm.

Group C: Rolls – five stroke roll. 70 bpm.

Group D: Flams, Drags & Ruffs – flam taps in eighth notes, drags & ruffs in quarter notes. 75 bpm.

Group E: Hands & Feet Patterns – four patterns around the kit, two in sixteenth notes and two in triplet rhythm. 80 bpm.

Group F: Fill – candidates are asked to play a one bar groove repeated consisting of three notated

bars (kick drum, snare, hi hat and crash cymbal) in a funk style and one of the four notated hand and feet patterns from Group E above nominated by the examiner. This is played to a backing track. 80 bpm.

Grade 5

Group A: Single & Double Strokes – in eighth, triplet eighth & sixteenth notes. Played as a continuous sequence. The examiner will nominate which should be played. 80 bpm.

Group B: Paradiddles – standard & inverted paradiddle using kick drum, snare and hi hat. 80 bpm

Group C: Rolls – five & seven stroke rolls. 75 bpm.

Group D: Flams, Drags & Ruffs – flams in triplet eighth notes, drags in eighth notes & ruffs in quarter notes. 80 bpm.

Group E: Hands & Feet Patterns – four patterns around the kit, two in sixteenth notes and two in triplet rhythm. 90 bpm.

Group F: Fill – candidates are asked to play a one bar groove repeated consisting of three notated bars (kick drum, snare, hi hat and crash cymbal) in a metal style and one of the four notated hand and feet patterns from Group E above nominated by the examiner. This is played to a backing track. 90 bpm.

Grade 6

Group A: Single & Double Strokes – in triplet eighth, sixteenth or sextuplet sixteenth notes. Played as a continuous sequence. The examiner will nominate which stroke should be played. 80 bpm.

Group B: Paradiddles – standard paradiddle in sixteenth notes with moving accent. 80 bpm.

Group C: Rolls – nine stroke roll. 80 bpm.

Group D: Flam & Drags – flamadiddle & dragadiddle in sixteenth notes. 80 bpm.

Group E: Technique Solos – Candidates are asked to perform one of two printed techniques solos, one in sixteenth notes (100 bpm) or sextuplet sixteenth notes (70 bpm). **Both must be prepared.** This is played to a backing track.

Grade 7

Group A: Single Strokes – in quarter, eighth, triplet eighth, sixteenth, quintuplet sixteenth, sextuplet sixteenth, septuplet sixteenth and thirtysecond notes, one bar of each and played as a continuous sequence. 65 bpm.

Group B: Paradiddles – standard paradiddle in sixteenth notes with moving accent. 80 bpm.

Group C: Flams & Paradiddle-diddles – standard & alternative paradiddle-diddle in sextuplet sixteenth notes. Moving flams in triplet eighth notes. 90 bpm.

Group D: Technique Solos – Candidates are asked to perform one of two printed techniques solos, one in sixteenth notes (100 bpm) or sextuplet sixteenth notes (70 bpm). **Both must be prepared.** This is played to a backing track.

Grade 8

Group A: Single Strokes – in quarter, eighth, nontuplet, dixtuplet, sextuplet sixteenth, septuplet sixteenth and thirtysecond, nonuplet thirtysecond and dixuplet thirtysecond notes, one bar of each and played as a continuous sequence. 65 bpm.

Group B: Paradiddles – standard paradiddle in sixteenth notes with moving accent. 80 bpm.

Group C: Flams & Paradiddle-diddles – standard & alternative paradiddle-diddle in sextuplet sixteenth notes with moving accents and moving around the toms. Moving flams in triplet eighth notes. 100 bpm.

Group D: Technique Solos – Candidates are asked to perform one of two printed techniques solos, one in sixteenth notes (100 bpm) or sextuplet sixteenth notes (70 bpm). **Both must be prepared.** This is played to a backing track.

Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation (Grades 1-5 only)

Candidates attempting Grades 1-5 inclusive have a choice of taking either the sight reading or the improvisation & interpretation test. Examples of the type of tests required in the exam are printed in the grade packs. Further examples can be found in the Companion Guide.

Please note that at Grades 4 and 5, the sight reading and improvisation & interpretation tests contain a small amount of the other skill. The requirements are shown for each grade below.

Exam Requirements: Sight Reading

Candidates will be asked to prepare a sight reading test which is given to them by the examiner. The test may be in one of the following styles: blues and rock (Grades 1-3) or blues, funk, rock or jazz (Grades 4-5). The examiner will allow the candidate 90 seconds to prepare the test and will set the tempo on a metronome. The candidate can choose to play with or without the metronome for the duration of the test.

Grade 1: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time, snare drum only.

Grade 2: 4 bars, 60-80 bpm, common time, snare drum only.

Grade 3: 8 bars, 60-90 bpm, 3/4 common time, snare drum only.

Grade 4: At this Grade there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar fill. The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. 12 bars, 60-90 bpm, time signatures as for Grade 3 above, **full kit**.

Grade 5: At this Grade there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar fill. The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. 12 bars, 60-90 bpm, time signatures as for Grade 3 above and also 12/8, **full kit**.

Exam Requirements: Improvisation & Interpretation

Candidates will be asked to prepare an improvisation & interpretation test which is given to them by the examiner. The test may be in one of the following styles: blues and rock (Grades 1-3) or blues, funk, rock or jazz (Grades 4-5).

Grades 1-2: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised drum groove to a backing track of 4 bars. One bar of groove is notated at the beginning and a bar of fill is indicated at the end. The candidate is allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session.

Grade 3: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised drum groove to a backing track of 8 bars. Two bars of groove are notated at the beginning. The candidate will be asked to play drum groove as indicated and to complete the test with a two bar fill at the end. The candidate is allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session.

Grade 4-5: the candidate will be asked to play an improvised drum groove to a backing track of twelve (Grade 4) sixteen (Grade 5) bars. Two bars of groove are notated at the beginning. The candidate will be asked to play drum groove as indicated and to complete the test with a four bar solo at the end. This is played to a backing track. The candidate is allowed 30 seconds to prepare and is allowed to practise through on playing of the backing track before playing it a second time in the exam. The test is continuous with a one bar count in at the beginning and after the practice session.

Quick Study Piece (Grades 6-8 only)

Candidate attempting any of these grades will be asked to perform a Quick Study Piece (QSP). This is given to the candidate 20 minutes before they enter the exam room and candidates entered for these grades are asked to arrive at the exam centre at least ten minutes before they are given their QSP to practise.

Candidates will be asked to perform from a paper outline and a CD given to them by the examiner. The outline is in the form of a 'lead sheet' or 'session chart' and will contain information on style, tempo and length, along with other musical information such as dynamics and marked solo passages. Sticking indications are also included where appropriate. Examples of the type of tests required in the exam are printed in the grade packs. Further examples can be found in the Companion Guide.

The CD contains a backing track to be used for both practise and performance in the examination. Each QSP will be in the style of rock, funk, blues, latin or jazz. The performance should reflect the style of the piece and candidates should use the spaces in the music to develop their musical ideas.

Exam Requirements: Quick Study Piece

Grade 6: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 4 performance. Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Grade 7: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 5 performance. Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Grade 8: the QSP will consist of up to 30 bars excluding repeats and DC, DS. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other musical notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will reflect the standard of a Grade 6 performance. Time signatures and Tempo: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8. 60-140 bpm. Keys: any major or minor

Ear Tests (Grades 1-8)

Candidates will be asked to take two ear tests in the exam. The tests are played on CD and use real instrument sounds. Each test is played to the candidate by the examiner twice. Candidates may use their instrument while the CD is playing.

Exam Requirements: Test 1 – Fill Recognition

Grade 1-3: The candidate will hear one bar of drum fill made up of four beat value combinations all played on the snare drum in common time. The candidate will be asked to play the fill back and then identify the correct fill from a pair printed on a sheet of paper. 70 bpm.

Grade 4-8: The candidate will hear one bar of drum fill made up of four beat value combinations all played on the snare drum in common time. The candidate will be asked to play the fill back and then identify the correct fill from three examples printed on a sheet of paper. 70 bpm.

Exam Requirements: Test 2 - Groove Recall

Grades 1-3: Candidates will hear a four bar drum groove (two bars repeated) twice on a CD. This is played on the kick drum, hi hat and snare (and crash cymbal at Grade 3) in common time. Candidates are required to play back what they have heard for four bars on the appropriate drum voices. 80 bpm.

Grades 4-5: Candidates will hear a four bar drum groove (two bars repeated) twice on a CD. This is played on the kick drum, toms, snare (including rim shot) hi hat, crash and is in common time. Candidates are required to play back what they have heard for four bars on the appropriate drum voices. When they have completed this, they should identify the style from one of the following: Latin, funk, jazz, blues or rock. They will be required to make their selection from a list of three asked by the examiner. 80-120 bpm.

Grades 6-8: Candidates will hear a four bar drum groove (two bars repeated) twice on a CD. This is played on the kick drum, snare (rim shot and ghost snare) hi hat (open, closed and half open at Grade 8) and snare in common time. Candidates are required to play back what they have heard for four bars on the appropriate drum voices. When they have completed this, they should identify the style from one of the following: Latin, funk, jazz, shuffle, blues, heavy metal, hip hop, techno drum & bass or rock. They will be required to make their selection from four styles asked by the examiner. 80-140 bpm.

General Musicianship Questions

Each Rockschoool grade finishes with five General Musicianship Questions. These questions are asked of the candidate orally by the examiner, who uses a performance piece played by the candidate as a starting point.

Exam Requirements

Grades 1-6: candidates will be asked questions in two main areas: (i) music notation and (ii) knowledge of the instrument.

Grade 7 and 8: in addition to the above candidates will also be asked a third category: history and styles.

A complete list of the topics covered in the music notation and theory category is printed in each book. Sample questions may be found on the Rockschoool website and in the Companion Guide. All questions concerning instrument knowledge will deal with the instrument played by the candidate.

Exam Regulations

1. Rockschoool exams are open to all persons, irrespective of age and in accordance with our Equal Opportunities policy.
2. Full payment and relevant documentation must reach the offices of Rockschoool on or before the chosen exam period's closing date. Rockschoool cannot guarantee an exam for any applications received after this date.
3. Exam entries may not be transferred from one candidate to another.
4. Any changes to the examination will incur a fee.
5. Cancellation of an exam will result in loss of the exam fee unless as a result of illness or injury. Such cases must be substantiated by a medical certificate. In this event, the exam will be re-scheduled on receipt of half of the original exam entry fee.
6. Names on certificates will be as on candidate's acknowledgement letter. Replacement certificates will incur a charge of £5.
7. On application, candidates may state times within an exam period when they are unavailable. However, Rockschoool cannot guarantee to avoid all such dates.
8. Rockschoool reserves the right to defer exams until the next available exam period. After one deferral, an exam is guaranteed at an exam centre chosen by Rockschoool. This may not be your local centre.
9. Candidates must use only the official Rockschoool sheet music for their respective exam. Photocopying of any material to facilitate page turns in the exams is allowable and the copies will be retained by the examiner. Sole use of photocopying is prohibited and may result in disqualification.
10. No refunds are given.
11. No teacher, or other person, must be present during the preparation of a candidate's Quick Study Piece. Any assistance given to a candidate will result in disqualification from the examination.
12. Only the examiner and candidate are allowed to be present in the examination room with the exception of moderators appointed by Rockschoool.
13. Candidates must bring in two copies of music for the 'free choice piece'. Players must use an original copy of the tune to be performed, and must provide a second copy for the examiner, which may be a photocopy. If there is no music available, a zero mark will be given for the piece. Any queries in writing should be addressed to the Director of Operations at least two weeks prior to the exam date.
14. Any backing tracks provided by the candidate for use with 'free choice' pieces must be capable of a music minus 1 playback without the examination part being audible to the examiner. If an unacceptable backing track is submitted, a zero mark will be given for the piece.
15. All band exams are the advertised instruments only. Backing tapes may not be used in the exam.
16. Any special needs candidates must notify the Rockschoool office prior to the exam.
17. The examiner's decision is final. Normally, an examiner will hear every component in full, but on occasion an examiner may conclude an examination when a decision has been reached.
18. Replacement certificates may be obtained by successful candidates. All replacements certificates will be marked as such and will incur a charge.
19. Rockschoool operates a quality assured appeals process. All appeals must be made in writing no later than 14 days after the exam date. There are two criteria for formal appeals, these are:
 - Appeals in respect of errors in procedure
 - Appeals in respect of errors in matching comments to marks awarded.

Full details of Rockschoool Ltd's appeal process are available from the Rockschoool office or website.

Assessment Requirements

Appendix A: Performance Pieces

Mark Band	Debut & Grade 1	Grades 2 & 3	Grades 4 & 5	Grades 6 - 8
Distinction 17+/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Very secure basic techniques Musical use of appropriate expressive techniques Secure rhythm/pulse/duration Seamless sync; secure continuity Highly confident & assured presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent basic techniques Fluent use of appropriate instrumental techniques. vib., staccato etc. Musical use of rhythm/pulse/duration Seamless sync; secure continuity Highly confident & assured presentation High degree of stylistic awareness Convincing appropriate improvisation (grade 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent techniques Fluent use of appropriate instrumental techniques. vib., staccato etc. Musical use of rhythm/pulse/duration Seamless sync; effortless continuity Highly confident & assured presentation High degree of stylistic awareness High level of appropriate improvisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Effortless techniques Fluent use of appropriate instrumental techniques. Distinctively musical rhythm/pulse/duration Seamless sync; effortless continuity Highly assured, professional performance Native level of stylistic awareness Extensive & individual improvisations
Merit 15+/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Secure basic techniques Correct use of appropriate expressive techniques Secure rhythm/pulse/duration Strong sense of sync/continuity Mainly confident presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Secure basic techniques Correct use of appropriate techniques Secure rhythm/pulse/duration Strong sense of sync/continuity Confident presentation Some degree of stylistic awareness (grade 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Secure techniques Musical use of appropriate techniques Secure rhythm/pulse/duration Strong sense of sync/continuity Confident presentation Some degree of stylistic awareness Consistent appropriate improvisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Secure techniques Musical use of appropriate techniques Secure use of rhythm/pulse/duration Strong sense of sync/continuity Confident, assured presentation High degree of stylistic awareness Extensive appropriate improvisation
Pass 13+/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly secure basic techniques Some evidence of appropriate expressive techniques Generally accurate rhythm/pulse/duration Mainly synchronised; occasional slips of continuity Generally confident presentation with minor lapses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly secure basic techniques Some evidence of appropriate techniques Generally accurate rhythm/pulse/duration Mainly synchronised; occasional slips of continuity Generally confident presentation Beginnings of stylistic awareness Improvisation evident but with occasional slips (grade 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly secure techniques Mainly correct use of appropriate techniques Generally accurate rhythm/pulse/duration Synchronised with occasional slips of continuity Generally confident presentation Evidence of stylistic awareness Some appropriate improvisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly secure techniques Correct use of instrumental techniques Secure rhythm/pulse/ duration Synchronised with occasional slips of continuity Generally confident presentation Evidence of stylistic awareness Some appropriate improvisation
Below Pass 1 9-12/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure basic techniques Inconsistent use of expressive techniques Inconsistent rhythmic sense Poor synchronisation; unaware of errors Hesitant presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure basic techniques Inconsistent use of some expressive techniques Some inconsistent rhythmic sense Poor synchronisation; unaware of errors Hesitant presentation Inconsistent stylistic awareness No improvisation (grade 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure techniques Inconsistent or incorrect use of instrumental techniques Inconsistent rhythmic sense Problems of synchronisation/continuity Hesitant presentation Inconsistent stylistic awareness Inappropriate improvisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Some insecurity of techniques Inconsistent use of expressive techs. Some inconsistencies in rhythmic sense Poor synchronisation and continuity Hesitant presentation Inconsistent stylistic awareness Inappropriate improvisation
Below Pass 2 1-8/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent basic technical errors Failure to use any expressive techniques Wayward pulse; incorrect rhythm/duration No sync; big continuity gaps; false starts Highly nervous presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent basic technical errors Failure to observe expressive marks Wayward pulse/rhythm/duration No sync; big continuity gaps; false starts Highly nervous presentation Stylistically unaware (grade 3) No improvisation (grade 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent technical errors Failure to observe expressive marks Poor pulse; largely incorrect rhythm/duration Little or no synchronisation; large gaps in continuity; false starts Highly nervous presentation Stylistically unaware No improvisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure techniques Inconsistent use of expressive techs. Poor sense of pulse; often incorrect rhythm/duration Little or no synchronisation; large gaps in continuity; false starts Highly nervous presentation Stylistically unaware No improvisation

All references to vibrato and staccato refer to Guitar and Bass exams only.

Appendix B: Band Pieces (Performance Certificate)

Mark Band	Level 1 (Grades 1-3)	Level 2 (Grades 4 & 5)	Level 3 (Grades 6-8)
Distinction 18+/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Fluent basic techniques 2: Fluent use of expressive techniques 3: Musical use of rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Seamless sync within the band; secure continuity 5: Highly confident & assured performances 6: High degree of stylistic awareness 7: Extensive appropriate improvisation 8: Strong sense of internal communication within the band 9: Strong effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Fluent techniques 2: Fluent use of expressive techniques 3: Musical use of rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Seamless internal sync; effortless continuity 5: Highly confident & assured performances 6: High degree of stylistic awareness 7: High level of appropriate improvisation 8: Musical sense of internal communication within band 9: Successful communication of collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Effortless techniques 2: Fluent use of expressive techniques 3: Distinctively musical rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Seamless internal sync; effortless continuity 5: Highly assured, professional performance 6: Native level of stylistic awareness 7: Extensive & individual improvisations 8: Conspicuous sense of internal band communication 9: Successful comm. of distinctive collective musical i.d.
Merit 16+/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Secure basic techniques 2: Correct use of expressive techniques 3: Secure rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Strong sense of internal sync/continuity 5: Mainly confident performances 6: Some degree of stylistic awareness 7: Some appropriate improvisation 8: Some sense of internal communication within the band 9: Some effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Secure techniques 2: Musical use of expressive techniques 3: Secure rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Strong sense of internal sync/continuity 5: Mainly confident performances 6: Some degree of stylistic awareness 7: Extensive appropriate improvisation 8: Strong sense of internal communication within the band 9: Some effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Very secure techniques 2: Musical use of expressive techniques 3: Musical use of rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Near-seamless sense of internal sync/continuity 5: Confident, assured performances 6: High degree of stylistic awareness 7: Extensive appropriate improvisation 8: Strong sense of internal communication within the band 9: Successful comm. of collective musical identity
Pass 14+/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Mainly secure basic techniques 2: Some use of expressive techniques 3: Generally accurate rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Mainly synchronised internally; 1 or 2 continuity errors 5: Some hesitant performances 6: Beginnings of stylistic awareness 7: Attempted but inconsistent improvisation 8: Minimal sense of internal communication within band 9: Some acknowledgement of audience presence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Mainly secure techniques 2: Mainly correct use of expressive techniques 3: Generally accurate rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Synchronised internally with 1 or 2 continuity errors 5: Some hesitation in performances 6: Beginnings of stylistic awareness 7: Some appropriate improvisation 8: Some sense of internal communication within the band 9: Some effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Secure techniques 2: Correct use of expressive techniques 3: Secure rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Synchronised internally with 1 or 2 continuity errors 5: Occasional hesitation in performances 6: Some degree of stylistic awareness 7: Some appropriate improvisation 8: Some sense of internal communication within the band 9: Some effort to communicate collective musical identity
Below Pass 1 9-13/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Insecure basic techniques 2: Inconsistent use of some expressive techniques 3: Inconsistent rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Poor internal synchronisation; unaware of errors 5: Lack of confidence 6: Stylistically unaware 7: No improvisation attempted 8: Lack of understanding between band members 9: No effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Insecure techniques 2: Some use of expressive techniques 3: Inconsistent rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Problems of internal synchronisation/continuity 5: Lack of confidence 6: Stylistically unaware 7: Inappropriate improvisation 8: Minimal sense of internal communication within band 9: Little acknowledgement of audience presence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Some insecurity of techniques 2: Some errors in use of expressive techniques 3: Some inconsistencies in rhythm/pulse/duration 4: Poor internal synchronisation and continuity 5: Hesitant; lacking in confidence 6: Beginnings of stylistic awareness 7: Inappropriate improvisation 8: Minimal sense of internal communication within band 9: Little acknowledgement of audience presence
Below Pass 2 1-8/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Consistent basic technical errors 2: Failure to observe expressive marks 3: Wayward pulse/rhythm/duration 4: No sync; big continuity gaps; false starts 5: Highly nervous presentation 6: Stylistically unaware 7: No improvisation attempted 8: Lack of understanding between band members 9: No effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Consistent technical errors 2: Failure to observe expressive marks 3: Poor pulse; largely incorrect rhythm/duration 4: Little or no sync; large gaps in continuity; false starts 5: Visibly nervous presentation 6: Stylistically unaware 7: No improvisation attempted 8: Lack of understanding between band members 9: No effort to communicate collective musical identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Insecure techniques 2: Very inconsistent use of expressive techniques 3: Poor sense of pulse; often incorrect rhythm/duration 4: Little or no sync; large gaps in continuity; false starts 5: Visibly nervous presentation 6: Stylistically unaware 7: No improvisation attempted 8: Lack of understanding between band members 9: No effort to communicate collective musical identity

Appendix C: Technical Exercises

Mark Band	Grades 1-5 (out of 15)	Mark Band	Grades 6 - 8 (out of 10)
Distinction 14+/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Fluent, musical level of technical accuracy 2: Exact sense of pulse 3: Always prompt responses 	Distinction 9+/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Fluent, effortlessly musical technical accuracy 2: Exact sense of pulse 3: Always near-instant responses
Merit 12+/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Correct pitches/rhythms 2: Strong sense of pulse 3: Generally prompt responses 	Merit 7+/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Correct pitches/rhythms with some fluency 2: Strong sense of pulse with no hesitation 3: Generally near-instant responses
Pass 11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Correct pitches/rhythms with occasional mistakes 2: Consistent if either slower or faster than requested 3: Some prompt responses 	Pass 6/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Correct pitches/rhythms with occasional mistakes 2: Consistent if either slower or faster than requested 3: Generally prompt responses
Below Pass 1 9-10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Errors in pitches and rhythms 2: Excessively cautious/hurried tempi; irregular pulse 3: Hesitant with occasional false starts 	Below Pass 1 4-5/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Errors in pitches and rhythms 2: Some cautious/hurried tempi; irregular pulse 3: Hesitant with occasional false starts
Below Pass 2 1-8/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Incorrect tests played 2: A number of significant and/or repeated errors; no sense of pulse 3: Frequent breakdowns 	Below Pass 2 1-3/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Incorrect tests played 2: Some significant or repeated errors; little or no sense of pulse 3: Frequent breakdowns

Appendix D: Sight Reading and Improvisation & Interpretation

	Sight Reading Grades 1-3	Sight Reading Grades 4-5	Improv & Interpretation Grades 1-3	Improv & Interpretation Grades 4-5
Out of 10	1: Technically accurate and musical 2: Consistent, accurate pulse 3: Strong sense of style 4: Communicative performance	1: Technically accurate and musical 2: All expression marks and techniques observed 3: Accurate pulse 4: Quite strong stylistic awareness 5: Confident performance 6: Good sense of improvisation	1: Technically accurate 2: Some use of varied timbre/articulation/register/dynamics 3: Consistent, accurate pulse 4: Appropriate stylistic awareness in improvisation 5: Confident performance	1: Technically assured and effortless 2: Wide range of expressive techniques 3: Grooving sense of pulse 4: Strong sense of idiom expressed through use of licks/grooves 5: Strong sense of distinctive musical communication within style 6: Consistent and exact sight reading
Distinction 9+/10	1: Technically accurate 2: Consistent, accurate pulse 3: Appropriate stylistic awareness 4: Confident performance	1: Technically accurate and musical 2: All expression marks and techniques observed 3: Accurate pulse 4: Quite strong stylistic awareness 5: Confident performance 6: Good sense of improvisation	1: Technically accurate 2: Some use of varied timbre/articulation/register/dynamics 3: Consistent, accurate pulse 4: Appropriate stylistic awareness in improvisation 5: Confident performance	1: Technically accurate and musical 2: Range of expressive techniques 3: Consistent, accurate pulse 4: Quite strong awareness of classic features of the idiom 5: Very confident performance 6: Accurate sight reading
Merit 7-8/10	1: Technically accurate 2: Consistent, accurate pulse 3: Appropriate stylistic awareness 4: Confident performance	1: Technically accurate and musical 2: All expression marks and techniques observed 3: Accurate pulse 4: Quite strong stylistic awareness 5: Confident performance 6: Good sense of improvisation	1: Technically accurate 2: Some use of varied timbre/articulation/register/dynamics 3: Consistent, accurate pulse 4: Appropriate stylistic awareness in improvisation 5: Confident performance	1: Technically accurate and musical 2: Range of expressive techniques 3: Consistent, accurate pulse 4: Quite strong awareness of classic features of the idiom 5: Very confident performance 6: Accurate sight reading
Pass 6/10	1: Mainly technically accurate but some minor pitch and/or rhythm errors 2: Largely consistent pulse (and <10% too fast or too slow) 3: Some stylistic awareness 4: Adequate sense of communication	1: Mainly technically accurate but some minor pitch and/or rhythm errors 2: Some recognition of expression marks and techniques observed 3: Largely consistent, accurate pulse 4: Basic stylistic awareness 5: Adequately fluent performance 6: Adequate sense of improvisation	1: Mainly technically accurate with some errors 2: Occasional use of varied timbre/articulation/register/dynamics 3: Largely consistent pulse (and <10% too fast or too slow) 4: Vestigial stylistic awareness in improv 5: Generally confident performance	1: Mainly technically accurate with occasional errors 2: Some use of varied timbre/articulation/register/dynamics 3: Largely consistent, accurate pulse 4: Basic stylistic awareness 5: Adequately fluent performance 6: Adequate sight reading
Below Pass 1 4-5/10	1: Several errors of pitch/rhythm 2: Pulse notably slow/fast/inconsistent 3: Little evidence of stylistic awareness 4: Nervous and hesitant performance or incomplete rendition	1: Several errors of pitch/rhythm/key 2: Expression marks and techniques largely not observed 3: Pulse slow/fast/inconsistent 4: Little evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Nervous, hesitant or incomplete performance 6: Little or incorrect improvisation	1: Several errors of basic techniques 2: Expressive monotony 3: Pulse notably slow/fast/inconsistent 4: Little evidence of stylistic awareness in improvisation 5: Some hesitant performance	1: Several errors of basic techniques 2: Occasionally varied timbre/articulation/register/dynamics 3: Pulse slow/fast/inconsistent 4: Little evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Nervous/hesitant/incomplete perf. 6: Inaccurate sight reading
Below Pass 2 1-3/10	1: Largely incorrect in all parameters 2: Wayward sense of pulse/rhythm 3: No evidence of stylistic awareness 4: Extremely hesitant performance or less than 1/4 of the test completed	1: Largely incorrect in all parameters 2: Expression marks and techniques not observed 3: Wayward sense of pulse/rhythm 4: No evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Extremely hesitant performance or less than 1/4 of the test completed	1: Largely incorrect in all parameters 2: Expressive monotony 3: Wayward sense of pulse 4: No evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Extremely hesitant performance or less than 1/4 of the test completed 6: Little or incomplete sight reading	1: Largely incorrect in all parameters 2: Expressive monotony 3: Wayward sense of pulse 4: No evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Extremely hesitant performance or less than 1/4 of the test completed 6: Little or incomplete sight reading

Appendix E: Quick Study Pieces

Grade 6-8	
Out of 15	
Distinction 14+/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Fluent, musical technique; tonality observed 2: Extensive, musical use of dynamics & articulations 3: Accurate, idiomatic sense of pulse/continuity 4: High degree of stylistic awareness 5: High level of musical communication 6: Highly convincing and appropriate range of improvisation 7: High degree of sync to backing track
Merit 12-13/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Secure techniques; tonality observed 2: All written dynamic/expressive marks observed 3: Consistent, accurate sense of pulse/continuity 4: Strong evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Confident, involving performance 6: Good range of appropriate improvisation 7: Good level of sync to the backing track
Pass 11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Mainly accurate technique; tonality observed 2: Some written dynamic/expressive marks observed 3: Consistent sense of pulse/continuity 4: Evidence of some stylistic awareness 5: Fairly confident performance 6: Some appropriate improvisation 7: Fluent with occasional slips to the backing track
Below Pass 1 8-10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Errors in pitch/rhythm; tonality not observed 2: Dynamic/expressive marks not observed 3: Inconsistent or too cautious pulse/continuity 4: Little evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Rather hesitant, insecure performance 6: Inappropriate improvisation 7: Slips or breaks to the fluency to the backing track
Below Pass 2 1-7/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Consistent basic errors in technique; tonality not observed 2: Dynamic/expressive marks not observed 3: Very inconsistent pulse with frequent breakdowns 4: No evidence of stylistic awareness 5: Very tentative, insecure performance 6: Improvisation sections omitted or single chords/stickings per bar 7: Little fluency or accuracy to the backing track

Appendix F: Ear Tests for Guitar

Out of 10	Grade 1-4	Grade 5-8
Distinction 9+/10	Melody: Exact recall throughout in all areas Rhythm/Chords: Exact recall throughout	Melody: Exact recall throughout in all areas Rhythm/Chords: Exact recall throughout with chord extensions correct
Merit 7-8/10	Melody: Close recall with 1 – 2 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques where appropriate Rhythm/Chords: Close recall with 1 – 2 slips in rhythm or chords	Melody: Close recall with 1 – 2 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques Rhythm/Chords: Close recall with 1 – 2 slips in rhythm, chords or extensions
Pass 6/10	Melody: Generally correct with 3 – 4 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques where appropriate Rhythm/Chords: Generally correct recall with 3 – 4 slips in rhythm or chords	Melody: Generally correct with 3 – 4 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques Rhythm/Chords: Generally correct recall with 3 – 4 slips in rhythm, chords or extensions
Below Pass 1 4-5/10	Melody: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques where appropriate Rhythm/Chords: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in rhythm or chords	Melody: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques Rhythm/Chords: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in rhythm, chords or extensions
Below Pass 2 1-3/10	Melody: largely or completely incorrect Rhythm/Chords: largely or completely incorrect	Melody: largely or completely incorrect Rhythm/Chords: largely or completely incorrect

Appendix G: Ear Tests for Bass

Out of 10	Grade 1-2	Grade 3-5	Grades 6-8
Distinction 9+/10	Melody: Exact recall throughout in all areas Rhythm: Exact recall throughout	Melody: Exact recall throughout in all areas Harmonic Recall: Exact recall throughout	Melody: Exact recall throughout in all areas Harmonic Recog: Exact recall throughout
Merit 7-8/10	Melody: Close recall with 1-2 slips in pitch or rhythm Rhythm: Close recall with 1-2 slips in rhythm	Melody: Close recall with 1-2 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques Harmonic Recall: Close recall with 1-2 slips in pitch or rhythm	Melody: Close recall with 1-2 slips in pitch or rhythm Harmonic Recog: Close recall with 1-2 slips
Pass 6/10	Melody: Generally correct with 3-4 slips in pitch or rhythm Rhythm: Generally correct recall with 3-4 slips in rhythm	Melody: Generally correct with 3-4 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques Harmonic Recall: Generally correct recall with 3-4 slips in pitch or rhythm	Melody: Generally correct with 3-4 slips in pitch or rhythm Harmonic Recog: Generally correct recall with 3-4 slips
Below Pass 1 4-5/10	Melody: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in pitch or rhythm Rhythm: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in rhythm	Melody: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in pitch, rhythm or techniques Harmonic Recall: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in pitch or rhythm	Melody: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips in pitch or rhythm Harmonic Recog: Hesitancy and with more than 4 slips
Below Pass 2 1-3/10	Melody: largely or completely incorrect Rhythm: largely or completely incorrect	Melody: largely or completely incorrect Harmonic Recall: largely or completely incorrect	Melody: largely or completely incorrect Harmonic Recog: largely or completely incorrect

NB If in doubt about overall marks, or if the overall mark does not tally with your assessment of the overall performance in this section, use the following rule of thumb. Mark each test out of FIVE, assuming the Distinction criteria to justify a mark out of 5/5, the Merit criteria to justify 4/5, the Pass criteria 3/5, the Fail criteria 2/5 and the Poor Fail 1/5. This will mean that Distinction + Merit = 9/10, Distinction + Pass = 8/10, Distinction + Fail = 7/10, and so on.

Appendix H: Ear Tests for Drums

	Grades 1-2	Grades 4-5	Grades 6-8
Out of 10	Fills: Exact recall and correct recognition Groove: Exact Recall	Fills: Exact recall Groove: Exact Recall Recognition: both correct	Fills: Exact recall Groove: Exact Recall Recognition: both correct
Distinction 9+/10	Fills: Close recall with 1-2 slips. Correct recognition Groove: Close recall with 1-2 slips	Fills: Close recall with 1-2 slips Groove: Close recall with 1-2 slips Recognition: both correct	Fills: Close recall with 1-2 slips Groove: Close recall with 1-2 slips Recognition: both correct
Merit 7-8/10	Fills: Generally correct recall with 3 slips. Correct recognition Groove: Generally correct recall with 3-4 slips	Fills: Generally correct recall with 3 slips Groove: Generally correct recall with 3-4 slips Recognition: 1 out of 2 correct	Fills: Generally correct recall with 3 slips Groove: Generally correct recall with 3-4 slips Recognition: 1 out of 2 correct
Pass 6/10	Fills: Hesitant recall with 4 or more errors. Incorrect recognition Groove: Hesitant recall with more than 4 errors	Fills: Hesitant recall with 4 or more errors Groove: Hesitant recall with more than 4 errors Recognition: both incorrect	Fills: Hesitant recall with 4 or more errors Groove: Hesitant recall with more than 4 errors Recognition: both incorrect
Below Pass 1 4-5/10	Fills: completely incorrect; or severe hesitancy. Incorrect recognition Groove: largely to completely incorrect	Fills: completely incorrect; or severe hesitancy and some errors Groove: largely to completely incorrect; or several errors and severe hesitancy/v. poor pulse Recognition: both incorrect	Fills: completely incorrect; or severe hesitancy and some errors Groove: largely to completely incorrect; or several errors and severe hesitancy/v. poor pulse Recognition: both incorrect

NB If in doubt about overall marks, or if the overall mark does not tally with your assessment of the overall performance in this section, use the following rule of thumb. Mark each test out of FIVE, assuming the Distinction criteria to justify a mark out of 5/5, the Merit criteria to justify 4/5, the Pass criteria 3/5, the Fail criteria 2/5 and the Poor Fail 1/5. This will mean that Distinction + Merit = 9/10, Distinction + Pass = 8/10, Distinction + Fail = 7/10, and so on.

Sample Music

Printed below is a set of samples from the exam music for guitar, bass and drums. Candidates will find short tips on how to play the pieces in the Guru's Guide section of each book and some of these are shown below.

Gotta Lotta Rosa: Joe Bennett

This is an unashamedly old fashioned rock song, reminiscent of AC/DC at their best. The opening chords should be played with plenty of attack but make sure that each chord is given its full length and that you play the part evenly. The notation suggests down strikes only here and towards the end of the piece when the theme is restated.

Fake Tortoise: Jason Woolley

The main groove of this indie rock track is played in eighth notes and is divided into a number of sections. The introduction lasts for five bars and is followed by a further four bars of eighth notes alternating between the open strings and second fret of the bottom two strings. Bars 21 and 22 are the same as bars 4 and 5 but played in first position.

To the Edge: Hussein Boon

This song, a homage to mid-90s U2 is quite intricate and is made up of a number of sections. The first four bars are played on the kit drum, 'four to the floor', with an eighth note snare beat announcing the arrival of the groove. The hi hat is played open in quarter notes for four bars before a complete change of groove in bars 12-15.

Hazi Taxi: Jason Woolley

A modern guitar rock track in the style of The Kaiser Chiefs. The opening chord riff looks quite tricky but is made up of power chords and should be played with an even up-and-down strumming action, while remembering not to sound the unwanted strings. The piece should be played with wit and invention using some of the suggested tricks in the score. Watch out for the sustained bends towards the end of the piece.

There and Beck: Simon Troup

Jeff Beck is perhaps the forgotten British guitar hero of the 60s, more commonly remembered for the kitsch 'Hi Ho Silver Lining' than for his sparse, earthy guitar work. This track is a tribute to him and features the slides, quarter bends, vibrato, dirty guitar sound and dynamic range that mark out his playing.

Jalapeño: Noam Lederman and Geoff Lai

This funk piece, inspired by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, is rhythmically challenging: the hi hat is played in off-beat sixteenth notes; similarly the kick and snare drums. This complexity calls for a total command of technique and confidence around the kit as well as the ability to shape the part dynamically and colour it with accents, ghost snares, buzz rolls etc.

Some You Win: Kit Morgan

A laid back jazz fusion piece that requires complete technical command to be in any way convincing. This song is rhythmically complex and features all manner of expressive techniques such as slides, ghost notes and accents to give it musical colour. The solo section gives you the opportunity to introduce a change of mood as well as a chance to demonstrate your chops.

Fake Tortoise

♩=115 IndiePop

The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of seven systems of music, each with a melodic line and a fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagrams use numbers 0-4 to indicate fingerings. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Chord symbols: E, F#m, A, E, F#m, A, G#m, A, B, E, B, F#m, A, E, B, F#m, A, C#m, G#m, B, A, C#m, G#m, B, G#m, B, F#m, G#m, A, G#m, A, B, F#m, E, B, F#m, A, B, F#m, G#m, A, B, E.

To the Edge

Hussein Boon

♩ = 108 *Pop*

The musical score is written for guitar and drums in 4/4 time. It begins with a tempo marking of 108 beats per minute and a 'Pop' feel. The guitar part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The drum part is written on a single staff with a bass clef. The score consists of five systems of music. The first system shows the initial melodic line and a simple drum pattern. The second and third systems introduce more complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth-note runs and syncopated rhythms. The fourth system features a prominent eighth-note guitar line and a consistent drum pattern. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase and a drum pattern that ends with a double bar line.

Hazi Taxi (extract)

Jason Woolley


♩ = 140 ModernPopGuitar



f



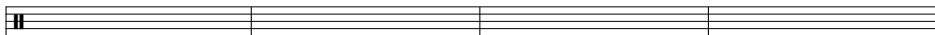
f



Fill



Fill *mf* *cont. sim.*



mf

There and Beck *(extract)*

Simon Troup

$\text{♩} = 70$ RockBallad

System 1: Treble clef: G, Gm7, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4. Bass clef: 3, 3/5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 1, 3.

System 2: Treble clef: G, Gm7, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4. Bass clef: 3, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5.

System 3: Treble clef: 1/4, 1/4, G, Gm7, 1/4. Bass clef: 3, 5, 3, 5, 1, 3.

System 4: Treble clef: Bbmaj7, mf, Eb, Fmaj9. Bass clef: 3, 3/5, 3, 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 2, 5, 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3.

System 5: Treble clef: Eb, Dm9, Ebmaj7, F. Bass clef: 4, 3, 5, 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 4, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 3, 3, 3, 3, 6, 3, 3, 6, 7, 8.

Jalapeño (extract)

Noam Lederman and Geoff Lai

$\text{♩} = 82$ Funk

The drum notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. It begins with a 'Fill' section, followed by a main groove. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accents. There are two first and second endings. The piece features several dynamic markings: *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *ad lib.* (ad libitum). Specific techniques are noted, including 'H.H. foot cont. sim. (14 bars)', 'Buzz Snare', and '2 crash cymbals'. The piece concludes with 'H.H. foot ends' and a 'Drum Solo' section.

Fill

f

1. 2.

H.H. foot cont. sim. (14 bars)

† Buzz Snare

mf

†† 2 crash cymbals

4:4

3

3

H.H. foot ends

Drum Solo
ad lib. around groove

Some You Win (extract)

Kit Morgan

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$
♩ = 93 Jazz/Funk

Em⁹ A¹³

mf

T
A
B

9 9 7 9 11 | 7 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

7 7 5 7 9 | 5 5 4 6 7 5 5 6 7

Em⁹ A¹³

T
A
B

7 7 7 7 10 8 10 7 | 7 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

5 5 5 5 7 7 4 | 6 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

G¹³ G^{#13} A¹³ Em⁹ A¹³

T
A
B

5 3 4 5 | 7 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

6 4 5 6 9 7 9 11 | 7 7 7 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

3 4 5 7 9 11 | 5 5 4 5 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

Em⁹ A¹³

T
A
B

5 5 5 7 10 12 8 10 7 | 7 7 7 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

7 7 6 6 7 9 5 7 5 | 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

D^{7#5#9} D^{maj7} G⁷ G^{maj7}

T
A
B

7 7 5 5 7 7 5 | 7 7 7 7 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 6 7 5 6 7

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

0 0 6 6 5 | 4 3 3 4 3 7 5

Some You Win (extract)

Kit Morgan

♩ = 93 Jazz/Funk

Em⁹ A⁷

Em⁹ A⁷ Em⁹

A⁷ Em⁹ A⁷ E^b7#5#9 Dmaj⁷

A^b Gmaj⁷ F#m⁷ Bm⁷ Gmaj⁷ E⁷/G#

A¹¹ E^b7#5#9 Dmaj⁷ A^b7 Gmaj⁷ F#m⁷ Bm⁷

Gmaj⁷ E⁷/G# A¹¹ A#dim Bm⁷ Gmaj⁷

Some You Win (extract)

Kit Morgan

$\text{♩} = 93$ Jazz/Funk

♩ ad lib. on repeat

mf

f

cont. sim.

Fill

To Coda ⓪

Bass Solo
Half time feel - Straight 8s

mp



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