

## **MUSIC THEORY:** from 1 January 2018

ABRSM Music Theory exams are available for Grades 1–8. Candidates may be entered for any grade irrespective of age and without previously having taken any other grade. The full syllabus is available at [www.abrsm.org/theory](http://www.abrsm.org/theory).

### **About Music Theory**

Developing musical literacy forms a key part of a rounded education for performers, composers and listeners of all kinds. An understanding of how written symbols relate to the elements of music, and having the skills to interpret and translate them into sounds, empowers us to communicate and experience music in a meaningful way. Music theory is a very practical subject that is completely entwined with performance and composition.

ABRSM's Music Theory exams give students:

- a knowledge of the notation of western music, including commonly used signs and terminology
- an understanding of fundamental musical elements such as intervals, keys, scales and chords
- an ability to apply theoretical knowledge and understanding to score analysis
- skills in harmonic completion of extracts and melody writing (at Grades 6–8)

Candidates are assessed on their ability to identify, use and manipulate musical symbols, to complete extracts and to answer questions relating to the elements of music according to the parameters detailed in the full syllabus at [www.abrsm.org/theory](http://www.abrsm.org/theory).

### **Grade 5 as a prerequisite**

We believe that a thorough understanding of the elements of music is essential for a full and satisfying performance at the higher grades.

A longstanding ABRSM requirement is that candidates must pass Grade 5 or above in Music Theory (or in Practical Musicianship or any solo Jazz instrument) before they can enter for Grades 6, 7 or 8 Practical exams.

### **Marking scheme**

Theory exams are marked out of a total of 100, with 66 marks required for a Pass, 80 for a Merit and 90 for a Distinction. The marking criteria for Theory exams are available at [www.abrsm.org/theorymarkingcriteria](http://www.abrsm.org/theorymarkingcriteria).

## Theory GRADE 5

As in preceding grades, with the addition of:

- 1 Irregular time signatures of  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{7}{8}$  and the grouping of notes and rests within these times. Irregular divisions of simple time values.
- 2 Tenor clef (C clef centred on 4th line). The identification of notes in the four clefs in any of the keys set for this grade (see below), and the transposition at the octave of a simple melody from any clef to another. The writing at concert pitch of a melody notated for an instrument in B $\flat$ , A or F, and vice versa (the interval of transposition up or down will be given).
- 3 Scales and key signatures of all major and minor keys up to and including six sharps and flats. All simple and compound intervals from any note.
- 4 The identification of the  $\frac{5}{3}$   $\frac{6}{3}$  and  $\frac{6}{4}$  forms of the tonic, supertonic, subdominant and dominant chords in any of the keys set for this grade. The identification of the progression  $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{5}{3}$  (Ic-V) on the dominant note in any of the keys set for this grade. The choice of suitable chords at cadential points of a simple melody in the major key of C, G, D or F.
- 5 More terms and signs. The recognition of ornaments, including the replacement of written-out ornamentation with the appropriate signs, but not vice versa. Questions about a passage of music written for voices or instruments appropriate to the grade will include questions on the types of voice and names of instruments, the clefs they use, instrument family groups and the basic way by which they produce sound, as well as points of general musical observation designed to test the candidate's ability to apply theoretical knowledge to actual music.