

## Instrumental Guidelines – 91949, 91270, 91416

Piano

These guidelines focus on the technical dimensions of achievement criteria in assessing solo piano together with consideration of repertoire choice and musicality.

The location and orientation of the piano is important so hands can be seen, in order that the assessment process for all levels is robust. Students should be given ample opportunity to practice on the, preferably, well maintained instrument they will be using for their assessed performances.

Level 1			Level 2			Level 3		
91949			91270			91416		
This achievement standard involves students demonstrating music performance skills.			This achievement standard involves performing two substantial pieces of music as a featured soloist.			This achievement standard involves performing two programmes of music as a featured soloist.		
Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence	Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence	Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate music performance skills	Demonstrate effective music performance skills	Demonstrate assured music performance skills	Perform two substantial pieces of music as a featured soloist.	Perform two substantial pieces of music effectively as a featured soloist.	Perform two substantial pieces of music convincingly as a featured soloist.	Perform two programmes of music as a featured soloist.	Perform two programmes of music effectively as a featured soloist.	Perform two programmes of music convincingly as a featured soloist.
Technique			Technique			Technique		
Students in their third year of itinerant piano tuition will be developing independent finger control in both hands. Generally, the right hand will perform melodic lines and			Students in their fourth year of itinerant piano tuition will have developed a range of secure technical skills and will generally be moving with confidence around the			Students in their fifth year of itinerant piano tuition will have developed a wide range of secure technical skills together with demonstrating a strong sense of control		

the left hand a variety of chord patterns. Shifts in either left- or right-hand positions should be by and large even.

Correct posture and hand position will aid students in creating effective tone and fluency. Standing is acceptable for keyboard playing where appropriate. Knowledge of sequencing and effective selection of backings and timbres in keyboard playing will vary with experience.

### **Repertoire**

Ideally, clean legato lines will be demonstrated; staccato may be used and this should also be cleanly articulated and controlled. If appropriate, accents, slurs and phrasing will further be exhibited. For Merit and Excellence, pianists will be able to demonstrate independence between hands. For example, they will perform music where the interest, rhythmic or melodic, is shared between hands. Students will also be able to use contrasting dynamics between hands (e.g. left hand *p* and right hand *mf*). The ability to demonstrate a range of dynamics, including *cresc.* and *decrec.* should also be evident.

### **Pedal**

The pedal may not always be necessary in pieces at this level but where it is used it should be in an appropriate

keyboard. Generally the right hand will perform melodic or chordal lines and the left hand a variety of chord patterns or basslines. Hands will be controlled and generally equal in tone, flexibility and coordination. Posture and hand position will demonstrate confidence and development of an individual style. Finger work will exhibit fluency and a range of skills which will have developed through attention to technical exercises.

Recommended text: The Virtuoso Pianist by Charles-Louis Hanon.

### **Repertoire**

There will be a notable step-up in ability seen in students from those who gained level 1. This will generally be shown through repertoire choice which will be extending students into the 'classics' of their chosen musical genre.

Student pianists at this level will display rehearsed and generally accurate performances. If errors occur students will be able to continue playing until the end of the music. Attention will be given to dynamics; phrasing and articulation, however there may not yet be a complete understanding of all stylistic aspects to the music. For example, the use of the pedal may not be fully integrated into performances and may be seen to be used to cover up technical errors from the hands rather than used for subtle effect.

over the instrument. Generally the right hand can now perform melodic or chordal or harmonic/riff lines and the left hand a variety of chord patterns or basslines or stride parts. Hands will be equal in tone, flexibility and coordination. Further, posture and hand position will enhance tone and fluency and allow performers to move effortlessly up and down the keyboard. Finger work may include extended scale passages, consecutive octaves, a range of chord shapes, interplay between hands and a sensitive 'touch'.

Recommended text: Contemporary Piano Technique - Coordinating Breath Movement and Sound by Stephany Tiernan.

### **Repertoire**

The two performance programmes will allow players to demonstrate the majority of the above technical skills together with the ability to sustain the delivery and communication of extended pieces of music. Ideally student's programmes will allow them to perform technically advanced pieces together with more expressive pieces. Individual pieces within both programmes will be well rehearsed with attention to accuracy of the score including articulation, dynamics, phrasing together with integrated pedalling. Contemporary and jazz genres are likely to include

manner and not used to cover-up technical limitations of the hands. Further, it should not create a murky effect or out of place dissonance.

Students performing at Achievement level will play with general accuracy and evidence of adequate preparation. Merit students will demonstrate secure technical skills, a mostly accurate performance, evidence of effective preparation and an awareness of phrase shape, dynamics, rhythm and feel.

To gain Excellence, pianists will display technical assurance, fluency, accuracy and show evidence of careful preparation. Further, students meeting excellence criterion will provide a performance of any musical genre which pays attention to detail and engages the listener.

### **Musicality**

As students gain confidence in the above technical aspects, their ability to communicate interpretive understandings appropriate to genre will also increase.

### **A/M/E**

Students performing at Achievement level may make minor errors or be hesitant; however the music will maintain general fluency and students will be experienced enough to acknowledge the audience at the end and maintain their 'game face'. At Merit and Excellence levels, pieces will be played with technical security (M) and assurance (E). Confidence will be demonstrated through well rehearsed performances and a degree of interpretive understanding (E). Minor errors will not mar performances.

### **Musicality**

Melody lines may begin to exhibit *rubato* and other interpretive styles such as *cantabile*; both of which could be between both hands. Performances will be musically expressive with a mature interpretation of musical genre from higher end criteria students. Students in a fourth year of lessons will be developing communication skills which allow them to share the music with their audience rather than being introspective and focussed on playing the notes.

students' own musical interpretation, including improvisation.

### **A/M/E**

Students performing at Achievement level may make occasional errors, which do not detract from the overall performance. They appear less confident than Merit (effective) or Excellence (convincing) students. Performing less technically challenging pieces (appropriate to this level) with expressiveness and musicality may benefit judgements for less experienced players.

To gain Merit, pianists will perform confidently and consistently. The pieces will be well rehearsed, played with precision and demonstrate interpretive understanding of different genre. For example, there will be a clear demarcation between a performance of a Beethoven sonata and a Joplin rag. Learning and playing different genre will allow students to communicate each composer's intention. Those students gaining Excellence will do this with imagination, musical expression and a sense of 'ownership' of the music.

### **Musicality**

In a fifth year of lessons, piano students could be expected to have gained a level of technical proficiency

		<p>which affords a degree of confident self expression. Musicality will be evident in the use of dynamics, phrasing and interpretative style. Ability to capture the mood of the piano music and communicate this to an audience will create an effective (M) and/or convincing (E) performance.</p>
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