

# Aural Tips - Grade 5

- Some tests allow for a second attempt or for an additional playing by the examiner, if necessary.
- The examiner may prompt if needed, although this may affect the assessment.
- Marks are not awarded for each individual test or deducted for mistakes; instead they reflect the candidate's overall response in this component.

## A. Sing a phrase played by the examiner

- **There is only one phrase to sing at Grade 5 but it is longer than the three little phrases at Grades 1 – 3 and a little more challenging to remember than the phrase at Grade 4.**
- **It will be played 2ce**
- Sing along in your head on the 2nd playing to gauge accuracy and familiarise yourself with notes and rhythm
- You can sing any sound (such as 'La la' or 'Do do') or you could hum or whistle if you prefer.
- Sing without hesitation & keep in time.

## A. B. Sing 6 notes from a score

- Prepare well in advance - practice singing the first 5 notes of a scale and arpeggios
- The notes will be within the range of a 3rd above or below the tonic in the key of C, F or G major. The starting and the ending note will be the tonic.
- Try playing notes a 3rd apart and repeating them. Progress to playing 1 note and working out the 3rd above and below.
- Progress to associating these intervals with the ones in examples.
- The key to improving is simply practising
- There are a limited number of ways of arranging only six notes one after the other, so if you practise a lot you will start to remember the patterns.

## C. Identify Musical features of a piece of music & Time recognition

One question will be about one of the following:

- **Character**
  - See GRADE 4 - Here are some of the kinds of words you can incorporate into your description: *discordant, lyrical, contrapuntal, light, relentless, repetitive, sparse, heavy, full, cheerful, playful, gloomy, sensual, romantic, violent...*

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- **Tonality**
- **Tempo**
- **Dynamics**
- **Articulation**

**Then you will have to talk about the STYLE & Period of the piece**

**The four periods you may be asked about in an exam are**

## **Baroque**

- Energetic / lively rhythm / strong/ spirited
- Polyphonic - interweaving melodies
- Regular cadences
- May modulate to related keys
- 18th century dance character melody (minuet, gigue, courante);
- Limited range of pitch (harpsichord was smaller than a piano)
- Limited use of dynamics (the harpsichord is not possible to play louder or softer);
- Use of ornamentation: trills, turns, mordents
- Possibly a detached articulation.
- Imitation between voices

Listen to J.S. Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Couperin, Rameau

## **Classical**

- Regular, clear phrases/stepwise melodies, scale passages (2/4 bars is common)
- Repeated themes
- Elegant and refined melody
- Simple texture: melody with accompaniment, simple harmony, melody with chords or Alberti bass / broken chord accompaniment.
- Simple chords and cadences
- Little to no pedal
- Simple dynamics such as crescendo and diminuendo.

Some composers to listen to: Mozart, Beethoven (early period), Clementi, Haydn.

## **Romantic**

- Flexible tempo;

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- Use of rubato
- Lyrical & expressive
- dramatic melodies;
- Dramatic modulations
- Use of pedal;
- Thicker texture with extensive use of chords and melodic lines moving through the voices;
- Tonal but harmonically complex
- Wider use of dynamics and different nuances eg: pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff and so on.

Some composers to listen to: Brahms, Chopin, Grieg and Schumann

## 20th Century.

- Rhythmical - use of syncopation and jazzy themes
- Angular, unusual melodies
- Irregular phrases
- Discordant harmonies and unusual, clashing chords & chord progressions
- Sudden dynamics /rhythmic changes
- unpredictable

Some composers to listen to: Bartók, Debussy, Prokofiev, Ravel, Stravinsky.

## Clap rhythm

- Clap along in your head on the 2nd playing to gauge accuracy and familiarise yourself with rhythm
- You can sing any sound (such as 'La la' of 'Do do') or you could hum or whistle if you prefer.
- Clap without hesitation & keep in time.
- **It helps if you had decided on 2 time, 3 time or 4 time when you first heard the piece to notice the musical details.**
- **After you have clapped the rhythm you will say if the piece was in 2 time, 3 time or 4 time., but if you didn't make up your mind then, hearing the phrase to be clapped will help you.**

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