



Victoria College Examinations

vcmexams.com

ENSEMBLES



Victoria College of Music and Drama, London Ltd

Founded 1890

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Ensemble Syllabus

Member of



ABOUT THE VCM

Victoria College of Music and Drama, London Ltd. is an independent body providing examinations in Music, Speech, and Drama subjects. It has held examination sessions throughout the British Isles and certain overseas countries since it was founded in 1890. It no longer operates a full-time teaching institution. The VCM is a corporate member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians, Worshipful Company of Musicians, the Music Education Council, the Association of Teachers of Singing, the European Piano Teachers Association, the European Recorder Teachers Association, the Society of Recorder Players, the European String Teachers Association the Society of Teachers of Speech & Drama, the National Association of Music Educators, the Association of British Choral Directors, the Schools Music Association of Great Britain and is an institutional member of the College of Teachers and abides by its code of practice.

Further details about Victoria College can be found on our website:

www.Vcmexams.com

COMPARISONS WITH OTHER EXAMINATION BODIES

The Grades I to VIII in this syllabus are intended to compare in general terms on a level for level basis with Grades 1 to 8 of most other examination bodies. VCM Theory examinations contain some more searching questions than those of some other boards.

REGULATIONS

All entries are accepted on the conditions laid down in the General Regulations, a copy of which is available on the College Website at www.vcmexams.com. Hard copies are available free of charge on request.

PASS MARKS

The pass mark for Grades I-VIII is 65%. To pass with Merit, 80%; with Distinction, 90%. Merit is shown as Honours in Ireland.

The pass mark for Medal examinations is 75%. The result of medal examinations is either "Award" or "No award". The pass mark for Diploma examinations is 75%. To pass with Honours, 85%.

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Music for Ensemble Pieces

Music for the Ensemble Grades is available to order on line at www.vcmpublishing.co.uk

The pack contains a full ensemble score, an audio CD and up to four ensemble parts for any combination of musical instruments. On application Teachers should tell the publisher what combination of instruments is required and the publisher will include the required ensemble sheets in the ensemble pack.

Small Ensemble Syllabus

Introduction

This syllabus has been designed in accordance with current education thinking and government policy. Emphasis is placed to meet the needs of modern school based music teaching in small group environments.

The syllabus is deliberately open to accommodate a wide range of ensembles at various stages of development. Any effective combination of instruments may enter and to encourage community based groups there are no age restrictions, the only stipulation being that all players should be within the required grade given for the level entered. Candidates should wear visible name badges to enable the examiner to allocate marks accurately.

Grade candidates may enter as duos, trios or quartets. Any larger combinations will be classed as a large ensemble and are offered as medal examinations (see the large ensemble syllabus).

The current grade fee is payable for each candidate.

Each candidate will receive a report form and, if successful, each participant will receive a certificate.

The entry form should include the names of all players and be bracketed together to show which candidates form an ensemble. The subject code is **EN**.

Mark Scheme

A total of 100 marks is available and will be divided as follows:

40 marks for Performance

40 marks for Ensemble

20 for Presentation

Pass Marks

Pass 65

Merit 80 (Merit is shown as Honours in Ireland)

Distinction 90

Assessment Areas

The set pieces include solo passages to allow the examiner to comment on the solo performance, but also include ensemble passages. Players should submit each piece as an *ensemble* performance.

Performance (40 Marks)

Each candidate plays an individual line within an *ensemble* piece. Examiners will comment on each candidate's *individual* contribution within the ensemble.

Examiners will focus on:

- Pitch
- Tempo
- Dynamics
- Rhythm
- Phrasing and articulation
- Musicality

Ensemble (40 Marks)

Each candidate plays an individual line within an *ensemble* piece. Examiners will comment on each candidate's *teamwork skills* within the ensemble.

Examiners will focus on:

- Interaction with group
- Ensemble Unity
- Balance
- Intonation
- Concentration
- Teamwork

Presentation (20 Marks)

Each candidate should contribute to the *presentation* by doing the following:

- Introduce at least one item from the programme
- Dress appropriately (Department)
- Contribute to the Folio

Introductions

Candidates should be able to introduce their programmes as to a live audience. Examiners will expect to be treated as an audience and addressed accordingly. Introductions should be interesting and show some variety. Style can be that of a DJ, a compere, or a performer and it is recommended that candidates study these techniques at a live performance or TV or radio show.

Department

Examiners will take into account general presentation of the pieces, department, style, facial expression and sincerity. Examiners will expect candidates to dress as if they are performing in a concert. A confident businesslike approach is looked for. Credit will be given for effort in presentation, but not for the quality or sophistication of the resources available to the candidate.

Folio

The ensemble should present to the examiner(s) on the day, a folio in the style of a concert programme. Each candidate should contribute to the folio and should sign to verify their contribution. The folio should include:

- A front cover showing the name of the ensemble group
- A list of the candidates
- A list of the pieces performed
- A short summary about the pieces performed

The Syllabus

To play two of the following pieces:

Grade 1

Shortning Bread
When the Saints go Marching
Terrestrial Triplets
Go Those Happy Feelings
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Grade 2

Dance Till U Drop
Syncopated Suzie
Jericho
Greensleeves
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade

Grade 3

Sailor's Hornpipe
Pomp & Circumstance March
When Johnny Comes Marching Home
Bertie the Hot Bavarian
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Grade 4

Anger Management
Remembering Ben
The American Patrol
The Parade of the Tin Soldiers
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Grade 5

Dona Nobis Pacem
Rushing Around
A Taste of the Orient
The Cherubs Touch
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Grade 6

The Punch and Judy Show
Mango Chutney
City Life
Danny Boy
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Grade 7

Joplin: The Entertainer
Bartok: An Evening in the Village
Pashley: Circus Suite
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Grade 8

Pachelbel: Canon
Bach: Toccata
Pashley: Steam Train Blues
An own choice piece not listed in the syllabus and suitable to the grade.

Large Ensemble Syllabus

Introduction

This syllabus has been designed to meet the needs of modern school based music teaching. Any effective combination of instruments may enter and to encourage community based groups there are no age restrictions.

The fee for the large ensemble is a double the grade solo fee, regardless of the number of players taking part. One fee only is payable for the ensemble.

A single report form will be issued for the whole ensemble but each member of a successful ensemble will receive an individual certificate and an application form to order the medal from the college.

Mark Scheme

A total of 100 marks is available and will be divided as follows:

80 marks for Performance
10 for Presentation
10 for Balance of Programme

Requirements

1. The ensemble should consist of between 5 and 30 players, although this maybe exceeded by prior discussion with VCM. If accompanied or conducted this member is not included in this number. Parts may be doubled as required.
2. A conductor is allowed and will be assessed as part of the ensemble but will not receive a certificate or require to be shown on the entry form.
3. Scores should be provided for the examiner. Photocopies are acceptable for this and will be destroyed by the examiner afterwards. For jazz ensembles and other groups not using conventional notation a lead sheet or other form of written guidance to the structure of the piece should be provided and should be submitted to the college at least one month before the exam for approval.
4. Programmes should be submitted to the college at least 4 weeks before the exam for all levels from Bronze upwards. For exams below this level ensembles should provide a written programme detailing pieces and composers/arrangers to the examiner on the day. These may only be changed with written consent from VCM. If in doubt over programming please contact VCM for advice.
5. The entry form should include the names of all players. The subject code is **EN**.
6. Examiners will create one report form per ensemble but all performers will receive a certificate and a medal application form if successful.

7. The provision of music stands, chairs etc. is the responsibility of the ensemble in discussion with the individual exam centre. Ensembles should notify centres of how much setting up time they require and this will be incorporated into the timetable of the examination session.
8. Repertoire should aim to incorporate all players and from Silver Medal level upwards conventional ensembles should try to draw from standard repertoire. However arrangements maybe included at Gold and Platinum levels under certain circumstances and prior written consent should be sought from VCM having detailed why this is required.
9. Performances are to be given as if to a public audience. Spoken commentary is not required.

Time Guidelines

These are the suggested times for performances. Ensembles running considerably over time maybe stopped during performance.

Junior Bronze Medal	8 minutes
Junior Silver Medal	10 minutes
Bronze Medal	12 minutes
Silver Medal	15 minutes
Gold Medal	20 minutes
Platinum	25 minutes

Programme Requirements

Ensemble Groups will be expected to perform a minimum of two and maximum of four pieces to be drawn from educational arrangements, original compositions or specially adapted music. Pieces are to be drawn from various appropriate sources as determined by the composition of the ensemble.

The approximate standards required for each medal examination are as follows:

Junior Bronze Medal	(grade 3)
Junior Silver Medal	(grade 4)
Bronze Medal	(grade 5)
Silver Medal	(grade 6)
Gold Medal	(grade 7)
Platinum Medal	(grade 8)

At Junior Medals elementary part playing is required in 2-4 parts. From Bronze medal 4 part harmony is required. A varied and well-balanced programme should be offered demonstrating the skill, variety and tonal opportunities afforded by ensemble playing. It is expected that a copy of the programme and copies of the main ensemble score will be given to the examiner on the day of the exam and this will form part of the programming mark.

