

SYLLABUS GUIDE

POPULAR PIANO AND KEYBOARDS **rockschool**

**"There is no doubt that
Rockschool is currently
the market leader in pop
music education"** TES February 2001

play music better play better music

Welcome to Our New Popular Piano and Electronic Keyboards Syllabus

Welcome to our first piano and electronic keyboards syllabus. We are delighted to bring the Rockschooll method to serve the needs of piano and electronic keyboard players. We hope you will find our piano and electronic keyboard syllabus easy to use and inspiring to teach and learn.

At Rockschooll we believe that playing piano and keyboard should be exciting, fun and accessible. That is why we have made our syllabus flexible as well as rigorous, with specially commissioned music (from top UK composers and piano players) that everyone will enjoy and with the additional options of composing your own music or arranging hit tunes as part of the performed repertoire in the exam.

Our aim is to provide students with exciting, approachable music that inspires learning. For teachers, our syllabus is an opportunity to motivate students without having to re-learn how to teach the piano or how to improvise jazz from scratch!

Our popular piano syllabus has two exams in one. First there is the traditional **grade exam**, with three performance pieces, sight reading or improvisation & interpretation, ear tests, technical exercises (such as scales and arpeggios) and general musicianship (like the Trinity College, *London viva voce* tests).

In addition there is the **performance certificate** for people who just want to perform pieces. The pass mark is higher in a performance certificate than in a grade exam, so players have to rise to the challenge of presenting **five** tunes in varied styles for careful examination.

Our new syllabus is also for **electronic keyboard** players. Full details of the technical specifications required for electronic keyboards can be found in this *Syllabus Guide* below, as well as in each Popular Piano grade pack published by Rockschooll.

In this *Syllabus Guide* you will find a complete description of the content of our **grade exams** and **performance certificates**, with a selection of sample performance pieces across the range of grades, information about our composers, instructions on how to enter Rockschooll exams, and an overview of Rockschooll's activities in the field of popular music education in the UK today.

Note: *exam requirements for candidates are printed in this Guide in italic type.*

Keyboard Specifications and Performance Regulations

These examinations are designed for **solo piano** or **solo electronic keyboard**. Rockschoo's examination centres will each contain an acoustic piano and an electronic keyboard. However, candidates may decide that they wish to bring in their own keyboards for their performances. Candidates must ensure that their electronic keyboard is suitable for the technical requirements of the grade:

Instrument Requirements for Electronic Keyboards

Debut and Grades 1-4: *a minimum of five octaves, touch sensitive and with a sustain pedal.*

Grades 5, 6 and 8: *a full 88 note keyboard, touch sensitive and with a sustain pedal.*

In addition, *candidates must ensure that the keyboard has a 'realistic' piano sound and must bring a keyboard stand, amplification (if necessary) and all relevant audio and power leads. Candidates must use a 'realistic' piano sound for their exam. Candidates are further reminded that these exams are for **solo** performances and should not use either backing tracks or internally generated, pre-programmed rhythms.*

Examination Content

The Rockschoo popular piano and electronic keyboard exams are designed to follow the model set by our 'RS2K' syllabuses for electric guitar, bass guitar and drum kit examinations first published in 1999. The examination materials for each grade are published in the form of an integrated book and CD package, which together contain all the information and resources that a candidate needs to take an exam.

Rockschoo's exams are divided into four **Zones**:

- **Entry Zone (yellow):** covering Debut and Grade 1 and designed for players who are just starting out, learning the basics of their instrument;
- **Player Zone (green):** covering Grades 2 and 3 and designed for more advanced beginners who are beginning to explore the demands of both technique and style;
- **Performer Zone (red):** covering Grades 4 and 5 and designed for players who are competent across a range of techniques and styles;
- **Pro Zone (blue):** covering Grades 6 and 8 and designed for players wishing to achieve mastery of technique and stylistic appreciation.

You will notice that Rockschoo does not publish a Grade 7 exam.

Grade Exams

Rockschool's grade exams are made up of the following elements:

- **Performance pieces (Debut; Grades 1-6 and 8)**
- **Technical exercises (Grades 1-6 and 8)**
- **Sight reading or improvisation & interpretation (Grades 1-5 only)**
- **Quick study pieces (Grades 6 and 8 only)**
- **Ear tests (Grades 1-6 and 8)**
- **General Musicianship (Grades 1-6 and 8)**

In addition, each book contains a *Guru's Guide*, with handy hints on how to play each piece, along with information on the marking schemes used for each section of the exams and a guide to free choice pieces.

Performance Pieces

There are six published pieces in each grade pack specially commissioned by Rockscool from top composers. A small number of pieces are arrangements of traditional or classic tunes. Each of these represents one of the following styles: blues, jazz, classic, pop and rock, world music and film music.

Exam Requirements

Debut: candidates are asked to perform **five** out of the six pieces printed in the Debut examination pack.

Grades 1-6 and 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.

Candidates may wish to adapt the performance pieces printed in the grade packs to suit their playing style and include improvisational passages, so long as these adaptations keep within the spirit of the style of the piece.

Guidelines are also published in each grade book for those candidates who wish either to write a piece of their own for performance in the exams 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 and the candidate can choose to play along to the click or without it.

Exam Requirements

Grade 1

These should be played at 60 bpm in a straight feel, right and left hand separately.

Group A – scales

- C major scale, A Aeolian
- C major pentatonic, E minor pentatonic (3 note pattern)

Group B – broken chords

- G major broken chord, A minor broken chord

Grade 2

These should be played at 70 bpm in a straight feel.

Group A – scales

- Hands together over 2 octaves: F major scale, C Mixolydian, E Aeolian, A Dorian, G major pentatonic (five note pattern) A minor pentatonic (five note pattern)

Group B – arpeggios

- Hands separately over 2 octaves: G major arpeggio, A minor arpeggio

Grade 3

These should be played at 60 bpm in either a straight or swung feel over 2 octaves.

Group A – scales

- Hands together: D major scale, A Mixolydian, C Aeolian, D Dorian, B \flat Lydian
- Right and left hand separately: F major pentatonic scale, C minor pentatonic scale, C blues scale, C chromatic scale

Group B – arpeggios

- Right and left hand separately: F major arpeggio, E \flat minor arpeggio

Grade 4

Exercises should be prepared in the following keys: C, F, G, D and B \flat and played at 90 bpm in either a straight or a swung feel over 2 octaves.

Group A – scales

- Hands together: major scale, Mixolydian, Lydian, Aeolian, Dorian, chromatic scale
- Hands separately: major pentatonic scale, minor pentatonic scale, blues scale

Group B – arpeggios

- Hands separately: major arpeggio

Grade 5

Exercises should be prepared in the following keys : C, F, G, D, B \flat and A and played at 100 bpm in either a straight or swung feel over 3 octaves unless otherwise indicated.

Group A –scales

- Hands together: major scale, Mixolydian, Lydian, Aeolian, Dorian, chromatic scale
- Hands separately: major pentatonic scale, minor pentatonic scale, blues scale (2 octaves)

Group B – arpeggios

- Hands together: dominant 7th arpeggio (2 octaves), minor 7th arpeggio (2 octaves)

Grade 6

Exercises should be prepared in the following keys: C, F, G, D, B \flat and A and played at 120 bpm in either a straight or swung feel over 4 octaves.

Group A – scales

- Hands together: major scale, Lydian,

Mixolydian, harmonic minor, melodic minor, diminished, chromatic scale, double octave, contrary motion scales

Group B – arpeggios

- Hands together: dominant 7th, minor 7th, diminished 7th arpeggios

Grade 8

Exercises should be prepared in any key and played at 140 bpm in either a straight or a swung feel over 4 octaves.

Group A – scales

- Hands together: major scale, Dorian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, Lydian $\flat 7$, harmonic minor, melodic minor, diminished, chromatic, double octave, contrary motion, whole tone scales

Group B – arpeggios

- Hands together: dominant 7th, minor 7th, diminished 7th, augmented arpeggios

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 types of tests required in the exam are printed in the grade packs.

Exam Requirements – Sight-reading

Candidates will be asked to prepare a sight-reading test which is given to them by the examiner. The test will be in one of the six styles common to the performance pieces. Candidates are asked not to write on the version of the test given to them. The examiner will allow 90 seconds for preparation and will then set a tempo for the candidate who must attempt a performance promptly.

Candidates can expect the following bar lengths, tempi and time signatures in each grade:

- **Grade 1:** 4 bars, 60 bpm, common time
- **Grade 2:** 4 bars, 60 bpm, common time
- **Grade 3:** 8 bars, 60-80 bpm, 2/4, 3/4, or 4/4
- **Grade 4:** 12 bars, 60-80 bpm, as for Grade 3
- **Grade 5:** 16 bars, 60-80 bpm, as for Grades 3 and 4, plus a range of musical notation signs, including repeats, DC and DS al coda and 1st and 2nd time bars

In all grades the note values used will reflect the standard of the performance pieces.

Exam Requirements – Improvisation & Interpretation

Candidates will be asked to prepare an improvisation & interpretation test which is given to them by the examiner. The sheet will have a number of bars and each bar will contain one or more chords. Candidates are asked to produce a performance made up of chords and/or single notes. The test will be in one of the six styles common to the performance

pieces. Candidates are asked not to write on the version of the test given to them. The examiner will allow 90 seconds for preparation and will then set a tempo for the candidate who must attempt a performance promptly.

Candidates can expect the following chord requirements, bar lengths, tempi and time signatures in each grade:

- **Grade 1:** 1 chord per bar, 4 bars, 60 bpm, common time
- **Grade 2:** up to 2 chords per bar, 4 bars, 60 bpm, common time
- **Grade 3:** up to 2 chords per bar, 8 bars, 60-80 bpm, 2/4, 3/4, or 4/4
- **Grade 4:** up to 2 chords per bar, 12 bars, 60-80 bpm, as for Grade 3, plus a range of musical notation signs, 1st and 2nd time bars
- **Grade 5:** 16 bars, 60-80 bpm, as for Grades 3 and 4, plus a range of musical notation signs, including repeats, DC and DS al coda and 1st and 2nd time bars

In all grades the note values used will reflect the standard of the performance pieces.

Quick Study Pieces (Grades 6 and 8 Only)

Candidates attempting either of these grades will be asked to perform a Quick Study Piece (QSP). This is given to candidates 20 minutes before they enter the exam room and candidates attempting these grades are asked to arrive at the exam centre sufficiently early to allow them time to practice their QSP.

Candidates will be asked to prepare a performance from an outline 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, solo sections, left and right hand instructions and expression marks. 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 be in one of the six styles designated in the performance pieces (see above) and will consist of between 16-20 bars. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other music notation information. The note lengths and rhythm values will be of Grade 4 standard. Tempo 80-100 bpm.*

Grade 8: *the QSP will be in one of the six styles designated in the performance pieces (see above) and will be up to 32 bars in length. The rhythms and chords will be indicated along with some written notation, dynamics and other music notation information. The note lengths and rhythms will be of a Grade 6 standard. Tempo 80-130 bpm.*

Ear Tests (Grades 1-6 and 8)

Candidates will be asked to take two ear tests in their grade exam. The tests are played with a piano sound to the candidate by the examiner on CD and each test is played twice.

The first test, regardless of grade, is a playback test where the candidate hears a melody and asked to play it back on the piano or keyboard. In Grades 1-5, candidates will be told the key of the exercise and the first note in the sequence. In Grades 6 and 8, candidates will be told the key only.

Exam Requirements – Test 1: Playback

Grade 1: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes composed from the first three notes of the G major scale (G, A, B) crotchets only, 2 bars, common time.

Grade 2: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes composed from the first five notes of either the C major or G major scales, crotchets and quaver notes only, 2 bars, common time.

Grade 3: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes derived from either the C major, F major, C minor pentatonic or F minor pentatonic scales, using simple melodic contours, crotchet and quaver notes only, 4 bars, common time.

Grade 4: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes derived from either the F and B \flat blues scales and F and G major scales, using simple melodic contours, minims, dotted minims, crotchet and quaver notes, and some quaver syncopation and shuffle feels, 4 bars, common time.

Grade 5: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes derived from either the B \flat and G major scales and A and D blues scales, note values and rhythms as in Grade 4, 4 bars, common time.

Grade 6: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes consisting of major, dorian or blues scales in the keys of C, F, G, D, A, B \flat and E \flat , note values as per **Grade 5:** but including semiquavers, 8 bars, common time, 6/8 and 3/4.

Grade 8: candidates will be asked to play back a combination of notes consisting of major, dorian or blues scales in any key, note values as per Grade 6, 8 bars, common time, 6/8 and 3/4.

The second test differs according to the grade being attempted. Candidates undertaking the chord sequence test (Grades 3-6 and 8) may use their piano or electronic keyboard as a guide.

Exam Requirements – Test 2

Grade 1: candidates will be asked to clap back a simple melody, quavers and crotchets, 2 bars, common time.

Grade 2: candidates will be asked to recognize a chord as either major or minor.

Grade 3: candidates will be asked to recognize a chord sequence using chords from the

following: I, IV and V in the keys of either C major, G Major or A minor, 1 chord per bar, 4 bars.

Grade 4: candidates will be asked to recognize a chord sequence using chords from the following: I, II minor7, IV, V7 and VI minor7 in the keys of either C major, F major or G Major, 1 chord per bar, 4 bars.

Grade 5: candidates will be asked to recognize a chord sequence using chords from the following: I, II minor7, IV, V7 and VI minor7 in the keys of either C major, B \flat major or D Major, up to 2 chords per bar, 4 bars.

Grade 6: candidates will be asked to recognize a chord sequence using chords from the following: I or I major7, II minor7, III minor7, IV or IV major7, V or V7, VI minor7 and minor VII \flat 5 in any key, up to 2 chords per bar, 4 bars.

Grade 8: candidates will be asked to recognize the root movement and chord type of a chord progression using chord combinations of major, minor, major7th, minor7th, and minor7 \flat 5 on root notes I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII in any key, up to 2 chords per bar, 4 bars.

General Musicianship

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

Exam Requirements

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

Grade 8: candidates will be asked questions in the same two categories as above but will be asked questions in a third category: history and styles.

A complete list of the topics covered in the music notation and theory category is printed in each grade book. Sample questions may be found on the Rockschool website.

All questions concerning instrument knowledge will deal with the instrument played by the candidate. Candidates using a piano will not be asked questions on electronic keyboards and vice versa.

Performance Certificates

Rockschool's performance certificates in popular piano and electronic keyboard deal with candidate performances only. Rockschool's performance certificates are available in the Player, Performer and Pro Zones and use the same repertoire as that published in Grades 3, 5 and 8. **Please note that for practical purposes, the *Debut* exam is effectively a performance certificate. The marking scheme for *Debut* is, therefore, identical as a performance certificate (see Marking Schemes, below).**

Exam Requirements

Performance Certificates: candidates are asked to perform **either five** out of the six pieces printed in the grade packs, **or** bring in up to **two** pieces from outside. This may be either a self-composed piece, or a piece of established popular repertoire.

Marking Schemes

All Rockscool exams are marked out of 100. The marking schemes for Grade exams and performance certificates are different, and within grade exams there are differences between the elements depending on which grade is being attempted. These can be summarised as follows:

GRADE EXAM	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Piece 1	13 out of 20	15 out of 20	17+ out of 20
Piece 2	13 out of 20	15 out of 20	17+ out of 20
Piece 3	13 out of 20	15 out of 20	17+ out of 20
Technical Exercises (Grades 1-5)	11 out of 15	12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Technical Exercises (Grades 6-8)	6 out of 10	7 out of 10	8+ out of 10
S R or I & I* (Grades 1-5)	6 out of 10	7 out of 10	8+ out of 10
Quick Study Piece (Grades 6-8)	11 out of 15	12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Ear Tests	6 out of 10	7 out of 10	8+ out of 10
General Musicianship Questions	3 out of 5	3 out of 5	3 out of 5
Total Marks	Pass: 65% +	Pass: 75% +	Pass: 85% +

* S R or I & I: Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Piece 1	14 out of 20	16 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Piece 2	14 out of 20	16 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Piece 3	14 out of 20	16 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Piece 4	14 out of 20	16 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Piece 5	14 out of 20	16 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Total Marks	Pass: 70% +	Merit: 80% +	Distinction: 90% +

Full marking criteria for all elements of each exam are available on www.rockschool.co.uk

Free Choice Piece Criteria

Detailed criteria for composing or choosing Free Choice Pieces can be found in the *Guru's Guide* section in each of the grade packs. You should choose or compose your tunes using the broad criteria set out below, cross-referencing these with the more detailed descriptions contained in the grade packs.

As a starting point, always look at the tunes printed in the grade packs. There you will find one example of the six styles which form the core of the printed repertoire: blues, jazz, classic, pop and rock, world music and film music. You should aim to choose or compose repertoire which falls into one or other of these categories. You may bring either a complete piece to the exam or a section (this may be necessary given the length requirements outlined below).

There are a number of elements which you need to take into account before making your final choices. These are:

- **Length:** you should aim to choose or compose pieces which last between a minute and three minutes maximum depending on the grade. You should use the pieces in the grade pack as a guide;

In addition, you will find a summary of the following requirements for each grade in the *Guru's Guide* and you should refer your piece to these criteria to ensure that they match the demands of the grade you are attempting. These are

- **Physical techniques**
- **Expressive techniques**
- **Note values and rhythms**

If you are in any doubt, please use the printed repertoire as a guide.

Entering a Rockschoo Exam

It is simple to enter a Rockschoo exam. Each book contains a four page pull-out examination entry form. This allows teachers to enter multiple candidates and single candidates to enter themselves. The pull-out also contains all the general and piano specific examination regulations.

There are three examination periods per year, the dates of which have been set until further notice. The periods and closing dates are shown in the table below.

PERIOD	DURATION	CLOSING DATE
Period A	1 st February to 15 th March	1 st December
Period B	15 th May to 31 st July	1 st April
Period C	1 st November to 15 th December	1 st October

Performance Piece Composers

Rockschool has commissioned a small group of professional songwriters and instrumentalists to produce repertoire for our popular piano and electronic keyboard syllabus.

Most of the repertoire in the books is original but we have included arrangements of four tunes now in the public domain: two by Scott Joplin (*The Entertainer* and *Maple Leaf Rag*), and two traditional pieces (*When the Saints Go Marching In* and the French nursery song *Alouette*). In addition, we have commissioned four tunes from Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd (Christopher Norton's compositions) and one from Faber Music Ltd (Stephen Warbeck). We have included a selection of the writers' biographies printed below.

Adrian York: Adrian is Rockschool's popular piano and electronic keyboard syllabus consultant and CD audio producer. Adrian is a successful media composer and a fixture on both the session and jazz circuits and has backed many top artists. Rumour has it that a long time ago he used to play in a well-known boy band. Adrian has composed a number of pieces across the grades, including two featured in this syllabus guide.

Stephen Warbeck: Stephen is one of the UK's top international film composers with an Oscar for the score of *Shakespeare in Love*. His other work includes music for *Billy Elliot*, *Quills* (a Golden Globe nomination in 2001) and most recently *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. On his days off, Stephen also plays accordion in the legendary Khippers band with the actor who played Nigel in East Enders as lead singer. Stephen composed the film music piece *Water* for Grade 6.

Debbie Wiseman: Debbie is one of the UK's top film and television composers with over 100 scores to her credit. Her film credits include *Wilde* and *Tom and Viv*, while her TV work includes *The Peoples' Century*, *Vets in Practice*, and the award winning *The Good Guys* and *Shrinks*. Debbie has contributed three film music pieces, including one at Debut and another at Grade 8, both featured in this syllabus guide.

Nick Ingman: Nick Ingman is a freelance composer, arranger and conductor with a CV that includes Hollywood blockbusters such as *Shakespeare in Love*, *The Saint*, *Quills* and *Chicken Run*. His arranging work has featured to date on 15 UK number one hit singles including such artists as Robbie Williams, Geri Halliwell, Eric Clapton and Sinéad O'Connor. Nick has composed two pieces, including the sample *By George!* from Grade 4 featured in this syllabus guide.

Christopher Norton: Christopher has a thriving career composing music for film and television. In education he is best known for his groundbreaking *Microjazz* series of music education books published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers.

Janette Mason: Janette is a top session player, jazz musician and media composer performing on piano, keyboard and organ for a number of artists including Oasis, Seal, Suzanne Vega, kd lang and Mica Paris. Her composition work includes a number of advertising campaigns and Channel 4 documentaries. Janette has composed one of the film score pieces and a pop and rock piece at Grade 5.

Alastair Gavin: Alastair has a thriving career as a media composer and is renowned as a fine pianist and keyboardist. He was the keyboard player in the BBC Rock School television series in the 1980's and has made appearances with artists as diverse as the Michael Nyman Band, Mari Wilson and trumpeter Harry Beckett. Alastair has contributed a number of pieces including *Everybody Shout* from Grade 3 featured in this syllabus guide.

Terry Seabrook: Terry writes music regularly for television, animated films and adverts. He records and performs with his own Latin group Cubana Bop on the international Jazz and Latin circuit. He also tutors piano as part of the world famous Jamey Aebersold Summer School each year. Terry has composed several pop and world music pieces including *Havana*, an extract of which is printed in this syllabus guide.

On the CD, all the tunes were performed by **David Rees-Williams** who has a dual career as a performer and educator from the Canterbury area. David brings a wealth of expertise across a range of styles to the performances. He is currently teaching at St Edmunds and The King's Schools and at Canterbury Christchurch University College. He works internationally as a performer at concerts, festivals and clubs, playing anything from baroque harpsichord to jazz piano.

An Innovative and Established Exam Board

Rockschool was founded in 1991 to bring high quality pop music into the mainstream of music education. All our syllabuses are validated by Trinity College, *London* (TCL), whose support has enabled us to provide innovative exams for **guitarists, bassists** and **drummers** across the UK. The Rockscool popular piano and electronic keyboard syllabus similarly enjoys the validation of TCL.

In 1999, our RS2K syllabus attracted even more players to our existing examinations with new performance pieces, the introduction of our performance certificates and band exams, along with our free backing CDs with every Rockscool book.

In addition to our examinations, Rockscool has been a leading force in developing pop music education. In the early 1990s we pioneered the field with the Brighton Rock summer school with the support of the Musicians' Union, and worked with BBC Radio 1 and the BPI to establish the education programmes of their Soundcity music festivals.

Since 1994 Rockschoo! has enjoyed a close partnership with the Prince's Trust. Together we run a series of week-long residential music courses for young people at risk aged between 18 and 25 to help them focus and move on in their lives. Nearly 1000 people have benefited from these free courses and some of them have taken lead roles in West End shows (such as Steve Balsamo as Jesus in the revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*) and performed at special events such as the Hyde Park Masters of Rock concert in 1996, the 1997 Two Nations Concert in Johannesburg (along with the Spice Girls) and for Prince Charles' 50 Birthday party at Buckingham Palace. On April 29th 2001 Rockschoo!'s tutors performed with 18 young musicians from South Africa and the UK to back Billy Ocean's acclaimed performance at the Trafalgar Square Freedom Day concert. The highlight of the day was our private meeting with Nelson Mandela at which we performed two South African pieces, prompting the former president to sing and dance with us.

In 2000 Rockschoo! has been part of the team working with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England and Wales on the new National Curriculum materials for Music as well as acting for the National Foundation for Youth Music (NFYM) on their Instrument Amnesty initiative.

From March 2001 Rockschoo! is researching rock and pop music education across England with the support of the NFYM and the Arts Council of England. If you would like your pop music teaching work to be included in our research, then please write to us at our address (see back cover) or see our website at **www.rockschool.co.uk**.

Our exams are officially recommended by the Scottish Qualification Authority and we are working towards similar accreditation by the QCA in England and Wales.

Sample Performance Pieces

Following are samples of the performance pieces contained in the grade packs, one from each grade. We have chosen these pieces in order to give you a flavour of the standard of repertoire and the stylistic diversity. We have also reproduced the performance hints from the relevant *Guru's Guides*.

- **Entry Zone:** *Phantasmaghou!ion* from Debut by Debbie Wiseman
Choo Choo Train Boogie from Grade 1 by Adrian York
- **Player Zone:** *The Entertainer* from Grade 2 by Scott Joplin
Everybody Shout from Grade 3 by Alastair Gavin
- **Performer Zone:** *By George!* from Grade 4 by Nick Ingman
Havana from Grade 5 by Terry Seabrook
- **Pro Zone:** *Riding the New Wave* from Grade 6 by Adrian York
Silent Movie Chase from Grade 8 by Debbie Wiseman

Grade Debut: *Phantasmaghou!ion* (film music)

Make sure you count the minim rests fully and take care not to confuse the E and Eb notes

in this tune. It is designed to encourage simple articulation although you might want to try a tremolando on some of the 3 notes chords to make it even spookier!

Grade 1: *Choo Choo Train Boogie* (blues)

A classic 'train' boogie in the tradition of Meade Lux Lewis's *Honky Tonk Train Blues* that needs to be played with an authentic boogie feel. Imagine that the first few bars are an old steam train gradually picking up speed. Watch out for the staccatos and keep the left hand 'rocks' part nice and steady.

Grade 2: *The Entertainer* (jazz)

Semiquaver syncopated patterns against the steady 'boom chick' of the left hand is the typical ragtime formula and no-one does it better than Scott Joplin. Try beating out the rhythms on your knees and when you are ready to play the arrangement, take care over the left and right hand balance, the syncopation and the dynamics.

Grade 3: *Everybody Shout* (pop/rock)

This piece is similar in feel to Billy Taylor's version of *I Wish*, the theme music to Jonathan Ross's BBC Film Review programme. The secret is the way in which the right hand syncopation sits against the steady left hand rhythm. As well as rhythmic strength, the right hand must have good articulation with the staccatos standing out.

Grade 4: *By George!* (classic)

The sophisticated elegance of the 1950s cocktail lounge is the ambience created by this tune, a homage to the 'locked hands' style made famous by the English jazz pianist George Shearing. Take care over the pedalling to achieve clarity and the dynamics to achieve intensity.

Grade 5: *Havana* (world)

For non-Salsa players the first thing to do in this wonderful piece is to get the hang of the syncopation as it uses all the various types to be found in Salsa music. The main theme is in the Guajira style which derives from Cuban Son and peasant music. Take care to practice the left hand bass jumps in the Cha-Cha section, observe the dynamics and staccatos, and don't forget to play with the Salsa (hot and spicy) spirit.

Grade 6: *Riding the New Wave* (pop/rock)

A tribute to the great pianists/keyboardists of the new wave post punk period, such as Steve Nieve (Elvis Costello), Johnny Fingers (The Boomtown Rats) and Dave Greenfield (The Stranglers). They combined classical knowledge with a punk sensibility. Play this piece with attitude but make sure you can articulate those fast left hand semiquavers. Parallel chord practice is useful over the opening and bar 21.

Grade 8: *Silent Movie Chase* (film)

In this homage to the music for silent movies there are some tricky technical elements such as left hand arpeggios and right hand trills against left hand triplets. Practice slowly and then build the tempo to achieve nimbleness of articulation, speed and lightness of touch and strong bold playing.

Debut

Phantasmaghoulion

Debbie Wiseman

♩ = 80 *Scary*

Popular Piano and Keyboards Syllabus Guide

Grade 1

Choo Choo Train Boogie

Adrian York

p *mf* getting faster

f

♩ = 84 Boogie Woogie

♩ = 134

Grade 2

The Entertainer

Scott Joplin

♩ = 76 March

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece in 2/4 time, marked *f* (forte). The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a descending melodic line, while the keyboard part provides a steady accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, marked *p* (piano) for the piano part and *f* for the keyboard part. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. Fingering numbers (1-5) are provided for many notes to guide the student. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final cadence.

Popular Piano and Keyboards Syllabus Guide

Grade 3

Everybody Shout *(extract)*

Alastair Gavin

♩=112 Funky

f

5 2 1 4 1 5 4 2 1 3 5 5 1 1 3 2 1

3 5 3 4 5 1 3

5 2 3 1 4 2

2 3 4 5

Grade 4

By George! (extract)

Nick Ingman

- 84 *In a relaxed but rhythmic style*

mp

2 3 4 5 4 3 2 5 2 1 2

2 3 4 3 5 2 1 2 1 5 1

2 3 4 5 3 3 5 2 5 3 5

2 3 4 1 2 3 5 3 5 4

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Grade 5

Havana (extract)

Terry Seabrook

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *sfz*, and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accents.

Grade 6

Riding the New Wave (extract)

Adrian York

Slow and Grand
rubato

ff

with pedal

molto rit.

mf

Rock

8va

Popular Piano and Keyboards Syllabus Guide

Grade 8

Silent Movie Chase (extract)

Debbie Wiseman

♩ = 92 Fast and furious

mp *mf*

mf

f

trill

trill

trill

trill

trill

1 2 5 3 2 1

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- **Rockschool** is about playing the styles of music you enjoy. Our specially written tunes develop the key skills, styles and techniques you need so you can play the hits of today, yesterday and tomorrow.
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- This **Syllabus Guide** contains samples of tunes across the range of grades, from **Debut** and **Grade 1** up to **Grade 8** so you can try out and have fun with a few of the great tunes we have on offer. There is also full information on both of our popular piano examinations, the **Traditional Grade** and the **Performance Certificate**, along with details of the technical requirements for every exam and guidance on how to enter. If you have access to the web you can get even more information on our **Rockschool** website at www.rockschool.co.uk.
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SYLLABUS GUIDE

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