

## **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 1

- 1 Note values of semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and semiquaver, and their equivalent rests (candidates may use the terms 'whole note', 'half note', etc.). Tied notes. Single-dotted notes and rests.
- 2 Simple time signatures of  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$ , bar-lines and the grouping of the notes listed above within these times.
- 3 The stave. Treble (G) and bass (F) clefs. Names of notes on the stave, including middle C in both clefs. Sharp, flat and natural signs, and their cancellation.
- 4 Construction of the major scale, including the position of the tones and semitones. Scales and key signatures of the major keys of C, G, D and F in both clefs, with their tonic triads (root position), degrees (number only), and intervals above the tonic (by number only).
- 5 Some frequently used terms and signs concerning tempo, dynamics, performance directions and articulation marks. Simple questions will be asked about a melody written in either treble or bass clef.