

Studying Scores

This module has six main sections.

1. Instrumental scores and techniques

Firstly you learn about types of keyboard instruments (including those played in Bach's time) and how early instruments developed into the fortepiano that Mozart and Haydn used to the modern piano. There is a chance for those who do not play the piano to learn about the pedals, what they do, and the signs used to tell a pianist to use them.



Snare Lever

Then you learn about the string family of instruments – which pitches the strings are tuned to, and techniques string players use – such as double-stopping and *pizzicato*. There is a separate section about bowing techniques, including harmonics, *portamento* and *col legno*, and the terms or signs used.

Next there is a section about wind instruments. You learn about how they produce sound, and about special techniques like tremolo and flutter-tonguing. There is a separate section about transposing instruments.

There are pictures of a number of percussion instruments, with descriptions of what they are used for.

After all this preparation, you will be shown how to read an orchestral score.

2. Understanding Music History

You learn about the four periods which grade 6 candidates are expected to know about – Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern. There are musical examples, so you can see what sort of music was written, and pictures, so you can see how there were similar styles in art and architecture of the time. There are assignments. At the end are extracts by four composers; you have to match the composer to the music.

- Most pieces or movements were based on a single tune or rhythm.
- Tunes were often **ornamented**. (See the passage by Couperin right.)
- “Motifs” (ideas) were often short. Composers would “spin out” an idea – maybe repeat it at different pitches in a “sequence” or “invert” it (turn it upside-down).
- Ideas were often imitated (echoed) by other parts.
- German composers liked contrapuntal music (two or more lines at once, as in the *sinfonia* right by Bach), yet it was giving way to homophonic music (melody, chords and bass).
- Italians Vivaldi and D. Scarlatti wrote tuneful works with simple textures. Scarlatti wrote mostly for harpsichord.



3. Ornamentation

This section adds a little more detail to what grade 5 students are expected to know. It focusses on trills, arpeggios and turns, the ornaments that are asked about in exams most often.

4. Rhythm

Exam questions often ask candidates to compare passages which have two rhythms. There are often questions about syncopation. Here you learn how to create and recognise syncopated rhythms.

5. Texture

This section begins by describing chordal and contrapuntal textures – and mixtures of the two. It then shows how textures changed in the Baroque, Classical and Romantic Periods. There are musical examples of various types of block-chord and broken-chord textures. Finally, there are sections about pedal notes and tremolos, both of which are often asked about in exams.

6. Mood

Exam questions often ask candidates to describe which musical features cause a change of mood in a passage. This section begins by answering the question “What is mood?”, then shows how music creates mood. Finally there are questions you can ask yourself to help you work out the mood of a passage.

An angular, jerky melody (∩∩∩) is usually more dramatic than one that moves by step. For example, this lively passage from Prokofiev's Second Sonata has many leaps:



Prokofiev, Piano Sonata no.2 op.14 1912