

# ENSEMBLES: Syllabus requirements

## Syllabus validity and levels

This syllabus is valid from 1989 until further notice. It is offered at the following three levels:

- **Primary** for performers of approximately Grades 4–5 standard
- **Intermediate** for performers of approximately Grades 6–7 standard
- **Advanced** for performers of approximately Grade 8 standard

## Entry

A special entry form should be completed (forms are available from music retailers and direct from ABRSM's office in London). If more than one ensemble is entered by an Applicant, a separate form should be completed for each ensemble.

## Types of ensemble

This exam is open to ensembles which:

- comprise any combination of two to ten instrumentalists\* and/or singers
- have *one* performer to each part
- are able to perform in the exam without the direction of a conductor

Such ensembles include piano duets as well as duos consisting of an instrumentalist (or singer) and a keyboard player where both performers wish to be assessed as an ensemble. Some of the most popular types of ensemble are featured on the following pages. Piano duet candidates may change places for different pieces in their programme, if they wish.

\* *The instruments must be included in the current range of subjects featured in ABRSM's syllabuses.*

## Programme planning

The programme should last approximately:

- **Primary** 12 minutes
- **Intermediate** 18 minutes
- **Advanced** 25 minutes

All ensembles will be allowed an additional five minutes for setting up and tuning.

All ensembles are required to perform a minimum of two items, contrasting in style and tempo. These may be chosen *either* from the suggested lists of works on the following pages, which are given as a guideline to expected standards, *or* from any other works, published or unpublished, of the ensemble's own choice, which are similar in standard and length.

In the case of own-choice works, a score must be submitted to ABRSM's Syllabus department for approval at least one month prior to the date of entry. Candidates may use any edition (the ones listed in the syllabus are given for guidance only and are not obligatory). On the day of the exam, full scores of all works performed should be made available for the examiner's use.

## Music stands

All ABRSM Centres provide a single music stand. Ensembles should bring any additional stands they require.

## **Performance and assessment**

The examiner will award an overall grading, rather than a mark, taking into account the following elements of the performance:

- technical competence (including accuracy of notes and rhythm, ensemble, balance and intonation)
- texture (including detail, contrast and blend)
- interpretation (including suitable choice of tempo and details of expression and phrasing)

The gradings are:

- A an outstanding performance, with little reservation on the part of the examiner
- B a very good performance, but with some reservation on the part of the examiner
- C a competent performance, but with significant reservation on the part of the examiner
- F failure to reach the standard required to pass

The examiner's notes and grading are sent to the Applicant named on the entry form, and certificates are issued for each member of an ensemble awarded an A, B or C grading.