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# BANJO



# Victoria College Examinations

in Banjo Playing

published in co-operation with the  
British BMG Federation

# Victoria College of Music and Drama, London

Founded 1890

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# Banjo Syllabus



Victoria College Examinations is an institutional member of the College of Teachers ([www.collegeofteachers.ac.uk](http://www.collegeofteachers.ac.uk)) and abides by its code of practice.

## **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 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.

## **ABOUT THIS SYLLABUS**

Examinations in Banjo Playing are available up to Grade 4 level only.

Candidates at all levels receive an individual written report and, if successful, a certificate or diploma.

## **SET BOOKS**

The prescribed pieces in London Music Press publications exclusively available from London Music Press (**LMP**), 52 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4LR at £8 per item including post and packing worldwide. Cheque with order only. Non-LMP publications are available from music shops or by mail order from Music Exchange (Manchester) Ltd. Tel. 0161 946 9301 or 0161 946 1234 fax 0161 946 1195, by email on [mail@music-exchange.co.uk](mailto:mail@music-exchange.co.uk) or on the Internet at [www.music-exchange.co.uk](http://www.music-exchange.co.uk) or similar websites such as [www.musicroom.com](http://www.musicroom.com)

Second hand and out of print music can be purchased on [www.Amazon.co.uk](http://www.Amazon.co.uk) or [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk)

## **REGULATIONS**

All entries are accepted on the conditions laid down in *General Regulations and Information*. A copy of which is available free of charge. It is also on our website: [www.vcmexams.com](http://www.vcmexams.com)

## **ENTRY FORMS**

Please use the code BO in the column headed %subject+ and the letter(s) in the %grade no.+ column as shown at the head of each grade in this syllabus. ALL diploma candidates should be entered on individual pink entry forms.

## **MEDAL EXAMINATIONS**

Successful candidates at medal examinations receive a certificate and a medal order form. Prices of medals are shown on the medal order form. Medals are supplied in boxes and are engraved with the candidate's name, subject of examination and the year.

Medal awards do not entitle holders to put letters after their names.

## **QUESTIONS**

Questions are based principally on the music performed; but, in addition, examiners are at liberty to ask questions on notes, rests, musical terms and signs, key and time signatures.

## **MEMORY**

Performing from memory is not compulsory at any level. However, it is encouraged and will be rewarded

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<i>BO</i>	<i>C</i>

## **C -Preparatory Examination in Banjo Playing**

### **Exercises (20 Marks)**

Candidates must choose and perform two of the exercises set out in the Exam Sheet for the grade.

### **Scalework (10 marks)**

To play with right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers, the scales of C Major and A Minor either form one octave; and a Chromatic scale starting on G one octave

### **Solo Pieces (50 marks)**

To play any two of the following pieces  
one chosen by the candidate from each of the two Lists, A and B.

#### **List A**

##### *Banjo Preparatory Exam Sheet LMP*

<i>Anonymous</i>	Breakdown
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	Brook Valse
<i>W.E. Ballantine</i>	Old Country Dance
<i>W.E. Ballantine</i>	Paddy's Wedding
<i>Herbert J. Ellis (arr.)</i>	Ring, ring the banjo
<i>Herbert J. Ellis (arr.)</i>	What can the matter be

*Mel Bay's Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238*

*Frank Bradbury Merry Campers*

#### **List B**

##### *Banjo Preparatory Exam Sheet LMP*

<i>Alan Thomas</i>	Etude
<i>Richard Shearing</i>	Wayside Song
<i>John Willis</i>	Tony Callagan's Jig
<i>Danielle Saxon Reeves</i>	Dip into Serenity (without a cross word)
<i>Linda Kitto</i>	Unaccompanied Waltz
<i>Linda Kitto</i>	Hoe Down

### **Questions (10 marks)**

### **Sight Reading (10 marks)**

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>BO</b>	<b>1</b>

# Grade 1 Banjo Playing

## Solo Pieces (60 marks)

To perform three pieces chosen by the candidate: one from List A; one from List B and one from either List A or List B.

### List A

#### *Banjo Grade 1 Exam Sheet LMP*

<i>R. Heath</i>	The Lorne Polka
<i>R. Heath</i>	The Cromartie Polka March
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	The Park Crescent March
<i>Charles Skinner</i>	The Ladbrooke March
<i>Vess L. Ossman</i>	Sunflower Dance
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	Sand Jig
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	My lodging is on the cold ground

#### *Mel Bay's Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238*

<i>Frank Bradbury</i>	The Pajama Dance
<i>Frank Bradbury</i>	The Mountain Polka

### List B

#### *Banjo Grade 1 Exam Sheet LMP*

<i>Ian Middleton</i>	Dance in G
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Monea Jig
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Happy Tune
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	First Waltz
<i>John Willis</i>	Lovers Lament
<i>John Willis</i>	Gentleman Jim

### Scalework (10 marks)

C and G major; A and E minor, two octaves

i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)

Chromatic scale starting on C to C (one octave)

i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)

## Questions (10 marks)

## Sight Reading (10 marks)

### Musicianship Tests (10 Marks)

Test 1: To clap a rhythm in 2/4 time. 2 bars in length, played twice by the examiner.

Test 2: To identify any note in the arpeggio C/E/G/C', Middle C being given

Test 3: To echo a five-note phrase played twice by the examiner.

### or Composition (10 Marks)

Perform an own composition of about 8 bars in the key of C major. It should be balanced as an opening 4-bar phrase which forms a question+ and a 4-bar phrase that forms an answer+

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>BO</b>	<b>2</b>

## Grade 2 Banjo Playing

### Solo Pieces (60 marks)

To perform three pieces chosen by the candidate: one from List A; one from List B and one from either List A or List B.

#### List A

##### Banjo Grade 2 Exam Sheet **LMP**

<i>Clifford Essex (arr.)</i>	Schaeffer's Jig
<i>W.E. Ballantine(arr.)</i>	Carnival of Venice
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	Skipping Rope Dance
<i>Joe Morley</i>	Dreamland Gavotte
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	The Bell Chimes
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	The Last Rose of Summer
<i>Herbert J. Ellis</i>	Kansas Jig

#### List B

##### Banjo Grade 2 Exam Sheet **LMP**

<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Waltz
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Pony Ride
<i>John Willis</i>	Alpine Rose
<i>John Willis</i>	Cycle Ride
<i>John Willis</i>	Sucoth Waltz

### Scalework (10 marks)

F major and D minor; D major, and B minor one octave

i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)

### Chromatic scale

Starting on C to C (two octaves)

i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)

### Questions (10 marks)

### Sight Reading (10 marks)

### Chord progression

Tonic (I), Subdominant (IV) and Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> (V7) chords in the keys of F & D major, to be strummed or plucked in time signatures of 2/4, 3/4 & 4/4 at examiner's discretion

### Musicianship Tests (10 Marks)

Test 4: To clap a rhythm in 2/4 time. 2 bars in length, played twice by the examiner.

Test 5: To identify any note C to G, played from C

Test 6: To hum, play or sing a group of 5 or 6 notes played twice by the examiner, and to complete the phrase by adding **one** note

### or Composition (10 Marks)

Perform an own composition of about 16 bars in the key of C, G or F major. It should be balanced as an opening 4-bar phrase which forms a question+, a 4-bar phrase that forms an answer+, a repeat of the opening 4-bar phrase, and a second answering+phrase

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>BO</b>	<b>3</b>

## Grade 3 Banjo Playing

### Solo Pieces (60 marks)

To perform three pieces chosen by the candidate: one from List A; one from List B and one from either List A or List B.

#### List A

##### *Banjo Grade 3 Exam Sheet LMP*

<i>Joe Morley</i>	A Banjo Oddity
<i>Joe Morley</i>	Donkey Laugh
<i>Eric Calcutt</i>	The Possum's Picnic
<i>Emile Grimshaw</i>	Banjo Blues
<i>Emile Grimshaw</i>	Spanish Romance
<i>J.S.Bach arr.B. Scheaff</i>	Gavotte
<i>Trad. arr H. Delmar</i>	The Londonderry Air

##### *Mel Bay's Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238*

<i>Frank Bradbury</i>	Gauchos Galopade
<i>Frank Bradbury</i>	Alabama Moon

#### List B

##### *Banjo Grade 3 Exam Sheet LMP*

<i>Alan Thomas</i>	Round Dance
<i>Barbara Pommerenke-Steel</i>	Milonga in the Rain
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Lullaby
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Simple Song
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Malaguena

### Questions (10 marks)

### Sight Reading (10 marks)

### Scalework (10 marks)

A and B flat major; F# and G minor, one octave

i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)

li) Right hand fingering: alternating thumb and index finger (x & .)

### Chromatic scale

Starting on D to D (one octave)

i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)

li) Right hand fingering: alternating thumb and index finger (x & .)

### Chord progression

Tonic (I), Subdominant (IV) and Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> (V7) chords in the keys of A & Bb major, to be strummed or plucked in time signatures of 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 & at examiner's discretion

### Musicianship Tests (10 Marks)

Test 7: To clap a rhythm in 2/4 or 3/4 time, 2 bars, played twice by the examiner and identify the time as 2/4 or 3/4

Test 8: To identify any note(s) in the chords of C, G, or F, played from the root note.

Test 9: To hum, sing or whistle a group of 5 or 6 notes played twice by the examiner, and then to complete the phrase by adding two or three notes.

### Composition (10 Marks)

Perform an own composition in simple binary form in the key of C, G, F, D or B flat major.



SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>BO</b>	<b>4</b>

## Grade 4 Banjo Playing

### Solo Pieces (60 marks)

To perform three pieces chosen by the candidate: one from List A; one from List B and one from either List A or List B.

#### List A

##### Banjo Grade 4 Exam Sheet **LMP**

<i>Kerry Mills</i>	Whistling Rufus
<i>Joe Morley</i>	The Jovial Huntsman
<i>Joe Morley</i>	The Rose Leaves Gavotte
<i>Emile Grimshaw</i>	The Banshee
<i>Emile Grimshaw</i>	Chop Suey
A.D. Cammeyer	Blue Eyes
A. D. Cammeyer	The Dancer's Dream

##### *Mel Bay's Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238*

<i>Frank Bradbury</i>	Ballade in Eb
<i>Frank Bradbury</i>	Greensleeves

#### List B

##### Banjo Grade 4 Exam Sheet **LMP**

<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Reverie
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Aquarelle II
<i>Alan Middleton</i>	Toccatina
<i>Liz Sharma</i>	Jig
<i>Liz Sharma</i>	Butterfly
Elias Sibley	Homage to Joe Morley

### Questions (10 marks)

### Sight Reading (10 marks)

### Scalework (10 marks)

- E and E flat major; C and C# minor, one octave
- Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)
  - Right hand fingering: alternating thumb and index finger (x & .)

### Chromatic scale

- Starting on Eb to Eb (one octave)
- Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)
  - Right hand fingering: alternating thumb and index finger (x & .)

### Chord progression

Tonic (I), Subdominant (IV) and Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> (V7) chords in the keys of Eb & E major, to be strummed or plucked in time signatures of 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 & 6/8 at examiner's discretion

### Musicianship Tests (10 Marks)

Test 10: To clap a rhythm in 2/4, 3/4 or 4/4 time played twice by the examiner, to state the time and then to identify the melody as major or minor.

Test 11: To identify triads as major or minor and then to name the notes in them, the root being named by the examiner.

Test 12: To hum, sing or whistle a group of notes- 2 bars - played by the examiner, and then to complete the melody by adding 4 or 5 notes.

### or Composition (10 Marks)

Perform an own composition in simple binary form in the key of D or B flat major, including a modulation to a related key.