Victoria College Examinations
in Banjo Playing
published in co-operation with the
British BMG Federation
Banjo Syllabus

Victoria College Examinations is an institutional member of the College of Teachers (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 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 WC1 R 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 or on the Internet at www.music-exchange.co.uk or similar websites such as www.musicroom.com

Second hand and out of print music can be purchased on www.Amazon.co.uk or 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

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
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
Anonymous Breakdown
Herbert J. Ellis Brook Valse
W.E. Ballantine Old Country Dance
W.E. Ballantine Paddy’s Wedding
Herbert J. Ellis (arr.) Ring, ring the banjo
Herbert J. Ellis (arr.) 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
Alan Thomas Etude
Richard Shearing Wayside Song
John Willis Tony Callagans Jig
Danielle Saxon Reeves Dip into Serenity (without a cross word)
Linda Kitto Unaccompanied Waltz
Linda Kitto Hoe Down

Questions (10 marks)

Sight Reading (10 marks)
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
R. Heath        The Lorne Polka
R. Heath        The Cromartie Polka March
Herbert J. Ellis The Park Crescent March
Charles Skinner The Ladbroke March
Vess L. Ossman  Sunflower Dance
Herbert J. Ellis Sand Jig
Herbert J. Ellis My lodging is on the cold ground

Mel Bay’s Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238
Frank Bradbury  The Pajama Dance
Frank Bradbury  The Mountain Polka

List B
Banjo Grade 1 Exam Sheet LMP
Ian Middleton   Dance in G
Alan Middleton  Monea Jig
Alan Middleton  Happy Tune
Alan Middleton  First Waltz
John Willis     Lover’s Lament
John Willis     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) or Composition (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.

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

List B
Banjo Grade 2 Exam Sheet LMP
Alan Middleton Waltz
Alan Middleton Pony Ride
John Willis Alpine Rose
John Willis Cycle Ride
John Willis Sukoth 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 (. & ..)

Chord progression
Tonic (I), Subdominant (IV) and Dominant 7th (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

Questions (10 marks)
Sight Reading (10 marks)

Musicianship Tests (10 Marks) or Composition (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
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
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
Joe Morley A Banjo Oddity
Joe Morley Donkey Laugh
Eric Calcutt The Possum’s Picnic
Emile Grimshaw Banjo Blues
Emile Grimshaw Spanish Romance
J.S.Bach arr. B. Scheaff Gavotte
Trad. arr H. Delmar The Londonderry Air

Mel Bay’s Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238
Frank Bradbury Gauchos Galopade
Frank Bradbury Alabama Moon

List B
Banjo Grade 3 Exam Sheet LMP
Alan Thomas Round Dance
Barbara Pommerenke-Steel Milonga in the Rain
Alan Middleton Lullaby
Alan Middleton Simple Song
Alan Middleton Malaguena

Questions (10 marks)

Sight Reading (10 marks)

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.

Scalework (10 marks)
A and B flat major; F# and G minor, one octave
i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)
ii) 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 (. & ..)
ii) Right hand fingering: alternating thumb and index finger (x & .)

Chord progression
Tonic (I), Subdominant (IV) and Dominant 7th (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

Composition (10 Marks)
Perform an own composition in simple binary form in the key of C, G, F, D or B flat major.
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
Kerry Mills Whistlin’ Rufus
Joe Morley The Jovial Huntsman
Joe Morley The Rose Leaves Gavotte
Emile Grimshaw The Banshee
Emile Grimshaw Chop Suey
A.D. Cammeyer Blue Eyes
A. D. Cammeyer The Dancer’s Dream

List B
Banjo Grade 4 Exam Sheet LMP
Alan Middleton Reverie
Alan Middleton Aquarelle II
Alan Middleton Toccatina
Liz Sharma Jig
Liz Sharma Butterfly
Elias Sibley Homage to Joe Morley

Mel Bay’s Banjo Method C-Tuning Concert Style MB93238
Frank Bradbury Ballade in Eb
Frank Bradbury Greensleeves

Scalework (10 marks)
E and E flat major; C and C# minor, one octave
i) Right hand fingering: alternating index and middle fingers (. & ..)
ii) Right hand fingering: alternating thumb and index finger (x & .)

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

Chord progression
Tonic (I), Subdominant (IV) and Dominant 7th (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

Questions (10 marks)

Sight Reading (10 marks)

Musicianship Tests (10 Marks) or Composition (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.

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