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Free Choice Piece  
**BASS**

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## BASS

Please read through the following section if you are thinking of performing any songs not published in the Rockscool Acoustic Guitar grade books.

### For all grades:

The appropriate grade book must be brought to the exam.

Candidates are allowed to perform only a certain number of free choice pieces in their exam. For a grade exam two out of three pieces may be free choice pieces, for Performance Certificate three out of five may be free choice pieces.

Candidates will need to bring a copy of the sheet music for the examiner and a backing track for all Free Choice Pieces including pieces from previous Rockscool Syllabi.

All Free choice pieces must be performed to a backing track (without the examined part). The backing tracks may be provided on CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB. Please note that the audio cannot be streamed from a device and must be a downloaded audio file for accessible playback on the exam day.

### Selecting Free choice pieces:

The following checklist has been devised to help you assess whether or not the repertoire you have chosen meets the criteria established for Performance Pieces in the grade you are taking.

\* Indicates that noted point should be included in the piece.

Other points are discretionary, depending on other elements of the piece chosen. If not all requirements are included in the notation, candidates are welcome to add these to the score for assessment.

If after reading this guide you still require help to determine if your chosen piece is suitable for the grade, please forward a copy of the sheet music to [freechoicepieces@rslawards.com](mailto:freechoicepieces@rslawards.com)

Note! Please allow **four weeks** for a decision regarding the suitability of the submitted piece.



## BASS DEBUT

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 45sec-3min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate basic left and right hand coordination\*

The piece must demonstrate accurate use of two fingers of the picking hand as required\*

The piece should demonstrate accurate basic damping techniques

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece should demonstrate basic control of legato/staccato

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should contain a mixture of whole, half, quarter and eighth notes



## BASS GRADE 1

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 1-3min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate basic left and right hand coordination\*

The piece must demonstrate accurate use of two fingers of the picking hand as required\*

The piece must demonstrate accurate basic damping techniques\*

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate basic control of legato/staccato\*

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The pieces should contain a mixture of whole, half, quarter and eighth notes



## BASS GRADE 2

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 1-3min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

The piece must feature most of the following.

If your piece does not have four out of six of the requirements in Section B it is not suitable for the examination.

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate competent left and right hand co-ordination\*

The piece must demonstrate use of two fingers of picking hand as required\*

The piece must demonstrate competent damping technique\*

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate competent control of legato/staccato\*

The piece should demonstrate basic range of dynamics (p, mf, f)

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should demonstrate a mixture of whole, half, quarter, eighth notes, as well as dotted half, quarter and eighth notes and associated rests



## BASS GRADE 3

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 1.30-4min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination\*

The piece should demonstrate use of thumb and damping techniques using the palm

The piece should demonstrate damping for percussive sounds

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate competent control of legato/staccato\*

The piece must demonstrate use of dynamics (pp-ff)\*

Other techniques to include:

Fretting hand vibrato

Hammer on and pull off

Accented notes

Simple slides

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should demonstrate a mixture of whole, half, quarter, eighth notes, as well as dotted half, quarter and eighth notes including some use of syncopated eighth and sixteenth note feels



## BASS GRADE 4

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 2-4min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination\*

The piece should demonstrate even use of fingers in picking hand when playing semiquavers

The piece should demonstrate fretted hand damping for dead notes

The piece should demonstrate use of syncopated eighth and 16th note feels

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate competent control of legato/staccato\*

The piece must demonstrate good understanding and control of dynamics (pp-ff)\*

The piece must demonstrate accented notes\*

Other techniques to include:

Simple slides

Fretting hand vibrato

Hammer on and pull offs

Use of slapped notes

Use of pulled notes

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should demonstrate a mixture of whole, half, quarter, eighth notes, as well as dotted half, quarter and eighth notes with more advanced use of eighth and 16th note syncopations



## BASS GRADE 5

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 2-4min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate accurate left and right hand co-ordination\*

The piece must demonstrate picking hand damping\*

The piece must demonstrate alternate picking\*

The piece must demonstrate double stops on adjacent strings\*

The piece should demonstrate damping for percussive effects

The piece should demonstrate smooth string crossing when playing sixths, sevenths and octaves

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate good control of legato/staccato\*

The piece must demonstrate phrasing and dynamics (pp-ff)\*

The piece should demonstrate slides

The piece should demonstrate fretting hand vibrato

The piece should demonstrate hammer on and pull offs

The piece should demonstrate comfortable slap style bass with and without muted notes

The piece should demonstrate comfortable pop style bass with and without muted notes

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should demonstrate a mixture of whole, half, quarter, eighth notes, as well as dotted half, quarter and eighth notes and eighth and sixteenth note syncopations



## BASS GRADE 6

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 2.30-5min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate highly developed left and right hand co-ordination\*

The piece must demonstrate highly developed damping techniques\*

The piece must demonstrate highly developed slap style using fretted notes with pulls and muted notes\*

The piece must demonstrate accurate use of two, three or four fingers of picking hand as required\*

The piece should demonstrate effective string jumping

The piece should demonstrate double stops (3rds, 5ths, 6ths, 8ves and 10ths)

The piece should demonstrate hammer ons and pull offs, slides, cross-string hammers, thumb pops and index and middle finger slaps (at least half of these)

The piece should demonstrate tapping techniques including single string, double stops

The piece should demonstrate use of harmonics

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate secure control of legato/staccato\*

The piece must demonstrate phrasing and dynamics (ppp-fff)\*

The piece must demonstrate accented notes\*

The piece should demonstrate slurs and trills by hammer ons and pull offs using open strings

The piece should demonstrate tone manipulation using picking hand

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should contain note values in almost any combination but have considerable amount of 16th notes, dotted note combinations and triplets of all varieties.

#### SOLO

The piece must include solo passages using any mode(s) as appropriate moving by step and leap over a suitably wide range\*



## BASS GRADE 7

### Section A: Essential Elements

The piece must exist in a notated copy and a copy of the sheet music should be provided to the examiner on the day of the exam \*

The piece must be performed to a backing track \*

For this grade the backing track should be between 3-5min long \*

A copy of the backing track (minus the examined part) should be brought to the exam on a CD, MP3 player, tablet or USB \*

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate highly developed left and right hand co-ordination\*

The piece must demonstrate highly developed damping techniques\*

The piece should demonstrate highly developed slap style using fretted notes with pulls and muted notes

The piece should demonstrate accurate use of two, three or four fingers of picking hand as required

Other Techniques to include:

Effective string jumping

Double stops (3rds, 5ths, 6ths, 8ves and 10ths)

Hammer ons and pull offs, slides, cross-string hammers, thumb pops and index and middle finger slaps (at least half of these)

Tapping techniques including single string, double stops

Use of harmonics

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate secure control of legato/staccato\*

The piece must demonstrate phrasing and dynamics (ppp-fff)\*

The piece must demonstrate accented notes\*

The piece should demonstrate slurs and trills by hammer ons and pull offs using open strings

The piece should demonstrate tone manipulation using picking hand

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should contain note values in almost any combination but have considerable amount of 16th notes, dotted note combinations and triplets of all varieties.

Sophisticated syncopated and contrapuntal rhythms in wide range of styles including walking and rhythmically independent bass lines and chord melody

#### SOLO

The piece must include solo passages using any mode(s) as appropriate moving by step and leap over a suitably wide range\*



## BASS GRADE 8

### Section A: Essential Elements

If you answer “No” to any of the following questions the piece is unsuitable for use in the grade examination. If you answer “Yes” to all of them then please proceed to the next section.

Is the piece more than two minutes and less than three minutes long?

Is the piece performed with a backing track?

Is the backing track on CD?

Is the backing track minus the Bass part?

Does the piece exist in a notated copy?

### Section B: Performance Elements

#### PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate advanced left and right hand \*

The piece must demonstrate advanced damping techniques\*

The piece must demonstrate use of two, three or four fingers of picking hand as required\*

The piece should demonstrate co-ordination in a slap percussive style

Other Techniques to include:

Double stops (3rds, 5ths, 6ths, 8ves and 10ths)

Triple stops (triads inversions etc, voicings of 7th chords)

Thumb and muting techniques

Fretted hand damping for dead notes

Smooth string crossing when playing 6ths, 7ths and 8ves and extended intervals advanced slap & pop techniques using open strings and stopped notes, 7ths, 8ves and 10ths

Right and left hand dead notes and damping

Hammer ons and pull offs, slides, cross-string hammers, thumb pops and index and middle finger slaps (at least half of these)

#### EXPRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

The piece must demonstrate advanced control of legato/staccato\*

The piece must demonstrate phrasing and dynamics (ppp-fff)\*

The piece must demonstrate accented notes\*

The piece should demonstrate slurs and trills by hammer ons and pull offs using open strings: minor and major, and 2nds and minor 3rds

The piece should demonstrate tone manipulation using picking hand

#### RHYTHM SKILLS

The piece should contain note values in almost any combination but have considerable amount of 16th notes, dotted note combinations and triplets of all varieties.

Sophisticated syncopated and contrapuntal rhythms in wide range of styles including walking and rhythmically independent bass lines and chord melody

#### SOLO

The piece must include solo passages using any mode(s) as appropriate moving by step and leap over a suitably wide range\*