Rockschool | Vocals Syllabus | Free Choice Piece Guidance

For general information about Free Choice Pieces please see:
https://www.rslawards.com/free-choice-pieces/

The following guidelines outline features that would normally be found within a free choice selection for vocals to meet the grade level.

These features are indicative and would not all necessarily occur to the same degree within any particular song. Standards can be measured by making a balanced judgement regarding various musical elements based on these guidelines. If in any doubt, please consult the pieces in the grade book for a guide.

It is not a prerequisite for free choice pieces to be approved by RSL Head Office, as the examiner will make a judgement about the suitability of the piece in the exam. However, if you are unsure about the eligibility of your piece(s) you can seek approval which incurs a fee of £10 per piece. Please email info@rslawards.com with details of the proposed piece(s) (including a copy of the sheet music) and the grade / instrument you intend to enter for. A full reply will be given no later than 4 weeks after payment of the approval fee, which will be facilitated via an online link that we will e-mail to you.

Please note that for any free choice pieces sung in a language other than English, a translation of the lyrics into English must be provided to the examiner on the day; otherwise this may affect the examiner's ability to assess the fullest extent of outcomes.

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Debut

Duration	45 secs – 2 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • consistent / maintained tone • solid chest voice The song would be expected to cover a range of at least a 5th Intervallic motion may be mostly stepwise
Expressive techniques	The song should include some simple phrasing Dynamics are likely to be limited and not assessed at this grade

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 1

Duration	1 – 3 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • consistent / maintained tone • solid chest voice The song would be expected to cover a range of at least a 5th Intervallic motion may be mostly stepwise
Expressive techniques	The song should include some simple phrasing

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 2

Duration	1 – 3 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • consistent / maintained tone with some colouring and variation • solid chest voice The song would be expected to cover a range of at least an octave The song would be expected to include intervals up to a 3rd
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • some personalisation of phrasing • dynamic changes

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 3

Duration	1 min 30 secs – 4 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • consistent tone with some colouring and variation • solid chest voice • head voice • consistency of register changes The song would be expected to cover a range of at least an octave The song would be expected to include intervals up to a 4th
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • some personalisation of phrasing • some dynamic changes including gradual changes • some stylistic awareness

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 4

Duration	2 – 4 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • consistent tone with confident colouring and variation • well-controlled chest voice • head voice/falsetto • fluency of register changes • variation and complexity of rhythms The song would be expected to cover a range of at least an octave The song would be expected to include intervals up to a 4th
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • developed phrasing • contrasting dynamic colouring • stylistic awareness

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 5

Duration	2 – 4 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • consistent and maintained tone • well-controlled chest voice • head voice/falsetto • fluency of register changes • variation and complexity of rhythms • good use of diction and articulation The song would be expected to cover a range of at least a 9th The song would be expected to include intervals up to a 5th
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • advanced use of phrasing • stylistic and varied dynamic colouring • well executed stylistic awareness and technique

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 6

Duration	2 min 30 secs – 5 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • well maintained and varied tone across different registers • solid chest voice • head voice/falsetto • variation and complexity of rhythms • good use of diction and articulation The song would be expected to cover a range of at least an 11th The song would be expected to include intervals up to a 6th
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • developed and personal phrasing • contrasted dynamic colouring • advanced and well executed stylistic awareness and technique

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 7

Duration	3 – 5 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • well maintained and varied tone across different registers, with very fluent transitions • solid chest voice • head voice/falsetto • variation and complexity of rhythms • good use of diction and articulation The song would be expected to cover a range of at least an 11th The song would be expected to include intervals up to an octave
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • advanced personal phrasing • stylistic and varied dynamic colouring • advanced and well executed stylistic awareness and technique

FREE CHOICE PIECE GUIDELINES | Grade 8

Duration	3 – 5 mins
Performance elements	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • well maintained and varied tone across different registers, with very fluent transitions • solid chest voice • head voice/falsetto • variation and complexity of rhythms • good use of diction and articulation The song would be expected to cover a range of at least an 11th The song would be expected to include intervals greater than an octave
Expressive techniques	The song should enable the candidate to demonstrate • advanced personal phrasing • stylistic and varied dynamic colouring • sophisticated and well executed stylistic awareness and technique