



# Lynne Oliver Music Studios

Piano ♦ Theory ♦ Woodwinds

## ROYAL CONSERVATORY EXAMINATIONS

### PIANO (Levels 1-7)

Preparation must begin at least a year prior to taking an exam at the Royal Conservatory. There are four components to the exam:

1. Repertoire (pieces) (56%)
2. Technique (24%)
3. Ear Tests (10%)
4. Sight Reading (10%)

#### 1. REPERTOIRE (56%):

There are three lists of music from which to choose: List A (16%), List B (18%), List C (16%). No repeats are necessary, but Da Capo signs are to be observed. All of my students must have two or more pieces learned from each list, although only one piece from each list is necessary for an exam:

##### Levels 1 and 2:

List A: Baroque and Classical

List B: Romantic and 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century

List C: Inventions

##### Levels 3 to 7:

List A: Baroque

List B: Classical and Classical-style

List C: Romantic and 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century

An additional six percent of the mark (2% for each piece) is awarded for memory of repertoire. If the piece is memorised, full marks are given; part marks can be obtained if music is used.

#### 2. TECHNIQUE (24%):

There are two parts to this component of the exam:

- a) Technical Tests (12%):  
These include scales, chords (triads), arpeggios (level 4 and up), etc. These must be memorised and up to the required tempo.
- b) Etudes (12%):  
For levels 1 and 2, I insist my students learn at least three etudes but one etude must be prepared for the exam. For levels 3 and up, my students must learn at least four etudes but two etudes must be prepared for the exam. Etudes need not be memorised.

Popular Selection List Substitutions:

One etude may be substituted for a work from the Popular Selection List.



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## 3. EAR TESTS (10%):

This component of the exam consists of four parts:

Levels 1 – 4:

- a) Clapback (2%):  
clap back the rhythm of a melody
- b) Intervals (2%):  
name intervals by ear
- c) Melody playback (4%):  
play back a melody
- d) Chords (2%):  
name a chord by ear

Levels 5 – 7:

- a) Intervals (2%):  
name intervals by ear
- b) Melody playback (4%):  
play back a melody
- c) Chords (2%):  
name a chord by ear
- d) Chord Progressions (2%):  
name a chord progression by ear

## 4. SIGHT READING (10%):

This component of the exam consists of two parts:

- a) Play (7%):  
play a short excerpt of music from sight after given a short time to study it  
generally expected to be able to sight read three level levels below the level currently  
studying
- b) Clap (3%):  
clap the rhythm of a simple rhythmic pattern from sight

### What is an Exam Like?

Like recitals or festivals, exams can create some anxiety. I try to give as much information as I can to my students so there are no surprises. If you know what to expect, much of the reason for the nervousness is eliminated. The most important thing is to know your music and technique well.

You must bring all of your music and your Examination Program Form (completely filled out) to the exam. Arrive at least one half hour before the exam. You do not want to be harried when you arrive. Make sure you know where to go and announce yourself to the person in charge. You will be shown where to wait. You can wait with your family or friends there.

There will only be two people in the examining room: you and the examiner. No one else is allowed with the exception of perhaps an examiner-in-training. You may choose to start with technique or pieces. The examiner will pick a few examples of technique. For the lower levels, he/she will listen

Lynne Oliver B. Mus. A., B. Ed., RMT

3025 The Credit Woodlands, Unit 404, Mississauga, ON L5C 2V3

647-971-3136 ♦ lynne@olivermusicstudios.ca ♦ olivermusicstudios.ca



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to the whole pieces and etudes (depending on time). For the higher levels the examiner will likely stop you from playing whole pieces (especially the Da Capo). Then the examiner will test your ear and sight reading. The exam will take between ten and twenty minutes.

The examiner may talk to you or may not. He or she may simply write while you play. Be sure to wait for the examiner to ask you to play. Do not go on to your next piece until he/she is ready. Be sure to listen to his/her questions carefully! You do not want a mark of zero because you played the "C Major" scale when he/she asked you to play in "a minor"! Listen carefully for which hand as well.

Use the same strategies that have been outlined in Recital and Festival Preparation sheets to help deal with nervousness and prepare for a performance. Remember: if your music is well prepared and you try the best you can, then you will do well.

You can access your exam marks and examiner comments by logging in to your account on the RCM Examinations website ([examinations.rcmusic.ca](http://examinations.rcmusic.ca)) approximately 4 - 6 weeks after the exam.