



Lynne Oliver Music Studios

Piano ♦ Theory ♦ Woodwinds

ROYAL CONSERVATORY EXAMINATIONS PIANO (Preparatory A and B)

Preparation must begin six months prior to taking an exam at the Royal Conservatory. There are four components to the exam:

1. Repertoire (pieces) (66%)
2. Technique (14%)
3. Ear Tests (10%)
4. Sight Reading (10%)

1. REPERTOIRE (66%):

Three pieces of music must be prepared for the exam. Each piece is worth 20%. Two must be chosen from the syllabus and one is Teachers' Choice. No repeats are necessary, but Da Capo signs are to be observed. All of my students must have more than three pieces learned from this level in order to have a choice.

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 (14%):

These include scales and triads. These must be memorised and up to the required tempo.

3. EAR TESTS (10%):

This component of the exam consists of two parts:

- a) Clapback (4%):
clap back the rhythm of a melody
- b) Chords (2%)
identify a chord as major or minor
- c) Playback (4%):
play back a melody

4. SIGHT READING (10%):

This component of the exam consists of two parts:

- a) Play (5%):
play a short excerpt of music from sight after given a short time to study it
- b) Clap (5%):
clap the rhythm of a simple rhythmic pattern



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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 the Examination Program Form (completely filled out) necessary 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. Then the examiner will test your ear and sight-reading. The exam will take approximately ten 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 asked you to play in "a minor"! Listen carefully for which hand as well.

Use the same strategies that have been outlined in Recital Preparation 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) approximately 4 – 6 weeks after the exam.