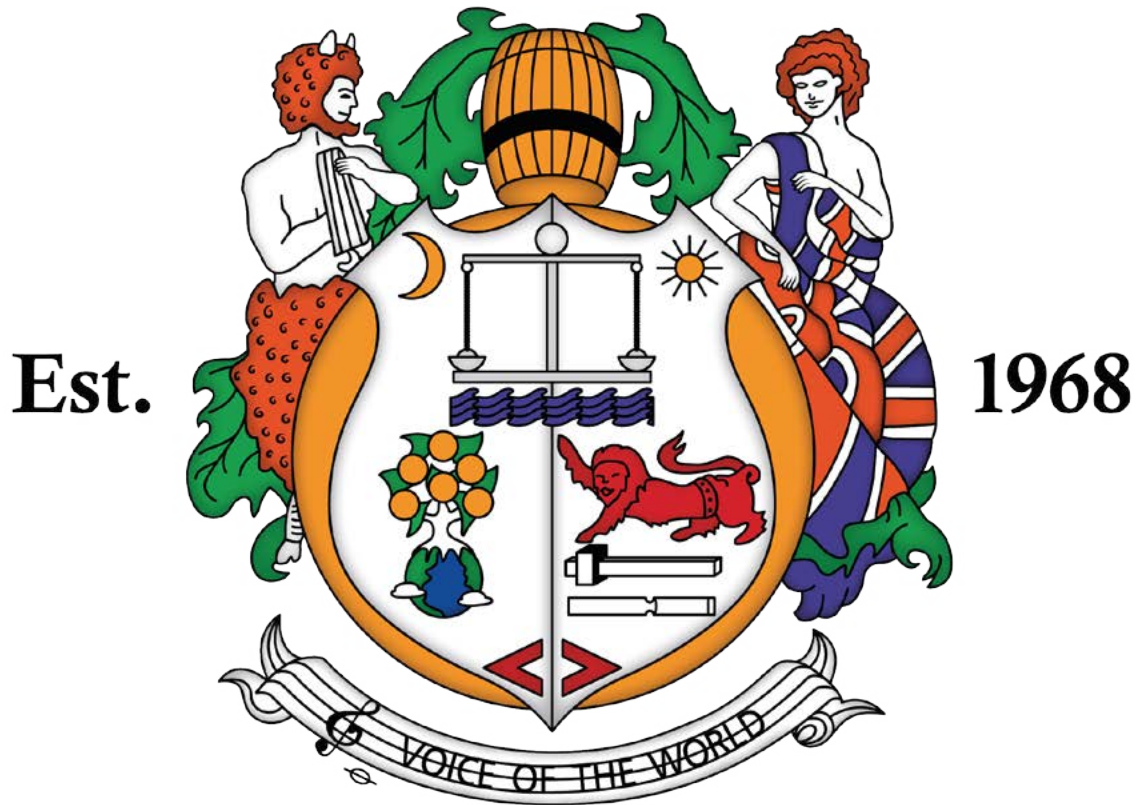


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ROCK GUITAR
STUDENT FEEDBACK

My marks and information on how I can improve to God-like status

Discipline	1 Mark Red = Fail	2 Marks Orange = Pass level	3 Marks Yellow = Merit level	4 Marks Green = Distinction level
Tempo	You were unable to correctly identify tempos throughout the exam.	You correctly identified the tempos, but you may be having trouble syncing up your hands with your ears, which makes playing in time very difficult and leads to inaccuracies in tempo.	You have clearly identified the tempos and played to them mostly accurately, but there were some inconsistencies in tempo where you may have struggled with other aspects of your playing.	You have demonstrated an excellent understanding of tempo in all aspects of your playing throughout your exam.
Rhythm	You were unable to correctly identify rhythms throughout the exam.	You have correctly identified the rhythms, but you may be having trouble replicating the rhythms in your head with your hands, or fully understanding the rhythms that you are playing.	You have demonstrated a good understanding of all rhythmic concepts presented, and a good execution of rhythm, but you may have made some common yet condemning mistakes, such as not fulfilling note values, or rhythmic inconsistencies in some aspects of your playing.	You have demonstrated a comprehensive understanding and excellent execution of rhythm throughout your exam.
Note Accuracy	You were unable to accurately identify the notes/pitches throughout your exam.	You have accurately identified the notes/pitches, but are most likely finding problems in execution - usually inaccurate representations of scales, chords, or exercises caused by either technical error or incorrectly learned material.	Your note accuracy was mostly correct, but there may have been some small issues causing you to occasionally slip up – these are usually technical errors or small recoverable mistakes, such as the occasional wrong note or chord in more complex passages.	Your note accuracy was consistently excellent throughout the exam.
Touch/Engagement	Indicates an approach to playing that lacked a sense of musicality, phrasing, articulation, and had little thought to sound/tone.	Indicates an approach to playing that showed some sense of musicality, phrasing, articulation, and had some thought to sound/tone. There were some issues with confidence that affected your playing, be that from nerves, or from a lack of familiarity with the guitar.	You demonstrated a good engagement with your playing and a developed sense of musicality throughout the exam, which may have occasionally been affected by minor confidence issues, or an uninformed approach to certain stylistic colloquialisms.	You have shown remarkable engagement with your playing throughout your exam.
Technicality	Your technique was a detriment to your technical progress, and had an adverse effect on your overall sound throughout the exam.	You demonstrated an effective technique that may still hinder your technical progress. You performed to a satisfactory technical level, struggling with the technically more difficult parts of the exams, and were to prone to making mistakes in these situations.	You showed good technique, which was in no way a hindrance to your technical progress. However, inconsistencies in technical proficiency arose at the more challenging parts of the exam.	You showed consistently excellent technique throughout your exam.

How I can improve!

Discipline	1 Mark Red = Fail	2 Marks Orange = Pass level	3 Marks Yellow = Merit level	4 Marks Green = Distinction level
Tempo	A common mistake at this level is to play to an internal tempo that YOU find comfortable, rather than sync yourself to the tempos given in the exam. The best way to keep this from happening is to practice to a metronome – remember to start very slowly, and only get faster when you find playing at your current speed too easy.	There are a number of different things you can try to help you lock in with the beat – some people find tapping their foot or nodding their head helps – but remember that nothing substitutes dedicated practice with a metronome!	It's a common issue that we're able to play some things on beat without a problem, but other things can still trip us up – maybe you can alternate pick with the best of them, but your chord progressions are still a little sloppy. Be sure to analyse every facet of your playing, and for anything that is holding you back, brush off the ol' metronome and slow it down!	Keep challenging yourself by experimenting with complex and unfamiliar tempos! You might want to try playing faster than is usually comfortable, or slowing right down to work on your accuracy (you'd be surprised how difficult this last one is for many people!).
Rhythm	<p>There are a number of things you can do to develop your rhythm at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure to review all of the note values and time signatures • Before you approach a song or exercise, study each different rhythm carefully and isolate those that you are finding difficult. • Start with practicing simple rhythms, and gradually increase the difficulty as simpler rhythms no longer feel challenging. • Remember to try counting along with any rhythm using the "1-e-and-a" method – this makes it easier to navigate the big spaces between notes by creating rhythmic reference markers. • You could also try recording yourself, and listening back to hear exactly where you are going wrong. • Play the rhythm slowly to a metronome – it makes it easier to land the notes exactly where they should go. Gradually build up speed as you master playing more slowly. <p>Rhythm gets better with practice, so keep at it and you'll develop in no time!</p>	<p>Make sure that you fully understand the differences between each note value and time signature, and to count each rhythm as you play it. Isolate any rhythms that you find difficult and practice them individually. A common mistake at this level is to ignore meter – make sure that you retain the stresses that a rhythm implies as you play.</p> <p>Sometimes, rhythm can suffer as a result of struggling with another technical skill – for instance, you may be unable to play a rhythm accurately because your chord changes are taking too long, or because you aren't able to pick a melody fast enough. If you can correctly identify an external reason for why you can't nail a rhythm, you are able to tackle the problem head on!</p>	<p>A common mistake at this level is to not play a note value fully – for instance, when you play a crotchet, make sure it takes up the entire beat, or you might end up playing a quaver and a quaver rest instead!</p> <p>Make sure rhythmic accuracy is consistent in all aspects of your playing. You may demonstrate good rhythm in some techniques and not in others (for instance, a common issue guitar players have is keeping the note values correct in arpeggios, and ensuring the notes don't bleed into one another or are muted to soon), so practice the specific things that you are struggling with.</p>	You'll never have to look far for challenging rhythms! Different styles of music all have characteristic rhythms you can experiment with - you could try learning Jazz swing rhythms, or contrapuntal funk rhythms - there are countless possibilities!

Discipline	1 Mark Red = Fail	2 Marks Orange = Pass level	3 Marks Yellow = Merit level	3 Marks Yellow = Merit level
Note Accuracy	<p>Make sure that you have correctly memorised all scales, chords, songs, and exercises. It can be easy to make small mistakes that can cost you a lot of marks – playing the correct scale in a different key/with a different starting note means that all the pitches would be incorrect! Similarly, playing parallel major/minor chords/scales to those specified (chords and scales with the same root note) also demonstrates a lack of understanding and can lose you marks, so be careful not to make these kinds of mistakes!</p> <p>Inability to demonstrate correct technique in songs/exercises can also yield low marks for note accuracy, as there is a tendency for missing notes/incorrect notes. As always, slow down anything that you are finding difficult, and gradually increase speed with a metronome.</p>	<p>Be sure to have all course material and exercises correctly memorised to avoid mistakes – for instance, sometimes the difference between two chords or scales can be very little (E major and E minor chords have a similar fingering); the culprit may even be a misreading of sheet music, or an incorrectly read fingering for a scale/chord (even the professionals still constantly make these kinds of mistakes!). When practicing, be sure to identify what it is that is causing you to miss notes/play incorrect notes – if you find this difficult, try recording or videoing yourself playing, so that you can get a more objective view of where you might be going wrong.</p>	<p>At this level, diligent, calculated practice is most likely the best method for progression – any technical weaknesses or unfamiliarity/confusion with course material should be addressed in your practice sessions! Be sure to analyse your playing and correctly identify what is holding you back before altering your practice routine.</p>	<p>As you learn more complex techniques and musical concepts, you'll have to develop your note accuracy alongside them. Working with unfamiliar chords and scales is a great way to develop your note accuracy, as you are expanding your musical vocabulary into new harmonic and melodic territory.</p>
Touch/ Engagement	<p>Touch isn't something that can be taught or learned in the traditional sense, since it is a conglomeration of your skills, your familiarity with guitar music, and your practical knowledge of music in general that determines good level of engagement when playing guitar. A foolproof way of developing the engagement with your instrument is to learn and play a lot of music! This way you will almost subconsciously develop a sense of musicality, and things such as phrasing and articulation will come almost naturally. Regardless of the style, playing as much music as you can will help you to forge your own unique, musical approach to playing the guitar.</p>	<p>You showed a general familiarity with the guitar and with guitar music, but a lack of confidence may have stopped you from fully engaging with your instrument and the music that you are playing, and impeded you from performing to the best of your abilities. The more you learn, play, and develop, the more confident you will become. You could try playing in front of other people or practice videoing yourself playing to help you combat any confidence issues.</p>	<p>You can further develop your engagement by looking deeper into the colloquialisms of the guitar and guitar music, which will develop a more informed, knowledgeable approach to guitar playing – the best way to do this is to listen, learn, and play as large a variety of music as you can!</p>	<p>You may have a few guitarists in mind who you think play with incredible connection with their instruments, and learning to play in this manner is an attainable thing - you could try transcribing some of your favourite solos and riffs, or breaking them down to see what makes them work. Learning to play with "feeling" is something that guitar players chase throughout their entire careers, and progress is usually slow and steady, but it's what sets apart the good from the great!</p>

Discipline	1 Mark Red = Fail	2 Marks Orange = Pass level	3 Marks Yellow = Merit level	4 Marks Green = Distinction level
Technicality	<p>It's very easy to learn habits that may be ineffective in the long-run. Common issues at this level include excess movement in your fretting hand, an inability to synchronise your hands correctly, and inefficient scale and chord fingerings, and being unable to properly fret a note. Next time you play, try analysing everything that you are doing and asking yourself "Why do I do it this way? Does it help me?" – if either of your answers are unsatisfactory, then you know you need to change your approach. This might feel like you're going backwards, but it'll stop you from having to completely revamp your technique later!</p>	<p>Try your best to unlearn any bad habits - the more common ones at this level may include inefficient finger placement in your fretting hand, and inefficient picking technique in your right hand. Try observing how other guitarists use their left and right hands – it'll help you to see how you should be conducting yourself, or alternatively, you might find a method that suits you better!</p>	<p>With anything that still feels technically challenging to you, try altering your practice routine to focus more on these issues – remember to slow down anything that is too tricky, and gradually build up speed with a metronome! To accurately discover exactly what it is that is impeding your progress, you will have to be very critical of your playing. This is very difficult for most people, but it's vital for being able to maximise your technical potential.</p>	<p>There are many techniques that you can learn to set your playing apart from the rest - think of John 5's use of Chicken' Pickin', or Paul Gilbert's blistering string-skipping arpeggios. Expanding your technical arsenal makes for a versatile, stand-out guitarist.</p>

Aural Template - Foundation

My marks and how I can improve

Melodic Recall

0

Not attempted/void.

1

You were unable to correctly recall the melody. First of all don't feel disheartened! Melodic recall is difficult for even the most experienced musicians! Remember, at the beginner level, the melody will use only the one octave C Major scale, so make sure this scale is learned from memory. There are only a certain number of melodic movements that can be made - try making up melody lines using this scale, and you'll quickly become familiar with its melodic possibilities. Once you've heard the melody the first time, try to sing or play along with it the second and third times - each time you will retain more information about the melody than the previous time. Even if you don't manage to memorise the whole thing, you will have absorbed enough information to make a good attempt!

2

You were able to recall part of the melody, and effectively played the melody back OR you were able to recall most of the melody, but you were unable to effectively play the melody back. You may have great control when using the one 8ve C Major scale position, but you still find are finding it difficult to recall the melody. Remember that you have both your guitar and your voice available to you in this part of the exam. Try singing or playing along with the melody the second and third times it appears (remember to leave the first time to really, really listen to it!). Similarly, many students at this level will have fewer issues with the recalling of the melody, but they will find it hard to realise this melody on guitar. Make sure that you are able to fluently play the one octave C Major scale position, upside-down, backwards, and with your eyes closed! The better your grasp of playing this scale, the less likely you are to make any technical mistakes.

3

You were able to recall most of the melody, and effectively played the melody back OR you were able to recall all of the melody, but there were some issues with playing the melody back. If you have received this mark, you have already demonstrated a good understanding of the skills required to correctly recall the melody, so they just need a little bit of refining! Differentiating between the different types of ascending and descending movements in the C Major scale is a great way to perfect your recall ability - many people will find it difficult to tell the difference between the jump from the root note to 4th and 5th notes of the scale, for instance. Make sure you keep challenging yourself with tougher melodies during your practice sessions, until you feel that you've exhausted the melodic possibilities of this scale position.

4

You recalled the entire melody, and played it back correctly. If you think you've mastered melodic recall with the one 8ve C Major scale position, try practicing melodic recall in different keys, or with harder, more unpredictable melodies. You could also try incorporating melodies with different rhythms if you feel ready. You'll never have to look far for challenging melodies to recall! Remember - any melody you've heard before, even once, gives you an unfair advantage. Make sure you always practice with fresh material.

Rhythmic Recall

0

Not attempted/void

1

You were unable to correctly recall the rhythm. If you have received this mark, you have most likely found difficulty in recalling the rhythm in its entirety, or keeping the rhythm to the correct tempo, but do not worry! There are plenty of things you can do to improve your recall abilities. The most important thing is to ensure that you are able to accurately count along to the rhythms - as soon as you can count with the rhythm, you have created a frame of reference with which you can use to tell where exactly the notes fall in the bar. If you are having trouble accurately predicting where each beat will fall, it's time to pull out the ol' metronome! Try counting crotchet beats, then quaver beats, and gradually increase the complexity of the rhythms as you get better. Ensure that you have fully understood the differences between note values, and how they fit into a bar. Since the rhythmic recall at this level uses only crotchets, quavers, and their corresponding rests, there are only so many rhythmic possibilities that can appear. As the rhythmic recall example is repeated three times, ensure you use the first listen to internalise and familiarise yourself with the rhythm. On the second and third repeats, try singing or playing the rhythm, each time memorising slightly more than the previous time. Even if you don't manage to memorise the whole thing, you will have absorbed enough information to make a good attempt!

2

You were able to recall part of the rhythm, and effectively played the rhythm back OR you were able to recall most of the rhythm, but you were unable to effectively play the rhythm back. Students at this level will often have fewer issues with recalling the rhythm, but they will find it harder to realise the rhythm on guitar. Remember, all rhythmic recall practice should be done with a guitar, so that you will learn to translate the rhythms that you hear from your head to your hands. Having enough control to play an unfamiliar rhythm from memory proficiently requires a good level of technical skill. Alternatively, you may have showed technical proficiency in your attempts, but are finding difficulty with the recall aspect of the exam. Make sure that you have properly familiarised yourself with the rhythmic possibilities of crotchet and quaver rhythms, and that you are able to count along with any examples that you hear.

3

You were able to recall most of the rhythm, and effectively played the rhythm back OR you were able to recall all of the rhythm, but there were some issues with playing the rhythm back. If you have received this mark, you have already demonstrated a good understanding of the skills required to recall the rhythm, so they just need a little refining! Make sure that you are properly taking into account the full value of each note, including rests. Continue to challenge yourself with more difficult rhythms during your practice sessions, until you feel that you've exhausted the rhythmic possibilities that may appear in the exam.

4

You recalled the entire rhythm, and played it back correctly. You'll never have to look far for complex rhythms to practice rhythmic recall! Try figuring out rhythms at higher speeds, that last for longer than 2 bars, or that use note values other than crotchets and quavers. You could even try combining rhythmic and melodic recall if you're feeling adventurous! Remember, if you've heard a rhythm before, even once, you have an unfair advantage when practicing rhythmic recall.

Harmonic Recognition

0

Not attempted/void

1

Recognition attempt is incorrect

4

Recognition attempt is correct

Remember to learn off the differences between Major and minor chords - Major chords are associated with a happy, jolly sound, whereas minor chords sound sad and serious. The only difference theoretical difference between them is their construction - Major chords have a Major 3rd interval, and minor chords have a minor 3rd interval, both of which are the defining features of Major and minor chords respectively. Learning the difference between these two sounds is vital for harmonic recognition!

Aural Template - Intermediate

My marks and how I can improve

Melodic Recall

0

Not attempted/void.

1

You were unable to correctly recall the melody. First of all don't feel disheartened! Melodic recall is difficult for even the most experienced musicians. Remember, at the intermediate level, the melody will be based on one of 4 scales - G Major, E minor, A Major, or F# minor (each using the 3-note-per-string scale position) so make sure each scale is learned from memory. Try making up melody lines using these scales, and you'll quickly become familiar with the melodic possibilities of each. Don't forget that though there are 4 scales in total, you will only be confronted with Major and natural minor scales - try to think about each scale in terms of its Major or minor characteristics. At the intermediate level, you are also asked to memorise rhythm. Try not to think of melody and rhythm as separate things - think about how the rhythm will accent certain parts of the melody. Once you've heard the melody the first time, try to sing or play along with it the second and third times - each time you will retain more information about the melody than the previous time. Even if you don't manage to memorise the whole thing, you will have absorbed enough information to make a good attempt!

2

You were able to recall part of the melody, and effectively played the melody back OR you were able to recall most of the melody, but you were unable to effectively play the melody back. Many students at this level will have issues balancing the melodic recall itself with performing the melody. Make sure that you are able to fluently play each scale position that might appear. Also try to familiarise yourself with the defining traits of the Major and Natural minor scales - e.g. the Major 3rd and Major 7th intervals are very recognisable in Major melodies, and the minor 3rd and minor 7th are indicators of a Natural minor melody. Learn to recognise these intervals upon first hearing them. Due to the length of the melodic examples, it can be tricky to memorise everything at once. Remember that you have both your guitar and your voice at your disposal, some melodies may be better remembered by singing them than trying to play them. Try singing or playing along with the melody the second and third times it appears, leaving the first time to listen to and internalise the melody.

3

You were able to recall most of the melody, and effectively played the melody back OR you were able to recall all of the melody, but there were some issues with playing the melody back. If you have received this mark, you have already demonstrated a good understanding of the skills required to correctly recall the melody, so they just need a little bit of refining! Many melodies will contain melodic and rhythmic motifs or patterns - if you can figure these out, you should be able to figure out how the pattern develops, and it will give you tips as to the melody's overall structure. Pay special attention to any articulation - make sure you learn, for instance, the difference between a quaver followed by a quaver rest, and a staccato quaver. The difference may be subtle, but your examiner will be able to tell! Keep challenging yourself with tougher melodies during your practice sessions, until you feel that you've exhausted the melodic possibilities of each scale position.

4

You recalled the entire melody, and played it back correctly. Continue to practice using longer, faster, more unpredictable melodies. You could also try incorporating melodies with accidentals, or melodies heavy with articulation. A great way to find tougher melodies is to recall music written for other instruments (for instance, a trumpet solo would probably feel strange to play, as it won't take into account what is comfortable and natural to play on guitar). Remember - any melody you've heard before, even once, gives you an unfair advantage. Make sure you always practice with fresh material.

Harmonic Recall

0

Not attempted/void

1

You were unable to correctly recall the chord progression. Harmonic Recall is likely the most difficult part of the exam, and there's plenty you can do to develop your ability to recall chord progressions. Remember there are only a limited number of chords that will appear, so make sure that you are able to play each one without any issues. Similarly, there are only a limited number of chord combinations that may appear, so try to familiarise yourself with the possibilities. One of the main difficulties students have is fluidly changing between chords, so practice changing between chords as efficiently as possible - a great way to do this is to record yourself slowly playing simple chord changes, and then aim to get rid of anything like string scuffing, or long periods of silence.

Like chords, there are only so many common strumming pattern rhythms that can appear, so try and learn off as many as you can before the exam. Having to memorise both the chord progression and the strumming patterns can seem like information overload, but try not to think of them as separate things - certain parts of the strumming pattern will emphasise and accent the corresponding parts of the chord progressions, and you can use this information to your advantage.

You have three opportunities to listen to the chord progression in your exam. Once you've heard the chord progression once, try to play along with it the second and third times. Each time you will retain more information about the progression than the previous time. Even if you don't manage to memorise the whole thing, you will have absorbed enough information to make a good attempt!

2

You were able to recall part of the chord progression, and effectively play it back OR you were able to recall most of the chord progression, but you were unable to effectively play it back. Many students at this level will have issues balancing recalling the chord progression itself with playing the progression. Make sure that you have memorised and can fluently play each of the chords that may appear. During the intermediate course, you learned about common chord progressions, such as the I-V-vi-IV and the ii-V-I: memorise these in the key signatures that will appear in the exam, as there is a real possibility that they will show up! If you feel that you are struggling with the rhythm, remember that you can develop your technical proficiency with strumming patterns by playing with a metronome, and you can expand your strumming vocabulary by learning songs. Due to the length of the examples, it can be tricky to memorise absolutely everything at once. Remember to play along with the chord progression the second and third times it appears, leaving the first time to listen to and internalise the melody.

3

You were able to recall most of the chord progression, and effectively played the chord progression back OR you were able to recall all of the chord progression, but there were some issues with playing the chord progression back. If you have received this mark, you have already demonstrated a good understanding of the skills required to correctly recall the progression, so they just need a little bit of refining! Make sure you are able to differentiate between standard chords and extended chords - each extended chord has a distinctive character that separates them from chords with the same root note, and will function differently in a chord progression. Many chord progressions will contain rhythmic motifs or patterns. Though the rhythms may be subtly different, try to focus on the similarities between them to help you remember as much as possible.

Pay special attention to any articulation included in the progression - make sure you learn, for instance, the difference between a forte progression, and a piano progression with a lot of accents. The difference may be subtle, but your examiner will be able to tell! Make sure you keep challenging yourself with tougher chord progressions during your practice sessions, and familiarising yourself with as many chord progressions as you can.

4

You recalled the entire chord progression, and played it back correctly. Keep pushing yourself by attempting to transcribe tougher chord progressions, likelihood is you'll come across some chords that are not featured in this course, and you can use these to expand your chord vocabulary. Remember, when practicing straight harmonic recall, any progression you've heard before, even once, gives you an unfair advantage. Make sure you always practice with fresh material.

Harmonic Recognition

0

Not attempted/void

1

Recognition attempt is incorrect

4

Recognition attempt is correct

Learning the differences between the chord extensions and alterations is vital for this part of the exam. For instance, the difference between the 2 types of 7th chords that may appear (Major and Dominant) - each has a distinctive characteristic. Dominant 7th chords tend to sound as if they need to move to another chord, whereas Major 7th chords sound a little more stable. If you are having trouble, try deconstructing each chord into its base intervals, and directly compare them to a reference chord - how do the intervals of D Major differ from D Major 7th? Could you identify which notes make them sound different, and which notes give them their characteristic sound? If you can work this out for each chord type, you'll find it much easier to discern the chord extensions by ear.

Interval Recognition

0

Not attempted/void

1

Recognition attempt is incorrect

4

Recognition attempt is correct

This part of the exam may seem intimidating, but when it all boils down to it, you just need to know your one 8ve C Major and A Natural minor scales really well! Though you don't have access to your guitar in this part of your exam, you are allowed to sing the scale - if you are able to do this, you can just ascend the scale from the starting note until you can replicate the interval in the exam. Another method is to use reference intervals - e.g. the Star Wars Theme starts with a perfect 5th, the Harry Potter Theme starts with a Perfect 4th. If you memorise these examples (or whichever ones you are most likely to remember), when these intervals appear in your exam you match it against your reference to see whether it fits. Alternatively, use reference notes - many guitarists, for instance, could sing an 'E' very easily. If you hear an example in C Major, in which the starting note is C and the higher note you recognise as E, you can work out the interval (a Major 3rd).

Aural Template - Advanced

My marks and how I can improve

Melodic Recall

0

Not attempted/void.

1

You were unable to correctly recall the melody. First of all don't feel disheartened! Melodic recall is difficult for even the most experienced musicians! At the advanced level, the will be based upon one of the modal scales, so make sure each scale is learned from memory. Ensure you fully understand how the characteristic notes/intervals of each scale are used. Try making up melody lines using the modes, incorporating the characteristic elements of each, and you'll quickly become familiar with the melodic possibilities.

At the advanced level, the length of the melodic recall is increased to 8 bars. This can seem like an overwhelming amount of information to take in all at once, so when practicing with these examples, try to break down the music into sections. Don't expect results immediately, training yourself to break down an 8 bar melody effectively takes time, but use your mistakes to discover how you best study melodic recall.

Remember to use your first listen to internalise and familiarise yourself with the melody. After this, try to sing or play along with it the second and third times - each time you will retain more information about the melody than previously. Even if you don't manage to memorise the whole thing, you will have absorbed enough information to make a good attempt!

2

You were able to recall part of the melody, and effectively played the melody back OR you were able to recall most of the melody, but you were unable to effectively play the melody back. Many students at this level will have issues balancing the melodic recall itself with performing the melody. Make sure that you are able to fluently play each of the modal scale positions. Melodies at this level will also make particularly heavy use of articulation, so make sure that you can recognise and fluently perform each articulation. At this level, you might be able to start identifying certain notes and intervals just by hearing them - if this is the case, you can use these skills to inform your melodic recall. If you can manage even the very first interval, you've already got a much better starting point than just the starting note. Remember that you have both your guitar and your voice at your disposal, some melodies may be better remembered by singing them than trying to play them. Try singing or playing along with the melody the second and third times it appears, leaving the first listen to internalise the melody.

3

You were able to recall most of the melody, and effectively played the melody back OR you were able to recall all of the melody, but there were some issues with playing the melody back. If you have received this mark, you have already demonstrated a good understanding of the skills required to correctly recall the melody, so they just need a little bit of refining! Many melodies will contain melodic and rhythmic motifs or patterns - if you can figure these out, you should be able to figure out how the pattern develops, and it will give you tips as to melody's overall structure. Pay special attention to any articulation included in the melody - make sure you learn, for instance, the difference between hammer-ons/pull-offs and softly picked phrases. The difference may be subtle, but your examiner will be able to tell! Keep challenging yourself with tougher melodies during your practice sessions, until you feel that you've fully comprehended the melodic possibilities of each mode.

4

You recalled the entire melody, and played it back correctly. Continue to practice using longer, faster, more unpredictable melodies. Try looking at melodies that modulate over several keys, or that are heavily chromatic. You could even try playing a melody after only two or maybe even just one listen! A great way to find tougher melodies is to recall music written for other instruments (for instance, a trumpet solo would probably feel strange to play, as it won't take into account what is comfortable and natural to play on guitar). Remember - any melody you've heard before, even once, gives you an unfair advantage. Make sure you always practice with fresh material

Harmonic Recall

0

Not attempted/void

1

You were unable to correctly recall the chord progression. Harmonic Recall is likely the most difficult part of the exam, and there's plenty you can do to develop your ability to recall chord progressions. Remember there are only a limited number of chords that will appear, so make sure that you are able to play each one without any issues. Similarly, there are only a limited number of chord combinations that may appear, so try to familiarise yourself with the possibilities. At this level, harmonic recall is notably longer at 8 bars. This can seem like an overwhelming amount of information to take in all at once, so when practicing with these examples, try to break down the music into sections. Bare in mind that 1 bar of music will usually only have between 1 and 3 chords, some of which will appear again the 8 bar phrase at least once, so there is usually much less harmonic content to remember than you might think there is!

Like chords, there are only so many common strumming pattern rhythms that can appear, so try and learn off as many as you can before the exam. Having to memorise both the chord progression and the strumming patterns can seem like information overload, but try not to think of them as separate things - certain parts of the strumming pattern will emphasise and accent the corresponding parts of the chord progressions, and you can use this information to your advantage.

You have three opportunities to listen to the chord progression in your exam. Once you've heard the chord progression once, try to play along with it the second and third times. Each time you will retain more information about the progression than the previous time. Even if you don't manage to memorise the whole thing, you will have absorbed enough information to make a good attempt!

2

You were able to recall part of the chord progression, and effectively play it back OR you were able to recall most of the chord progression, but you were unable to effectively play it back. Many students at this level will have issues balancing recalling the chord progression itself with figuring out the technical aspects of playing the progression. Make sure that you have memorised and can fluently play each of the chords that may appear! This will save you precious time during the exam. Chord progressions at this level will also make particularly heavy use of articulation, so make sure that you can recognise each articulation by ear, and that you can fluently perform articulation as part of your chord progressions.

At the advanced level, you'll encounter modal harmonies, so it is vital that you memorise the characteristic chords and chord progressions of each mode (they will most definitely appear). If one of these or a slight variation on one of these does show up and you can instantly recognise it, you'll have a lot of the work done already, and you'll drastically reduce your workload. Keep the more common chord progressions in your mind as well, such as ii-V-I and I-V-vi-IV, as these will also appear frequently.

If you feel that you are struggling with the rhythm, remember that you can develop your technical proficiency with strumming patterns by playing with a metronome, and you can expand your strumming vocabulary by learning as many songs as possible! Due to the length of the examples, it can be tricky to memorise absolutely everything at once. However, take any 8-bar phrase, and you'll notice that it is likely comprised of two 4-bar phrases, which will probably be quite similar (if not will outright imitate one another). Remember to play along with the chord progression the second and third times it appears, leaving the first time to listen to and internalise the progression.

3

You were able to recall most of the chord progression, and effectively played the chord progression back OR you were able to recall all of the chord progression, but there were some issues with playing the chord progression back. If you have received this mark, you have already demonstrated a good understanding of the skills required to correctly recall the progression, so they just need a little bit of refining! Make sure you have an idea of the function of the extended and altered chords that you have learned thus far. For instance, minor 7th and Major 7th chords usually act as substitutes for standard minor and Major chords, giving a different harmonic flavour, whilst Dominant 7th and Suspended 4th chords usually have harmonic tendencies to move to another chord.

Many chord progressions will contain rhythmic motifs or patterns. Though the rhythms may be subtly different, try to focus on the similarities between them to help you remember as much as possible. Pay special attention to any articulation included in the progression - make sure you learn, for instance, to recognise the difference between sudden and gradual dynamic differences (crescendos and decrescendos). The difference may be subtle, but your examiner will be able to tell! Keep challenging yourself with tougher chord progressions during your practice sessions, and familiarising yourself with as many chord progressions as you can.

4

You recalled the entire chord progression, and played it back correctly. Keep pushing yourself by attempting to transcribe tougher chord progressions, and aim to expand your chord vocabulary. If you've not already, try looking into different music; Jazz, Blues, and Funk are all rife with complex harmonies that many great rock guitarists have borrowed from. Remember, when practicing harmonic recall, any chord progression you've heard before gives you an unfair advantage, so always use fresh material.

Harmonic Recognition

0

Not attempted/void

1

Recognition attempt is incorrect

4

Recognition attempt is correct

Learning the differences between the chord extensions and alterations is vital for this part of the exam. Make sure you can identify the differences between the 3 types of 7th chord in the advanced course. Remember, Major and minor chords are quite stable, and tend to add flavour rather than suggest harmonic movement, whilst Dominant 7th chords have a harmonic tendency to move to another chord. Similarly, Suspended 4th and 2nd chords also have a harmonic tendency to move to another chord, and lose all of their Major/minor qualities, as there is no longer a 3rd. If you are having trouble, try deconstructing each chord into its base intervals, and directly compare them to a reference chord - how do the intervals of D Major differ from D Major 7th? Could you identify which notes make them sound different, and which notes give them their characteristic sound? If you can work this out for each chord type, you'll find it much easier to discern the chord extensions by ear.

You'll also encounter diminished and Augmented chords at this level, and many people find it quite difficult to differentiate between these two, as they are cast off as just sounding "dissonant". Try first of all to differentiate between the types of sound they create - diminished chords are very tense, begging to resolve to a more stable chord, whereas augmented chords are not quite as tense, and have more stability. At this point, if you can deconstruct them in your head, you'll hear the tell-tale intervals for each.

Using a reference song for each type of chord type can be useful as well - have a song ready for each type of chord, and when it appears in the exam you can cycle through your reference songs to see which one fits!

Interval Recognition

0

Not attempted/void

1

Recognition attempt is incorrect

4

Recognition attempt is correct

The dreaded chromatic interval recognition may seem tough (and it is!) but it's nothing that can't be made better with practice! Firstly and foremostly, make sure you know all the intervals by heart. Try using reference intervals - if you can at least list a reference song for each interval of the Major scale, any intervals that lie in the minor or modal scales/chromatic intervals can be found by comparison.

Though you don't have access to your guitar in this part of your exam, you are allowed to sing - since you are always given the starting note, you can sing scales or intervals until you are able to find the other note to create the interval. If you are able to sing a Major scale from any starting note (ascending and descending), once again you can find any chromatic intervals by comparison.

Alternatively, use reference notes - many guitarists, for instance, could sing an 'E' very easily. If you can compare this note to your starting note, then you'll instantly be able to name the interval. If you find this difficult, you can always use reference songs to create reference notes - for instance, you might know that the first note in Boston's 'More Than a Feeling' is a D, so if you can hear this in your head you'll be able to apply it as a reference note.

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