London College of Music Examinations

Piano
Sample Exam Booklet

Includes examples of:
Step 1, Grades 1, 4 and 8 exams

Valid from:
2026 until further notice

updated 13.05.2026

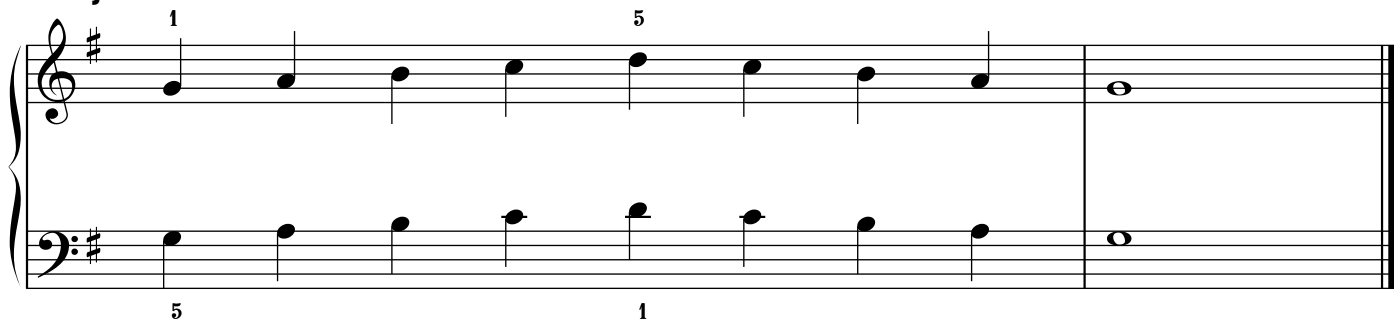
LCME
SINCE·1887

Step 1

Component 1: Scales and Exercises **25 marks**

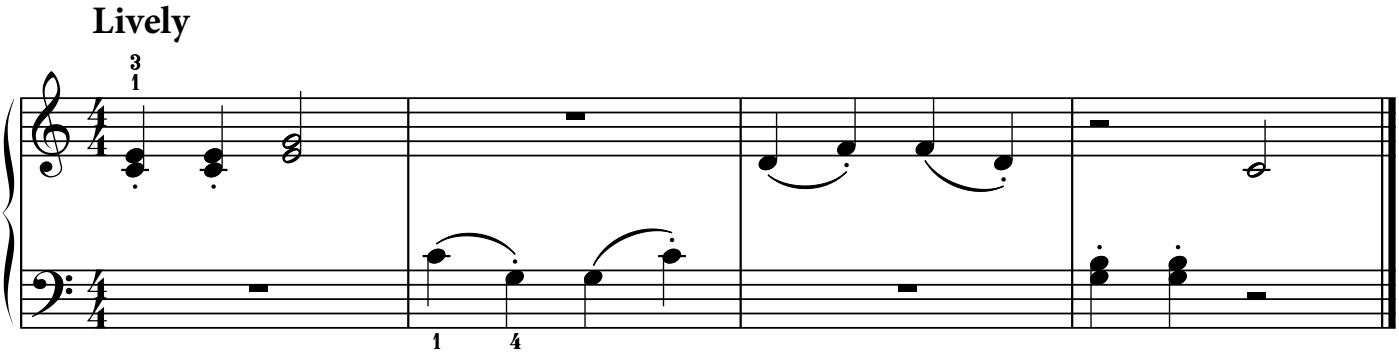
Performance from memory of a selection of five-finger scales. For example:

• G major

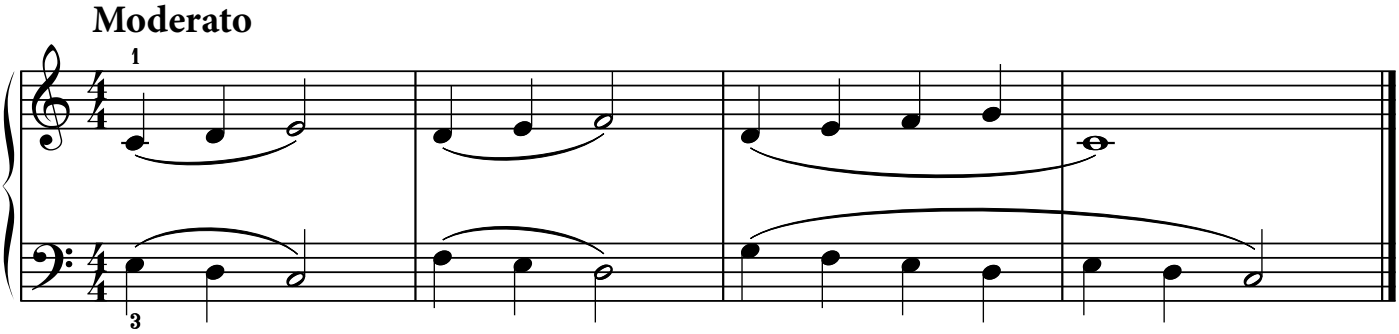


Performance of any four of the published eight exercises. For example:

• Hop and Jump



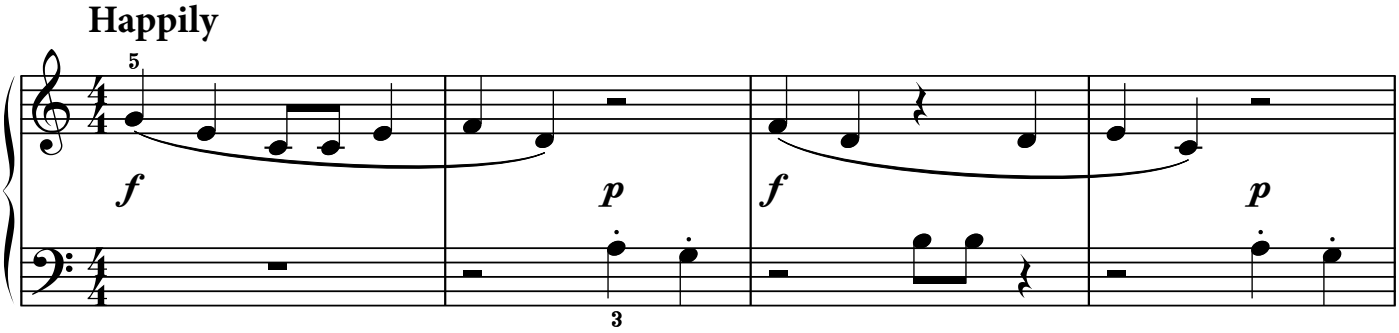
• Magic Mirror

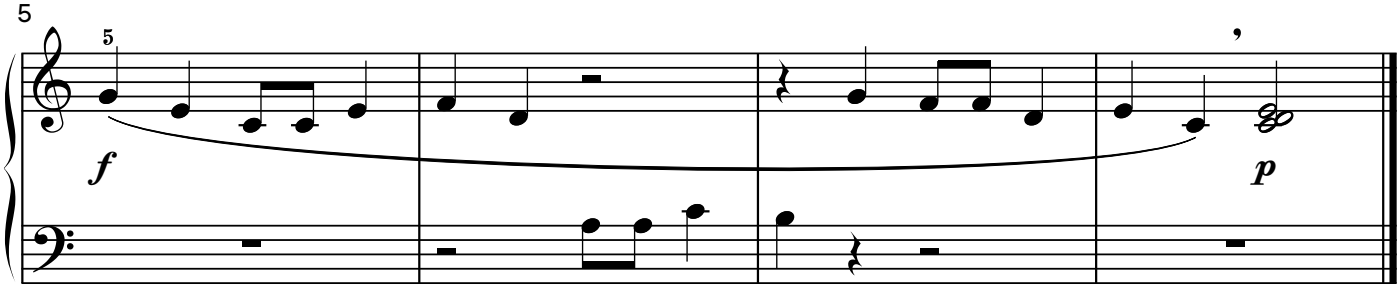


Component 2: List A Pieces **20 marks**

Candidates to play any two of the published six pieces. For example:

• Calypso Song

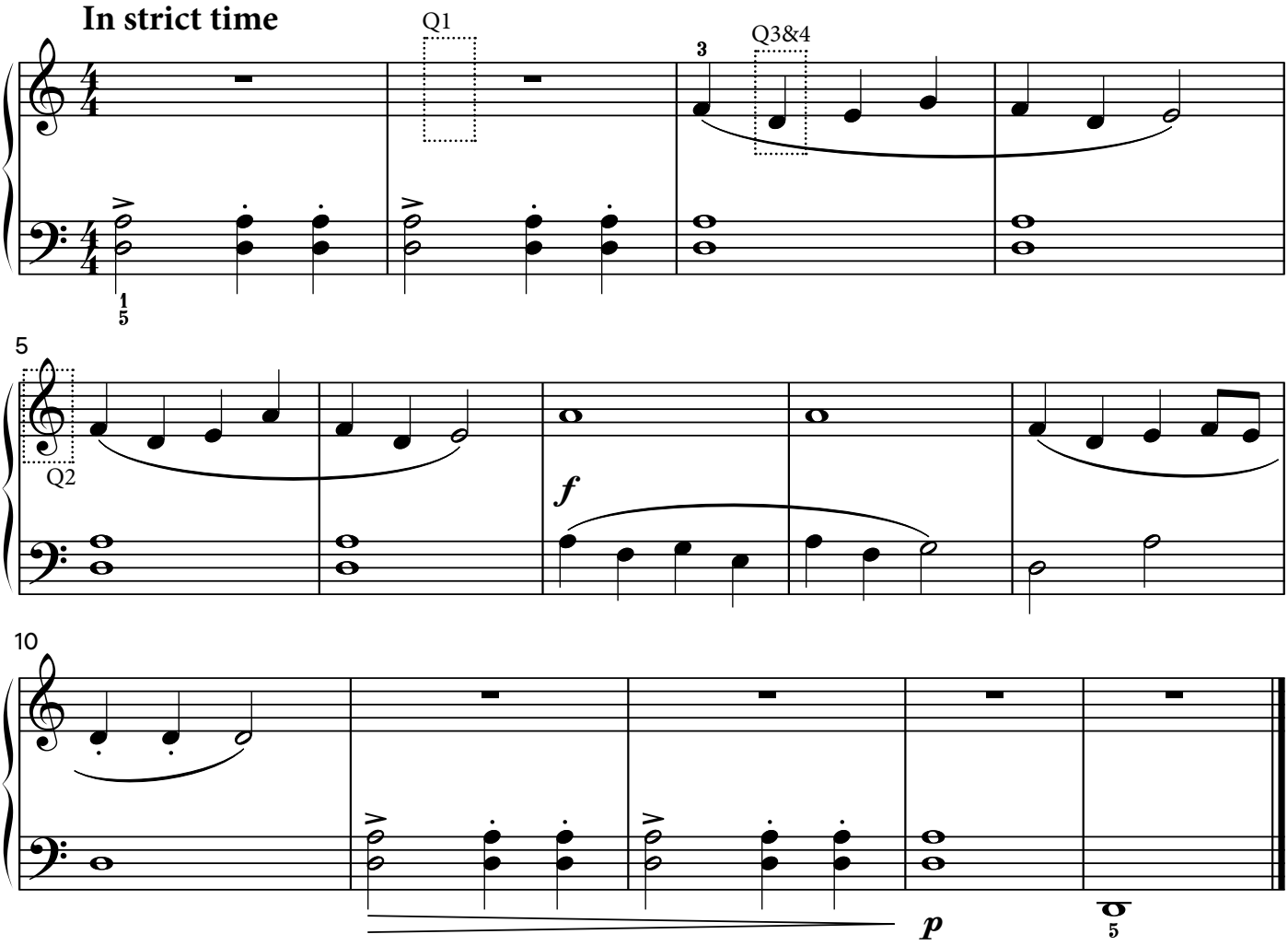




Component 3: List B Pieces **40 marks**

Candidates to play any two of the published six pieces. For example:

• Return of the Knights



Component 4: Discussion **15 marks**

Candidates will be engaged in a short discussion with the examiner. For example:

Q1. Examiner: What is the name given to these five lines? [Examiner points to the five lines]
Candidate: The staff (or stave).

Q2. Examiner: What is this symbol? [Examiner points to a treble clef]
Candidate: A treble clef (or G clef).

Q3. Examiner: What is the letter name of this note? [Examiner points to a crotchet D]
Candidate: D

Q4. Examiner: And how many beats is it worth?
Candidate: One.

Grade 1

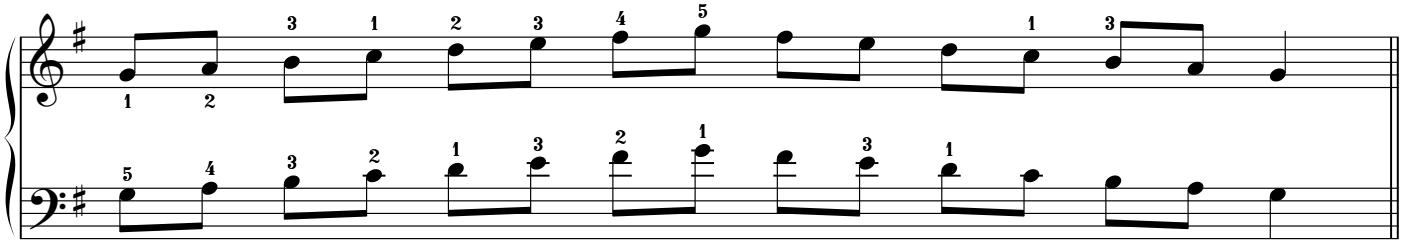
Component 1: Technical Work **15 marks**

Candidates can prepare either Option 1: Scales and arpeggios, or Option 2: Study.

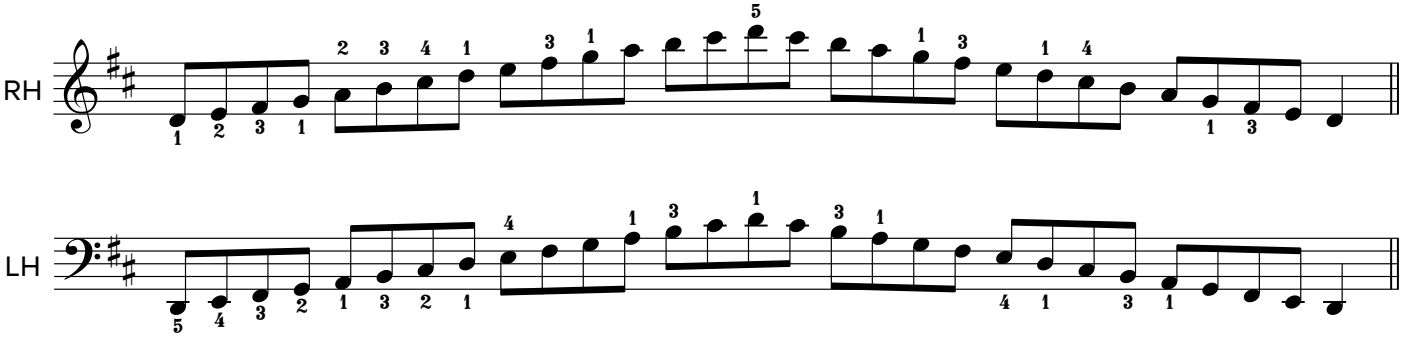
Option 1: Scales and arpeggios

The examiner will ask for a selection of the scales, broken chords and arpeggios listed in the syllabus. All are to be performed ascending and descending, from memory. For example:

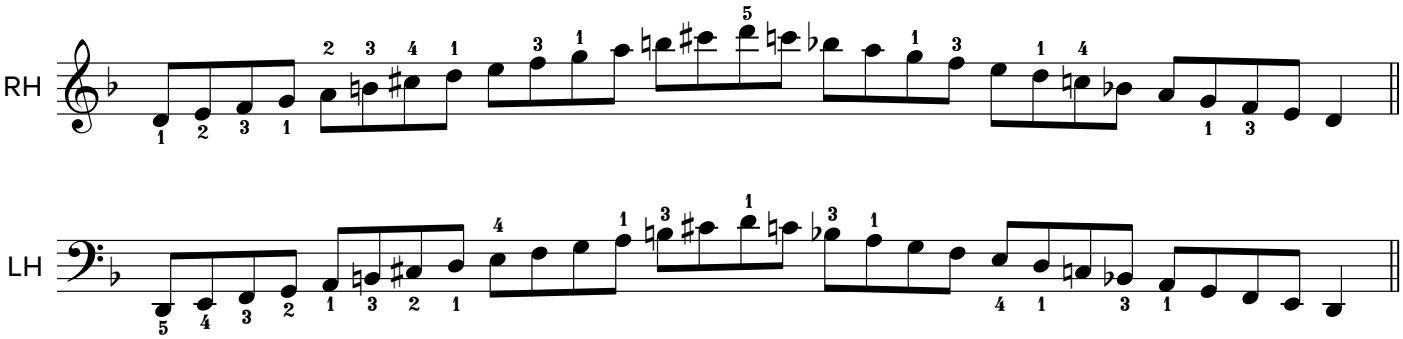
• **G major major scale:** 1 octave, hands together, ♩ = 69



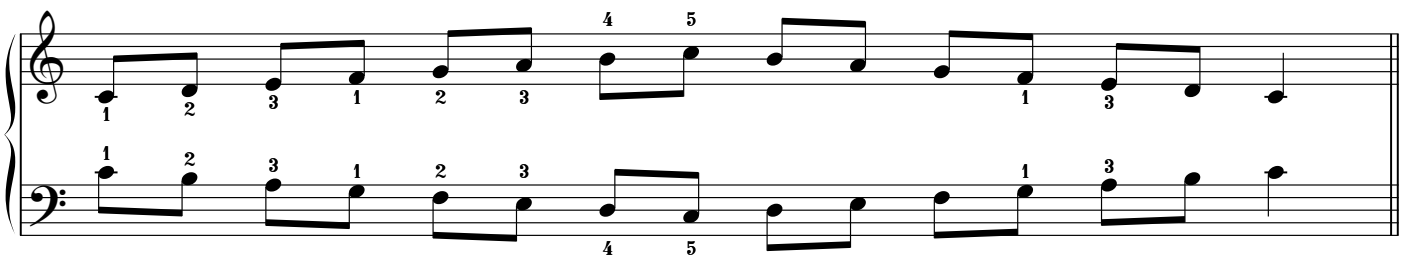
• **D major:** 2 octaves, hands separately, ♩ = 69



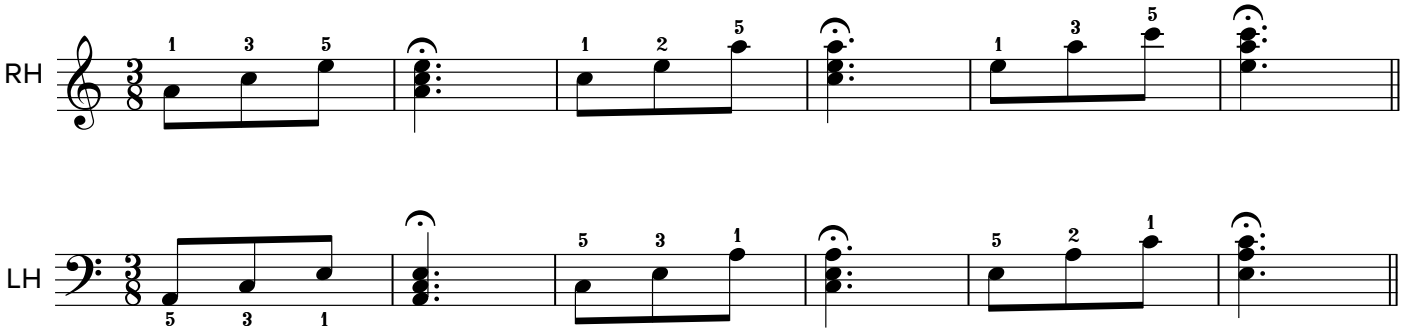
• **D melodic minor scale:** 2 octaves, hands separately, ♩ = 69



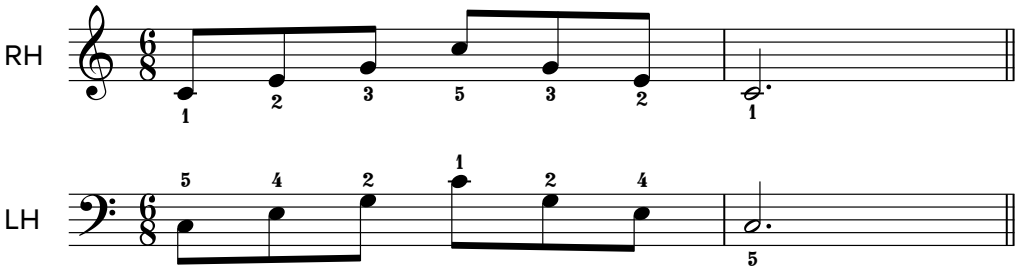
• **C major in contrary motion:** 1 octave, hands together, ♩ = 69



• **A minor broken chord:** 1 octave, hands separately, ♪ = 100



• **C major arpeggio:** 1 octave, hands separately, ♪ = 100

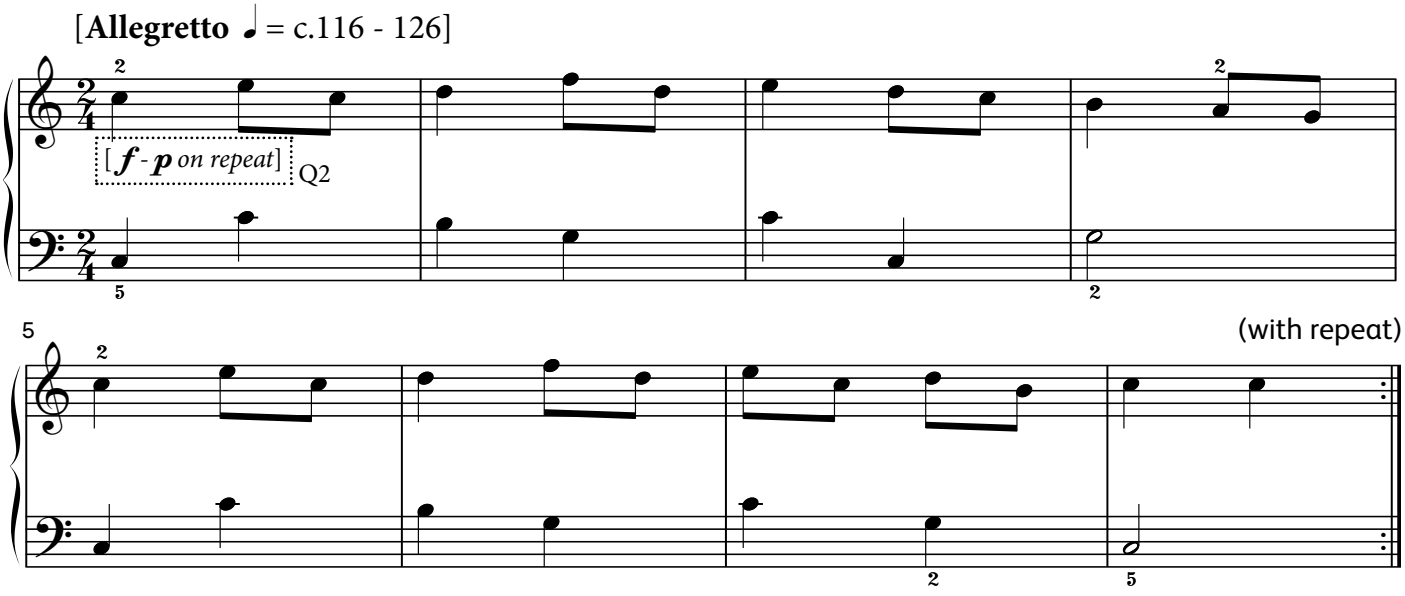


Option 2: Study
Performance of the published study.

Component 2: Performance **3x20 marks**
Performance of three pieces, one from each list, A, B and C. Up to two pieces may be substituted with selections of the same grade from the Popular Piano list. In addition, further List B and List C options can be found in the Piano Anthology series (LCME) for the appropriate grade and list. At least one piece must be from the current LCME Piano handbook.

The following List A piece is given as an example:

• **Ignatius Sancho: Les Matadors**



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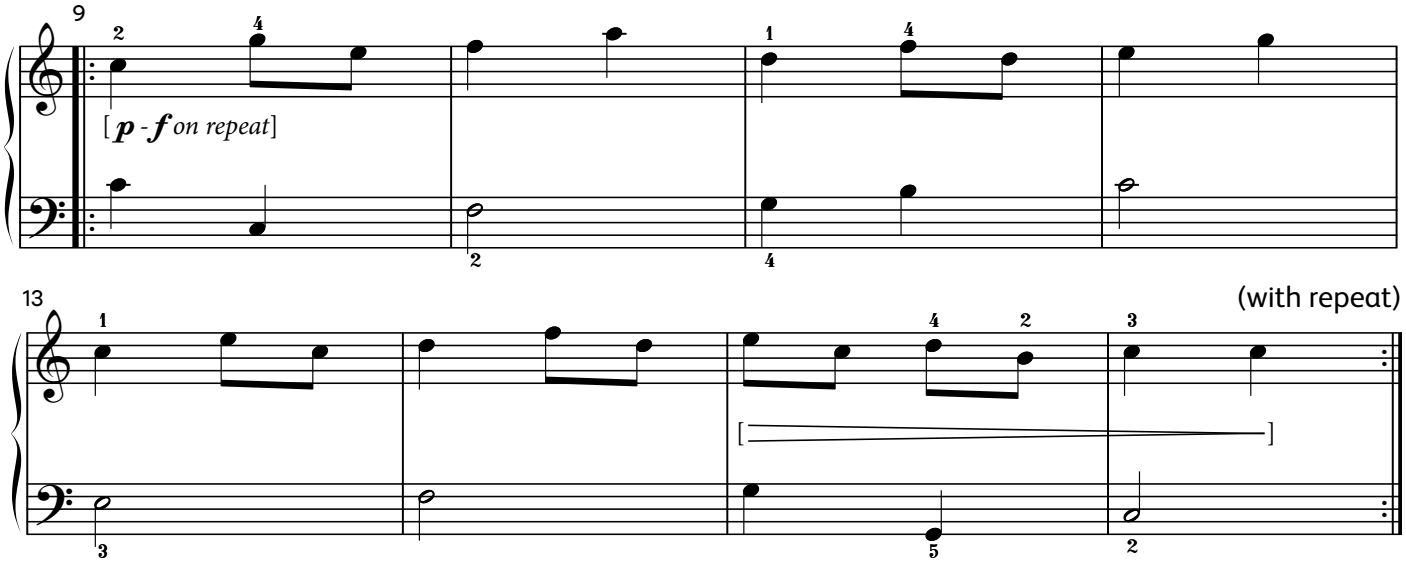


Component 3: Discussion — 7 marks

Candidates will be engaged in a short discussion with the examiner. For example:

Q1. Examiner: Which of the pieces that you played today is your favourite, and why?
Candidate: My favourite is 'Moody Boogie', because it is fun and sounds like I could dance to it.

Q2. Examiner: What does this symbol mean? [Examiner points to piano on the score]
Candidate: It stands for forte for the first repeat and then piano, which means it should be played loudly and then quietly.

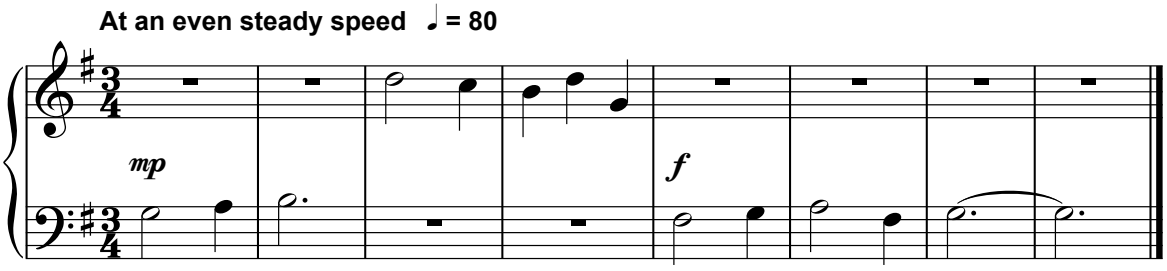
Q3. Examiner: Can you name some different parts of the piano?
Candidate: The keys, pedals, and the lid. (or for a digital piano: the keys, buttons/controls, and speakers).

Q4. Examiner: Can you describe and show good posture when playing?
Candidate: Sit up straight on the bench, at the right height, not too close or too far from the keys, with relaxed hands and curved fingers.

Component 4: Sight Reading or Keyboard Harmony Test — 10 marks

Option 1: Sight Reading

Candidates will perform a short, previously unseen piece of music. Up to one minute is allowed to study the test, during which the candidate may try parts of it if they wish. For example:

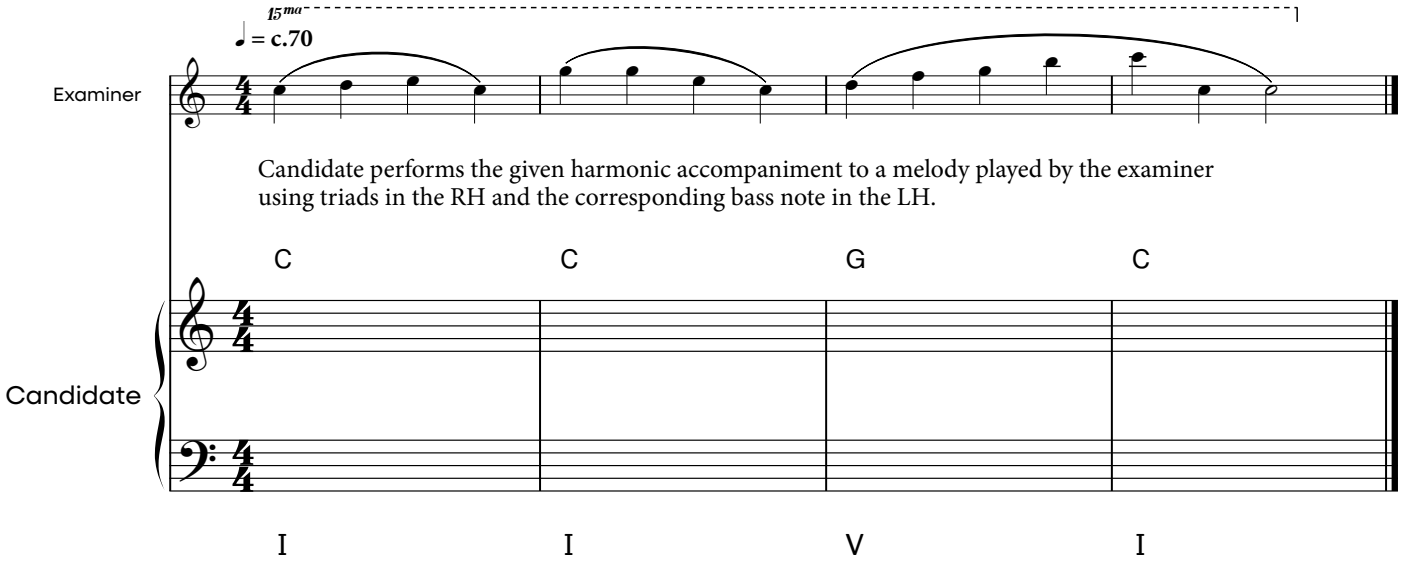


Option 2: Keyboard Harmony Test

Candidates perform a harmonic accompaniment to a 4-bar melody played by the examiner using triads in the right hand and the corresponding bass note in the left hand. Chords will be specified.

The following parameters offer guidance as to what may be tested in the exam:

- chords I and V in the keys of C and G major
- either root positions or inversions at candidate's choice
- $\frac{4}{4}$



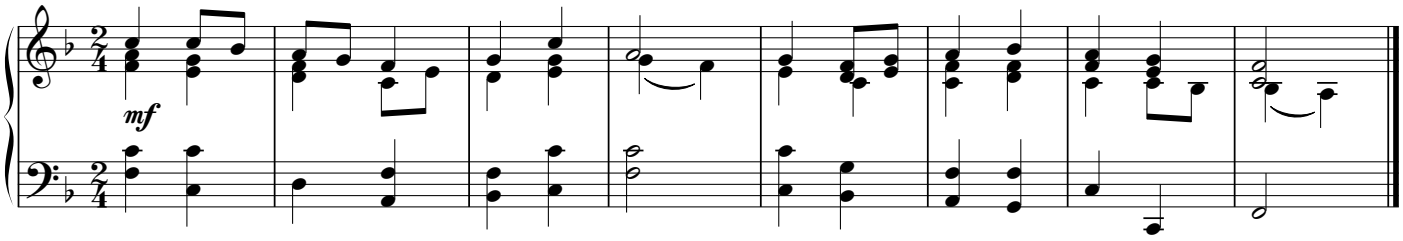
Component 5: Aural Tests **8 marks**

Candidates will be asked to complete a series of aural tests.

Test 1

a) A short harmonised passage will be played (see example below). Candidates will then be asked to identify the time signature as either 2 or 3 time.

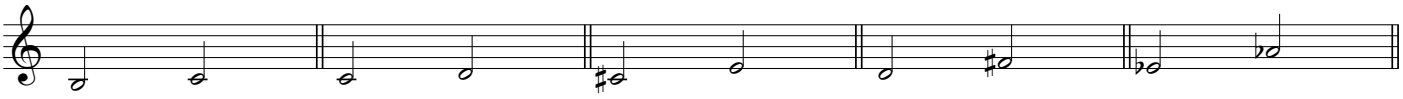
b) The examiner will play the passage once more. Candidates will be asked to clap or tap on each beat, accenting the first beat of each bar.



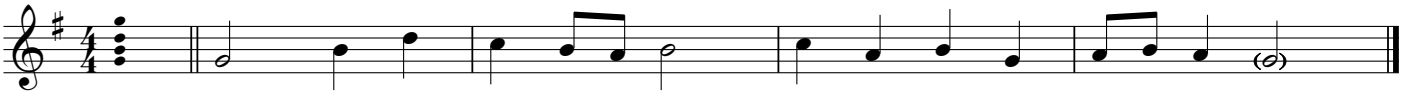
Test 2

a) Two notes of diferent pitch will be played (see example below). Candidates will then be asked to identify which of the two is either higher or lower.

b) The same two notes will be played once more. Candidates will be asked to sing back one of the two notes.



c) The key-chord of a major key will be played , followed by a short unharmonised melody in the same key (see example below). The examiner will stop playing before the final note. Candidates will be asked to sing the missing final note (the tonic).



Grade 4

Component 1: Technical Work **15 marks**

Candidates can prepare either Option 1: Scales and arpeggios, or Option 2: Study.

Option 1: Scales and arpeggios

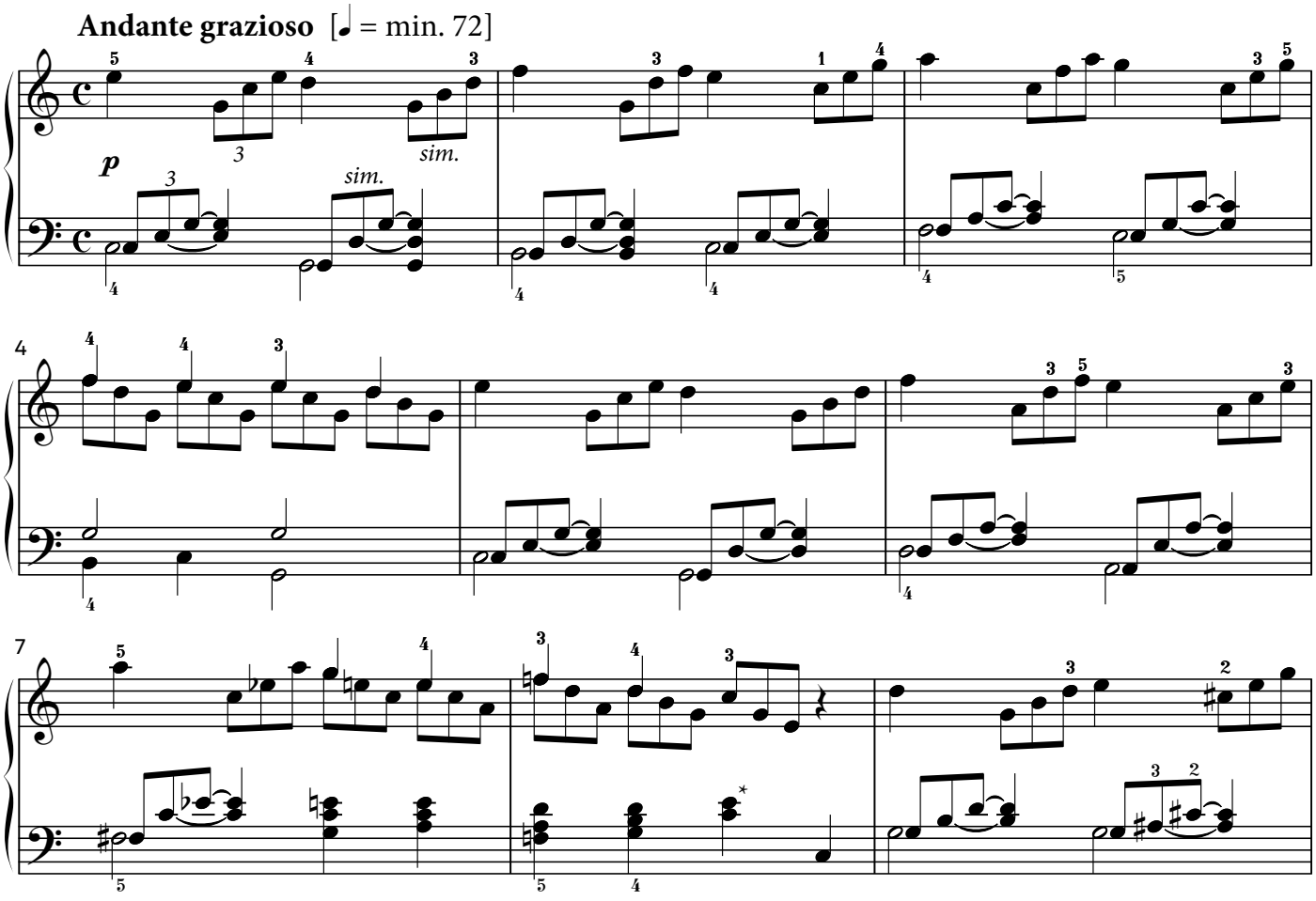
The examiner will ask for a selection of the scales, broken chords and arpeggios listed in the syllabus. All are to be performed ascending and descending, from memory. For example:

- **D♭ major scale:** 2 octaves, hands separately and together, piano and forte, ♩ = 96
- **F melodic or harmonic minor scale:** 2 octaves, hands separately and together, piano and forte, ♩ = 96
- **D major in contrary motion:** 2 octaves, hands together, piano and forte, ♩ = 96
- **E♭ major arpeggio:** 2 octaves, hands separately, forte, ♩ = 76
- **Chromatic scale:** on any note, 2 octaves, hands separately,piano and forte, ♩ = 96
- **Chromatic contrary motion scale:** beginning on D, 2 octaves, hands together, piano and forte, ♩ = 96

Option 2: Study

Performance of the published study. These first systems are given as an example:

- **Louise Farrenc: Étude Op 50 No 1**



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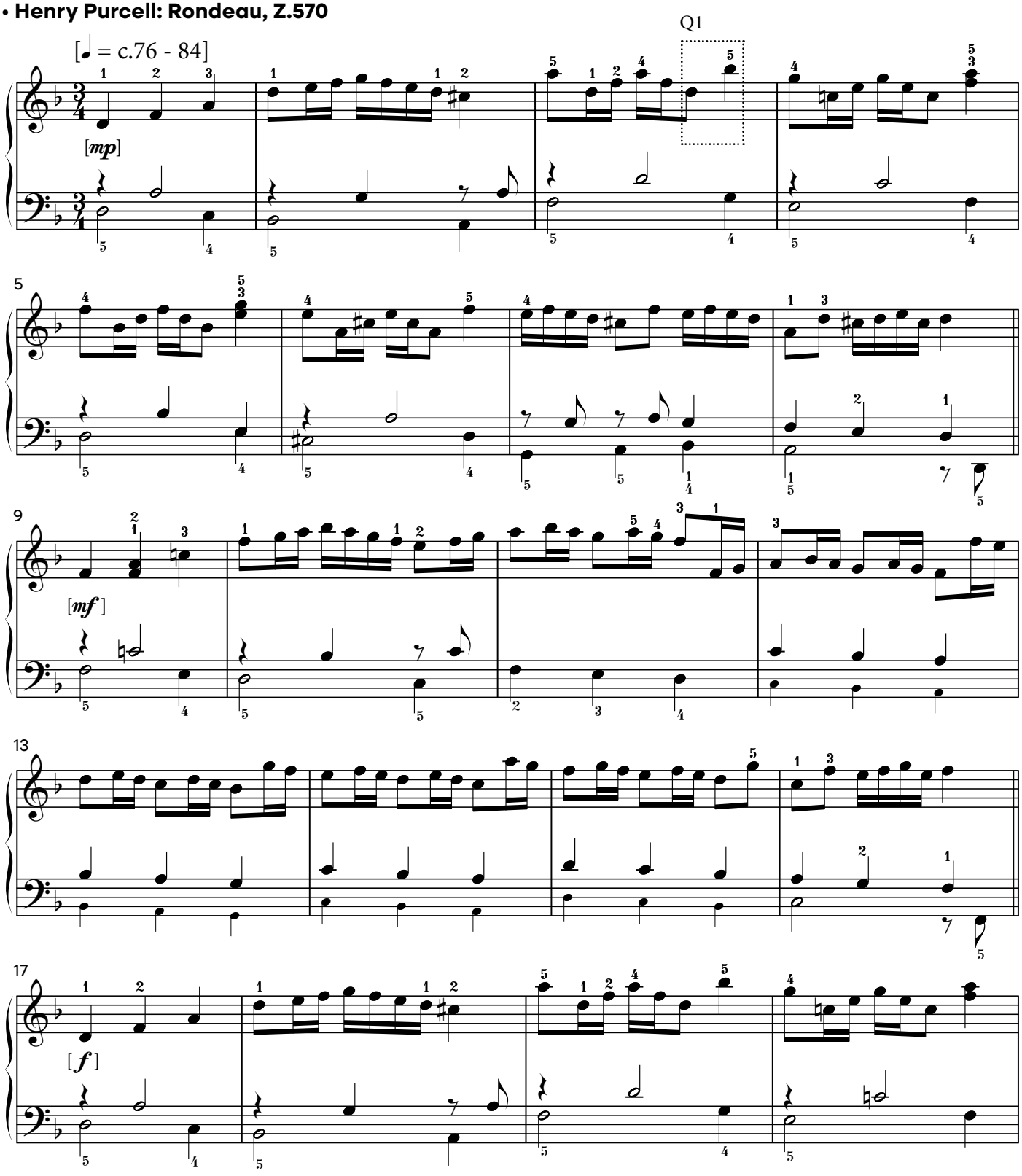
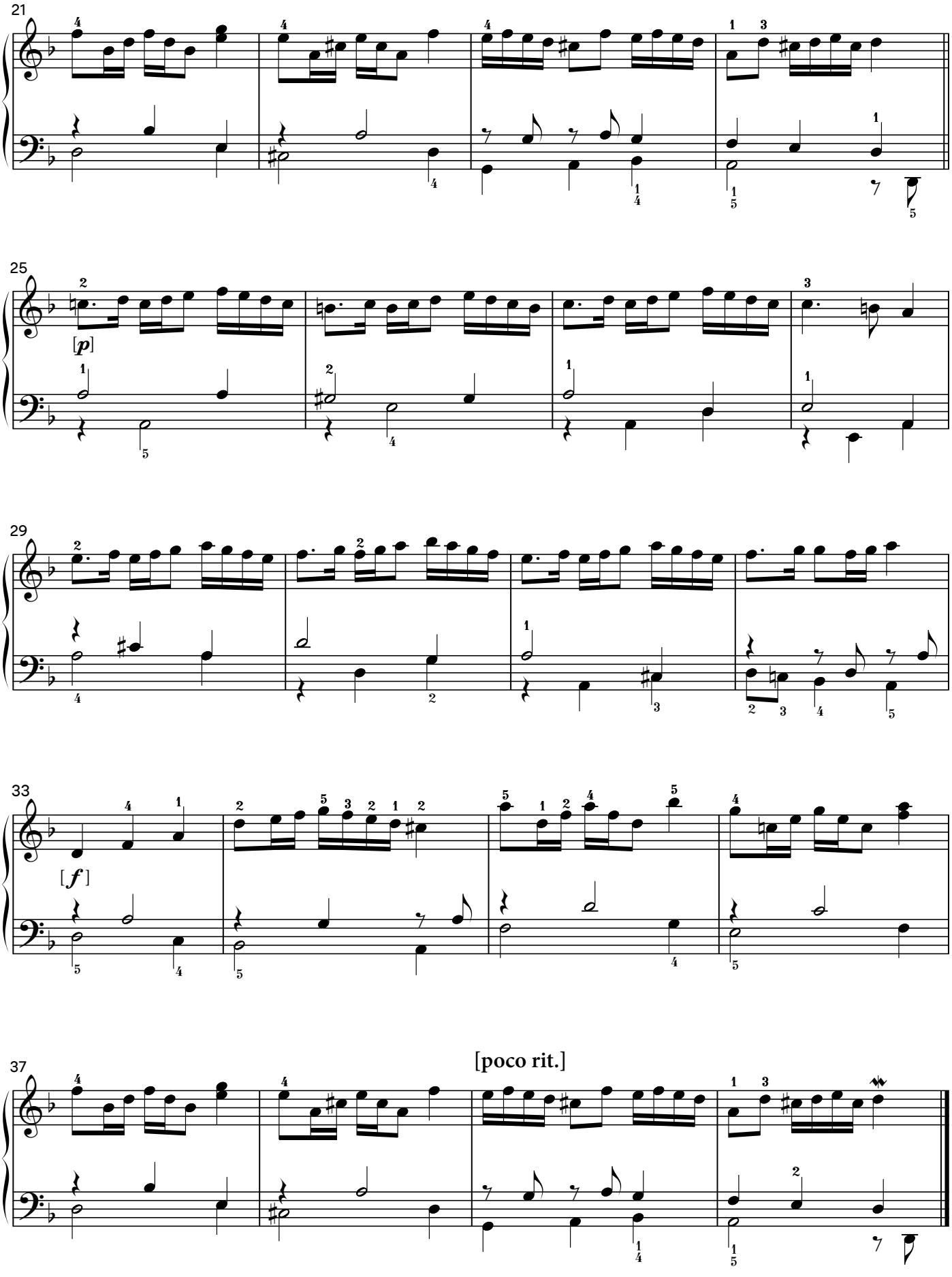
Component 2: Performance **3x20 marks**

Performance of three pieces, one from each list, A, B and C. Up to two pieces may be substituted with selections of the same grade from the Popular Piano list. In addition, further List B and List C options can be found in the Piano Anthology series (LCME) for the appropriate grade and list. At least one piece must be from the current LCME Piano handbook.

The following List A piece is given as an example:

- **Henry Purcell: Rondeau, Z.570**




21
25
[p]
29
33
[f]
37
[poco rit.]

Component 3: Discussion — 7 marks

Candidates will be engaged in a short discussion with the examiner. For example:

Q1. Examiner: What is the interval between these notes? [Points to the last two notes in bar 3 of 'Rondeau']
Candidate: A minor sixth.

Q2. Examiner: Can you name some of the composers (or artists) of the pieces you performed, including their nationality and approximate dates?
Candidate: Invention No. 1 in C was composed by Johann Sebastian Bach, who was German and lived from 1685 to 1750. Sonatina in A minor is by Anton Diabelli, an Austrian composer from 1781 to 1858.

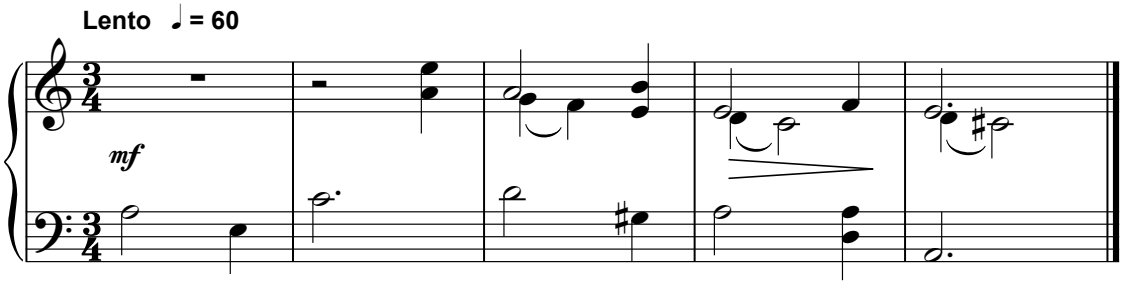
Q3. Examiner: Can you describe your approach to learning these pieces and any difficulties you encountered?
Candidate: I practised hands separately first, then together slowly. Bach was challenging for hand independence, and the Sonatina needed evenness in fast passages. The jazz and Latin pieces were tricky rhythmically.

Q4. Examiner: Name another instrument in the family and describe similarities and differences with the piano?
Candidate: The harpsichord is similar in layout and range, but it plucks the strings instead of striking them. It doesn't have dynamics like the piano, and the action is lighter.

Component 4: Sight Reading or Keyboard Harmony Test — 10 marks

Option 1: Sight Reading

Candidates will perform a short, previously unseen piece of music. Up to one minute is allowed to study the test, during which the candidate may try parts of it if they wish. For example:

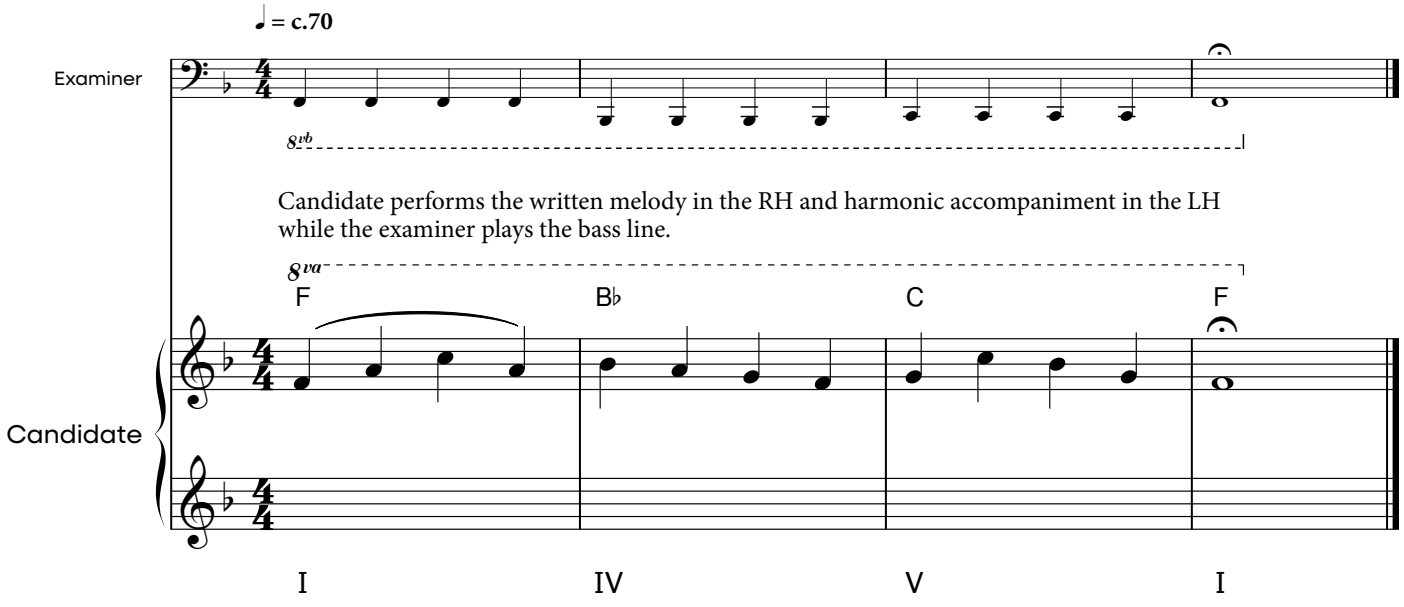


Option 2: Keyboard Harmony Test

The candidate performs a previously unseen 4-bar melody in the right hand with harmonic accompaniment in the left hand, over a bass line played by the examiner. Chords will be specified..

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

- chords I, IV and V in the keys of C, D, G, A and F major
- appropriate right-hand chord voicings should be used
- 4/4, 3/4



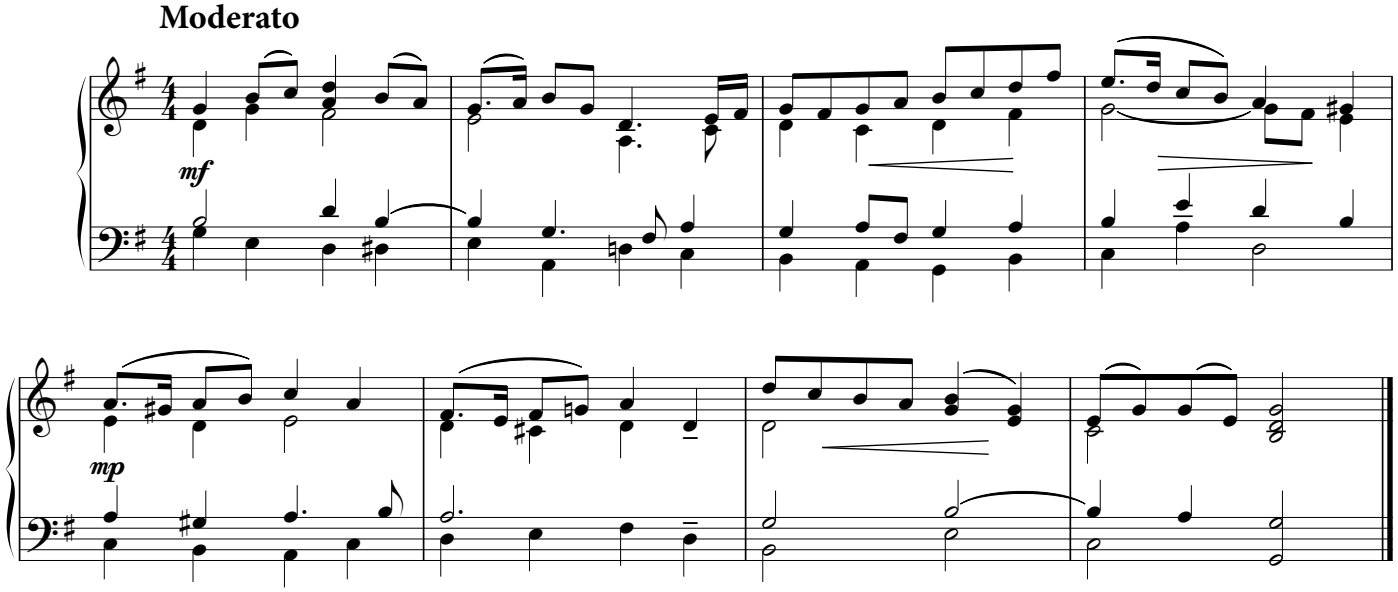
Component 5: Aural Tests **8 marks**

Candidates will be asked to complete a series of aural tests.

Test 1

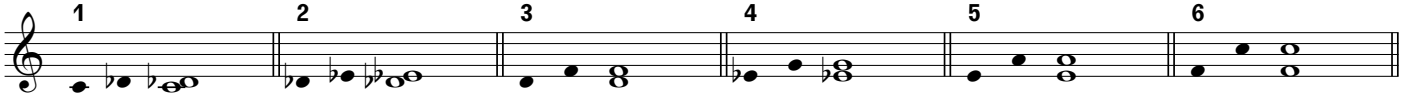
a) A short harmonised passage will be played. Candidates will then be asked to beat (conduct) time, with a clear conducting pattern, in time with the examiner's playing, as they play the passage again. Passages in 6/8 should be conducted with a 2-beat pattern.

b) An unharmonised version of a short phrase (approximately 2 bars) from the passage will be played twice. Candidates will be asked to clap or tap back the rhythm of the phrase.

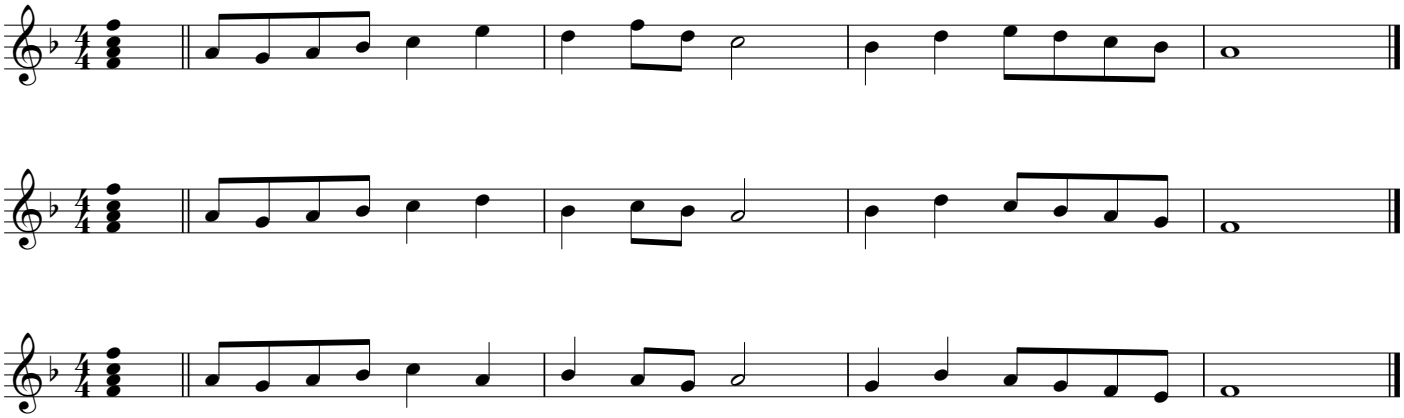


Test 2

a) An interval will be played twice, once with the pitches sounded successively, and once with the pitches sounded together. Candidates will be asked to identify the interval, by type and numerical value (for example, major 2nd, perfect 4th). The intervals will be restricted to any major, minor or perfect interval up to and including an octave. The test will then be repeated using a different interval.



b) Candidates will be shown three similar variations of a short melody (marked 1, 2 and 3); each will differ in pitch but not in rhythm. One of the versions will be played, twice. Candidates will then be asked to identify which version was played.



Grade 8

Component 1: Technical Work **15 marks**

Candidates can prepare either Option 1: Scales and arpeggios, or Option 2: Study.

Option 1: Scales and arpeggios

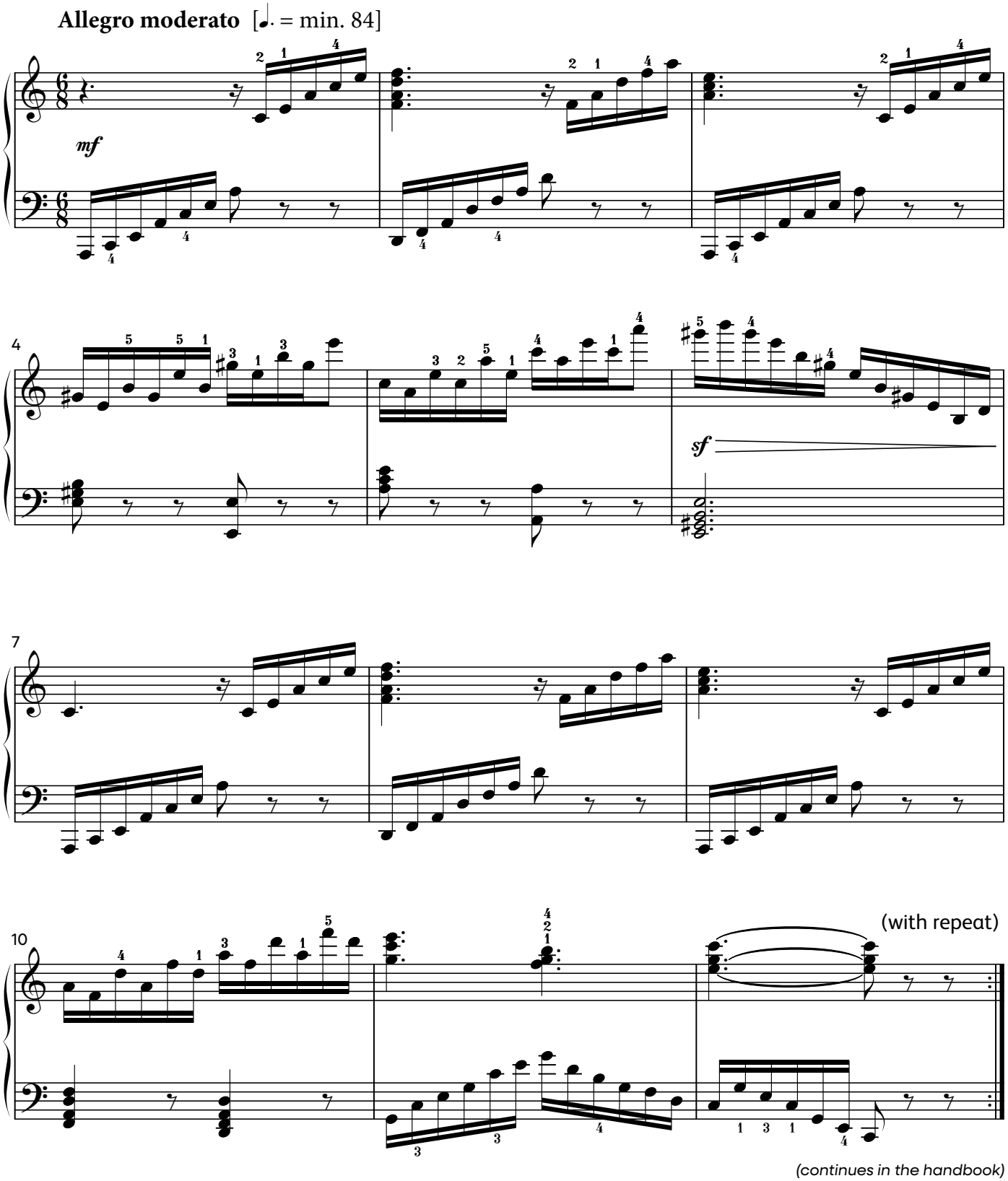
The examiner will ask for a selection of the items below. All are to be performed ascending and descending, from memory. Tempo markings reflect the capabilities expected at this level.

Requirements	Range	Details
Scales		
C, G, F, Bb, Eb, Ab major; C, G, F, Bb, Eb, G# minor (harmonic and melodic)	4 octaves	hands separately and together, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* and *staccato* 𝅗𝅥 = 88
Contrary motion scales		
C, G, F, Bb, Eb, Ab major; C, G, F, Bb, Eb, G# harmonic minor	2 octaves	hands together, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* and *staccato,* 𝅗𝅥 = 88
Scales in thirds		
C, A, Eb major; D harmonic minor	2 octaves	hands separately, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* ♩ = 120
Chromatic Scale in minor thirds		
Beginning on D/F	1 octave	hands separately, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* ♩ = 120
Chromatic Scale in major sixths		
Beginning on F/D	4 octaves	hands together a major 6th apart *piano* and *forte*, *legato* and *staccato,* 𝅗𝅥 = 88
Arpeggios		
C, G, F, Bb, Eb, Ab major C, G, F, Bb, Eb, G# minor	4 octaves	root position, 1st inversion and 2nd inversion, hands separately and together, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* 𝅗𝅥 = 60
Dominant 7th Arpeggios		
In the keys of C, F#, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db major	4 octaves	hands separately and together, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* 𝅗𝅥 = 60
Diminished 7th Arpeggios		
Beginning on F#, G, Ab, A, Bb, B	4 octaves	hands separately and together, *piano* and *forte*, *legato* 𝅗𝅥 = 60

Option 2: Studies

Performance of both the published studies. The following study is given as an example:

• **Louise Farrenc: Étude Op 42 No 4**



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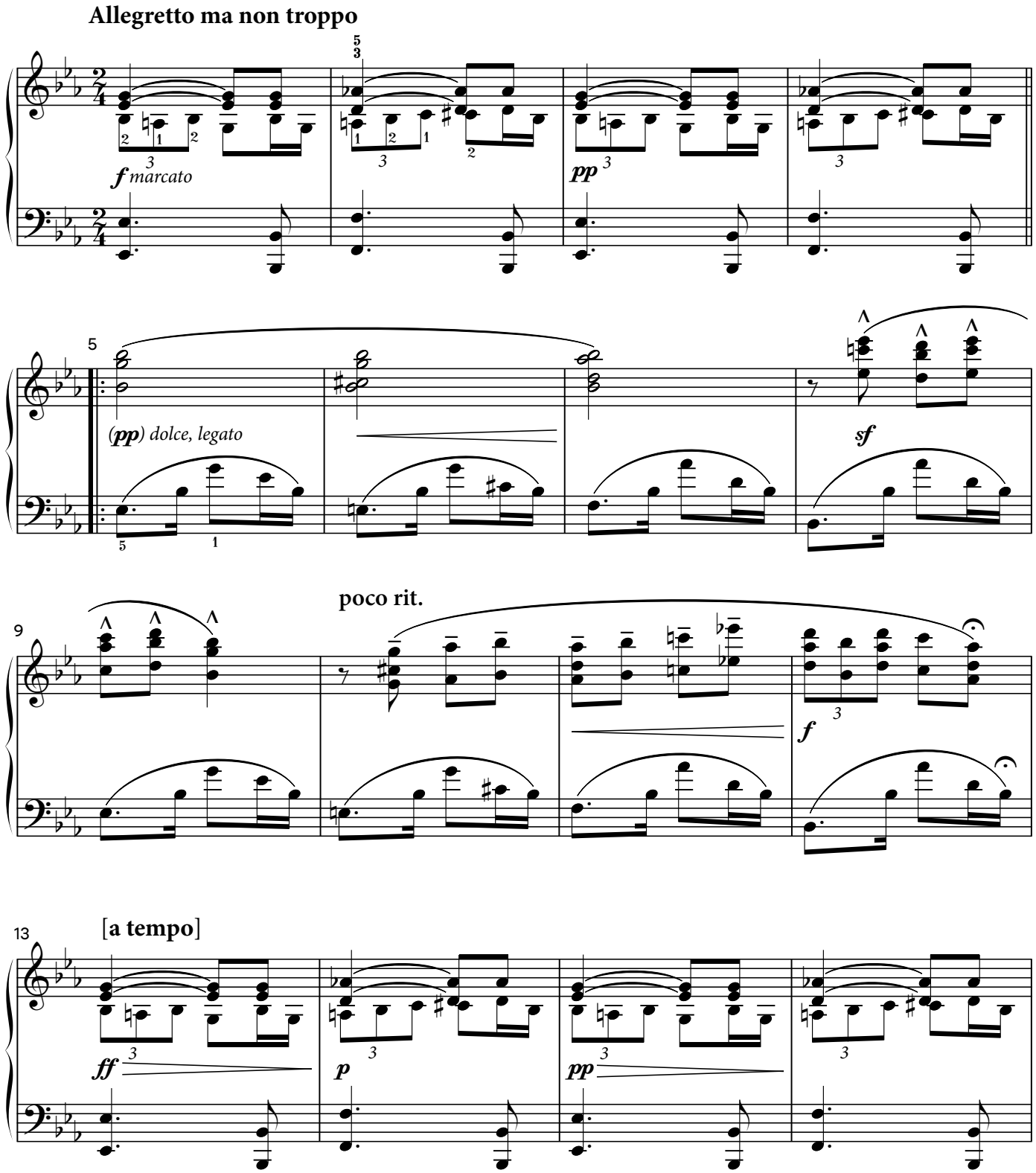
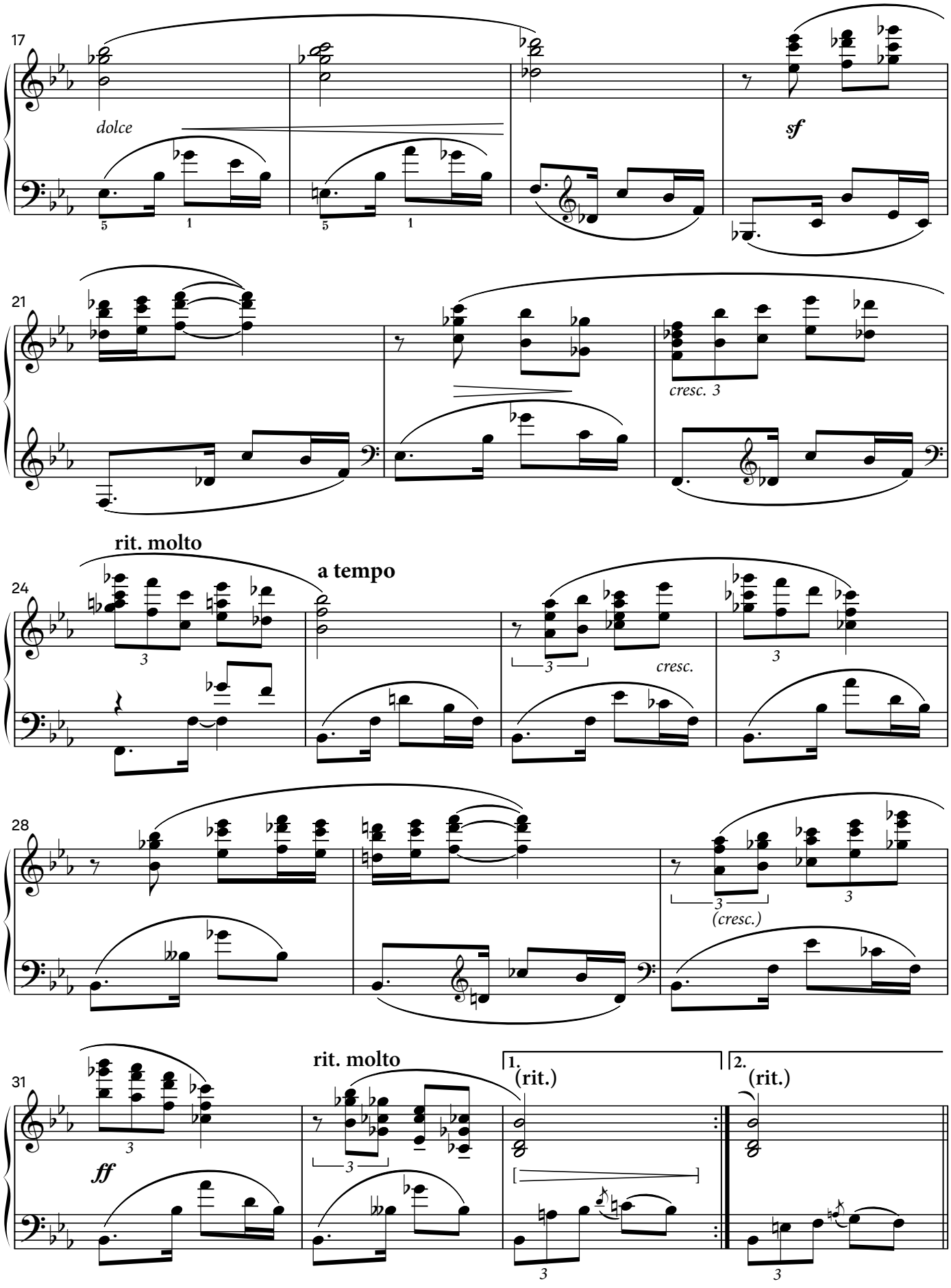
Component 2: Performance **3x20 marks**

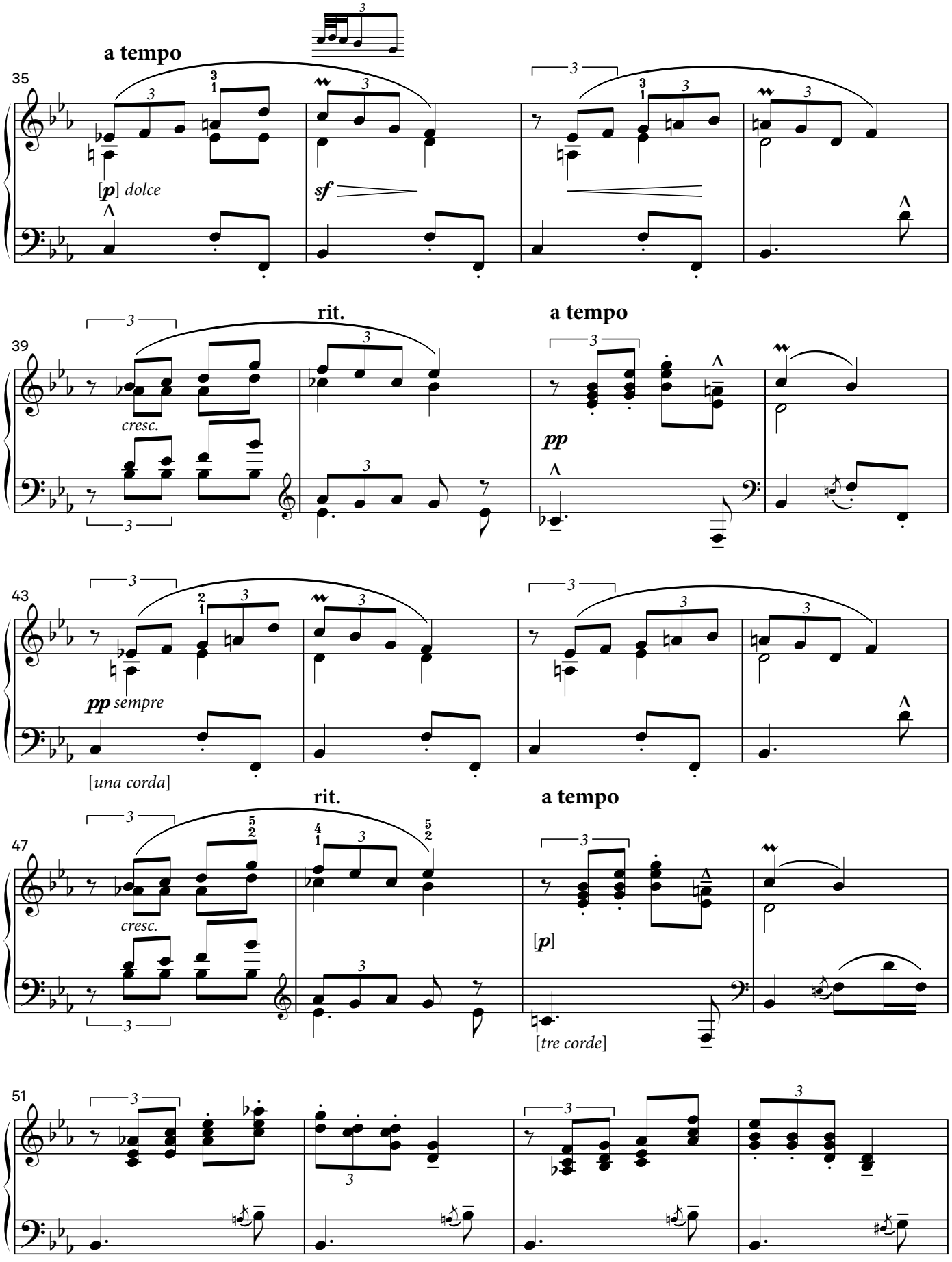
Performance of three pieces, one from each list, A, B and C. Up to two pieces may be substituted with selections of the same grade from the Popular Piano list. In addition, further List B and List C options can be found in the Piano Anthology series (LCME) for the appropriate grade and list. At least one piece must be from the current LCME Piano handbook.

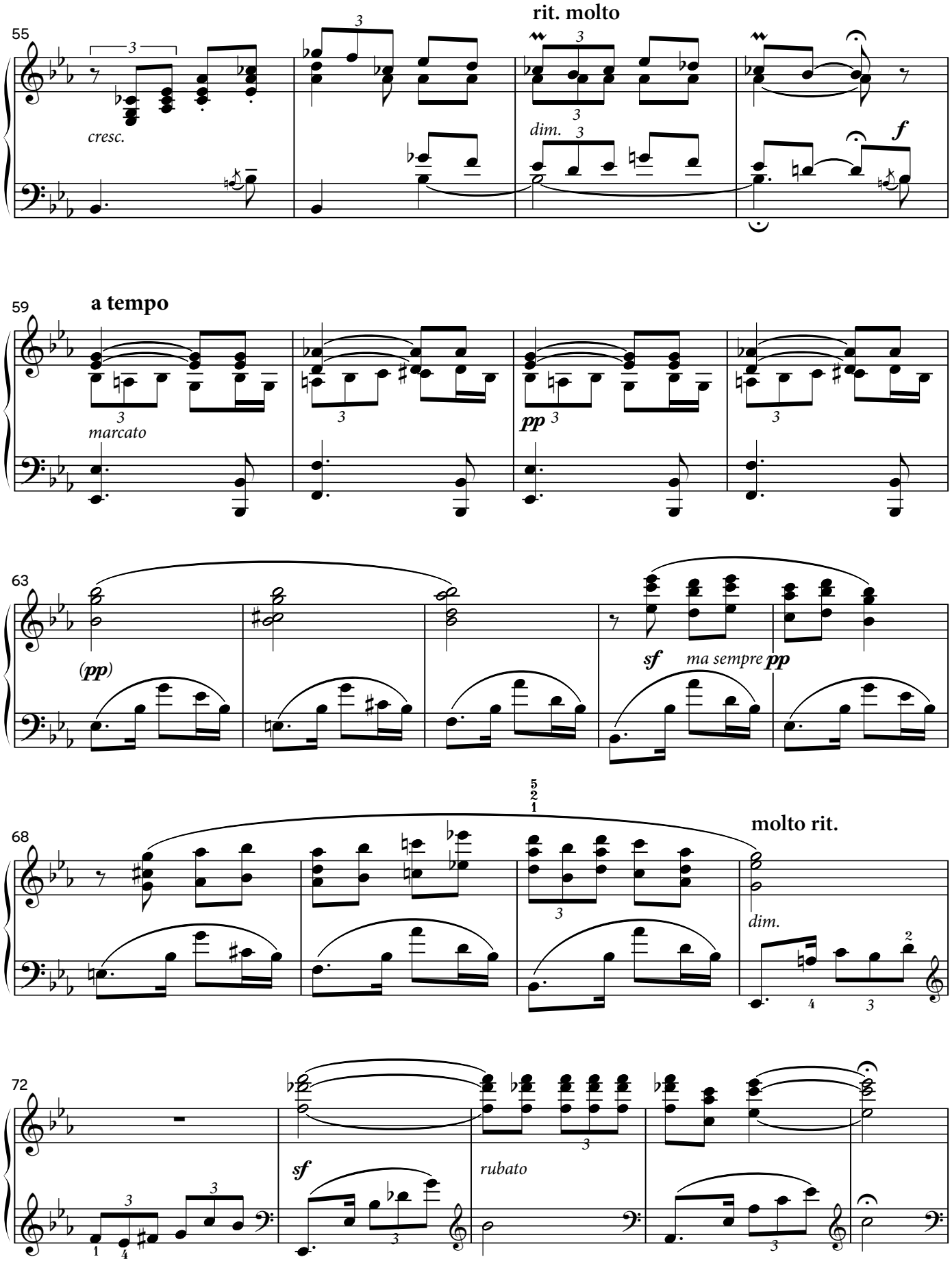
The following List B piece is given as an example:

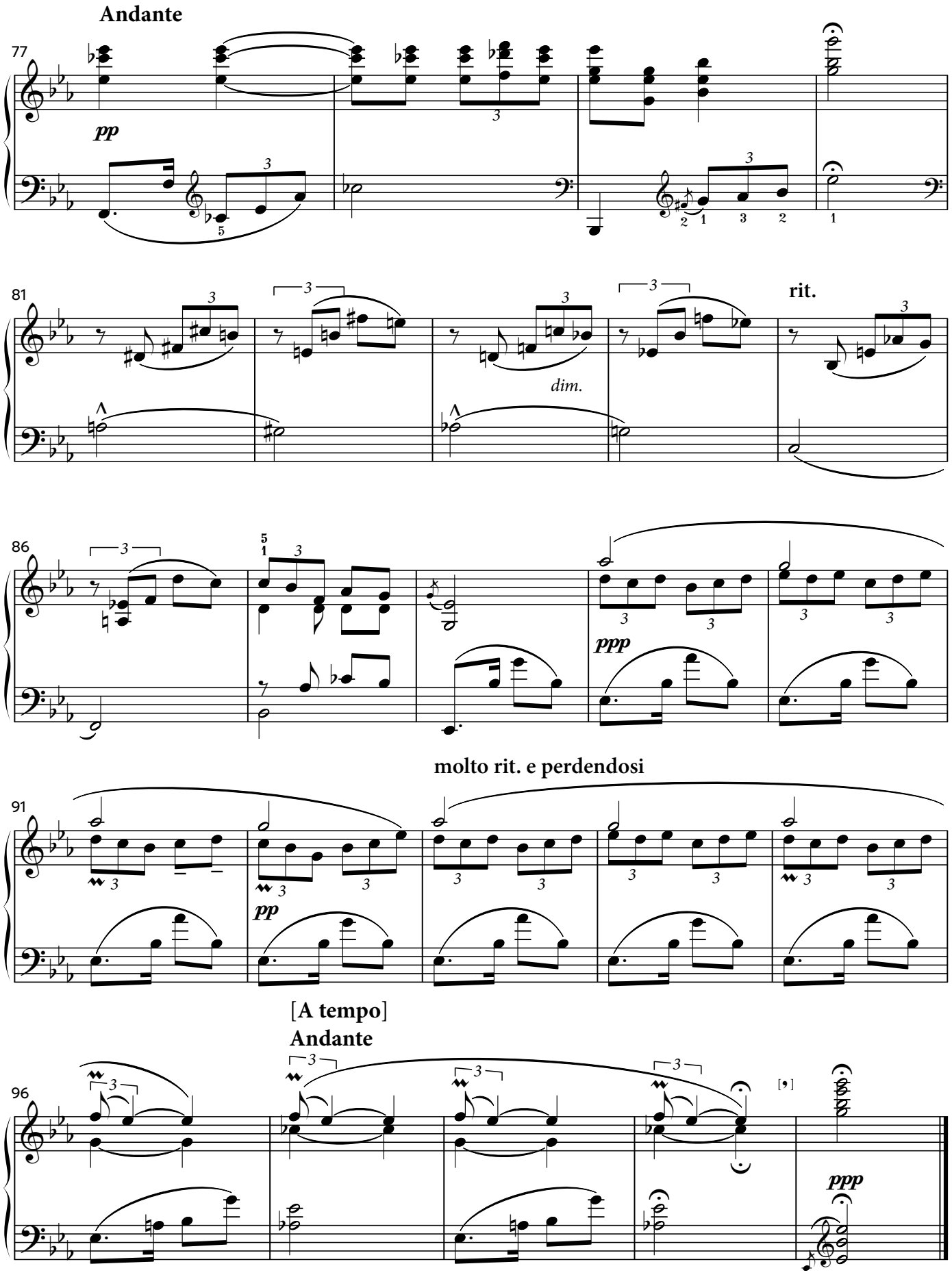
- **Isaac Albéniz: Sous le Palmier, Op 232 No 3**




17
dolce
sf
21
cresc. 3
rit. molto
a tempo
24
cresc.
28
(cresc.)
31
rit. molto
ff
1.
(rit.)
2.
(rit.)


a tempo
35
[p] dolce
sf
rit.
a tempo
39
cresc.
pp
43
pp sempre
[una corda]
rit.
a tempo
47
cresc.
[p]
[tre corde]
51


55
rit. molto
cresc.
dim.
f
59
a tempo
marcato
pp
63
(pp)
sf
ma sempre pp
68
molto rit.
dim.
72
sf
rubato


Andante
77
pp
81
dim.
rit.
86
ppp
molto rit. e perdendosi
91
pp
[A tempo]
Andante
96
ppp

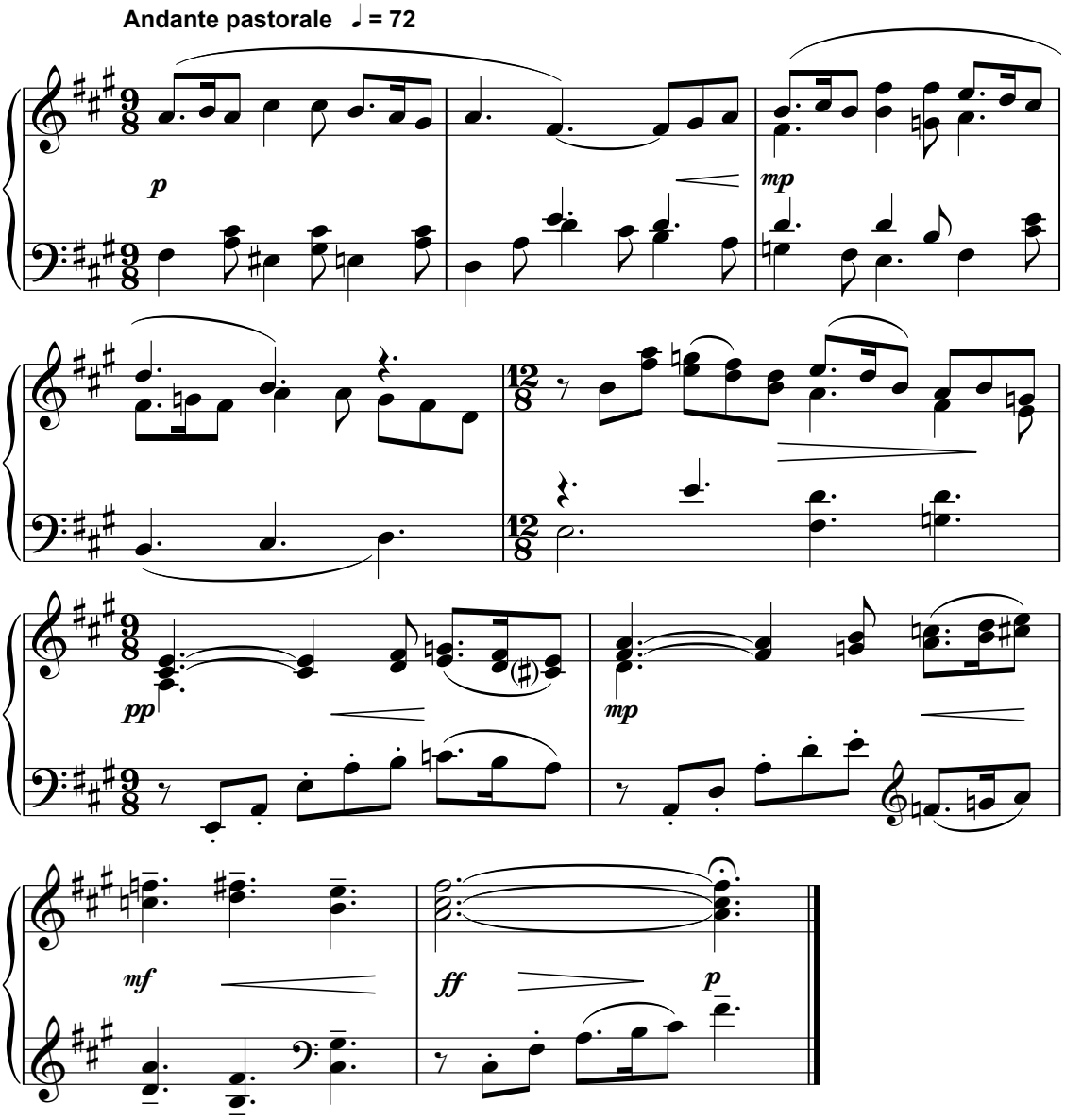
Component 3: Discussion **7 marks**

The candidate and examiner will engage in conversation about the music performed including notational elements, instrument specific knowledge and techniques applied in the performance, as appropriate to the grade.

Component 4: Sight Reading or Keyboard Harmony Test **10 marks**

Option 1: Sight Reading

Candidates will perform a short, previously unseen piece of music. Up to one minute is allowed to study the test, during which the candidate may try parts of it if they wish. For example:



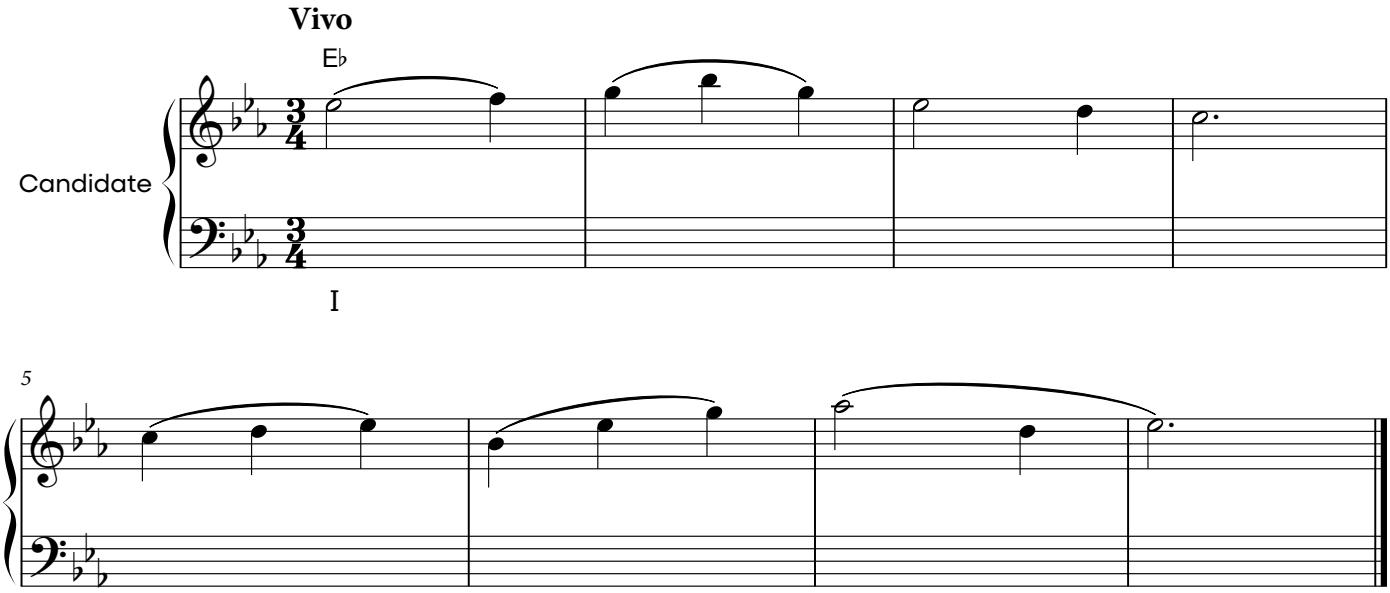
Option 2: Keyboard Harmony Test

The candidate harmonises a given melody using chords over a bass line. Only the opening tonic chord is given, with all other harmonic choices made by the candidate. The harmony used must be diatonic, and aligned to the key of the melody. The accompaniment may be extended with a brief introduction, varied textures, or cadential embellishments.

In this grade the candidate must:

- chords I–ii–IV–V in major or i–iv–V–VI in minor, in keys up to three sharps and three flats
- use of inversions and appropiate right-hand figuration is expected
- $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$

The candidate plays a harmonised melody using chords over a bass line. The opening tonic chord is given. The remaining harmonic choices must be diatonic.



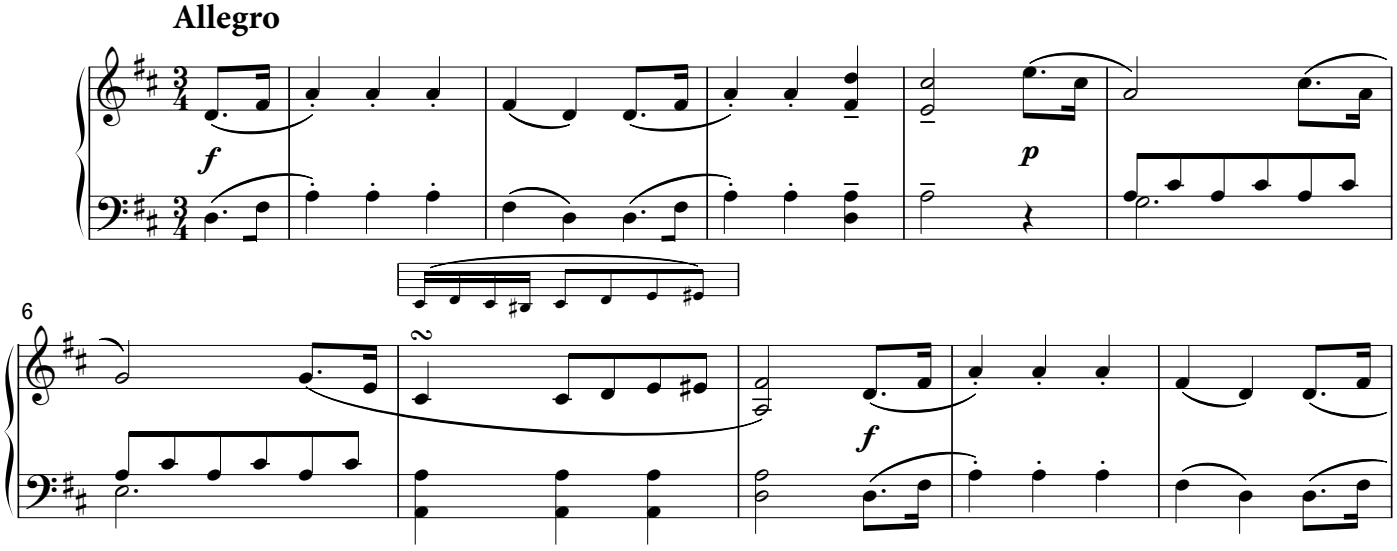
Component 5: Aural Tests **8 marks**

Candidates will be asked to complete a series of aural tests.

Test 1

A short harmonised passage will be played. Candidates will then be asked a selection of the questions below:

- to identify the time signature
- to identify whether the passage is in a major or minor key
- to suggest an appropriate tempo marking
- to describe and identify any particularly noticeable aspects of the dynamics, phrasing, articulation, modulation,
- ornamentation, texture etc.
- to suggest a musical style (Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, twentieth century or modern, jazz/popular)
- to identify any interval in the melodic line between two successive notes, up to and including a major 10th (the two
- pitches will be played again, as occurring in the melody)
- to clap back, or identify and describe, the note values (rhythmic values) of a short phrase (1 to 2 bars), taken from
- the passage and played again as an unharmonised version
- to identify a cadence, taken from the passage, played again by the examiner.



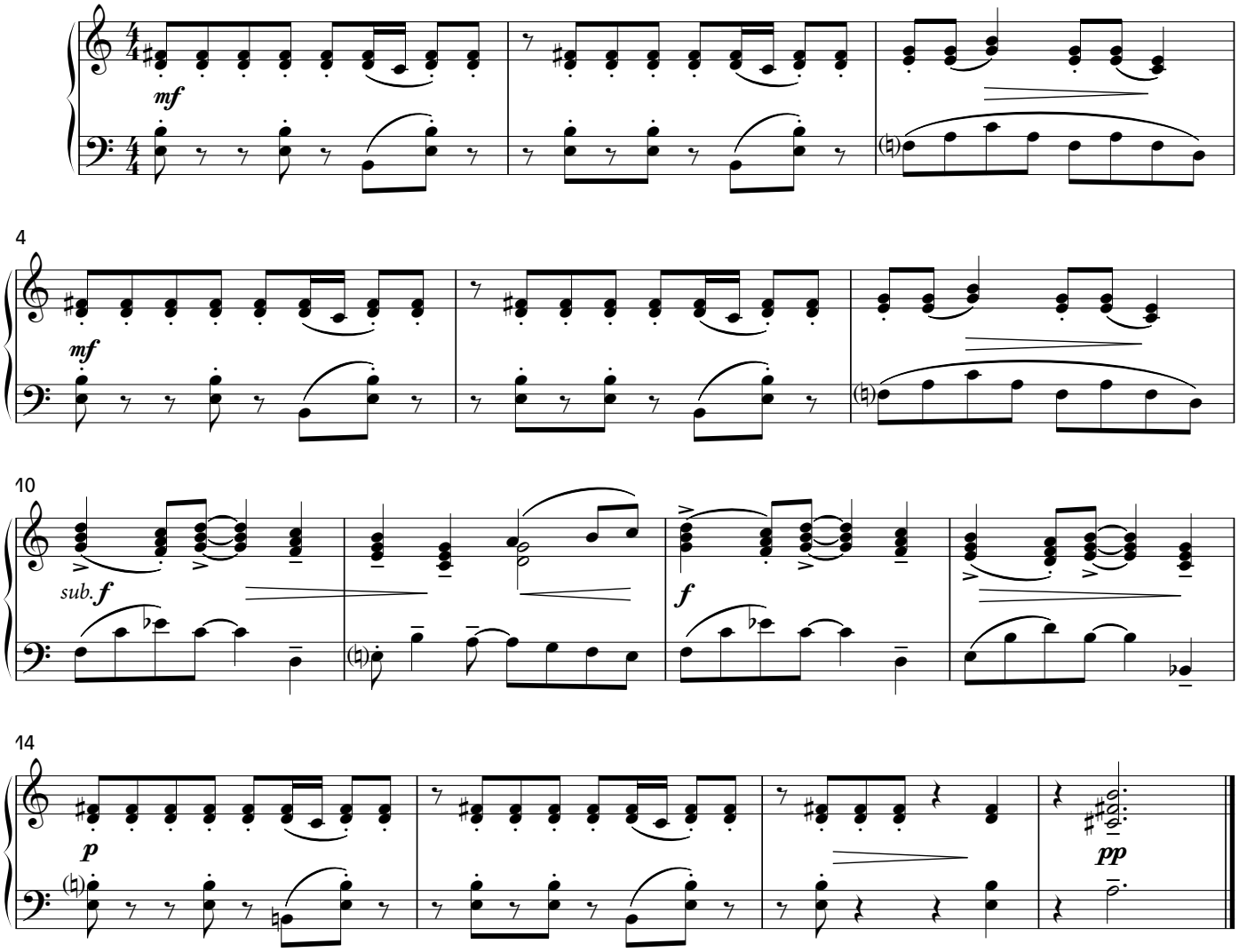
Test 2

Candidates will be given a copy of the score for the passage played in Test 1; without phrasing, tempo, articulation or dynamic markings.

The passage will be played once again in full; further shorter sections may also be played again, sometimes with changes in phrasing, tempo, articulation and/or dynamics. Candidates will be asked a selection of the questions below:

- To name the key
- To identify modulations
- To identify ornaments
- To describe the overall form (in addition to those specified for Grade 7, these may include ABCA, ABCBA, AA'BA, ABA'B, and similar structures, as well as more organic forms, or forms based on imitative or fugal structures)
- To identify melodic, rhythmic or harmonic devices, such as sequence, inversion, repetition, pedal points, augmentation/diminution, motivic development, etc
- To identify changes in phrasing, tempo, articulation and/or dynamics, in short passages, up to 2 bars in length, played in two different styles by the examiner

Ritmico e con anima



Modern / 20th Century

[Form: AABA' (modified ternary)]

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