



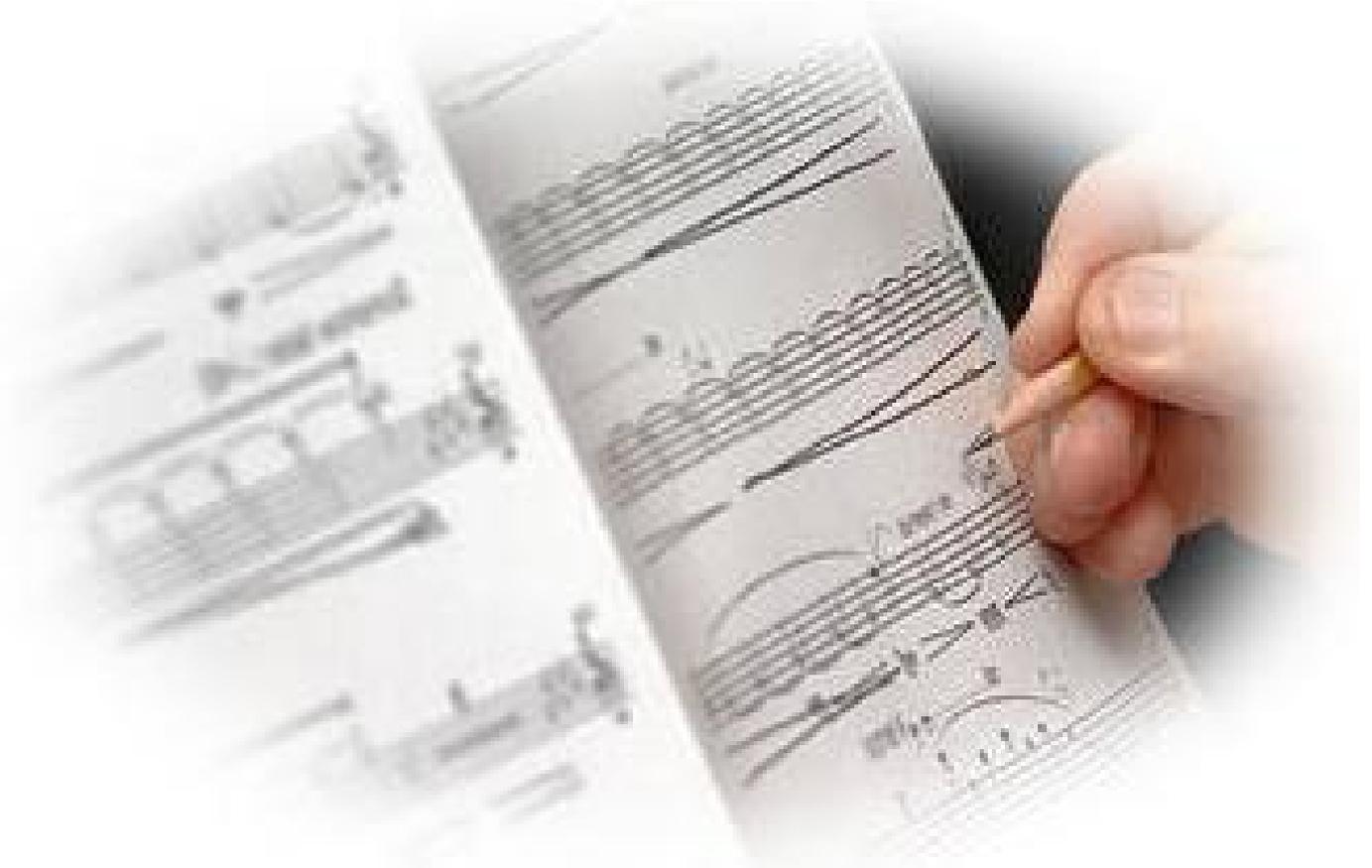
*Victoria College Examinations*

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# THEORY OF MUSIC

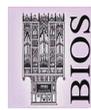
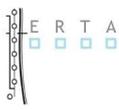




# Victoria College of Music and Drama, London Ltd

Founded 1890

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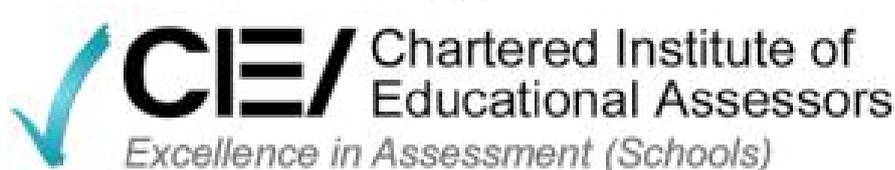
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### Subject Consultant

Dr. Donald E. Sammons PhD BMus HonVCM FVCM GLCM FLCM FTSC LMusTCL ACP FRSA LRSM

# Theory of Music Syllabus

Member of



## ENTERING CANDIDATES FOR THEORY EXAMINATIONS

Candidates can enter or be entered for Theory exams by one of two procedures:

1. **At a public centre via the Local Secretary.** Teachers should contact the Local Secretary and ascertain when the next session for Theory examinations will take place.

The Local Secretary will arrange for the examination to be independently invigilated and the worked papers to be submitted for marking. The results will be forwarded to the address shown on the entry form.

2. **Where it is not practicable for candidates to visit a local centre,** the College will, exceptionally, arrange for the examination to take place elsewhere, e.g. at a teacher's studio. In such cases, the candidate or teacher must arrange for an independent person to invigilate the examination at no financial cost to the College. The invigilator is not required to have any knowledge of the subject, but is required to sign a declaration that the examination has taken place according to the regulations. Under no circumstances can the invigilator be the teacher of the candidate(s) sitting the examination.

The name and address of the Invigilator must be submitted to the College with the entry form. The Theory examination paper will be sent to the Invigilator direct to be unsealed at the examination itself. The invigilator will be supplied with an addressed envelope to return the worked paper(s).

To maintain the fairest possible standards, candidates found to have obtained prior knowledge of questions - from any source - will be disqualified. As with all examinations, entries are required six weeks ahead of the examination under procedure 1 or 2 above.

### PAST PAPERS

Past Papers are available in booklets of six different papers for the each grade. They can be ordered online from [www.vcmpublications.co.uk](http://www.vcmpublications.co.uk)

### ABOUT THE VCM

Victoria College of Music and Drama, London Ltd. is an independent body providing examinations in Music, Speech, and Drama subjects. It has held examination sessions throughout the British Isles and certain overseas countries since it was founded in 1890. It no longer operates a full-time teaching institution. The VCM is a corporate member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians, Worshipful Company of Musicians, the Music Education Council, the Association of Teachers of Singing, the European Piano Teachers Association, the European Recorder Teachers Association, the Society of Recorder Players, the European String Teachers Association the Society of Teachers of Speech & Drama, the National Association of Music Educators, the Association of British Choral Directors, the Schools Music Association of Great Britain and is an institutional member of the College of Teachers and abides by its code of practice.

Further details about Victoria College can be found on our website:

**[www.Vcmexams.com](http://www.Vcmexams.com)**

### COMPARISONS WITH OTHER EXAMINATION BODIES

The Grades I to VIII in this syllabus are intended to compare in general terms on a level for level basis with Grades 1 to 8 of most other examination bodies. VCM Theory examinations contain some more searching questions than those of some other boards.

## **EXAMINERS**

All Theory of Music examination papers are marked by an independent examiner. A percentage of papers is moderated by a senior examiner and all papers initially assessed as deserving a mark near or below the Pass Mark are marked again by a separate examiner.

## **REGULATIONS**

All entries are accepted on the conditions laid down in the General Regulations, a copy of which is available on the College Website at [www.vcmexams.com](http://www.vcmexams.com) . Hard copies are available free of charge on request.

## **PASS MARKS**

The pass mark for Grades I-VIII is 65%. To pass with Merit, 80%; with Distinction, 90%. Merit is shown as Honours in Ireland..

The pass mark for Medal examinations is 75%. The result of medal examinations is either "Award" or "No award". The pass mark for Diploma examinations is 75%. To pass with Honours, 85%.

## **MARK SCHEME**

A maximum of twenty marks is attainable for each of the five questions in all Theory examinations.

## **EXEMPTION FROM QUESTIONS AT PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS**

Candidates who have passed certain VCM Theoretical Examinations are entitled to claim full marks for questions at Practical Examinations as follows:

Grade I Theory exempts up to and including Preliminary Practical

Grade IA Theory exempts up to and including Grade I Practical

Grade II Theory exempts up to and including Grade 3 and JBM Practical

Grade III Theory exempts up to and including Grade 5 and JSM Practical

Grade IV Theory exempts up to and including Grade 7 and SM Practical

In all such cases the theory result or certificate must be produced for the Examiner at the beginning of the practical examination.

A pass at Grade IV Theory of Music is required before the award of a Grade 8 practical certificate

A pass at Grade V Theory of Music is required before the award of a DipVCM or an Associate Diploma in any musical instrument or Singing.

A pass at Grade VI is the requirement for Licentiate~~s~~hip, and Grade VII for the Teacher~~s~~ Fellowship.

WHERE THEORY AND PRACTICAL PARTS ARE TAKEN AT SEPARATE TIMES, THE ONUS IS ON THE CANDIDATE TO NOTIFY THE COLLEGE WHEN BOTH PARTS ARE PASSED.

A declaration, to be signed by both the College Representative and the Invigilator, that the examinations are conducted according to the regulations is sent to the place of examination with the sealed examination papers. A copy of this declaration can be obtained on application to the College.

## **MARKED PAPERS**

**Marked papers are not returnable.**

## Exemption from Theory requirements by virtue of Prior Learning

Certain practical examinations require a pass at a Grade Theory examination before the practical certificate is awarded.

We recognise Prior Learning in that we will grant exemption from the Theory requirements to candidates who apply for exemption on the grounds that they have passed other examinations.

We will consider applications for exemption from Grade IV or Grade V Theory of Music to candidates who provide evidence (a photocopy is acceptable) of having passed GCSE in Music; Scottish or Irish Leaving Certificate in Music; or equivalent or superior qualifications. Grade IV or V in Theory of Music from another reputable examination board will also be accepted. Candidates who have passed Irish *Junior* Cert in Music do not qualify.

We will consider applications for exemption from *Grade VI* Theory of Music to candidates who provide evidence (a photocopy is acceptable) of having passed “A” *Level* in Music; Scottish or Irish *Higher* Certificate in Music; or equivalent or superior qualifications. Grade VI in Theory of Music from another reputable examination board will also be accepted

Speech & Drama candidates may claim exemption by virtue of similar qualifications in English Literature (not English Language).

### How to apply

**Candidates or their teachers can apply at any time for exemption either by email or by post, attaching a copy of the relevant evidence. A postal address is required, as VCM will issue an exemption certificate, in addition to keeping a record on file.** Exemption will only be granted on production of evidence: hearsay assurances from teachers is not acceptable.

### Disclaimer

This procedure is merely a recognition of prior learning. It is emphatically not a statement that acceptable qualifications are directly equivalent to VCM Theory examinations, or vice versa.

### Good Practice

It is good educational practice for candidates to work through VCM Theory Grades alongside Practical Grade exams. VCM Theory exams are intended to be more searching than those of other Awarding Bodies, and act as a complement to our practical examinations.

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>I</b>

## THEORY OF MUSIC: GRADE I

ONE HOUR ALLOWED

The Treble (G) and Bass (F) clefs; names of notes: lines and spaces; Middle C (both clefs); note values: crotchets, minims, semibreves; time-signatures: 2/4 and 3/4; barlines, double barlines. Major keys and scales of C and G ascending/descending. Terms: **piano/p/mp/pp/forte/f/mf/ff; cresc., dim.**

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>IA</b>

## THEORY OF MUSIC: GRADE IA

ONE HOUR ALLOWED

As in Grade I, plus:

The sharp, flat and natural. Major keys and scales of F and D, with their signatures and Tonic Triads (root position only). Tones and semitones. One leger line above and below staves.

Time values of notes and rests, including quavers and semiquavers. The bar rest. Simple time-signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, Common Time.

Simple Italian terms especially relating to pace (e.g. Allegro, Andante, Moderato, Largo, Lento, Rit. and Rall.) and dynamics: **fff, sfz, ppp**. The pause sign/fermata

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>II</b>

## THEORY OF MUSIC: GRADE II

ONE HOUR ALLOWED

As in Grade IA, plus:

2 leger lines above/below each staff; rewriting a short passage at the same pitch from treble to bass clefs or vice versa using only notes from G below to F above middle C. The scales and keys of B flat and A major and of A minor and D minor (harmonic form); with their signatures and Tonic Triads (root position only). Diatonic intervals in those same keys, major 2nd, major and minor 3rd and perfect 4th and 5th.

To recognise 3/8, 3/2, 2/2, and 6/8 time. Dotted notes and rests. Barring unbarred music.

Italian terms and signs including those of pace, dynamics and style: DC (al Fine), D.S., repeat signs, accent, staccato and legato, slurs, ties.

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		TM	III

## THEORY OF MUSIC: GRADE III

ONE AND A HALF HOURS ALLOWED

As in Grade IA and II plus:

The major scales and keys of E, Eb and Ab; and the harmonic minor scales and keys of E, G and C: their key-signatures and Tonic Triads (root position and first inversion). Diatonic intervals in these keys, including major and minor 6th.

All previous time-signatures, plus 9/8 and 12/8 time. Double-dotted notes and rests, demisemiquavers. Triplets. More than 2 leger lines above/below each clef. Transposing a melody from Treble to Bass or Bass to Treble, at the same pitch or an octave higher or lower.

Further common Italian terms and signs, including *8va.....*; *loco*.

## THEORY OF MUSIC: GRADE IV

ONE AND A HALF HOURS ALLOWED

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		TM	IV

As in preceding grades plus:

The major scales and keys of B, F sharp and D flat; the minor scales and keys of B, F sharp, C sharp and F (the harmonic form): their key-signatures and Tonic and Subdominant Triads (root position and first inversions only). Diatonic intervals in these keys, including the major 7th. Transposing a melody into another key a tone or semitone, or a major or minor 3rd, up or down.

The technical names for the notes of the Scale (Tonic, Dominant, etc.)

To recognise all simple and compound time-signatures; *alla breve*, syncopation, the Duplet. Italian terms and signs, including those of instrumental styles; enharmonics; the C clef - Alto only. Ornaments: to recognise and/or to write out as played the acciaccatura and mordent.

## THEORY OF MUSIC: GRADE V

TWO HOURS ALLOWED

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		TM	V

As in preceding grades plus:

All major and all minor scales (both forms) and keys with their signatures. Related keys. All intervals, including augmented and diminished, and their inversions. Double flats and double sharps.

Simple and compound times and their signatures. Irregular times, e.g. 5/4, 7/8. Barring of unbarred music. Completion of incomplete bars with rests. Irregular groups of notes. The C clefs: Alto and Tenor.

Italian terms, signs and ornaments: trill, turn, and appoggiatura only.

Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant Triads in root position and their inversions in major and minor keys. The three primary chords - I, IV, and V - in root position in any key, laid out as for four voices (S.A.T.B.) - 2 notes on the Treble stave and 2 on the Bass. The construction of the Plagal Cadence (S.A.T.B.) in simple major keys. To identify (only) any of the four cadences.

Transposing a melody from clef to clef and/or key to key.

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>VI</b>

## **THEORY & ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION: GRADE VI**

TWO HOURS ALLOWED

All major and all minor (both forms), scales and keys with their signatures. The Harmonic chromatic scale. All diatonic and chromatic intervals; compound intervals.

All time-signatures, barring, use of rests, the C clefs (Alto and Tenor).

Terms, signs and ornaments: all ornaments, including inverted ornaments. Abbreviations: notes, groups, bars.

Triads and their inversions as for Grade V, also on Supertonic, Submediant, major and minor keys. To recognise or write out any diatonic chords and their inversions (S.A.T.B.). To recognise and/or write out any of the four cadences in major or minor keys (S.A.T.B.). To add chord indications and phrasing to a melody for Keyboard.

Transposition from Short Score (for voices) to Open Score with the use of C clefs (alto and tenor), either at the same pitch or from key to key.

Simple melodic structure.

Simple questions about Romantic composers and their better known works. Dance names and styles, e.g. Gavotte, Ecosse, Barcarolle, etc. The sections of the orchestra. A choice will be given.

## **THEORY & ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION: GRADE VII**

TWO AND A HALF HOURS ALLOWED

Show on entry form as

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>VII</b>

Major, minor and harmonic chromatic scales in all keys. All intervals, and all triads and their inversions.

Terms, signs and ornaments; including common German terms.

Any diatonic chords and their inversions, arranged as for four voices in Short Score (two staves), and also in succession as in the four cadences, preceded by one or two suitable chords.

Harmonisation in four parts of a diatonic melody or of an unfigured Bass. To add chord indications to a melody for Keyboard. The use of unaccented Passing Notes. The Dominant 7th chord and its inversions.

Completing an eight bar melody of which the beginning is given; a modulation may be introduced.

Adding another melody above or below a given melody.

Phrasing. Melodic structure. To comment on the harmonies in a short passage.

General questions about the classical composers (1700-1828) and their better known works. The Suite - its movements. The String and Woodwind instruments of the orchestra. Short answers will be required and a choice will be given.

Show on entry form as		SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
				<b>TM</b>	<b>VIII</b>

# THEORY & ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION: GRADE VIII

TWO AND A HALF HOURS ALLOWED

General Theory: keys, scales, intervals, triads, terms, ornaments, signs and abbreviations including common German and French terms

Harmony: Four-part chords formed on all degrees of major and minor scales, and their inversions. The chord of the Dominant 7th and its inversions. The chord of the Diminished 7th. Modulation to related keys. Accented and unaccented Passing Notes. The harmonisation of a melody in four vocal parts, or in a simple style for pianoforte or organ. To add three parts above a figured or an unfigured Bass. To add chord indications and phrasing to a melody for Electronic Keyboard.

Melodic Structure. To add another melody above or below a given melody. To write a melody to given words or rhythm. To complete an eight bar melody for which the beginning is given.

Phrasing: to analyse the rhythmic and harmonic structure of a melody including modulations.

General Musical Knowledge: simple questions about composers, including well-known 20th century composers and their better known works. The Sonata. The Symphony. The instruments of the orchestra including the more common transposing instruments. Common musical forms. Short answers will be required and a choice will be given.

## MEDAL EXAMINATIONS

### Junior Bronze Medal

Show on entry form as

syllabus as for Grade III, 75 marks being required for a Pass.

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>JBM</b>

### Junior Silver Medal

Show on entry form as

syllabus as for Grade IV, 75 marks being required for a Pass.

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>JSM</b>

### Bronze Medal

Show on entry form as

syllabus as for Grade VI, 75 marks being required for a Pass.

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>BM</b>

### Silver Medal

Show on entry form as

syllabus as for Grade VII, 75 marks being required for a Pass.

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>SM</b>

### Gold Medal

Show on entry form as

syllabus as for Grade VIII, 75 marks being required for a Pass.

SURNAME	FORENAMES	SUBJECT	GRADE
		<b>TM</b>	<b>GM</b>

# **DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS**

## **Diploma-in-Music (DipMusVCM)**

THREE HOURS ALLOWED

General Theory: keys, scales, intervals, triads, terms, ornaments, signs and abbreviations including common German and French terms

Harmony: Four-part chords formed on all degrees of major and minor scales, and their inversions. The chord of the Dominant 7th and its inversions. The chord of the Diminished 7th. Modulation to related keys. Accented and unaccented Passing Notes. The harmonisation of a melody in four vocal parts, or in a simple style for pianoforte or organ. To add three parts above a figured or an unfigured Bass. To add chord indications and phrasing to a melody for Electronic Keyboard.

General questions on composers, on orchestral instruments and on musical forms. Short answers will be required and a choice will be given.

To write a short series of chords and/or phrases from a given opening to effect a modulation to a given key or keys, related or unrelated.

To write a short series of chords (SATB) from a given opening to effect a modulation to any related key. Free counterpoint in 2 parts.

To write a melody to given words. To write a melody of 12-16 bars from a given opening to include modulations.

## **Associate-in-Music (AMusVCM)**

THREE HOURS ALLOWED

Harmonisation in three or four parts for voices or instruments of a given melody or Bass; figured or unfigured; or in simple pianoforte or organ style. The range of harmony to include all diatonic chords and their inversions. The chords of the Dominant and Diminished 7th, upper Dominant discords (9th, 11th, and 13th) passing notes (unaccented and accented), suspensions, and modulations to related keys. Candidates may also be required to add chord indications and phrasing to a melody as for Keyboard. To prepare, write and resolve in a short series of no more than four chords any of the following: secondary 7ths, the augmented 6th chords, and the chord of the Neapolitan 6th.

Simple Free Counterpoint in two parts. General Theory of Music including terms used in Harmony and Counterpoint; Transposition, and Open Score (with C Clefs)

General questions on composers, on orchestral instruments and on musical forms. Short answers will be required and a choice will be given.

To write a short series of chords and/or phrases from a given opening to effect a modulation to a given key or keys, related or unrelated.

Free Counterpoint in 2 and/or 3 parts. 2-part Canon (8-10 bars)

To write a melody to given words. To write a melody of 12-16 bars from a given opening to include modulations.

# **Licentiate-in-Music (LMusVCM)**

**2 papers of 2 hours each**

Candidates for LMusVCM must hold the AMusVCM or be an Associate of the VCM in a musical subject.

CANDIDATES WILL BE REQUIRED TO BRING TO THE EXAMINATION AN ORCHESTRAL ARRANGEMENT OF A PIECE OF MUSIC PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE FOR THE CANDIDATE AT LEAST TEN DAYS BEFORE THE EXAMINATION DATE AND ATTESTED AS THE CANDIDATE'S OWN UNAIDED WORK. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT NOT MORE THAN SIX HOURS, NOT NECESSARILY AT ONE SITTING, SHOULD BE SPENT ON THIS PROJECT.

The Syllabus is as for AMusVCM with the addition of Chromatic Harmony, Counterpoint, Free and 16th Century (at the candidate's choice) up to 4 parts.

Terms used in Fugue. Fugal Exposition in 3 parts.

To answer a Fugue subject and compose an effective countersubject.

To arrange a short passage for various combinations of instruments, and/or to reduce a short orchestral extract to a playable piano score.

Questions on composers, 1600 to modern times, and on musical forms. Concise answers will be required and a choice will be given. Candidates may also be asked to analyse and comment on a piece of music e.g. a movement from a sonata or a suite, supplied at the examination

## **Fellowship (FVCM)**

***Fellowship candidates must already hold the LMusVCM diploma in Theory of Music unless permitted direct entry by virtue of Regulation 14.***

**1. N.B. Holders of both the LMusVCM and the LVCM in a Practical Musical subject may apply for Fellowship without further examination.**

**2. -by examination**

### Part One

Two papers in Theory of Music (Three hours each): syllabus as for LMusVCM plus Fugue in 4 parts; the scoring of a short passage for small orchestra and/or the reduction of a short orchestral passage to a playable piano score.

### Part Two

To submit within two years of passing Part One, **two** of the following:

(i) A single movement intended as part of a full-length work of Chamber Music (Trio, Quartet, or Quintet)

(ii) A folio of three varied solos for any keyboard instrument, or for another instrument (or voice) with keyboard accompaniment.

(iii) A well developed **Fugue** in four parts for instrument(s) or voices on a subject devised by the candidate.

(iv) The Orchestration of two contrasted solos chosen from the piano works of **one** of: Schumann, Tschaikovsky (Op37,39) Edward MacDowell, Debussy (Preludes) or Kabalevsky.

(v) An extended essay of about 10,000 words on any historical theme pertaining to the development of music

### **3. -or by composition**

Candidates may submit three compositions of varied character certified as their own unaided work by a suitably witnessed declaration. The works must demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship as well as an original approach to harmonic, contrapuntal and structural concepts.

### **4. -or by thesis**

Candidates may submit a thesis (about 15-20,000 words) on some aspect of Music and its development approved by the College at least six months beforehand. The thesis must contain musical examples and be certified as the candidate's own unaided work by a suitably witnessed declaration.



