

Scottish Harp Exam Guidelines

General Guidelines on Performance

1 The performance section of the exam is worth 90 marks in the exam overall.

2 It is your opportunity to present a full and varied programme of music, chosen from three separate repertoire lists.

3 The examiner will prompt you throughout by asking what tune or set of tunes he or she wishes to play next; and may ask something further, such as 'Why did you choose that tune / those tunes?' or 'Can you tell me something about that tune?'

This exchange will not be marked. You should view it as a brief opportunity to put the tunes into context, establish a rapport with the examiner as audience and feel more at ease during performance.

4 The performance section consists of three categories of music:

- Airs;
- Dance tunes, or tunes rhythmically varied; and
- Recent compositions.

As the grades progress, you are allowed more time and scope to perform your programme of music, chosen from the increasingly challenging repertoire lists:

• At Grades 1 and 2, you have a total of 4½ minutes to play one air, one dance tune and one recently-composed tune.

• At Grades 3 and 4, you have a total of 6 minutes to play two stand-alone tunes and one set of two tunes. At least one tune from each of the three categories should be played.

Note: where two tunes are offered together, these must be played as a set. You may construct your set from other tunes among all three lists if you wish. In either case, the tunes should relate to each other in terms of appropriate sequences, keys and links.

• At Grade 5, you have a total of 9 minutes to play two stand-alone tunes and one set of three tunes. At least one tune from each of the three categories should be played.

Note: where two or three tunes are offered together, these must be played as a set. You may construct your set from other tunes among all three lists if you wish. In either case, the tunes should relate to each other in terms of appropriate sequences, keys and links.

5 Each list in Grade 5 contains one or two Scottish traditional or recently-composed tunes that are not arranged for harp, and are labelled 'own arrangement'. If you wish to perform any or all of these tunes, your arrangement(s) must be comparable in technical and artistic standard with the other tunes listed for the grade.

6 The repeating of tunes, or of a tune's parts, is at your discretion. Knowing the total time limit and parameters accorded to the performance section of each grade, you are encouraged to make choices - to produce a varied programme and to put something of yourself in the music within the boundaries of the exam structure.

Example: at Grade 4, an examiner will expect to hear approximately nine minutes of music. Spending five minutes on a march, strathspey and reel set, for instance, is entirely permissible; going over the full allotted time of nine minutes for the whole programme, however, is discouraged. Although the time limits are for general guidance only, the examiner may stop you if the time limit is exceeded.

7 At Grade 5, you may replace one of the listed tunes in the repertoire with a tune of your own choice. The tune should be comparable in technical and artistic standard with the other tunes listed for the grade.

Important Notes for You and Your Tutor

8 You are free to use sheet music if you wish.

9 You will be expected to perform unaccompanied.

10 When presenting a set of tunes, they should relate to each other in terms of appropriate sequences, keys and links.

11 The tune sections can be played in any order at your choice. The examiner will ask.

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Tune Arrangements

Arrangements are integral to the grading of tunes. The publications recommended as the sources for tunes in the repertoire reflect the standard of arrangement expected for the tunes in the given grade. Exams books are available on Taigh na Teud's book and DVD website www.scotlandsmusic/home Downloadable MP3s of the sound files are available here too so you can hear the tunes and easily choose your repertoire for an exam or a new tune to learn. You can also buy the exam sheet music as single PDF copies to download. You are free to use other sources for the tunes named in repertoire lists throughout the grades - the tunes may well have been learned by ear, for instance - as long as arrangements are comparable in technical standard and in the same key. If the examiner judges your arrangement to be below the technical and artistic standard of other tunes in the repertoire at that grade, marks may be deducted.