

Performance

For further information about the performance aspect of your exams, please consult the **Specification** <http://www.ulstercollegeofmusic.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2-Specification.pdf>.

In particular, look at pages **6-7, 14, 27-28, 30, 46-48**.

AS - SOLO PERFORMANCE (51 marks - 32.5% of AS; 13% of A-level):

- Students should prepare at least *two* contrasting pieces.
- Students should be able to create a performance to a *minimum Grade 4* Standard (see below)
- Performance should last 5-7 minutes (penalized if shorter!)

A2 - SOLO PERFORMANCE (51 marks - 19.5% of A-level):

- Students should prepare at least *two* contrasting pieces.
- Students should be able to create a performance to a *minimum Grade 5* Standard (see below)
- Performance should last 8-10 minutes (penalized if shorter!)

MARKS AND ASSESSMENT FOR AS & A2 (51 Marks)

You will get higher marks if you demonstrate:

- **technical control and accuracy (17 Marks):** *use of a wide pitch range, good intonation, advanced rhythms, range of articulations, ornaments properly executed*
- **expressive interpretation, sense of style, communicating composer's intentions (17 Marks):** *correct choice of tempo (which is maintained/changed accurately), wide range of dynamic levels that are distinguishable, correct choice of phrasing and other stylistic conventions*
- **AS level of demand (9 Marks):** *grade 4 = 3 marks; grade 5 = 6 marks; grade 6 = 9 marks*
- **A2 level of demand (9 Marks):** *grade 5 = 3 marks; grade 6 = 6 marks; grade 7 = 9 marks*
- **Viva voce (8 Marks):** *excellent knowledge of the chosen programme and wider repertoire and ability to discuss analytically the technical challenge and points of interpretation*

VIVA VOCE DISCUSSION WITH EXAMINER FOR AS & A2

You must engage in a meaningful viva voce about points arising from your programme, including:

- The title, composer and stylistic content of *each piece performed in your programme*
- Your rationale for your choice of programme
- Technical challenges you encountered in preparing your programme
- Stylistic conventions and details of interpretative aspects of the pieces you are performing
- Details of recordings you have listened to and how these influenced your final performance
- In general, you should be able to comment perceptively on the music you perform and demonstrate *your preparation* (reflection, analysis and evaluation) for the performance

OTHER DETAILS

- If the performance requires an accompanist and no accompanist is available, candidates may use a backing track provided it does not detract from the performance
- Other performers may provide support (e.g. a pop group or traditional group) provided the candidate being examined performs a substantial solo part and their part is *not* doubled

ISSUES THAT COME UP

- Most students needed ***a lot more emphasis*** on ***changes in dynamics and speed***, especially at cadences and the end of pieces if stylistically appropriate
- ***More rubato***, especially for Romantic and 20th century pieces – sometimes too regimental/stiff!
- Most pianist are ***overusing the pedal*** or ***not lifting their foot off*** properly – muddy textures
- Don't be ***too loud!*** You need to be able to demonstrate the difference between *mf* – *f* – *ff*
- ***Tuning, page turning*** – these need to be worked out in advance before the examiner hears you. Don't restart the piece to find correct tuning etc., it is meant to be a performance after all
- ***Higher registers***, esp. for voices and orchestral instruments, need to be confident
- ***Phrasing and breathing*** for wind instruments could be clearer – try to control your instrument a little more – the examiner shouldn't hear heavy breathy tones or squeaks