



conservatory
C A N A D A™

Contemporary Idioms™

Level 4

Length of examination: 25 minutes

Examination Fee: Please consult our website for the schedule of fees: www.conservatorycanada.ca

Corequisite: There is no written examination corequisite for the completion of Level 4.

Students registering for a Contemporary Idioms exam may mix and match CI repertoire with Classical skills in the following manner:

- Students must be registered for a CI Piano exam
- Students prepare the repertoire requirements as listed in the CI syllabus below (4 pieces)
- Instead of the Skills listed below, students prepare *ALL* Technique, Sight Reading, Aural Tests, Keyboard Skills (Grades 4+) and Background Information as per the same Level of the Classical Piano syllabus. Students *do not* mix and match various skills between the two streams.
- Students choosing Classical skills on this exam do not prepare Improvisation requirements.
- A different marking scheme applies when preparing Classical skills (Repertoire is still /48 + /2 for memory).

REQUIREMENTS & MARKING

Requirements		Total Marks
Repertoire 4 pieces of varying styles	Piece #1	12
	Piece #2	12
	Piece #3	12
	Piece #4	12
Memory	2 marks max will be awarded for 2 pieces memorized	2
Technique	Scales, Triads, Arpeggios	14
Sight Reading	Rhythm Pattern /3, Piano Passage /7	10
Aural Tests	Play/Sing Back /3, Chords /4, Intervals /3	10
Improvisation	Etude /5, Lead Sheet /5	10
Background Information and Applied Skills		6
Total Possible Marks		100

REPERTOIRE

- Candidate must be prepared to play four pieces varying in style, with at least 2 composers being represented to receive full marks.
- Candidate can choose the style of their pieces but please note that only **one** piece from the Classical Syllabus may be used.
- If the candidate has chosen to perform exam pieces from the American Popular Piano Repertoire book by Christopher Norton, a maximum of **one** of these pieces may match the candidate's chosen etudes, for the improvisation portion of the exam.
- Please check the updated Contemporary Repertoire List for proper leveling of all American Popular Piano selections.
- To keep examinations running on time, candidates are encouraged to create concise arrangements of their music. Repeats may be observed when it is integral to the form of the music (e.g. Da Capo and Dal Segno indications), however longer pop stylings should be edited to condense the length by omitting excessive repeats on similar verses, repetitive choruses or extended solo sections that are not idiomatic to the instrument.
- Editing the notation and rhythm of pop stylings is allowed to bring the performance closer to a more realistic representation of the original recorded version or live performance version, or to make the music more accessible and level appropriate for the candidate.
- One mark per piece will be awarded for memorizing up to any two pieces on the exam. Although memorization is encouraged, no additional marks are available for memorizing three or more pieces.

TECHNICAL TESTS

- All technical tests must be played ascending and descending from memory with a steady pulse, even tone and logical fingering.
- Metronome markings should be regarded as minimum speeds.
- Do not repeat the upper tonic when playing scales.
- Examiner will state "swing" or "straight" eighths when applicable.

Scales/Modes	Keys	Hands	Range	J=	Performance
Scales/Modes					
Ionian/Major	A, E \flat	Together	2 octaves	92	Swing or Straight 8ths
Dorian	b, f	Together	2 octaves	92	Swing or Straight 8ths
Mixolydian	E, B \flat	Together	2 octaves	92	Swing or Straight 8ths
Aeolian/ Natural Minor	f \sharp , c	Together	2 octaves	92	Swing or Straight 8ths
Harmonic Minor	f \sharp , c	Together	2 octaves	92	Swing or Straight 8ths
Blues	e \flat	Together	2 octaves	92	Swing or Straight 8ths

Triads					
Solid	A, E \flat , f \sharp , c	Together	1 octave	138	Quarter notes, separated by a quarter rest
Broken	A, E \flat , f \sharp , c	Together	1 octave	76	Triplet 8th notes
Arpeggios					
Major & Minor	A, E \flat , f \sharp , c	Separate	2 octaves	80	Legato, in even 8th notes

SIGHT READING

The candidate will be given a brief period to scan the score for the following two tests:

- A.** Tap, clap or play on one note (at the candidate's choice) a simple rhythm, 4 bars in length.
- Time signature may be 2/4, 3/4 or 4/4.
 - Note values may include sixteenth, eighth, dotted eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, half and dotted half.
 - Rest values may include eighth, quarter, half and whole.

Example only:



- B.** Play at sight a simple 4-8 bar melody within the limits of the grand staff.
- Hands together with the melody in the right hand; appropriate fingering will be given.
 - The piece may be in the keys of C, G, D, A, F, B \flat or E \flat major, with a time signature of 2/4, 3/4 or 4/4.
 - Note values may include eighth, quarter, half and dotted half notes. Eighth, quarter, half and whole rests may be used.

Example only:

AURAL TESTS

The candidate will be required to:

- A. Play back or sing back to any vowel (at the candidate's choice), a short melody of six to eight notes in 2/4, 3/4 or 4/4 time. The melody will be based on the first five notes of a major scale and will begin on the tonic note. The examiner will:
 - Name the key - either C, G, D or F major.
 - Play the tonic four-note chord in broken form.
 - Play the melody twice.

- B. Identify major triads, minor triads and dominant 7th chords played once by the examiner. The chords will be in closed root position and will be played in solid form.

Example only:

- C. Identify any of the following intervals after the examiner has played it once in broken form:

Ascending	Descending
minor 3rd	
major 3rd	
perfect 4th	perfect 4th
perfect 5th	perfect 5th
perfect 8th	perfect 8th

IMPROVISATION

A. Improvisation Etudes:

- Prepare any **three** selections (at the candidate's choice) from Christopher Norton's **American Popular Piano Etudes Book 4**. (Three different Etudes).
- The Examiner will choose one of the Etudes to be performed on the exam.
- The candidate will be expected to play hands together along to the backing track (provided by the Student). Students should attend the exam with equipment to amplify the volume of the backing track.
- The student may use any legal notated copy of the Etudes they find useful to play from. (Any of the modules from the book; no photocopies).
- The left hand plays as written or using the given voicings and creating its own rhythmic vamp, while the right hand improvises freely within the given note set or with additions as appropriate.
- The rhythmic suggestions from the book's modules do not have to be followed.
- The candidate is free to create in this exercise, using as much or as little of the given material as they like, as long as the realized improv is idiomatic to the backing track.
- If the candidate has chosen to perform exam pieces from the American Popular Piano Repertoire book by Christopher Norton, a maximum of **one** of these pieces may match the candidate's chosen etudes, for performance on an exam.

B. Lead Sheet Reading:

- Candidate will play at sight a simple melody of 8 bars in lead sheet format in the key of A major or E \flat major.
- The LH may be realized in blocked or broken chords in any inversion, or rhythmic vamp using idiomatic rhythms.
- The RH melody may be harmonized if desired.
- Marks will be awarded for good voice leading.
- Chord progression may include the I, ii⁷, IV and V⁷ of the key.

Example only:

The image shows two staves of musical notation in E-flat major, 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody starting on E-flat, moving to G-flat, B-flat, and then a descending eighth-note run. The second staff shows the same melody with a final double bar line. Chord progressions E-flat, B-flat7, F-min7, B-flat7, E-flat are indicated above the notes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION & APPLIED SKILLS

Candidate should be prepared to give verbal answers or demonstrate the following elements on the piano:

- A.** Title, composer/arranger, and key of all four repertoire choices.
- B.** Find and explain all signs (including clefs, time signatures, key signatures, accidentals, etc.), articulation markings (legato, staccato, accents, phrase or slur markings, etc.), dynamic markings, tempo markings, and other musical terms found in the four repertoire choices.
- C.** Chords:
- Candidate should be prepared to:
 - Play any root position major or minor triad starting on any note.
 - Convert any triad into a dominant 7th or a minor 7th chord.
- D.** Scales:
- Using a one octave ascending scale, demonstrate with either hand how to change a:
 - F# minor pentatonic scale to an F# blues scale.
 - C minor pentatonic scale to a C blues scale.
- E.** Candidate will choose **one** of the prepared repertoire pieces in which genre or style is clearly represented, and be prepared to name the style or genre and then describe or demonstrate these characteristics. For example: *What is the style of this piece?* "Ragtime". *What are the features that make it typical of Ragtime?* Candidate will be awarded marks for elaborating using specific details that they have researched.