



conservatory  
C A N A D A™

## Contemporary Idioms™

### Level 6

**Length of the examination:** 30 minutes

**Examination Fee:** Please consult our website for the schedule of fees: [www.conservatorycanada.ca](http://www.conservatorycanada.ca)

**Corequisite:** Successful completion of the **THEORY 2** examination is required for the completion of Level 6.

**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
<b>Repertoire</b> 4 pieces of varying styles	Piece #1	12
	Piece #2	12
	Piece #3	12
	Piece #4	12
<b>Memory</b>	2 marks max will be awarded for 2 pieces memorized	2
<b>Technique</b>	Scales, Triads/Chords, Arpeggios, Chord Progressions	14
<b>Sight Reading</b>	Rhythm Pattern /2, Piano Passage /6	8
<b>Aural Tests</b>	Play/Sing Back /3, Chords /4, Intervals /3	10
<b>Improvisation</b>	Etude /7, Improv Piece /5	12
<b>Background Information and Applied Skills</b>		6
<b>Total Possible Marks</b>		<b>100</b>

## 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
<b>Scales/Modes</b>					
Ionian/Major	B, D $\flat$	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
Dorian	c $\sharp$ , e $\flat$	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
Phrygian	d $\sharp$ , f	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
Lydian	e, g $\flat$	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
Mixolydian	F $\sharp$ , A $\flat$	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
Aeolian/ Natural Minor	g $\sharp$ , b $\flat$	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths

Harmonic Minor	g <sup>#</sup> , b <sup>b</sup>	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
Locrian	a <sup>#</sup> , c	Together	2 octaves	112	Swing or Straight 8ths
<b>Triads</b>					
Solid	B, D <sup>b</sup> , g <sup>#</sup> , b <sup>b</sup>	Together	2 octaves	80	Quarter notes
Broken	B, D <sup>b</sup> , g <sup>#</sup> , b <sup>b</sup>	Together	2 octaves	80	Triplet 8th notes
<b>Dominant 7th &amp; Diminished 7th Chords</b>					
Solid	F <sup>#7</sup> , A <sup>b7</sup> , g <sup>o7</sup> , a <sup>o7</sup>	Separate	2 octaves	80	Half notes
Broken	F <sup>#7</sup> , A <sup>b7</sup> , g <sup>o7</sup> , a <sup>o7</sup>	Separate	2 octaves	80	8th notes
<b>Arpeggios</b>					
Major & Minor	B, D <sup>b</sup> , g <sup>#</sup> , b <sup>b</sup>	Separate	2 octaves	92	8th notes, root position only
Dominant 7th & Diminished 7th	F <sup>#7</sup> , A <sup>b7</sup> , g <sup>o7</sup> , a <sup>o7</sup>	Separate	2 octaves	92	8th notes, root position only
<b>Chord Progressions</b>					
ii <sup>7</sup> - V <sup>7</sup> - I <sup>maj7</sup>	B, D <sup>b</sup>	Together	N/A	N/A	RH broken, LH solid Pedal is optional

Chord Progression example:

## 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.
- Using time signatures of 2/4, 3/4 or 4/4.
  - Note values may include sixteenth, eighth, dotted eighth, triplet eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, half and dotted half. Tied notes may be used.
  - Rest values may include eighth, quarter, half and whole.

Example only:

- B. Play at sight a piece 8-16 bars in length, about equal in difficulty to Grade 3 classical. The excerpt may be in a major or minor key with up to and including three sharps or flats. Material from Conservatory Canada's classical syllabus is appropriate in preparation for this requirement.

## 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 and lower leading tone of a major or minor scale and will begin on the tonic note. The examiner will:
- Name the key - either C, G, D, F, or B $\flat$  major; A, E, B, D or G minor.
  - Play the tonic four-note chord in broken form.
  - Play the melody twice.
- B. Identify major triads, minor triads, dominant 7th chords, major 7th chords and diminished 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 2nd	
major 2nd	
minor 3rd	minor 3rd
major 3rd	major 3rd
perfect 4th	perfect 4th
perfect 5th	perfect 5th
minor 6th	minor 6th
major 6th	
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 6**. (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. Improvisation Piece:

- Candidate will prepare **one** of the following three:
  1. Lead Sheet Reading:
    - Candidates will be given an eight bar lead sheet to play hands together **twice**, without pause before repetition, in the key of B or D ♭ major.
    - First time: Candidate will harmonize the given melody in either keyboard style\* (with melody at the top of the chord), blocked chord style\* or between the hands\*. Candidate may choose which style to use.
    - Second time: Played either in keyboard style\* with the RH creating an idiomatic rhythmic vamp (no melody required) **or** with RH soloing (improvised melody) and LH in blocked chord style\*. Candidate may choose which style to use.
    - Excerpt will have one or two chords per bar and may include I, I<sup>maj7</sup>, ii<sup>7</sup>, iii, IV, V<sup>7</sup> or vi<sup>7</sup> of the key. Stylistic chord substitutions are allowed, such as substituting <sup>Maj</sup>6 for <sup>Maj</sup>7.
    - Marks will be awarded for fluency and good voice leading.

\*Keyboard style: Single bass note in LH, chords in RH

\*Blocked chord style: Any inversion of given chord in LH, single note in RH

\*Between the hands: Harmony split in any suitable arrangement between RH and LH

*Example only:*

**Ab Major** A<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>min7 E<sup>b</sup>7

A<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>min7 E<sup>b</sup>7 B<sup>b</sup>min7 E<sup>b</sup>7 A<sup>b</sup>

2. 12 Bar Blues:

- Candidate will improvise over a 12 bar blues progression in a key of their choice.
- RH will improvise over a LH comping pattern of their choice.
- Marks will be awarded for maintaining a steady pulse.
- Maximum time allowed is one minute.
- Example illustrates a basic template to follow. Other variations of 12 bar blues along with chord substitutions may be used.

Example only:

**12 Bar Blues**

3. Composition:

- Candidate will create an original composition in a key and meter of their choice.
- Maximum time allowed is one minute.
- Candidate must provide a chord chart, lead sheet or score completely written out in standard notation for the Examiner.

**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:
- Candidates should be prepared to:
    - Play any dominant 7th, minor 7th, major 7th, diminished 7th, major 6th or minor 6th chord in root position, starting on any note. Candidate will be asked by letter / chord name (G7, E $\flat$  min7, F $\sharp$  maj7, etc.)
- D.** Scales:
- Using a one octave ascending scale, demonstrate with either hand how to change a:
    - C major pentatonic scale into an A minor pentatonic scale then an A blues scale.
    - G major pentatonic scale into an E minor pentatonic scale then an E blues scale.
    - D major pentatonic scale into a B minor pentatonic scale then a B blues scale.
    - F major pentatonic scale into a D minor pentatonic scale then a D blues scale.
    - B $\flat$  major pentatonic scale into a G minor pentatonic scale then a G 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.
- F.** Candidate should be prepared to give two or three relevant details about the composer/arranger of **one** of their repertoire pieces (candidate's choice). Details may include the composer's nationality, instruments the composer played or wrote for, preference of music genre, famous works or associations, anecdotal information, etc.