

# Performance

For further information about the performance aspect of your exams, please consult the **Specification** <http://www.ulstercollegeofmusic.com/classes-2/gcse-music/>). In particular, look at pages **6-8, 15-16** and **Appendices 2 & 3**.

## **SOLO PERFORMANCE (60 Marks – 15%):**

You will get higher marks if:

- Your piece encompasses a wide **pitch range** (2+ octaves)
- Your piece has more **advanced rhythms** (syncopation, semiquaver runs)
- You properly express a range of **articulations**, ornamentation, and chromatic passages.
- You properly express the **correct tempo**, which is **maintained** and/or **changed** accurately
- You properly express an extended **range dynamic contrasts** (*pp - p - mp - mf - f - ff*)
- You express the correct **phrasing** and a variety of tone
- You give a personal response to the music, consistent with composers intentions and the style
- Grade 4 standard: good length, advanced keys, tempi, rhythms and chords, command of your chosen instrument demonstrating performance techniques (i.e. correct use of pedal and range).

## **ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE (60 Marks – 15%)**

You will get higher marks if:

- You and all performers involved collectively change tempo **together accurately**
- Your piece has more **advanced rhythms** (syncopation, semiquaver runs)
- Your piece has **independent** parts (i.e. **not** all performers playing together in chordal style)
- Your piece has independent parts that allow **entries of performers** at different times
- You properly express a range of **articulations**, ornamentation, and chromatic passages
- You properly express an extended **range dynamic contrasts** (*pp - p - mp - mf - f - ff*) and **balance your dynamic level with other performers!**
- You have accurate **tuning, intonation, phrasing** and variety of **tone** throughout your piece
- You have a good understanding of how your role relates to the piece as a whole and a sensitivity to other parts – **respond to adjustments as needed during performance**
- You have the confidence to **take the lead** and support others as necessary during performance

## **ISSUES THAT CAME UP EACH YEAR**

- Most students needed **a lot more emphasis** on **changes in dynamics and speed**, especially at cadences and the end of pieces. This also applies for ensemble pieces: **change together!**
- **More rubato**, especially for Romantic and 20<sup>th</sup> century pieces – sometimes too regimental/stiff!
- Most pianist are **overusing the pedal** or **not lifting your foot off** properly – muddy textures
- Don't be **too loud!** You need to be able to demonstrate the difference between *mf - f - ff!*
- **Balance** between you and other performers! Some were too quiet, others were too loud.
- **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.
- **Much more interaction** between you and other performers – ensemble
- **Timing** – 5 minutes max for solo performance and 5 minutes for ensemble performance
- **Higher registers**, esp. for voices and orchestral instruments, need a little more confidence.
- **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!