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WELCOME TO THE ROCKSCHOOL REPERTOIRE SAMPLE BOOKLET FOR UKULELE

This interactive booklet is designed to give a flavour of the pieces of music contained within the graded music exam syllabus and information on the musical skills and understanding that have been benchmarked at each grade. This sits alongside the Syllabus Guide which provides full details of the graded examinations run by Rockschool for Ukulele.

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If you are using Adobe Acrobat to view this document, you will be able to hear the sample audio alongside the sample repertoire pages. Alternatively, please visit the [RSL Awards website](#) to hear the audio previews.

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THE ROCKSCHOOL BOOKS ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE KEY SECTIONS:

PERFORMANCE PIECES:

Each graded exam book contains all the material you need to learn at each grade and has been benchmarked according to a set of criteria which are contained in this booklet.

The songs are also supported by Technical Guidance. These sections cover the song from the performers' perspective, focusing on the technical issues the learner will encounter as they navigate each track.

Each book also contains both a full mix and backing track to provide the learner with the ideal level of performance they need to aim for. Both versions have spoken count-ins at the beginning much like you would expect in a professional recording environment.

Please note: any solos played on the full mix versions are indicative only.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES:

There are either three or four groups of technical exercise, depending on the grade:

Group A – scales

Group B – arpeggios/broken chords

Group C – chord voicings

Group D – a choice of stylistic studies

Please note: Group D only exists at Grades 6–8.

Rockschool's Technical Exercises are designed to introduce a gradual increase of expressive techniques and ideas, that collectively enable each player to attain a true sense of musicality. Whether that's achieved in tone modification, ornamentation, or articulation; each technique can be freely applied to any specific style a player chooses to identify with.

SUPPORTING TESTS AND GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS:

The candidate is required to undertake three kinds of unprepared, supporting test:

1. Sight Reading **or** an Improvisation & Interpretation (Debut to Grade 5).

Please note: these are replaced by mandatory Quick Study Pieces (QSPs) at Grades 6–8 in all graded exams except for Piano and Keys.

2. Ear Tests: featuring Melodic Recall and Chord Recognition (Debut to Grade 3) and Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall (Grades 4–8).
3. General Musicianship Questions (GMQs), which will be asked by the examiner at the end of each exam. Each book features examples of the types of unprepared tests likely to appear in the exam. The examiner will give a different version in the exam.



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REPERTOIRE:

The pieces of music in the graded exam book have been carefully selected to cater for a wide range of musical tastes so please refer to the syllabus guide and our website for more details.

Learners also have the opportunity to use Free Choice Pieces alongside this specified repertoire and the benchmarking criteria in this booklet should be used to identify whether the piece they want to use meets the required standard for the grade chosen.

This is also available on our [website](#).

There are six 'hit tune' arrangements which fall into two categories:

1. Session Style:

These arrangements cover the skills required of contemporary ukulele players in ensemble environments, be they on the stage or in the studio. The backing tracks feature vocalists, and the assessed ukulele parts are reflective of what session players would perform live or on mainstream commercial recordings.

2. Ukulele Specialist:

These instrument-specific solo-ukulele arrangements intensely navigate the ukulele's range of melodic expression (these pieces are duets at Debut – Grade 3).

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ED BLACK, TEACHER OF ROCKSCHOOL

AUDIO:

Audio is provided in the form of backing tracks (excluding the assessed part) and examples (including the assessed part) for the pieces and the supporting tests where applicable. Audio files are supplied in MP3 format to enable playback on a wide range of compatible devices. Digital versions of the book include audio files in the download. Physical versions of the book include a code to download the audio at [rslawards.com/downloads](https://www.rslawards.com/downloads).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The books also contain information on exam procedures, including online examination entry, marking schemes, information on Free Choice Pieces and any improvisation, notation and tone requirements for each grade.



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EXAMS

When they are ready, candidates can enter for the following types of exam:

Graded Music Exam

candidates perform Three Pieces; a selection of Technical Exercises; and a series of Unseen Tests.

Performance Certificate

candidates perform Five Pieces only. This exam can also be taken via video submission.

Learners can take their exam at one of our Public Exam Venues or, should your venue meet certain criteria, we can convene a private exam day at your venue for your students.

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ASSESSMENT:

Candidates are assessed against specific Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria which are detailed in full in the Syllabus Guide and on our [website](#).

We have also included a summary of the Assessment Criteria in this booklet.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

There are three learning outcomes in Rockschool graded music exams:

1. Be able to perform music in popular musical styles.
2. Be able to demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to set technical demands.
3. Be able to demonstrate musical understanding through a range of set tests.

Graded Examinations reference all three learning outcomes, whereas Performance Certificates only require the first outcome to be met.

WHAT ARE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA?

Assessment Criteria are how we assess the learning outcomes.

- They are applied to evidence musical outcomes at progressing grades.
- Each criterion is equally weighted.
- Each is considered / marked separately.
- The combination gives the total mark for each piece/ supporting test.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Command of Instrument

The quality of the sound produced from the instrument, including the consistency of sound/tone, control of sound/tone commensurate with grade.

2. Sync or Pulse

Alignment of the performance to backing track, metronome or applied to a solo performance, observing notation markings. For unaccompanied pieces candidates should maintain a secure internal pulse and adjust the pulse where instructed within the music.

3. Accuracy and Understanding

Representing the written notation accurately, except by instruction through performance notes, or interpreting the written part with equivalent skills demonstrated. Secure understanding of musical structure evidenced through transitions of phrases, bars and sections.

4. Style and Expression

An expressive and commanding performance of the notated material dictated by the demands of the performance piece.

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UKULELE DEBUT MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	40 secs–1 min 20 secs
Tempo	60–160 bpm
Time Signatures	Simple time signatures, i.e. 4/4, 3/4
Rhythmic Values	Whole, half, quarter, 8th notes and rests, occasional dotted half notes or dotted quarter notes
Dynamics	None, or very simple/sparse
Articulation	None, or very simple/sparse
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chord types generally will not extend beyond triads, and tonality will be predominantly diatonic
Melodic Features	Melodies will be predominantly diatonic Intervallic transitions will be stepwise or small (for example, crossing strings)
Physical Techniques	Chord shapes will be simple and predominantly in open or first position Harmonic rate of change will be fairly slow giving time for preparation There may be basic or infrequent muting techniques required in either hand

'Demons' | Imagine Dragons



Album: *Night Visions*

Label: Interscope/Kidinakorner

Genre: Pop/Rock

Chart Peak: 13 (UK)

Written By: Ben Mckee, Adam Baachoui,
Dan Platzman, Dan Reynolds,
Wayne Sermon, Alexander Grant,
Josh Mosser

Produced By: Alex Da Kid

Background Info



'Demons' is a song recorded by American rock band Imagine Dragons. It was written by band members Dan Reynolds (vocals), Wayne Sermon (lead guitar), Ben McKee (bass), and Daniel Platzman (drums), and was produced by Alex da Kid. The song appears on their major-label debut extended play *Continued Silence* and also makes an appearance on their debut studio album *Night Visions* as the fourth track.

Night Visions was recorded between 2010 and 2012 and was primarily produced by the band themselves, as well as British hip-hop producer Alex da Kid and Brandon Darner, from the American indie rock group The Envy Corps.

The song has been a commercial success, becoming their second Top 10 single after their initial chart hit, 'Radioactive'. 'Demons' has sold over four million copies in

the United States, and was the eighth most downloaded song in rock history as of 2015.

'Demons' managed an impressive 61 weeks on the US Hot 100 and won Imagine Dragons several awards, including the iHeart Radio Music Award for Alternative Rock Song of The Year in 2014. The song also achieved top ten positions in singles charts around the globe, including Canada, Belgium, Austria, Brazil and France.

The hallmark of Imagine Dragons' music is its ability to blur the lines between musical genres. Dan Reynolds cites Arcade Fire, Nirvana, Muse, The Beatles, Paul Simon, Coldplay, Harry Nilsson, and U2 as some of his and the band's artistic influences. In terms of success, Reynolds credits bands like Foster the People and Mumford & Sons for bringing alternative pop music to a new level of commercial success in recent years.

Performance Notes



This pop/rock song starts with a laid back feel but the intensity gradually builds through the different sections. The key centre is C major and your four chord progression remains constant throughout the song, but notice that your strumming pattern changes every eight bars.

The main challenge will be to move confidently between chords. You will be strumming on all four beats in the C section and you will need a fast and accurate change from one chord to the next. However, you must take particular care with the long chords in the A section because they must still be held for their four full beats. Listen carefully to the band so you can count the beat and stay in time.



[A] ♩=90 Pop/Rock

When the days are cold and the cards all fold and the saints

Ukulele Tab: 3 0 0 0 | 2 3 2 0

we see are all made of gold, when your dreams all fail and the ones

Ukulele Tab: 0 0 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 | 3 0 0 0

we hail are the worst of all and the blood's run stale

Ukulele Tab: 2 3 2 0 | 0 0 0 2 | 0 1 0 2

I want to hide the truth, I want to shelter you, but with the beast inside there's no where we can hide.

Ukulele Tab: 3 0 0 0 | 3 0 0 0 | 2 0 2 0 | 0 0 0 2 | 0 0 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 | 0 0 0 2

No matter what we breed, we are still made of greed. This is my kingdom come, this is my kingdom come.

Ukulele Tab: 3 0 0 0 | 3 0 0 0 | 2 0 2 0 | 0 0 0 2 | 0 0 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 | 0 0 0 2

Words and Music by Daniel Reynolds, Benjamin McKee, Daniel Sermon, Alexander Grant and Josh Mosser
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UKULELE GRADE 1 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	50 secs – 1 min 30 secs
Tempo	60-170 bpm
Time Signatures	Simple, or basic compound time signatures, i.e. 4/4, 3 /4, 6/8
Rhythmic Values	As shown in Debut, <i>plus</i> 8th notes and rests, occasional dotted 8th notes, 8 th note syncopation, occasional 16th notes, and very occasional non-complex triplet groupings
Dynamics	Simple dynamics [P, F, MP, MF]. Subtle transitions will be very infrequent
Articulation	Simple/sparse, with infrequent variation
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Harmony will generally will not extend beyond triads, and tonality will be predominantly diatonic, but there may be occasional closely related non-diatonic chords, or occasional dominant 7ths
Melodic Features	Melodies will be predominantly diatonic Intervallic transitions will be stepwise or small (for example, crossing strings)
Physical Techniques	Chord shapes will be simple and predominantly in open or first position Melodic passages will remain on single strings, or move at a moderate tempo to an adjacent string. Simple string skipping may feature. Melodic work might be harmonised with occasional double stops Basic muting techniques may be required in either hand, and occasional simple legato techniques may appear (hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides)

'Stand By Me' | Ben E. King



Album: *Don't Play That Song*
Label: Atco
Genre: Soul

Chart Peak: 1 (UK)
Written By: Ben E. King, Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller
Produced By: Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller

Background Info



'Stand By Me' was written by Ben E. King and producers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The title was inspired by a spiritual song written by Sam Cooke and J.W. Alexander called 'Stand By Me Father' which contains lines derived from Psalm 46:2. Ben E. King had written the song with The Drifters in mind but they declined recording it. After the success of 'Spanish Harlem', King had some studio time available and played the song to Leiber and Stoller. There are varied accounts of who did exactly what, with both Leiber and Stoller claiming they worked out harmonies and a bass line, but in the end the song was credited to all three with a 50% split in favour of King.

'Stand By Me' was released in April 1961. Since then, the estimated royalties generated by the song are over twenty two million US dollars. The original recording session included Romeo Penque on sax, Ernie Hayes on piano, Al Caiola and Charles McCracken on guitars, Lloyd Trotman on bass, Phil Kraus on percussion and Gary Chester on drums, with a chorus and strings arranged by Stanley Applebaum.

'Stand By Me' was a top 10 hit on the US Billboard charts twice – upon its release in 1961 and then again in 1986 when it was re-released as part of the soundtrack to the movie of the same name. In the UK charts it reached no. 27 on its original release and no. 1 when re-released in 1987, partly due to its utilisation on a Levi's jeans advert. The song also appeared on the album *Don't Play That Song*.

Ben E. King had an illustrious career and died at the age of 76 in 2015. He is now regarded as one of the greatest voices of soul, rock and rhythm & blues. Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller are amongst the most successful and influential record producers of the twentieth century. They produced and wrote for artists including Elvis Presley, Barry Mann, Elkie Brooks, Peggy Lee and Stealers Wheel. Their work influenced artists including Donald Fagen and Phil Spector, who started out as their session guitarist.

'Stand By Me' was recorded over four hundred times. Notable versions include those of Muhammad Ali in 1963, John Lennon in 1975, Maurice White in 1985, Prince Royce in 2010 and Florence + The Machine in 2016.

Performance Notes



This piece is arranged as a duet, with the candidate part (assessed) performing the iconic riff and chord sequence, whilst the second part (non-assessed) performs the melody. The tempo has a lively feel which, combined with the catchy melody and riff, makes for a classic pop hit.

It is important to be secure with the syncopated rhythm of the riff as this holds everything together. To achieve this, make sure you understand where the notes fall in relation to the beats by using the smallest note value – in this case eighth notes: (1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &). The rests are as important as the notes, so practise your muting technique to ensure these are played confidently. Notice that this arrangement is in the key of G major, and you will cover the G major scale in the technical section of this book which is helpful for becoming confident with the riff.

The verse is marked at Bar 9 as letter 'A'. You'll know

this as the verse melody comes in at this point in the second ukulele part (in fact there is a 'pick up' at the end of bar 8). At this point, you will need to move to full chords as shown in the notation. Try to ensure these are crisp and your fingering is secure, again watching out for the rests in between the two strums. The second strum is on an upbeat (2&), so be careful that this isn't too loud.

We then see the chord part continuing through to section 'B' (Chorus), but notice there is now an extra strum on beat 4 of every bar until the D chord at bar 30. Lastly, we return to playing single notes to finish the song – the first part of the riff played three times before finishing on a final G note in bar 34. Make sure you feel confident moving from the full chordal strums back to the single notes, and remember that at all times you are playing an accompaniment, so your tone should be strong and clear but not overpowering the melody at any point.



Stand By Me

Duet

Candidate Part (Assessed)

Ben E. King

$\text{♩} = 118$ Soul

G

See note on welcome page about assessed and non-assessed ukulele parts

Em C

[3]

D G

[6]

A G Em

[9]

C D

[12]

G

[15]

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UKULELE GRADE 2 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	1 min 10 secs–1 min 45 secs
Tempo	60-170 bpm
Time Signatures	4/4 (straight or swung), 3/4, 2/4, 6/8, 12/8
Rhythmic Values	As shown in previous grades <i>plus</i> 16th notes and rests, dotted 8th notes, syncopations, some 16th note syncopation, non-complex triplet groupings
Dynamics	Simple dynamics [P, F, MP, MF], crescendo (<) and diminuendo (>)
Articulation	Simple/sparse, with infrequent variation
Melodic Features	Melodies will be predominantly diatonic but chromatic notes may occur
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chord types might extend to 7ths, and tonality will be predominantly diatonic, but there may be occasional non-diatonic chords
Physical Techniques	<p>Chords may feature partial barre shapes, or very occasional full barre shapes</p> <p>Melodic passages may move at a faster rate between strings. String skipping may feature more frequently</p> <p>Melodic work might be harmonised with occasional 6ths or thirds</p> <p>There may be more frequent transitions between melodic and chordal passages</p> <p>Basic muting techniques may be required in either hand, and simple legato techniques may appear (hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides)</p>

'Ziggy Stardust' | David Bowie



Album: *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars*
Label: RCA
Genre: Glam Rock

Chart Peak: 76 (UK) (Live Version)
Written By: David Bowie
Produced By: David Bowie, Ken Scott

Background Info



'Ziggy Stardust' was written by David Bowie for his 1972 album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. The song features Bowie's alter ego Ziggy Stardust, a rock star acting as a messenger for extraterrestrial beings.

The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars (often shortened to *Ziggy Stardust*) is a concept album telling the story of a fictional rock'n'roll star named Ziggy Stardust, and was Bowie's fifth studio outing. Bowie created Ziggy Stardust while in New York City promoting his previous record, *Hunky Dory*. He then performed as the eponymous protagonist at various venues across the United Kingdom, Japan and North America from January 1972 to July 1973.

There isn't another artist in rock 'n' roll history that has changed their public persona with as much variety and success as David Bowie. He started in the mid 60s as a British folksinger before shifting course, becoming a psych-pop rocker with a penchant for space aliens. By the early 70s he had made another change, this time taking on a character who looked and acted a lot like David

Bowie, but was actually a narcissistic rock star from outer space named Ziggy Stardust. Ziggy became the centre of the glam-rock movement and Bowie's greatest creation. Hailed as a seminal work, it received critical acclaim and has been consistently considered one of the greatest albums ever recorded.

He tried on other roles over the years, including American soul man and European electronic-music pioneer, while shaping the careers of Mott the Hoople, Iggy Pop and Lou Reed. He had the biggest-selling album of his career in 1983 with *Let's Dance* as a new wave pop star. In 2013, after a 10-year break, he made a triumphant return with *The Next Day*.

During his lifetime, his album sales, estimated at 100 million worldwide, made him one of the world's best-selling music artists. Since his debut, he has been awarded ten platinum albums in the UK alone and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996. Sadly, David Bowie passed away in January 2016, but he will be remembered as one of the greatest artists of his generation.

Performance Notes



The introduction of this arrangement begins with the main riff. This may take a little time to master, so be patient and practice the riff slowly, aiming for accuracy and consistency before raising the tempo. Aim for accuracy and consistency first. Be careful not to press down too hard on the strings as this may affect the intonation on your ukulele.

Section A introduces long chords to help support the melody. Be careful of the dynamic shift between the powerful introduction and the verse. Listen to the audio to help guide you.

Moving into the chorus (B section), you will play

a 16th-note figure in unison with the bass. Focus on correct note lengths, using left and right hand muting to stop any notes lasting longer than they should and any unwanted strings ringing out. The 16th notes within this section will also be a good opportunity to alternate strumming patterns.

The song finishes with a reprise of the main riff for four bars, before ending on a whole-note G chord. Make sure you are comfortable with the transitions between all sections.

Take your time and use the audio as well as the notation to help guide you through the piece.



Ziggy Stardust

Session Style

David Bowie

♩=75 Glam Rock

Chords: G, D Dsus⁴ D Dsus⁴ D, C⁵, G, Am

T 3 2 0
A 2 2 0
B 0 2 2

Chords: G, D Dsus⁴ D Dsus⁴ D, C⁵, G, Am

T 3 2 0
A 2 2 0
B 0 2 2

Chords: G, Bm

Zig - gy played gui - tar, jam - ming good with Weird and

T 2 2 0
A 3 3 0
B 2 2 0

Chords: C, D

Gil - ly, the spi - ders from Mars. He played it left hand

T 3 0 0
A 0 0 0
B 0 0 0

Words and Music by David Bowie

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UKULELE GRADE 3 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	1 min 30 secs –2 mins
Tempo	60-180 bpm
Time Signatures	4/4 (straight or swung), 3/4, 2/4, 6/8, 12/8
Rhythmic Values	As shown in previous grades <i>plus</i> quarter note triplets and 16th note syncopation. There may be some variation in triplet groupings. Simpler rhythms appear in conjunction with other elements (e.g. more detailed harmonic work)
Dynamics	Simple dynamics [P, F, MP, MF], crescendo (<) and diminuendo (>), <i>sFz</i>
Articulation	Staccato, tenuto and/or accents may occur with some variation
Melodic Features	Melodies will be predominantly diatonic but chromatic notes may occur
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chord types might extend to 7ths, and tonality will be predominantly diatonic, but there may be occasional closely related non-diatonic chords
Physical Techniques	<p>Melodic passages might incorporate basic string skipping and position shifts</p> <p>Full barre shapes may be required in chordal work</p> <p>Harmonic rate of change is moderate but might include some more challenging sequences</p> <p>Rhythmic groupings may differ more frequently</p> <p>Muting and legato techniques might be more frequent</p> <p>Simple expressive/physical techniques such as spread chords may feature</p>
Solo/Development	Open, solo or development sections are not obligatory, but if included should not exceed 8 bars' length as a guide.

'Perfect' | Ed Sheeran



Album: ÷
Released: 2017
Label: Asylum/Atlantic
Genre: Pop

Written By: Ed Sheeran
Produced By: Ed Sheeran, Will Hicks
Chart Peak: 1 (UK)

Background Info



'Perfect' was the fourth single to be released from Ed Sheeran's chart-topping album ÷ (*Divide*). The track was well-received globally, topping the charts in both the UK and the US as well as an impressive sixteen other countries worldwide. 'Perfect' gave Sheeran his second UK number one single from the album, with 'Shape of You' already having topped the charts on its release. The first and third single releases, 'Castle on the Hill' and 'Galway Girl', followed closely behind and peaked at number two. 'Perfect' achieved incredible sales globally and was certified 4 x Platinum in the UK and 8 x Platinum in the US.

Despite its later release, 'Perfect' was actually the first song to be written and destined for Sheeran's third studio album ÷ (*Divide*). Inspired by and written for his girlfriend Cherry Seaborn, Sheeran was determined to create the greatest love song he'd ever write and to show his listeners his true sincerity. Feeling that his previous release, 'Thinking Out Loud', had come to define him, he wanted to create something even more heartfelt and emotional. Having successfully written the song, Sheeran set out to produce it with the help of Will Hicks

(Grammy-nominated British producer) and instrumental assistance from his brother Matthew Sheeran. Until now the brothers had never collaborated together, but with their Grandmother being elderly they decided to fulfil her final wish which was to see them work together. In light of this, Matthew provided the strings orchestration for the recording of 'Perfect'.

The release of ÷ (*Divide*) saw Sheeran break Frankie Laine's 1953 record as he occupied all of the top five positions in the UK Singles chart and placed nine songs in the top ten. With an unbelievable reception worldwide, the singer-songwriter's album achieved certified status in a staggering 22 countries across the globe. With over three million sales in the UK he saw his album certified 11 x Platinum in his home country and with four million US sales he received 4 x Platinum status in America.

To date, Sheeran has sold more than 150 million records worldwide, making him one of the best-selling artists of all time. His second album, 'x', features on the list of the 100 best-selling UK albums in chart history, coming in at number 20.

Performance Notes



This slow pop ballad is written in the time signature of $\frac{4}{8}$ which means there are four beats in each bar but each beat is then divided into three rather than two. This triple division of notes is called compound time. It results in a steady four beat pulse with a gentle swaying feel. You play the accompaniment at the start and it is important to establish the feel and the mood in these opening bars.

You will be playing the melody for the verse and bridge, so take care with the balance of the melody and the accompaniment. You will need to be heard over the accompaniment whilst maintaining the gentle laid-back feel of the song. Make sure your phrases are of a similar feel to the original vocal line by thinking of your melody

as musical sentences. A singer would need to breathe between phrases which naturally breaks up the melody. Notice that some notes are held at the end of phrases whereas others are cut short to provide space.

You can use your own choice of chord voicing and rhythm in chorus, marked by the accompaniment development section (bars 21 to 28). Try experimenting with strummed chords and arpeggios until you find the right feel to match the melody. The dynamics gradually increase through the song with the chorus section being marked as *f* (*forte*) however, you need to take care to compliment the second ukulele with your accompanying part. It must not be so loud or full that you overpower it.



Candidate Part (Assessed)

Ed Sheeran

♩ = 63 Pop

Intro

G

mp

Em

C

D

Verse

G

Em

C

D

G

Em

C

D

[11]

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UKULELE GRADE 4 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	1 min 45 secs–2 min 15 secs
Tempo	60-180 bpm
Time Signatures	6/4, 4/4 (straight or swung), 3/4, 2/4, 6/8, 12/8. Time signature changes may occur
Rhythmic Values	As shown in previous grades. Simpler rhythms may appear in conjunction with other elements (e.g. more detailed harmonic work). There may be some variation in permutations of rhythmic groupings
Dynamics	[PP, MP, P, MF, F, FF], crescendo (<) and diminuendo (>)
Articulation & Phrasing	Moderate variation in articulation and phrasing. Moderate frequency of hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides, with some repetition or extension
Melodic Features	Intervallic transitions over an octave may occur, and some non-diatonic notes might occur
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chords might occasionally extend beyond 7ths, and tonality may be diatonic or based in a modal key centre. Some non-diatonic chords might occur
Physical Techniques	<p>Melodic passages can skip strings more frequently, and incorporate some position shifts</p> <p>Melodic work might be harmonised with thirds, sixths or octaves</p> <p>There may be some variation in muting and legato techniques, with moderate technical challenges</p> <p>Melody and accompaniment voicings may appear in one part</p> <p>There may be some variation in voicings and accompaniment styles within sections</p> <p>Expressive techniques such as spread chords may occur</p> <p>Campanella style melodies may occur</p> <p>Natural harmonics or special effects such as percussion may feature infrequently</p>
Solo/Development	Open solo or development sections are not obligatory, but if included should not exceed 16 bars' length as a guide

'Use Me' | Bill Withers



Album: *Still Bill*
Released: 1972
Label: Sussex Records
Genre: Soul/Funk

Written By: Bill Withers
Produced by: Benorce Blackmon, Bill Withers,
James Gadson, Melvin Dunlap,
Ray Jackson

Background Info



'Use Me' was a US hit for American soul singer, Bill Withers. Featuring on his second studio album, *Still Bill*, the track wasn't officially released in the UK as a single but performed well in the United States, peaking at number 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. In their list of the best songs of 1972, Billboard ranked 'Use Me' as number 78.

Withers wrote the song about an unhappy and unhealthy relationship that his friends thought he should walk away from. Although the character in the song understands he's not being treated fairly, he has no desire to end the relationship and continues to let the partner in question treat him badly. 'Use Me' became one of the first songs to tackle this subject, so some criticised the topic while others congratulated Withers on his straight-talking lyrics.

'Use Me' was Bill Withers' second biggest US hit and topped the Soul Chart for two weeks on its release. The singer and songwriter performed the song live on *Soul Train* (one of the first television programmes to be dedicated to R&B and Soul music) in the November of 1972.

Bill Withers was born William Harrison Withers Jr. in 1938 in a small coal-mining town in West Virginia. Withers had a stutter and found it hard to fit in until he joined the United States Navy when he was 18. In the Navy he learned to overcome his speech impediment and soon became interested in songwriting. He wrote his first song 'Ain't No Sunshine' whilst working for the Douglas Aircraft Corporation factory line and on its success he refused to resign as he didn't trust the music industry.

In 1970 the songwriter's demo was picked up by Sussex Records who signed him to a record deal. Soon, Withers was assigned the talented Booker T. Jones to be his producer for his first album *Just as I Am*. Withers was only allowed twelve hours to record the entire album, which was reduced to only nine hours following funding issues.

During a short break from touring, Withers wrote his second album *Still Bill*, which included the smash hit 'Lean on Me'. The song saw Withers get his first UK chart hit as it peaked at number 18 in 1972. With sales of more than three million copies, 'Lean on Me' became Withers' second Gold Record (after 'Ain't No Sunshine') and 'Use Me' became his third Gold Record later that same year.

Performance Notes



The rhythmic sections should be played with a steady 16th-note strumming technique. Fretting hand muting skills will be very important to create the right style and feel. The repetitive pattern in the verse will give you plenty of opportunity to practise this technique, but be careful with the subtle change to the rhythm in every third bar.

The ukulele solo section contains melodic lines based around E minor, but the Cs are all raised by a semitone (C#). This comes from the underlying A⁷ chords and creates a minor but funky sound, referred to as E dorian mode. This is essentially a natural minor scale with a raised 6th, and you will look at this mode in more detail

at higher grades in the syllabus. There are a number of staccato notes within the phrases and you might choose to cut these notes short by muting with either of your strumming or fretting hand.

Be sure to observe the slurs and grace notes which create more subtle interest within the melody, and think carefully about your choice of position and fingering of your fretting hand.

Economical use of fingering and hand position will make the solo much more comfortable to play and you will perform with more fluency.



Use Me

Session Style

Bill Withers

♩=77 Soul

Intro

Em⁷

A⁷

Ukulele tablature for the Intro section. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 77 BPM, and the style is Soul. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody line with a forte (f) dynamic. The second staff shows the ukulele chords and fingerings: T (2, 3, 2), A (3, 3, 3), and B (4, 4, 4). The chords are Em⁷ and A⁷.

Em⁷

A⁷

My friends

Ukulele tablature for the first line of the verse. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 77 BPM, and the style is Soul. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody line with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second staff shows the ukulele chords and fingerings: T (2, 3, 2), A (3, 3, 3), and B (4, 4, 4). The chords are Em⁷ and A⁷. The lyrics "My friends" are written below the melody.

Verse

A

Em⁷

A⁷

feel it's their app - oin - ted du -

Ukulele tablature for the second line of the verse. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 77 BPM, and the style is Soul. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody line with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second staff shows the ukulele chords and fingerings: T (2, 3, 2), A (3, 3, 3), and B (4, 4, 4). The chords are Em⁷ and A⁷. The lyrics "feel it's their app - oin - ted du -" are written below the melody.

Em⁷

A⁷

ty, _____

They keep try - ing to tell _____

Ukulele tablature for the third line of the verse. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 77 BPM, and the style is Soul. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody line with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second staff shows the ukulele chords and fingerings: T (2, 3, 2), A (3, 3, 3), and B (4, 4, 4). The chords are Em⁷ and A⁷. The lyrics "ty, _____" and "They keep try - ing to tell _____" are written below the melody.

me _____

all you want to do is use

Ukulele tablature for the fourth line of the verse. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 77 BPM, and the style is Soul. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody line with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second staff shows the ukulele chords and fingerings: T (2, 3, 2), A (3, 3, 3), and B (4, 4, 4). The chords are Em⁷ and A⁷. The lyrics "me _____" and "all you want to do is use" are written below the melody.

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UKULELE SAMPLE PACK



UKULELE GRADE 5 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	2 mins–2 mins 45 secs
Tempo	60-160 bpm
Time Signatures	6/4, 4/4 (straight or swung), 3/4, 2/4, 6/8, 12/8. There may be occasional time signature changes
Rhythmic Values	As previous grades plus occasional 32nd notes and 16 th note triplet groupings. Simpler rhythms appear in conjunction with other elements (e.g. more detailed harmonic work). There may be some variation in permutations of rhythmic groupings
Dynamics	[PP, MP, P, MF, F, FF], crescendo (<) and diminuendo (>)
Articulation & Phrasing	Moderate variation in articulation and phrasing. Moderate frequency of hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides, with some repetition or extension
Melodic Features	Intervallic transitions over an octave may be regular, and melodies may feature non-diatonic notes at regular points
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chords types might extend to 9ths, and include occasional alterations or non-diatonic chord tones
Physical Techniques	<p>Melodic passages might incorporate moderate string skipping and position shifts</p> <p>Melodic work might be harmonised with thirds, sixths or octaves</p> <p>Melody and accompaniment voicings may appear in one part</p> <p>There may be some variation in muting and legato techniques, with moderate technical challenges</p> <p>There may be some variation in voicings and accompaniment styles within sections</p> <p>Expressive techniques such as spread chords may occur</p> <p><i>Campanella</i> style melodies may occur</p> <p>Natural harmonics may feature</p>
Solo/Development	Open solo or development sections are not obligatory, but if included should not exceed 16 bars' length as a guide

'Hallelujah' | Jeff Buckley



Album: *Grace*
Released: 2007
Label: Columbia
Genre: Folk Rock

Written By: Leonard Cohen
Produced by: Jeff Buckley / Andy Wallace
Chart Peak: 2 (UK)

Background Info



This song was written and originally released by Canadian singer songwriter Leonard Cohen. Featuring on his 1984 album *Various Positions*, the track initially found little success and peaked at number 59 on the US Billboard singles chart. Instead, it was with Jeff Buckley's 1994 version that the song received the critical acclaim it deserved. Certainly a songwriter's masterpiece, Cohen delivered a powerful lyric and melody. However, it was Buckley's haunting vocal and arrangement that saw the song peak at number 2 in the UK Singles Chart.

Jeff Buckley's version of the track featured on his album *Grace* (1994). Since its release, Buckley's version has been held as one of the greatest interpretations of all time and is regarded highly by artists to this day. John Legend called it "...one of the most beautiful pieces of recorded music I've ever heard."

In 2004, Rolling Stone magazine ranked Buckley's rendition at number 259 in their 'The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time' list, long before its single release. In 2007, Buckley's 'Hallelujah' was named 'The Greatest Song of All Time' by The International Observer. It seemed that at last the mastery of the song was receiving the acclaim it deserved.

Jeff Buckley's album *Grace* was released in 1994 and initially achieved poor sales, peaking at number 149 in the US Billboard Album Chart. However, by 2007 the album was a worldwide success and had sales of over 2 million copies globally. *Grace* has been cited by critics and listeners as one of the greatest albums of all time. Sadly, Jeff Buckley never lived to see the success of his work and will never know the impression his adaption of Hallelujah had on its listeners.

Performance Notes



This piece is written in the compound time signature of $\frac{6}{8}$ which gives the music a gentle sway. Make sure you establish the two beat feel at the start with a slight accent on the 1st and 4th eighth-notes of the arpeggio.

You will need to use a combination of fingerpicking and strumming in this piece, however, the introduction suits a fingerpicking style of assigning p, i, m, a each string. Take care during the strummed sections to keep the melody clear and avoid striking any unwanted strings.

The melody is mainly played on the 4th string, and it will sound nice for this to be slightly louder than the accompaniment so it can be heard as a smooth melodic line rather than part of the chords.

There is a direction to play '*ponticello*' during the bridge section at bar 13, so move your picking hand nearer to the bridge of the ukulele to get a brighter, harder sound. Here, the chord voicings ascend in pitch.

Use the dynamics to help this section build but notice that the *diminuendo* in bar 19 leads to a more gentle feel in the chorus. Make sure the accompanying notes in the chorus do not drown out the melody. Notice the '*natural*' direction at the end of the chorus which instructs you to move your picking hand back over the sound hole.

The melody in the second chorus is played with harmonics, so take care to ensure these are precise and project clearly.

The link (bar 61-68) contains some interest via a different chord sequence, inspired by Buckley's performance. Be careful with fingering here as the string sequence will change slightly depending on the chord / melodic passage.

The final chorus brings us back to a similar feel as the intro. Note the 'rall' (*rallentando*) at bar 77, where there is a gradual slow down towards the last chord at bar 79.



Hallelujah

Solo

Jeff Buckley

♩ = 60 Folk Rock

First system of music notation for the Intro, featuring a treble clef, 8/6 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is in C major, with chords C and Am. The bass line is in C major, with chords C and Am. The tempo is marked as 60 beats per minute, and the style is Folk Rock. The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano).

Verse

Second system of music notation for the Verse, featuring a treble clef, 8/6 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is in C major, with chords C and Am. The bass line is in C major, with chords C and Am. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Third system of music notation for the Verse, featuring a treble clef, 8/6 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is in C major, with chords F, Dm, Gmaj⁷, C, and G. The bass line is in C major, with chords F, Dm, Gmaj⁷, C, and G.

Bridge

Fourth system of music notation for the Bridge, featuring a treble clef, 8/6 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is in C major, with chords C, F, G, Am, and F. The bass line is in C major, with chords C, F, G, Am, and F. The dynamics are marked as *pont. [†] cresc.* (piano, crescendo).

† Pick close to the bridge until directed to return to normal picking (*nat.*)

Fifth system of music notation for the Bridge, featuring a treble clef, 8/6 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is in C major, with chords G, E⁷, and Am. The bass line is in C major, with chords G, E⁷, and Am. The dynamics are marked as *f* (forte).

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UKULELE GRADE 6 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	2 min 15 secs–3 mins
Tempo	50-200 bpm
Time Signatures	6/4, 4/4 (straight or swung), 3/4, 2/4, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8. There may be time signature changes, or occasional irregular time signatures such as 5/4, 5/8, 7/8 etc
Rhythmic Values	As previous grades. Permutations of rhythmic groupings may show some complexity
Dynamics	Any, with changes
Articulation & Phrasing	Regular variation of articulation, including some differentiation between voices in the same part
Melodic Features	Melodic content may be diatonic or based on modal scales, and there may be frequent chromaticism
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chords may occasionally extend beyond 9ths, and include occasional alterations or simple substitutions. Modal interchange and temporary modulations may occur
Physical Techniques	<p>Chordal work might involve rootless voicings, cluster voicings or extension notes</p> <p>There may be variety in voicings and accompaniment styles within sections</p> <p>Special expressive effects such as harmonics and body percussion may feature</p> <p>A range of legato and non-legato techniques may feature, presenting some advanced challenges</p> <p><i>Campanella</i> style and <i>rasgueado</i> techniques may feature</p>
Solo/Development	Open solo or development sections are not obligatory, but if included should not exceed 16 bars' length as a guide

'Eleanor Rigby' | The Beatles



Album: *Revolver* (1966)
Label: Parlophone, Capitol
Genre: Baroque Pop

Chart Peak: 1 (UK)
Written By: John Lennon / Paul McCartney
Produced By: George Martin

Background Info



'Eleanor Rigby' features on The Beatles' seventh studio album, *Revolver*, and was released simultaneously on both the album and A-side single, along with 'Yellow Submarine', on the 5th August 1966. The A-side gave The Beatles their 11th UK number 1, also topping the charts in New Zealand and Canada and peaking at number 11 in the US.

Paul McCartney was experimenting with his piano at home when he came up with the idea of a piece revolving around a character who he had originally named 'Daisy Hawkins'. On introducing the song to the rest of the band the original idea began to expand and the character of 'Eleanor Rigby' was born. Each member of the band played an important role in the creation of this fantastic song, but the songwriting was eventually credited to Lennon-McCartney.

'Eleanor Rigby' continued the band's journey into experimental studio music, moving away from their previous rock 'n' roll and pop-oriented singles of earlier years. When they presented the single to their producer George Martin, often referred to as the 'fifth Beatle', he completely understood in which direction McCartney wanted to take the piece and went on to compose a string accompaniment. This became the iconic backing for a classic Beatles record on which, unusually, none of the band members feature as performing instrumentalists.

Differing from many of their biggest hits, and those of other musicians of the time, 'Eleanor Rigby' moved away from the classic love song and told a much more sombre story. Focussing on the difficult topics of loneliness, depression and old age, The Beatles told a beautiful story backed by an almost "funeral like" accompaniment. Few artists had the courage to release a single focussing on what can be a very solemn topic, and so many of the listeners may have been shocked initially. However, the number 1 status proved that this was a universal topic, and Lennon-McCartney's stunning approach was not lost on their audience. The song has been said to have launched a popular theme in future releases, including 'See Emily Play' by Pink Floyd and 'Pictures of Lily' by The Who, where a fictitious female character becomes the sole focus of an entire piece of music.

It is undeniable that 'Eleanor Rigby' has influenced artists throughout the years, with notable cover versions including releases by global superstars Ray Charles, Joan Baez and Aretha Franklin. It would be difficult to put into words how important The Beatles were to popular music as we know it. To this day, global superstars continue to cite them as a huge influence on their work, including Coldplay, Lady Gaga, Noel Gallagher and countless more.

Performance Notes



This arrangement uses the exact form and key of the Beatles' original version. It is an unconventional pop song because the accompaniment is a string arrangement by George Martin with no use at all of the standard rock and roll instruments.

A key feature of this arrangement is the use of *campanella* technique. '*Campanella*' means little bell in Italian and the idea is to allow your notes to ring over each other.

It is important to think about your fingering to allow notes to sustain. It is often possible to let notes

ring for the rest of the phrase. This arrangement can be successfully performed with 'p-i-m-a' fingerstyle technique, or with a pick.

It is important to observe the dynamics throughout, as they enhance the form of the song. The chords in bars 19-21 need to be treated carefully to maintain a good balance with the melodic line. The open strings in the chords should also ring on for as long as is practically possible in the *campanella* style so care must be taken not to damp these strings as you fret the notes for the next part of the melody.



Eleanor Rigby

Solo

The Beatles

♩=138 Baroque Pop

First system of musical notation for Eleanor Rigby, featuring a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and 4/4 time signature. The melody is marked *f* (forte). The guitar tablature below shows fret numbers: 0, 2, 0, 2, 4, 4.

Second system of musical notation, including a repeat sign and a section marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The guitar tablature shows fret numbers: 0, 3, 5, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0, 2, 5, 2, 0, 4.

Third system of musical notation, continuing the melody. The guitar tablature shows fret numbers: 5, 2, 5, 4, 7, 2, 5, 0, 3, 0, 6, 4, 2.

Fourth system of musical notation, continuing the melody. The guitar tablature shows fret numbers: 0, 7, 7, 5, 2, 0, 0, 4, 5, 2, 5, 4, 7, 6.

Fifth system of musical notation, ending with a double bar line and the instruction "To Coda". The guitar tablature shows fret numbers: 2, 5, 0, 3, 4, 2, 0, 7, 5, 7.

Sixth system of musical notation, featuring a key signature change to one flat (Bb) and a final key signature change to one sharp (F#). The guitar tablature shows fret numbers: 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 7, 0, 0, 4, 0.

Ukulele Grade 6
8

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UKULELE SAMPLE PACK



UKULELE GRADE 7 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	2 mins 30 secs–3 mins 30 secs
Tempo	50-200 bpm
Time Signatures	Any, with changes
Rhythmic Values	Any, up to 32nd notes. Complex combinations beyond 16th note triplets will not be frequent, but variations may occur regularly. Simpler rhythms will appear in conjunction with other elements (e.g. more detailed harmonic work, faster tempos or more complex time signatures). Tuplet figures will show more complexity
Dynamics	Any, with changes, and including strong contrasts
Articulation & Phrasing	Regular variation of articulation, including some differentiation between voices in the same part. Subtlety of control between legato and staccato will be required and there may be different articulations occurring simultaneously
Melodic Features	Melodic content may be diatonic or based on modal scales, and there may be frequent chromaticism
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chord voicings may regularly extend beyond 9ths, and include alterations/substitutions. Modal interchange may occur. Temporary modulations may occur more frequently
Physical Techniques	<p>Voicings and accompaniment styles within sections will show depth and variety of technique</p> <p>Alternate tunings may be required</p> <p>Special expressive effects such as harmonics and body percussion may feature</p> <p>A range of legato and non-legato techniques may feature, presenting some advanced challenges</p> <p>A range of expressive techniques may feature, presenting some advanced challenges</p> <p><i>Campanella</i> style and <i>rasgueado</i> techniques may feature</p>
Solo/Development	Open solo or development sections are not obligatory, but if included should not exceed 16 bars' length as a guide

'If I Ain't Got You' | Alicia Keys



Album: *The Diary Of Alicia Keys*

Label: J

Genre: Soul / R&B

Written By: Alicia Keys

Produced By: Alicia Keys

Chart Peak: 18 (UK)

Background Info



'If I Ain't Got You' was released as the second single from Alicia Key's second studio album *The Diary Of Alicia Keys*. The song was inspired by the death of singer and actress Aaliyah, and the September 11 2001 attacks in New York City, as well as events in Alicia Key's life that made her ponder over the relevance of material things.

'If I Ain't Got You' reached no. 4 in the Billboard Hot 100 charts and topped the R&B Charts. The song won a Grammy Award for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance. The video for the song featured rapper and actor Method Man as Alicia Key's on-screen boyfriend.

'If I Ain't Got You' was recorded at Kampo Studios in New York City and features Steve Jordan on drums and Hugh McCracken on guitar. Alicia Keys showed a promising talent at a young age. From the age of 7 she

studied classical piano and at 12 years old she enrolled in the Professional Performing Arts School in Manhattan, graduating at 16 as a valedictorian. Her piano playing and vocal delivery are testament to her considerable talent and her recognisable style blends her classical roots with the urban sounds of her youth into a singular mix of contemporary R&B and gospel.

Alicia Keys has released six studio albums to date and embarked on seven successful world tours. Her album sales are over 35 million worldwide and her single sales are in the region of 30 million. She has won 15 Grammy Awards. Alicia Keys is involved in a great deal of philanthropic activity and is vocal critic of the objectification of women in the music and entertainment industries. In 2017 she received Amnesty International's Ambassador Of Conscience Award.

Performance Notes



This arrangement draws upon various elements in the original recording, from the piano arpeggios in the introduction to Alicia Key's vocal phrasing and melodic lines.

A hybrid picking or fingerstyle approach might facilitate the greatest control throughout. The 'expressively' indication in bar 1 implies that the opening arpeggios should be fluid, with gentle rises and falls in the dynamics. It is important not to overdo this, and to ensure that the picking hand is stable throughout.

The principal challenge in section A will be executing the intricate melodic rhythms whilst placing the accompanying notes and chords accurately. It is also important to balance the projection; one approach might be to study the melody (notes with tails up) first, taking heed of the harmonic progression before then looking at the second voice (tails down).

We see further development of melody and accompaniment ideas through section B (block chords

ascending and descending diatonically) plus some further rhythmic challenges, such as the 16th note triplets (bar 17) versus the 32nd notes flourishes in bar 20. Careful study of the audio performance will help in learning these nuances. The melody is powerfully embellished in the second verse (section D) and you can experiment with the degree of swing in the 16th note rhythms (too swung would sound very 'stiff').

In section E there is an opportunity to improvise a solo based on the chord voicings shown. There is plenty of room for interpretation here and you can experiment with different approaches, such as sounding each chord with interspersed melodic solo ideas or playing a chord-based melody throughout.

Section F presents us with some re-harmonisation approaches bringing exciting life to the melody for the last chorus. These might be new concepts, so take time to prepare the new chords carefully.



If I Ain't Got You

Solo

Alicia Keys

♩ = 120 Soul/R&B

Cmaj⁷ **Bm⁷**

mp expressively

Am⁷ **Gmaj⁷** **Gmaj⁷** **Am⁷** **Bm⁷**

Cmaj⁷ **Bm⁷**

Am⁷ **Gmaj⁷** **A^bmaj⁷**

A **Gmaj⁷** **Em⁷** **Am⁷**

D⁷ **Gmaj⁷** **G[#]dim⁷**

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[3] [5] [7] [9] [12]

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UKULELE GRADE 8 MUSICAL SKILLS AND FEATURES

Duration	2 mins 30 secs – 3 mins 45 secs
Key	Any, with changes
Tempo	50-200 bpm
Time Signatures	Any, with changes
Rhythmic Values	Any. Complex combinations beyond 16th note triplets may be frequent and variations may occur regularly. Simpler rhythms will appear in conjunction with other elements (e.g. more detailed harmonic work, faster tempos or more complex time signatures). Triplet rhythms may be complex
Dynamics	Any, with changes, and including strong contrasts
Articulation & Phrasing	Regular variation of articulation, including differentiation between voices in the same part. Subtlety of control between legato and staccato will be required and there may be different articulations occurring simultaneously
Melodic Features	Melodic content may be diatonic or based on modal scales, and there may be frequent chromaticism or challenging intervals
Harmonic Features & Tonality	Chord voicings may regularly extend beyond 9ths. Chordal voicings may be more advanced, denser and/or more frequent, differ regularly, and include alterations. Modal interchange may occur. Temporary modulations may occur frequently
Physical Techniques	Voicings and accompaniment styles within sections will show depth and variety of technique Alternate tunings may be required Special expressive effects such as harmonics and body percussion may feature A range of legato and non-legato techniques may feature, presenting some advanced challenges A range of expressive techniques may feature, presenting some advanced challenges <i>Campanella</i> style and <i>rasgueado</i> techniques may feature
Solo/Development	Open solo or development sections are not obligatory, but if included should not exceed 16 bars' length as a guide

'Bohemian Rhapsody' | Queen



Album: *A Night at the Opera* (1975)
Label: EMI Parlophone
Genre: Rock

Written by: Freddie Mercury
Produced by: Roy Thomas Baker, Queen
Chart peak: 1 (UK: 1975 and 1991)

Background Info



Queen's record company told the band that because of its length (5:55) and non-traditional structure, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' was unlikely to get airplay. Despite the record company pleading with them, Queen refused to cut any sections and the song went on to become a huge success.

At the time of recording, it was the most expensive single ever made and topped the UK charts for 9 weeks, becoming one of the best selling singles of all time. After lead singer Freddie Mercury's death in 1991, the single reached the top of the charts once more.

Brian May has said that whilst the song was largely crafted in the studio, Freddie had the song fully formed in his mind and intended for it to be a mini-mock-opera. Even the production process was complex. The 180 vocal tracks that were overdubbed for the operatic section pushed the limits of the 24-track tape machine in the studio. Each track had to be layered with others then 'bounced down' into sub-mixes to fit onto each track.

In October 2018 Twentieth Century Fox released a blockbuster telling the story of legendary rock star Freddie Mercury, subsequently named 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. It tells of the star's rise to fame, including the dispute with the band's then record label over whether or not the song should be released as a single. The film pays homage to Mercury's genius, with several scenes depicting the unique techniques used to record the worldwide hit that is 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

Formed in London in 1970, Queen consisted of Freddie Mercury (lead vocals), Brian May (guitar/vocals), John Deacon (bass) and Roger Taylor (drums/vocals). The band quickly became known for their unique identity and style, often merging classic rock with the likes of disco, opera, pop and many other unlikely genres.

He left behind a legacy that included 14 studio albums which all made it into the top ten on the UK album chart. Queen's total album sales are estimated at 170–200 million, placing them on the list of best selling artists of all time.

Performance Notes



This arrangement is based on Jake Shimabukuro's popular rendition, with adaptations where required for the grade level. As a general approach to this piece, much is left open to the performer so as to offer full opportunities for stylistic approaches. This is also to encourage preparation by listening to other recordings, notably Jake Shimabukuro's own performance and the original record by Queen.

A guide tempo of 80 bpm is given in section A, but with an indication to play *freely*. You can exploit full rhythmic tension and release between each phrase before settling into a new guide tempo of around 75bpm at section B but with a steady pulse. Dynamics are left completely open to interpretation, as are expressive techniques so use the reference recordings to steer your artistic choices. Some spread chords in section A will work well.

It is crucial to ensure that the melody is clear above any accompanying notes throughout, and you can mimick the studio trickery of the Queen version playing with dynamic tricks (such as 'echoes' through the "*mamma mia*" call and responses in bars 64 and 65). Similarly, contrast in articulations should be fully exploited throughout.

The interchanging of odd, compound and simple time signatures of differing lengths will make more sense if you don't over-analyse them and simply look at the overarching musical ideas (see bar 67, where the "*magnifico*" extends through an over-ringing arpeggio across $\frac{7}{8}$ taking us straight back to $\frac{4}{4}$).

Lastly, for emphasis you might wish to experiment with *rasgueado* flourishes to embellish chords on occasion. This might be best placed in sections where maximum impact is needed, such as bars 89–93 and 97.



Queen

B ♩ = 75

With a steady pulse

NH

NH

NH

[16]

∞ Ukulele Grade 8

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