An Introduction to the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition*: Part III  
**DR. THOMAS GREEN, CHIEF EXAMINER, PRACTICAL SUBJECTS**

The *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition* is a fascinating compendium of pedagogically valuable material. One new feature is the inclusion of grade-by-grade lists of studies / etudes. As in the recent past, studies are printed in a series of graded study albums published by The Frederick Harris Music Co., Limited, but for the first time they are actually listed in the *Syllabus*.  

Continued on page 2

**UPDATE! SYLLABI CROSSOVER**

Teachers and candidates should note the following amendment to the *Piano Syllabus* crossover period of September 2008 to August 2009:

- During the crossover year candidates preparing technical tests and studies / etudes from the *Piano Syllabus, 2001 Edition* for their examination will be permitted to play repertoire from the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition*.


This reflects a change in policy, resulting from the enthusiasm displayed by candidates and teachers wishing to explore the new piano series *Celebration Series Perspectives®*.

**Piano Crossover**

- Starting September 1, 2009, only the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition* can be used for examinations.

**Cello Crossover**

- Starting September 1, 2008, only the *Cello Syllabus, 2007 Edition* can be used for examinations.
Traditional etudes presenting specific technical challenges are listed alongside more imaginative, often contemporary, pieces that can be used for technical development. Close to 80 of the 143 studies / etudes listed from Grade 1 through Grade 10 are new to the Celebration Series®. This article will provide an overview of some of the highlights.

**Grades 1 and 2**
In Grades 1 and 2, many of the studies are newly selected character pieces. New Grade 1 studies include Stephen Chatman’s “Scaly Things,” Anne Crosby’s “Celebration,” Christine Donkin’s “Soaring” and “Time Travel,” Pierre Gallant’s “Paper Tiger,” Jon George’s “Relay Race,” and Christopher Norton’s “Space Fleet” and “Two-Handed Blues.” New selections for Grade 2 include Christine Donkin’s “Crazy Comics,” Pierre Gallant’s “Little Lopsided Waltz,” Linda Niamath’s “Baseball Practice” and “Celebration,” and Christopher Norton’s “Asteroids.” Nancy Telfer’s “Crocodile Teeth,” formerly a Grade 2 List B Piece, is now a Grade 2 study. Although Grade 1 and Grade 2 examinations require only one study (worth 12 marks beginning in January 2009), teachers will no doubt enjoy introducing their students to several of the imaginative studies listed.

**Grades 3 to 6**
From Grade 3 to Grade 10, students are expected to perform two studies (worth 6 marks each beginning in January 2009) at the examination. New Grade 3 studies include traditional etudes by Czerny, Gurlitt and Schytte as well as a variety of character pieces. Among them are “Marionettes” by Mel Bonis, “Computer Chatter” and “Witches and Wizards” by Christine Donkin, “All Aboard!” by Linda Niamath, and “The Milky Way” by Nancy Telfer. Walter Carroll’s “The Village Band,” formerly a Grade 2 List B piece, and Linda Niamath’s “Bike Ride,” formerly a Grade 4 List C piece, are now listed as Grade 3 studies.

The Grade 4 list likewise includes a healthy mix of current favourites and new selections. Burgmüller’s “The Wagtail,” Heller’s “The Avalanche,” and Christopher Norton’s “Blues No. 1” are listed alongside “La toupée / The Top” by Mel Bonis, “Hotshot” by Stephen Chatman, “Dragon Fly” by William Gillock, and “Bike Ride” by Dale Reubart. Linda Niamath’s “Masquerade,” formerly a Grade 4 List C piece, is now listed as a Grade 4 study. The Grade 5 list features several fine studies by Bertini, Czerny, Gedike, and Gurlitt. In addition, Burgmüller’s “Sweet Sorrow” and Maikapar’s “Staccato Prelude” are listed along with “The Little Trumpeter” by Robert Fuchs, “Skipping Rope” by Yelena Gnesina, “Chicken Talk” by Mike Schoenmehl, “In Church” by Tchaikovsky, and “Supernova” by Nancy Telfer. Students who enjoyed William Gillock’s “Dragon Fly” in Grade 4 might like to explore Anne Crosby’s “Dragonfly Scherzo,” and Eduard Rohde’s “Dance of the Dragonflies,” which are both listed as studies at the Grade 5 level.

Interesting additions to the lists of studies for Grade 6 include two of Giuseppe Concone’s Twenty-five Melodic Studies, op. 24, August Nölck’s “Good Humoured” and “The Broken Record” by Mike Schoenmehl. Two Grade 6 studies that were possibly inspired by similar outdoor scenes are Yelena Gnesina’s “Song of the Brook” and Lajos Papp’s “Pebbles in the Water.” Among currently listed studies that have been retained are Finney’s “Playing Ball,” Heller’s “Fluttering
Leaves,” Kabalevsky’s “Toccata,” Karganov’s “Game of Patience”, and Shostakovich’s “Dance.” Yoshinao Nakada’s “The Gear Wheels of a Watch,” formerly a Grade 6 List C piece, is now listed as a Grade 6 study.

**Grades 7 and 8**

The Grade 7 list includes three imaginative studies with related titles: Yelena Gnesina’s “Spinning Top,” Christopher Norton’s “Wound Up”, and André Previn’s “Mechanical Toy.” Other new selections include studies by Bertini and Swinstead as well as Hofmann’s “Elégie,” op. 77, no. 2, and Tcherepnin’s “Bagatelle,” op. 5, no. 9. Interesting additions to the Grade 8 list include two agility studies – Steven Chatman’s “Chromatic Etude” and André Previn’s “In Perpetual Motion” – and two studies in cantabile playing – Heinrich Hofmann’s “Lyric Song” and Alec Rowley’s “Lied.” These appear alongside Burgmüller’s “The Gypsies,” Loeschhorn’s “Song of the Waterfall,” Tarenghi’s “Dance of the Marionettes”, and other traditional favourites. As in Grades 5 and 6, the study lists for Grades 7 and 8 include attractive jazz and pop pieces by Mike Schoenmehl. The Grade 7 list includes “Cyclone,” while the Grade 8 list includes “Classical Pop Tune.”

**Grade 9 through ARCT**

The study lists for Grades 9 and 10 have not been extensively revised, but there are some interesting new titles. The Grade 9 list includes Kabalevsky’s “Who’ll Win the Argument?” and Hofmann’s “To the Lute.” Jacques Ibert’s “Las promenade en drâneau,” formerly a Grade 8 List D piece, is now a Grade 9 study. The Grade 10 list includes “La voix de l’instrument,” op. 70, no. 4, by the reclusive Romantic composer Charles-Valentin Alkan and Chopin’s Etude in A flat major, from the *Trois nouvelles études,* as well as Hofmann’s “By the Mountain Torrent,” op. 37, no. 2, Moszkowski’s “Zwiegesang,” op. 52, no. 3, and Takács’ “When the Frog Goes Wandering.”

New concert études at the ARCT level include Sophie Eckhardt-Gramatté’s *Étude de concert,* Nikolai Kapustin’s *Eight Concert Études,* op. 40 (any one), Calixa Lavallée’s *Le papillon,* and the first three of Karol Szymanowski’s *Four Études,* op. 4.

**Teacher’s Choice Option**

With the implementation of the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition,* students will be offered a wider range of substitution possibilities. These are outlined in chart form on page 131 of the *Syllabus.* As in the *Piano Syllabus, 2001 Edition,* students in Grade 3 through Grade 9 will be able to replace one study with a selection from the *Popular Selection List.* Beginning in January 2009, students from Grade 1 through Grade 9 will be able to replace a study with a “Teacher’s Choice” selection. (The “Teacher’s Choice” option has been available to students in the United States since 2004.) The piece chosen must be similar in length, difficulty, and musical quality to studies listed for the student’s grade. Although students in Grades 1 through 9 are still permitted only one substitution per examination, the “Teacher’s Choice” option will allow them to select from a wide variety of styles and even to perform one of their own compositions.

Dr. Thomas Green is Chief Examiner, Practical Subjects at RCM Examinations. He holds a Bachelor of Music from McGill University, a Master’s in Performance from the Université de Montréal, and a PhD in Music History from Brandeis University. Dr. Green has taught music history at McGill University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Windsor. For several years he served as Editor-in-Chief at The Frederick Harris Music Co., Limited. Currently he maintains a large class of piano students and teaches music history and harmony at the Académie Ste. Cécile and at his private studio in Windsor. For a more detailed biography, visit www.rcmexaminations.org under “College of Examiners.”

**Dr. Thomas Green** is Chief Examiner, Practical Subjects at RCM Examinations. He holds a Bachelor of Music from McGill University, a Master’s in Performance from the Université de Montréal, and a PhD in Music History from Brandeis University. Dr. Green has taught music history at McGill University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Windsor. For several years he served as Editor-in-Chief at The Frederick Harris Music Co., Limited. Currently he maintains a large class of piano students and teaches music history and harmony at the Académie Ste. Cécile and at his private studio in Windsor. For a more detailed biography, visit www.rcmexaminations.org under “College of Examiners.”
Reviewing Celebration Series Perspectives®:
Levels 7-10
BY DR. DALE WHEELER

Examining a revised series of music books for the first time is always exciting. What’s the same? What’s new? Has the look changed? What’s new? Has the look changed? Such was my anticipation upon receiving the courier package containing the final drafts of the Levels 7 to 10 Celebration Series Perspectives®.

We often bypass the contents of a volume and go straight to the scores. In this case, however, there are some important things to note. The subdivisions now clearly identify both the list (A, B, C, etc.) and the historical period (Baroque, Classical, etc.) The same is true in the new Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition. Hopefully this will alleviate the confusion that occasionally arose in Grade 7 examinations where students would prepare four, rather than three, pieces because of the manner in which the contents page of the repertoire book was structured.

Also worth noting is that with the studies / etudes up to and including Level 8, the particular technical element of each piece is listed under the title. The Takács Tocatina in Level 8, for example, is labeled “facility in black- and white-key combinations.”

A quick survey of the keys of the pieces shows a clear link to the keys listed in the technical requirements for each grade. In Grade 8, for example, E flat major is a required key. As a result, three repertoire selections and two studies are in this key.

There is a satisfying mixture of old and new repertoire. (You can view a list of the contents of each volume online at www.frederickharrismusic.com/covers/CS4contents.pdf). I compared the 1994 and 2001 volumes with the new edition. Some perennial favourites have remained through all three iterations. These would include repertoire pieces such as Chopin’s Prelude in E minor and Prelude in B minor, Bartók’s Pentatonic Tune, and de Falla’s Danse de nuencier, as well as studies such as Loechhorn’s Song of the Waterfall, the Bartók Bagatelle, op. 6/5, and Rachmaninoff’s Etude-tableau, op. 33/8.

Other favourites are back after an absence. To mention a few: Beethoven’s Six Easy Variations, Debussy’s Little Shepherd, and Glière’s Prelude in D flat. (This was my favourite piece when I did my Grade 8 examination many decades ago.)

A careful look at the pieces that have been carried over from the 2001 edition show that in many instances some thoughtful re-editing has occurred; they have not simply been transplanted. Bach’s Sinfonia No. 6 in E major, for example, has had fingerings both added and subtracted. One ornament has been re-fingered and some finger substitutions have been added. Mozart’s Fantasia in D minor has had some slight revisions to the suggested metronome speeds, and the recommended fingering in m. 19 corrects an error in the earlier edition.

Comparing the current volumes to the 2001 series, approximately half of the repertoire is repeated. So, while some will be comforted by the familiarity, others will be excited and challenged by the new material. From an examiner’s standpoint, I hope that many of you will have students prepare some of the new repertoire!

One readily apparent change is that there is a much wider range of composers represented on the A and B lists in Levels 7 and 8. Level 7 List A, for example, now includes Krebs, J. S. Bach, Fiocco, Telemann, C. P. E. Bach, and Kirnberger. Johann Krebs is a particularly welcome addition to List A in Levels 7, 8, and 9. He was a student of J. S. Bach and many musicologists compare him favourably to the older master. Jan Dussek, a significant Bohemian composer, is an important inclusion in the Level 8 Classical list.
It is always refreshing to encounter composers and works that are unfamiliar. A couple of examples that I found particularly intriguing:

Level 7 List B introduces us to Stephen Storace by way of a lovely Sonatina movement. Storace was an English composer who worked for a time in Vienna and became acquainted with Mozart. In fact, his sister sang the role of Susanna in the premiere of Le Nozze di Figaro.

The Level 10 Repertoire book includes The Rails by the early 20th-century Russian Modernist composer Victor Deshevov. It has a locomotive-like propulsion that builds to a dramatic conclusion.

A big winner in the “Unknown Composer” category is the Romantic composer Heinrich Hofmann. Throughout Levels 7 to 10 he is represented by seven pieces. The Level 9 Study, To the Lute, is a particularly attractive work and imitates the plucking and strumming of the instrument.

The Student Workbooks for Level 7 and 8 are a valuable adjunct, not only for the student but the teacher as well. Although they are considered to be supplementary, teachers really should make them compulsory for students since they add such an important dimension to the study of a work. Even more importantly, I feel they provide a pedagogical template for teachers who may be stuck in the rut of teaching merely “the right notes at the right time at the right dynamic level.” For theory students and especially for students pursuing a Piano Pedagogy examination, these volumes are also an important resource.

For each selection, the historical time period, page number in the repertoire book, and CD number and track are all cross-referenced. Each discussion begins with a brief biography of the composer. The material which follows touches on various aspects of style, form, technique, and interpretation as may be appropriate. Diagrams, fill-in-the-blank exercises, musical excerpts, and brief music writing tasks provide students with ample opportunities to interact with the music on an intellectual and emotional level. Terms are bolded and presented in a Glossary at the end. I am particularly impressed with the numerous memorization tips strategically placed throughout the volumes.

“There is a satisfying mixture of old and new repertoire. Some perennial favourites have remained through all three iterations.”

All in all, I think you will enjoy the changes – some subtle and some dramatic – in the upper levels of the Celebration Series Perspectives®. The editors have achieved a balance between providing continuity from previous editions and venturing into repertoire that “boldly goes where no one has gone before.” I know I’m looking forward to digging into these volumes with my students as well as being exposed to some of the new repertoire when I’m on the examining trail.

Dale Wheeler has taught at the post-secondary level for twenty years and is currently on the music faculty at Red Deer College where he teaches piano. He is a regular columnist for Clavier magazine and his articles and research have recently been published in Music Alberta, American Music Teacher and the Journal of the American Liszt Society. For a complete biography, visit www.rcmexaminations.org under “College of Examiners”.

for a complete biography, visit www.rcmexaminations.org under “College of Examiners”.

July/August 2008 Music Matters 5
Introductory Harmony: A Status Seeker
From “out in the cold” to “into the fold”…

BY MARIA CASE, CHIEF EXAMINER, THEORETICAL SUBJECTS

The Introductory Harmony examination, created with the Theory Syllabus, 1995 Edition, has always stood a little off-to-the-side in our examination system. Lacking the formal ties of kinship which bind other courses to corresponding practical levels, it has at times been overlooked, even by experienced teachers. Its value has been widely acknowledged by the teaching community since its inception; and indeed, it is an invaluable course of study for students going on to more advanced theory studies. However, without the validation associated with being “required”, its potential as an examination has not been fully realized. Sure, the stamp “recommended” attests to its fine character, but its dance card remains far from full.

As we engage in the exciting process of revising the Theory Syllabus in preparation for the 2009 Edition, the status of Introductory Harmony has been the subject of much debate. We have received many requests from teachers to reconsider the current status of Introductory Harmony and make this a compulsory examination, linking it to the practical Grade 8 certificate. Yet, although we readily agree that this would have tremendous pedagogical value, it would also add an extra level of responsibility to our already busy candidates. At this point in time, (spoiler alert: “leaked” information to follow!) there will be no official change in status for this examination.

Now, as is often the problem with leaked information, we do not get the whole story, so allow me to clarify. In the Theory Syllabus, 2009 Edition, the Introductory Harmony examination will not be “recommended”, but rather “strongly recommended as a co-requisite for Grade 8 practical examinations and as preparation for Basic Harmony”. What’s in an adverb? Let’s see.

With the addition of “strongly”, this examination is coming into the fold, and finding its place in the cumulative stream which comprises our harmony levels. The content, as described in the current and future syllabi, will be part of a required body of knowledge upon which subsequent levels are built. So, let’s examine some of the unique features and elements of Introductory Harmony.

This examination gives considerable focus to chord identification, first introduced in the rudiments levels. Students are asked to identify the root and quality of diatonic chords found in major, natural minor and harmonic minor scales. The identification of chords by name, as opposed to function, is an important step in building confident harmonic analysis skills. Root and quality symbols (popular and jazz chord symbols) also provide a relevant link to popular musical styles and notation.
Teachers who use this examination have always valued the emphasis placed on the development of melody-writing skills. A variety of question formats help to foster this: students may be asked to compose a melody based on a given rhythm, continue the first two measures of a four-measure phrase while specifying the melodic cadence at the end, or respond to a given four-measure opening to create a unified melodic composition. These formats help students to go beyond the formulaic responses we often see in student work at the Basic Harmony level. As well, they foster an understanding of the relationship between melody and implied harmony.

The two-part writing featured at this level (mainly note-against-note) also helps to strengthen the student’s ability to think musically on both the horizontal and vertical planes. Adding a bass line to a given soprano melody (or vice versa), students become more aware of the melodic shape of these lines. This type of question obviously prepares the way for future counterpoint studies, but also helps students retain a stronger sense of line in their four-part writing as well.

When first introduced to four-part writing, students may easily be overwhelmed by the amount of material. Introductory Harmony allows students to become comfortable with the conventions of chorale style, while working with a more limited harmonic vocabulary than is encountered at the Basic Harmony level. It is here that they learn the vocal ranges for each part, the different types of motion (parallel, similar, contrary, and oblique) and even the implications that stem direction has in two- and four-part writing. There is considerable focus given to the writing of cadences, including pre-cadential chords and the resolution of dominant seventh chords in all positions.

One other unique feature of Introductory Harmony is the emphasis given to the identification of Baroque dances such as allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue, menuet, bourree, and gavotte. Having played these dances in their practical studies since earliest levels, students may now consolidate their experience and really absorb the rhythmic features and character of each dance type. This will help with the structural analysis portion of the Basic Harmony examination, the analysis of internal forms of larger structures encountered in Intermediate Harmony, and provide students with authentic models for their own stylistic compositions at later stages.

Taking time to explore Introductory Harmony should prove a rewarding experience for both students and teachers, and one which will lay the groundwork for an enriched understanding of musical language.

Maria Case is Chief Examiner, Theoretical Subjects at RCM Examinations and holds an ARCT Diploma in Piano Performance from The Royal Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music in Composition from the University of Toronto. For a complete biography, visit www.rcmexaminations.org under “College of Examiners”.

“Introductory Harmony allows students to become comfortable with the conventions of chorale style, while working with a more limited harmonic vocabulary than is encountered at the Basic Harmony level.”
Attention Guitar Teachers and Composers


Any comments or suggestions regarding the revision of the syllabus or submissions of published pieces for the series can be submitted up to September 1, 2008.

Please submit your comments and suggestions by email to: syllabus@rcmexaminations.org

PIANO WORKSHOPS FALL 2008


Having undergone a complete makeover, the new Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition has a fresh new look and provides an easy-to-use, quick reference guide for both beginning and seasoned teachers preparing students for examinations.

To help introduce the new Syllabus, RCM Examinations will be co-hosting three-hour workshops in September, October, and November with Registered Music Teacher Groups in each province. These workshops will cover new components of the Syllabus such as the Preparatory A and B examinations, and highlight changes to marking schemes, and requirements for memory, and substitutions. The presentation will include demonstrations of the new Technical Requirements as well as performances of old and new repertoire.

Please refer to the enclosed flyer to find a workshop location near you. The Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition is now available at music stores, and will come into effect on September 1, 2008. Teachers are encouraged to bring their own copies of the new Syllabus with them to the workshop. This workshop is free and available to all teachers to attend.

SPECIAL REMINDER TO ARCT CANDIDATES

Candidates working toward the Teacher’s ARCT Diploma are reminded they have until August 2009 to complete the Diploma requirements as outlined in the Piano Syllabus, 2001 Edition. Starting September 2009, candidates who have not completed their ARCT Diploma requirements will have to continue their studies using the Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition.


Music Matters aims to provide up-to-date information on the RCM Examinations Certificate Program. Articles by senior members of the teaching community offer new perspectives and useful suggestions for managing a successful teaching studio and using the RCM curriculum. Music Matters is published six times each year – in September, November, January, March, May, and July.

Current and back issues of Music Matters may be downloaded from our website, free of charge.

RCM Examinations
5865 McLaughlin Road, Unit 4
Mississauga, ON, Canada L5R 1B8
Telephone 905.501.9553
Fax 905.501.0909
www.rcmexaminations.org