



ABRSM

# Aural Tests

Aural tests assess the standard of a candidate's 'musical ear'. The examiner will deliver each test following a set of spoken words and instructions. Each test will require either a spoken, sung or clapped response. The speed and accuracy with which candidates respond to the aural tests can tell the examiner a lot about the candidate's musical make-up and help to form an overall picture of the candidate's abilities.

Listening lies at the heart of all good music-making. Developing aural awareness is fundamental to musical training because having a 'musical ear' impacts on all aspects of musicianship. Singing, both silently in the head and out loud, is one of the best ways to develop the 'musical ear'. It connects the internal imagining of sound, the 'inner ear', with the external creation of it, without the necessity of mechanically having to 'find the note' on an instrument (important though that connection is). By integrating aural activities in imaginative ways in the lesson, preparation for the aural tests within an exam will be a natural extension of what is already an essential part of the learning experience.

The tests are administered by the examiner from the piano. For any test that requires a sung response, pitch rather than vocal quality is the object. The examiner will be happy to adapt to the vocal range of the candidate, whose responses may be sung to any vowel (or consonant followed by a vowel), hummed or whistled (and at a different octave, if appropriate).

All candidates take the same group of tests. These are carefully graded from basic recognition of rhythm and memory of short phrases to tests demanding well-developed aural perception and discrimination. The pass mark is 12; the maximum mark is 18.

