



# Jazz Piano Studies

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# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 1: Study

Before playing 'Rambler', candidates are required to play the C major scale, as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 1'.

A solid walking bass is important. Try to play  nearer to , so you get a good swing feel.

There should be evidence of creativity in the second chorus – perhaps you could vary the dynamics, or break down the right hand chords into melodic patterns.

Ideas may be sketched on the chart.

### Rambler

♩ = c.112 Fairly lively. In a swing style.

Stuart Corbett



The musical score for 'Rambler' is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is C major and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as 'Fairly lively' with a quarter note equal to approximately 112 beats per minute. The style is 'swing'. The score includes piano accompaniment with chords and a walking bass line. The chords are: C, F, G7, C, Am, Dm, G, C, C, F, G, C, Am, Dm, G, C. The bass line consists of quarter notes: 4, 1, 1, 1, 5, 1, 3, 4, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5. The right hand part features chords and melodic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the second system and a triplet of eighth notes in the fourth system. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 2: Study

Before playing 'Do-Be-Do-Waa', candidates are required to play the D minor harmonic OR melodic scale (candidate's choice), as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 1'.

This study is based on 'call and response' phrases. These are common in jazz. For example, bars 1 and 2 are the 'call', and bars 3 and 4 are the 'response'.

In the examination the response phrases at **[B]** should be improvised.

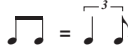
Awareness of the F major pentatonic scale (F G A C D F) and the D minor pentatonic scale (D F G A C D) will provide a good foundation for improvisation ideas.

Notice that the chords are based on major chord symbols. This tells us that the piece is basically in a major key (D). Often, however, more than one pentatonic or blues scale will work when improvising. There are a number of reasons for this, many of which do not need to be explored here in order to help you have fun experimenting in the 'response' bars. When you have mastered your D minor pentatonic patterns try using F natural and F sharp in a couple of places. You will then be starting to explore what are often referred to as 'blue notes'. [It is not compulsory to do this in the exam.] The F sharp fits with the major chords and the F natural with the given key signature. The 'call phrases' avoid using F natural or sharp. This helps the patterns in D minor pentatonic. The G sharp in the opening is also a blue note. If you add it to the D minor pentatonic scale it becomes D blues scale. Don't get too bothered about the theory. Encourage your ears to respond creatively to the patterns and style of the piece.

Don't be afraid to vary the dynamics.

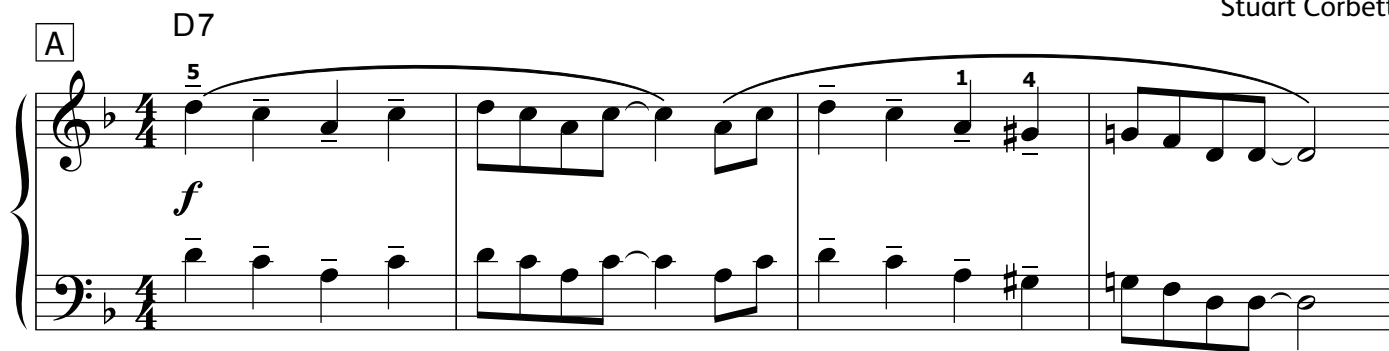
Ideas may be sketched on the chart.

### Do-Be-Do-Waa

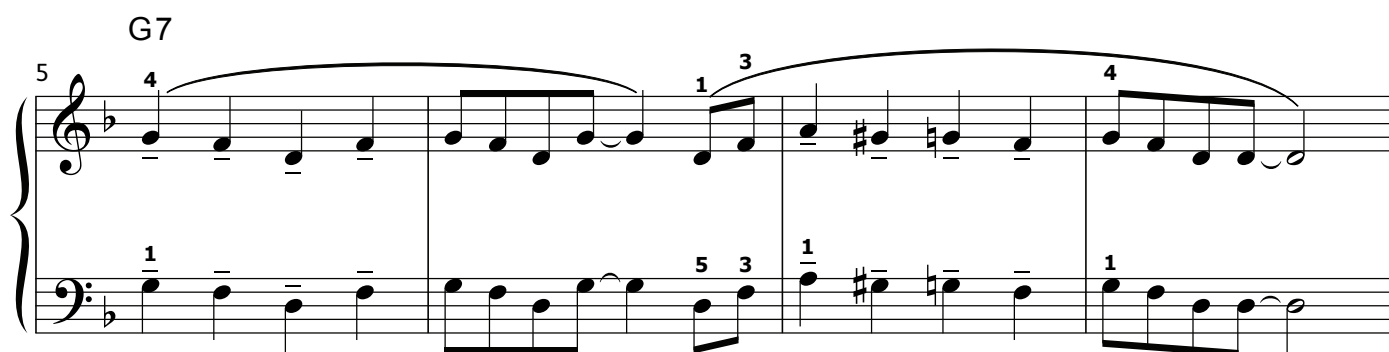
♩ = c.124 In a lively funky (straight quavers) or swing style 

Stuart Corbett

**A** D7



G7



9 **A7** **D7** Fine

**B** **D7**  
13 (Call phrase) (Response)

**G7**  
17

**A7** D.C. al Fine

# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 3: Study

Before playing 'Penta Picture', candidates are required to play the Aeolian mode (pure minor) starting on A, as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 1'.

You are encouraged to play 'Penta Picture' with warm, expressive qualities. The second chorus should have a degree of personalisation – for example, fills and improvised melodic elements.

In parts, patterns from the A Aeolian mode will work (A B C D E F G A). If you remove B and F from this mode you have the A minor pentatonic scale (A C D E G A). You can use A minor pentatonic throughout, to help your creative ideas.

Aim for a beautiful sound. Vary the dynamics, but the piece should never be too loud.

Your ideas may be sketched on the chart, but **not** written out in full.

### Penta Picture

♩ = c.84 Slow, with expression. Legato and rubato (straight or swung).

Stuart Corbett

The first system of the musical score for 'Penta Picture' is in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over five measures. The notes are A4, C5, D5, E5, and G5. Fingerings are indicated as 1, 3, 3-1, 3, and 3. The bass staff contains chordal accompaniment for the first five measures, with chords Am, Am7, FΔ7, G7, and C. The dynamics are marked *p*. The tempo is indicated as c.84.

The second system of the musical score for 'Penta Picture' continues from the first system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over five measures. The notes are A4, C5, D5, E5, and G5. Fingerings are indicated as 5, 3, 1, 3, and 3. The bass staff contains chordal accompaniment for the first five measures, with chords Am, Am7, FΔ7, G7, and C. The dynamics are marked *p*.

9

Dm G7 C Dm G7 C

13

Em Am7 D Dm G7 C

To Coda

D.C. al Coda

17

C

Coda

# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 4: Study

Before playing 'Summer Stroll', candidates are required to play the A $\flat$  major scale, as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 1'.

This gentle piece uses II-V chord movements in Section **A**. These patterns are often found in standards, and in some jazz compositions. Section **B** uses chord patterns that move down in 5ths. This is often referred to as the 'Magic Circle'. 'Autumn Leaves' is a famous standard which is based on the Magic Circle.

Expressive and warm tonal qualities are encouraged. Careful use of the sustain pedal may help you to achieve this.

In the repeat you may wish to develop your own melodic ideas from the given patterns. You may also wish to expand on the minimal voicing in the bass clef.

The Coda should be free and expressive. Perhaps some note repetition and/or playing around with the given arpeggiated patterns may help.

Your ideas may be sketched on the chart, but **not** written out in full.

### Summer Stroll

$\text{♩} = c.84$  Legato and expressive. Straight quavers.

Stuart Corbett

Gm7    C7    Gm7    C7    Fm    E7    E $\flat$ 7    A $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7

**A**

Gm7    C7    Gm7    C7    Fm    E7    E $\flat$ 7    A $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7

**B** Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 Bbm7 Eb7 Ab Bm B° Ab

9

*p* *p* *p* *mf*

Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 Bbm7 Eb7 Ab△7 D.C. al Coda To Coda ⊕

13

*poco rit.*

*p* *p* *p* *mf*

Ab Slow and free D° Dbm Bbm7(9) Eb

17

Coda ⊕

*mf*

Ab

21

*dim. e rit.*

2 1 4 2

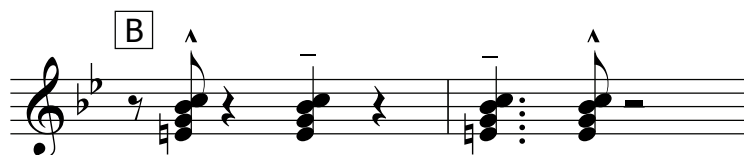
# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 5: Study

Before playing 'The Pianist Got Shots', candidates are required to play the G Blues scale (with each hand separately), as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 1'.

The treble clef bars in Section **B** have been left open for you to add your own shots and touches of embellishment and improvisation. ('Shots' were often a feature in big band swing style writing. When one section played the melody, another section would add short notes or chords, following a rhythmic pattern.)

Example:



Be creative with the dynamics. You could play the treble clef up an octave in the repeat. Tremolo effects may add character.

In the repeat there should be some improvisational content over the boogie woogie patterns in Section **B**.

You may sketch your ideas on the chart, but improvisations should **not** be written in full.

## The Pianist Got Shots

$\text{♩} = \text{c.148}$  With a sense of fun and a touch of Barrelhouse  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^3$

Stuart Corbett

**A**      G                      C      C#°              G/D      Eb°              Em              Am7/D

⊕ To Coda 3rd time

5      G                      C      C#°              1. Gm/D              C7b9 G7 D7

2.  
Gm/D C7b9 G7 C7

9

*ff*

G7

12

C7 D7

15

D.C. 1st and 2nd time  
al Coda 3rd time

*dim.*

G7

19

(G Blues scale)

*tremolo effect*

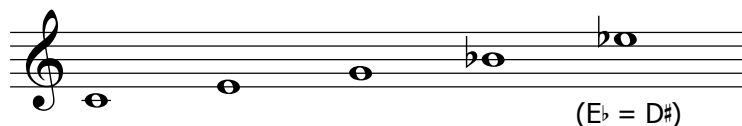
Coda

# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 6: Studies

Before playing 'Plus Nine Blues', candidates are required to play the chromatic scale starting on E, as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 2'.

'Plus Nine Blues' introduces elements of chromaticism – for example, C7+9 is based on the dominant 7th chord and the raised 9th:



This gives a major/minor sound quality.

The first chorus at [B] should contain fills. The second chorus of [B] should be improvised. The piece should conclude with one final chorus at [A].

Improvisation ideas should **not** be sketched on the chart.

## Plus Nine Blues

$\text{♩} = \text{c.124}$  (  $\text{♩} = \overset{\sim}{\text{♩}} \overset{\sim}{\text{♩}}$  ) With lots of atmosphere

Stuart Corbett

[A] C7+9

5 F7+9 C7+9

9 G7+9 F7+9 C7+9 Fine

[B] 13 C7+9

Fill 2 bars in C Blues


17 F7+9 C7+9

Fill 2 bars in F Blues

21 G7+9 F7+9 C7+9 D.C. al Fine

Fill in G Blues Fill in F Blues

'Latin Sundae' builds on elements related to Latin American music, outlined in the Grade 5 section of 'Jazz Piano Handbook 1'.

Section **A** is based on a rhythmic pattern known as a Clave – 


Section **B** establishes a Montuno. These repeated riffs can be 2, 4 or 8 bars long.

Precise rhythmic clarity and neat syncopation are important.

The repeats at **B** and **C** should be improvised in the examination. Take care to retain the rhythmic foundation of the piece.

Improvisation ideas should **not** be sketched on the chart.

## Latin Sundae

 = c.154 Lively and rhythmic (straight quavers)

Stuart Corbett

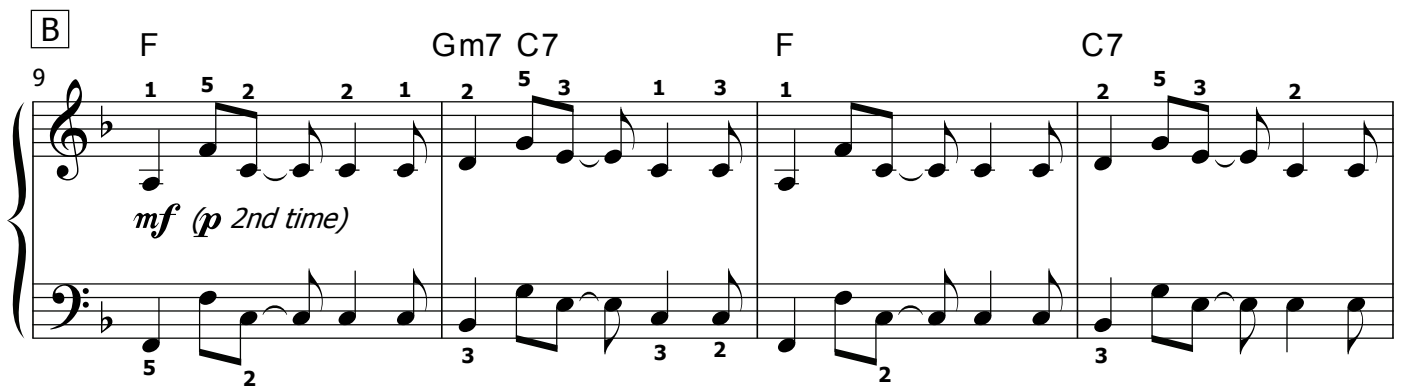
**A** C C7



C7



**B** F Gm7 C7 F C7



13

F Gm7 C7 F

17

C F Gm7 C7 F Gm7 C7

21

F Gm7 C7

1. F Gm7 C7

25

2. F Gm7 C7

*smoother* Dm Gm7

*p*

29

Dm Gm A Dm Gm7

33

C7 C7 F° C7 F° C7 F Gm7 C7

37

F Gm7 C7 F

40

Gm7 C7 F

# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 7: Studies

Before playing '3 + 2', candidates are required to play the E $\flat$  major scale, as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 2'.

$\frac{5}{4}$  time is generally structured as |  $\overset{>}{1} \overset{>}{2} 3 \overset{>}{1} 2$  | or |  $\overset{>}{1} 2 \overset{>}{1} 2 3$  |

One of the most famous jazz pieces in 5 time is 'Take Five', by Paul Desmond and associated with Dave Brubeck.

'3 + 2' should skip along. The repeated choruses at A should contain improvised elements.

Good block chord awareness ('Jazz Piano Handbook 2', Grade 6) should help fluency through the changes.

There is room to expand bass clef voicing, if you wish.

Improvisational elements should **not** be written on the chart. You may wish to write in fingering patterns.

### 3+2

$\text{♩} = c.152$     $\text{♪} = \text{♪} \text{♪}$    Swing

Stuart Corbett

E $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7   Ab   E $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7   Ab   E $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7   Ab   E $\flat$

*mf not legato*

A   Ab $\Delta$ 7   Gm7   Fm7


*mp legato*



'Relax and Lounge' offers an opportunity to explore the cantabile qualities of the instrument. In the second chorus you are encouraged to explore elements associated with lounge pianist styles, for example fills, ornaments, arpeggiated flourishes and perhaps varying octave registrations.

Your ideas should **not** be written on the chart.

The Coda should be expressive and free. You could think of C7♭9 as a diminished chord:

C7♭9 

## Relax and Lounge

Stuart Corbett

♩ = c.72-82 Straight quavers



Chord progression for the first system: F, B♭, A7, Dm, Gm7, C7

Chord progression for the second system: F, B♭, A7, Dm, F♯<sup>o</sup>

Chord progression for the third system: B♭, B♭m, F, D7, Gm

14 *C7* *To Coda* *F* *Bb* *F*

18 *C#°* *Dm* *Bb* *8va*

22 *B°* *Poco accel. (Jazz waltz style)* *F* *F+* *Bb* *rit.* *E7* *D.C. al Coda*

Freely – this may be played as a cadenza

Coda *27* *F* | *Bbm* | *Gm7* | *C7b9* | *F* ||

# LCM Exams

## Jazz Piano Grade 8: Studies

Before playing 'Reflections', candidates are required to play the C diminished scale, starting on the whole step OR half step (candidate's choice), as illustrated in 'Jazz Piano Handbook 2'.

'Reflections' contains a lot of altered chords. Altered chords are often dominant 7th chords with +9 and b13 added. Occasionally, the b9, +9, +11 and b13 can be included. This can open up a wonderful palette of sound.

The second chorus may be straight or swung and should contain personalised qualities, including some improvisation.

One question often asked is: Why is the +11 not referred to as a flattened 12th? The +11th is essentially a +4 and the 12th a flattened 5th. The reason is primarily historic. Up to the mid-1940s jazz harmonies were quite traditional. As modern jazz harmonies developed, from the bebop era on, jazz musicians often used the +4 as a scalic passing note. It also came into increasing prominence with the use of the Lydian mode. The Lydian mode on C starts on the 4th note of G major. Hence the structure C-D-E-F sharp [+4]-G-A-B-C.

Improvisation ideas should **not** be written on the chart. You may wish to write in fingering patterns.

Both of the Grade 8 studies are 'contrefacts', ie. pieces based on the structure of another piece. 'Reflections' is based on Chick Corea's 'Mirror Mirror', and 'Stridin' and Behavin'' is based on Fats Waller's 'Ain't Misbehavin''. Many jazz artists compose pieces based on the chord structure of another piece. 'I Got Rhythm' has an abundance of contrefact compositions. Jazz musicians often refer to this type of piece as based on 'Rhythm Changes'.

### Reflections

Stuart Corbett

♩ = c.82 Intro: Slow and free. Straight quavers

*pp* *cresc.* *mf*

*Ped.*

Dreamily. Straight quavers.

♩ C $\Delta$ 7 E7Alt F $\Delta$ 7 A7Alt

*p*

*Ped.*

9

D9 F#Alt GΔ7 B7Alt

p.

13

CΔ7 Eb7Alt Gm7 D/CΔ7

*pp* *cresc.* *mp*

17

FΔ7 F#∅ G C7b9

*pp* *cresc.* *mp*

*più mosso*

21

F#/B B/Eb B/E AbAlt

*mf*

*a tempo*

G $\Delta$ 7                      B9add13                      E $\flat$ 9add13                      B $\flat$ 7

25

*mf*

F /A7 Alt                      Dm7                      G7+9                      G $\sharp$ o Alt

29

*mp*

To Coda  $\oplus$                       D.S. al Coda

Am7                      D7Alt                      C/Dm   E $\flat$ /Fm   D $\flat$ /E $\flat$ m   C/Dm   A $\flat$ 7   G7

33

*mp*

Coda  $\oplus$

C9                      C9add13

37

*ppp*

The second chorus of 'Stridin' and Behavin'' should include elements of embellishment and improvisation.

Listening to masters of stride piano could help your ideas. Examples include:

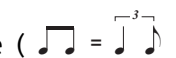
- James P Johnson – often described as 'the father of stride piano'
- Fats Waller – influenced by James P Johnson
- Earl Hines – often used stride techniques alongside patterns which made the piano sound busy and full; this style is often referred to as 'trumpet style'
- Art Tatum – a pianist who could embrace many styles with his virtuoso technique

Notice that the key signature is only given at the start of the piece. This is common in the jazz world.

Improvisation ideas should **not** be written on the chart. You may wish to write in fingering patterns.

## Stridin' and Behavin'

Stuart Corbett

♩ = c.104-114 In a relaxed stride style (  )

**A**

Chord symbols: Eb, E°, Fm7, F#°, Eb/G, G7+5, Ab, Db7, Eb, Cm, Fm7, Bb7, Eb, E°

10 Fm7 F#° Eb/G G7+5 Ab Db7

13 Eb Cm Fm Bb7 Eb

16 Ab7 G7 Cm Bb7

19 F7 C7 Bb7

22 Bb7 F7 Gm C7 Fm7 Bb7

25 **C** Eb E° Fm7 F#° Eb/G G7+5

28 Ab Db7 Eb Cm Fm Bb7

31 Eb Fm7 Bb7 To Coda D.C. al Coda

33 Coda  $\Phi$  pp Eb $\Delta$ 7