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*Victoria College Examinations*

*vcmexams.com*

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in conjunction with

**Stringbabies<sup>®</sup>**

**Certificates in**  
**Stringbabies<sup>®</sup>**  
**String Playing**

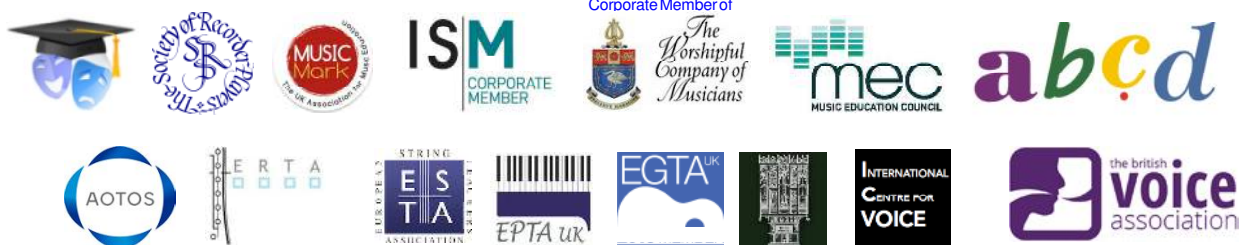


# Victoria College of Music and Drama, London

Founded 1890

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# Stringbabies Certificates in String Playing Syllabus

Member of



## **ABOUT THE VCM**

Victoria College of Music and Drama, London Ltd. is an independent body providing examinations in Music, Speech, and Drama subjects. It has held examination sessions throughout the British Isles and certain overseas countries since it was founded in 1890. It no longer operates a full-time teaching institution. The VCM is a corporate member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians, Worshipful Company of Musicians, the Music Education Council, the Association of Teachers of Singing, the European Piano Teachers Association, the European Recorder Teachers Association, the Society of Recorder Players, the European String Teachers Association the Society of Teachers of Speech & Drama, the Association of British Choral Directors, the Schools Music Association of Great Britain, the European Guitar Teachers Association, the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors and the British Institute of Organ Studies

Further details about Victoria College can be found on our website:

**[www. Vcmexams.com](http://www.Vcmexams.com)**

## **ABOUT STRINGBABIES**

Stringbabies is a holistic approach to teaching Strings and general musicianship developed by the cellist, Kay Tucker.

The original intentions of Stringbabies was to enable children between the ages of 3 to 6 years to comprehend written notation at the same time as playing an instrument, through the use of a simplified notation system using shapes, simple tunes to play and sing based on the instrument's tuning which would also help build solid aural skills. The focus on student led composition and creativity within Stringbabies has contributed towards a strong reputation for building solid sight reading and aural skills.

The Stringbabies approach was developed into its current form during 2003-2004, initially in a version for cello known as 'Cellobabies'. The first 'Cellobabies' book appeared in 2005. Within a short time, requests were received from strings teachers for Violin and Viola versions as well as requests for additional training in using the approach.

To date, Stringbabies is in partnership with 4 music services in the UK, several schools including 2 in the USA. There are registered Stringbabies teachers throughout the UK and more recently into the USA but there are many more teachers throughout the UK and around the globe who use the Stringbabies approach in their work.

## **CHANGES TO SYLLABUS**

VCM examination requirements do not alter annually: this syllabus is valid for all examinations held between the dates shown on the cover.

## **MARK BRACKETS**

All candidates will receive a copy of their report form and a certificate appropriate to their level of achievement.

Candidates are able to achieve the following levels:

Developing  
Successful  
Outstanding

Mark criteria are contained within this syllabus.

## REGULATIONS

All entries are accepted on the conditions laid down in *General Regulations and Information*, a copy of which is available free of charge. It is also on our website: [www.vcmexams.com](http://www.vcmexams.com). In addition all Certificate Awards must comply with the requirements set down within this syllabus.

## ENTRY FORMS

All certificate awards can be entered on white entry forms with no more than ten candidates on a page. Please use the appropriate code in the column headed `subject\_ and the letter(s) or numbers in the `grade no.\_ column as shown at the head of each award in this syllabus.

On entry forms the subject column should be completed using the following simple abbreviations:

Violin	VL
Viola	VA
Cello	VC
Double Bass	DB

## SIGHT READING

Sight Reading tests are included in all awards. For guidance, specimen Sight Reading are contained within this syllabus.

## MUSICIANSHIP TESTS

Musicianship Tests are included in all awards. These tests are specific to the certificate awards and differ from those set for grade examinations. Specimen Musicianship Tests are contained within this syllabus.

## PIECES

Candidates are required to prepare the whole of the pieces as prescribed for each certificate. All pieces should be performed **without** accompaniment.

## SCALEWORK

Candidates must prepare all scalework as per the given requirements for each level. Scales must be played from memory.

## MEMORY

In all examinations, credit will be given for playing at least one piece from memory, but candidates will not be penalised for not doing so.

## MEDLEYS & OWN CHOICES

Where examination requirements include medleys or own choices, a second copy must be provided for the examiner. Medleys should include a minimum of three tunes, an introduction passage, suitable links and a coda drawing on the musical material of the music performed..

## PHOTOCOPIES

All VCM and Stringbabies publications are copyright. Photocopying of LMP publications is not permissible and **candidates using unauthorised photocopies at examinations will be disqualified**. It is acceptable, however, to use a photocopy for the second copy when the syllabus requires one to be handed to the examiner, provided the original is also brought to the examination. It is also acceptable to use photocopies of parts of long pieces to avoid awkward page turns, again provided the original is also brought to the examination.

## SET BOOKS

The specialist Stringbabies publications are available directly from Stringbabies. See following advertisement for details.

## **Moderation**

All teachers will be required to submit a signed declaration with each set of entries stating that all work is that of the candidate except where noted within the syllabus.

Teachers must also submit an MP3 recording of one selected assessment as it takes place with the returned report forms. Teachers will receive notification of which assessment is required by VCM following entry. A professional standard of recording is not required but recordings must be clear and allow the candidate to be heard clearly. The recording should be emailed to VCM for moderation to [admin@vcmeams.com](mailto:admin@vcmeams.com) and be titled *name\_date\_SBLlevel*.

Recordings will be compared against marking criteria as published within this syllabus and the following actions taken:

- ð Approved, no further action
- ð Approved, minor comments
- ð Not approved, areas to address

Where the moderator makes minor comments these will be informal suggestions to consider that do not affect the mark given. Where Not Approved the moderator will make adjustments to the given marks as required and feedback to the teacher explaining the decision taken and advice for future entries.

# **Victoria College also offers a full range of exams in String Playing from beginner to Fellowship Diploma for**

**Violin  
Viola  
Cello  
Double Bass**

Copies of all syllabuses are available free of charge on request or can be downloaded from the VCM website at

**[www.vcmexams.com](http://www.vcmexams.com)**

plus a wide range of other Music, Speech and Drama subjects.

## Level 1 (Entry code SB1)

***RATIONALE: At this stage students will have been learning at least one term and will be comfortable with Stringbabies notation. Only skills in Stringbabies notation will be tested.***

### Solo Pieces

**A. Choose to perform 2 from the following list:**

Hello song

Kippers and custard

Strawberry Song.

Toby Turtle (from Stringbabies Zoo)

**B. Basic composition on one line of minimum 16 crochet beats duration using Open strings, crochets, quaver and crochet rests. The score and a brief explanatory statement from the teacher and pupil on the process followed should be submitted with the assessment form. (no more than 100 words).**

### Scales and technique

Compose a short rhythm of no more than 6 beats and play with bow on two open strings of choice with good sound and good technique

Expectations:

Candidate must demonstrate good posture and developing bow hold. The sound produced with the bow should be resonant and clean.

### Musicianship tests

#### **Aural and Sightreading.**

1. Accurately sing or play the upper or lower note of the Hello song and Kippers and custard while the teacher plays the alternative note (testing listening and ensemble skills).
2. Say, then play the rhythm of a short line of notes using Stringbabies notation on a 1 line stave using open strings - no more than 8 crochet beats duration, using crochets, quavers and rests. Students can play pizzicato or with the bow.

## Level 2 (Entry Code SB2)

**RATIONALE:** *At this stage students will have been learning at least two terms and will be comfortable with both Stringbabies and beginning to transfer skills to conventional notation. Only skills in Stringbabies notation will be tested.*

### Solo Pieces

**A. Choose to perform 1 from each of the following lists:**

#### Piece to test bowing skills

Henny the Hen (from Stringbabies Zoo)

Dragonflies and Frogs

#### Piece to test Left hand and bowing skills

Kangaroo

Do-Re-Mi

Hot Cross Buns

Goodbye

**B. An own composition of at least 20 seconds must be performed. The score and a brief explanatory statement from the teacher and pupil on the process followed should be submitted with the assessment form. (no more than 100 words).**

### Scales and technique

Compose a short rhythm of no more than 6 beats and play on every note from open string up to the 4<sup>th</sup> degree (E.G. Open string D to G)

Compose a short rhythm of no more than 6 beats and play on every note ON ANY open string.

Play Hello Song using harmonics

### Musicianship tests

#### **Aural:**

1. Accurately clap back or play 4 rhythmic figures which may include triplets and semiquavers played by the teacher.
2. Listen to a short melody played 2 times . A 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing would contain a note with the pitch altered. The candidate is to indicate the change by raising their hand

**Sightreading:** A piece using Stringbabies notation on a **3 line staff** using open strings only

### Level 3 (Entry code SB3)

**RATIONALE:** *At this stage students will have been learning at least for a year and will be comfortable with both Stringbabies and conventional notation.*

#### Solo Pieces

**A. Choose to perform 2 from the following list:**

- **Choose 1 piece from the following pieces in the Stringbabies book:**

Winter creeps ,

Once a Man Fell in a Well (In major or minor key for cello)

Pease Pudding Hot

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

- **Choose 1 piece from the list of conventional repertoires include in this syllabus.**

**B. An Own composition of at least 30 seconds duration written in conventional or Stringbabies notation must be performed. The score and a brief explanatory statement from teacher and pupil on the process followed should be submitted with the assesment form. (no more than 100 words).**

**The composition should:**

#### Scales and technique

A, D & G major scales and arpeggios (1 octave) on violin, D, G & C majors on cello and viola. One scale to be played two crochets to each note and another scale to be played in a rhythm composed by the student comprising of minimum 2 beats and maximum 6 beats.

#### Musicianship tests

Aural:

- Candidate is given a choice of 3 rhythmic figures in stick notation (includes crochets, quavers and crochet rests) student to identify one played by the examiner and then say or play another rhythm out of remaining two.
- Listen to a short melody played 2 times and identify whether it is legato/staccato and piano/forte. A 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing would contain a note with the pitch altered. The candidate is to indicate the change by raising their hand.

**Sight reading** Two short pieces of Sight reading. One in Conventional notation and one in Stringbabies notation on a **5 line staff** using open strings only.



## **Example Level 3 Conventional Repertoire List**

### **Violin**

- Kathy and David Blackwell** City Lights from Fiddle Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Kathy and David Blackwell** Clare's Song from Fiddle Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Kathy and David Blackwell** In the Groove from Fiddle Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Mary Cohen** Seven Hairy Caterpillars from Bags of Tunes for Violin (Faber)  
**Mary Cohen** Henry Baggins' Best Suit from Bags of Tunes for Violin (Faber)  
**Thomas Gregory** Ode to Joy from Vamoosh Book 1 for Violin ([www.vamooshmusic.com](http://www.vamooshmusic.com))  
**Thomas Gregory** Carnival from Vamoosh Book 2 for Violin ([www.vamooshmusic.com](http://www.vamooshmusic.com))  
**Lumsden and Attwood** Witches Brew from Witches Brew for Violin (Peters)  
**Lumsden and Attwood** Stinkbomb Surprise from Witches Brew for Violin (Peters)  
**Lumsden and Wedgewood** Strong Iguanadon from Jurassic Blue for Violin (Peters)  
**Hugh and Katharine Colledge** Westminster Abbey from Waggon Wheels for Violin (Boosey & Hawkes)  
**Sheila Nelson** Fiddle and Flute from Stringsongs for Violin (Boosey and Hawkes)

### **Viola**

- Kathy and David Blackwell** City Lights from Viola Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Kathy and David Blackwell** Clare's Song from Viola Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Kathy and David Blackwell** In the Groove from Viola Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Mary Cohen** Seven Hairy Caterpillars from Bags of Tunes for Viola (Faber)  
**Mary Cohen** Henry Baggins' Best Suit from Bags of Tunes for Viola (Faber)  
**Mary Cohen** Rocky Mountain from Superstart for Viola (Faber)  
**Thomas Gregory** Ode to Joy from Vamoosh Book 1 for Viola  
([www.vamooshmusic.com](http://www.vamooshmusic.com))  
**Thomas Gregory** Carnival from Vamoosh Book 2 for Viola  
([www.vamooshmusic.com](http://www.vamooshmusic.com))  
**Lumsden and Wedgewood** Strong Iguanadon from Jurassic Blue for Viola (Peters)  
**Hugh and Katharine Colledge** Westminster Abbey from Waggon Wheels for Viola  
(Boosey & Hawkes)  
**Hugh and Katharine Colledge** Goldfish Bowl from Waggon Wheels for Viola  
(Boosey & Hawkes)

### **Cello**

- Kathy and David Blackwell** City Lights from Cello Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Kathy and David Blackwell** Clare's Song from Cello Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Kathy and David Blackwell** In the Groove from Cello Time Joggers (OUP)  
**Mary Cohen** Seven Hairy Caterpillars from Bags of Tunes for Cello (Faber)  
**Mary Cohen** Henry Baggins' Best Suit from Bags of Tunes for Cello (Faber)  
**Thomas Gregory** Ode to Joy from Vamoosh Book 1 for Cello ([www.vamooshmusic.com](http://www.vamooshmusic.com))  
**Thomas Gregory** Carnival from Vamoosh Book 2 for Cello ([www.vamooshmusic.com](http://www.vamooshmusic.com))  
**Lumsden and Attwood** Witches Brew from Witches Brew for Cello (Peters)  
**Lumsden and Attwood** Stinkbomb Surprise from Witches Brew for Cello (Musicland/Peters)  
**Lumsden and Wedgewood** Strong Iguanadon from Jurassic Blue for Cello (Peters)  
**Hugh and Katharine Colledge** Westminster Abbey from Waggon Wheels for Cello (Boosey & Hawkes)  
**Sheila Nelson** Fiddle and Flute from Stringsongs for Cello (Boosey and Hawkes)

## **VCM Stringbabies Marking Criteria**

*These criteria are for use by teachers in all levels of award. They are to be used as a best fit guide and candidates may display some characteristics of different levels. Take a balanced view and award marks on the overall feel for each element.*

### **Pieces and Scales**

#### **Rhythm and Pulse**

Developing: pulse and rhythm generally consistent but still developing in term of confident maintenance throughout the piece or scale.

Successful: Pulse and rhythm mostly consistent and accurate with only the occasional incorrect rhythm

Outstanding: Fully consistent maintenance of pulse and accuracy of rhythm, delivered in a confident manner

#### **Pitch**

Developing: Generally consistent accuracy of intonation but still with several errors.

Successful: Mostly accurate intonation. Candidate should demonstrate awareness of unfocused intonation if not able to correct it quickly at this stage.

Outstanding: A well developed awareness of intonation appropriate to the level of performance.

#### **Tone**

Developing: working towards clear, focused tone produced with the bow, produced without blemishes and clean accurate string crossing with even sound

Successful: Able to produce clear, focused tone with the bow, with only the occasional blemish and clean accurate string crossing with even sound and only minor blemishes. A clean accurate string crossing technique with even sound

#### **Musical interpretation**

Developing; working towards performing with clear sense of line and phrasing and at levels 2 and 3 a sense of dynamic shaping.

Successful: Clear evidence of phrasing, dynamic shape and understanding of character and mood where applicable.

Outstanding: Highly musical and shaped phases with outstanding dynamic contrast and shape.

### **Musicianship Tests**

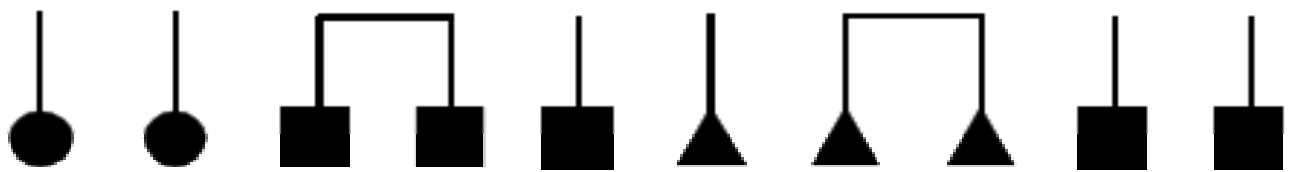
Developing: working towards a confident, fluent and accurate response in the test.

Successful: Displaying a good degree of fluency and accuracy.

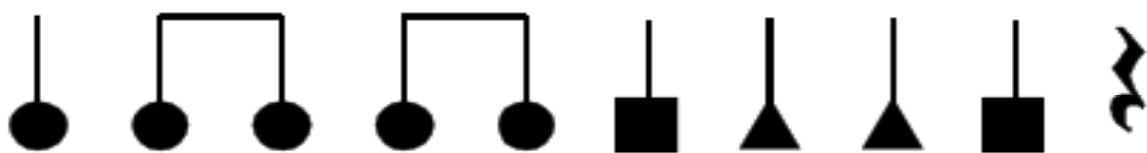
Outstanding: A highly fluent and accurate performance

ALL TESTS MAYBE PHOTOCOPIED FOR EDUCATIONAL USE  
Example Sight Reading Tests

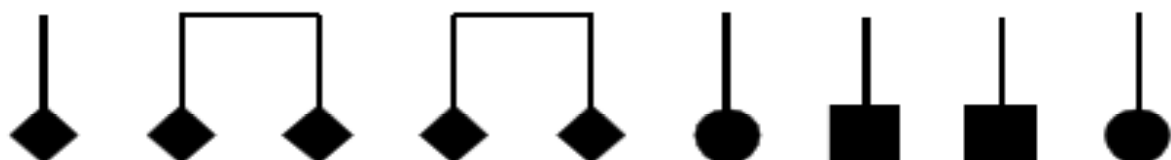
Level 1 All Instruments



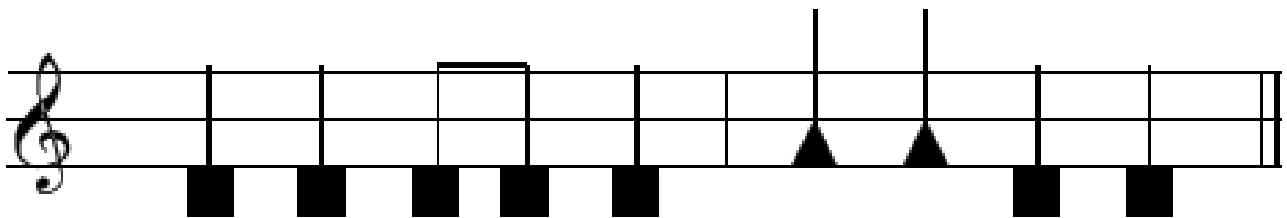
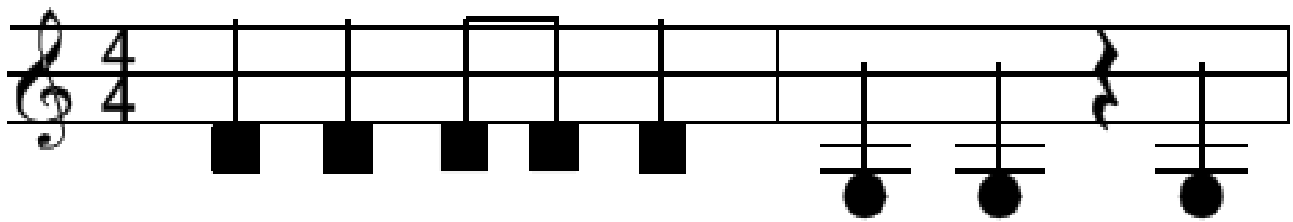
Level 1 Violin



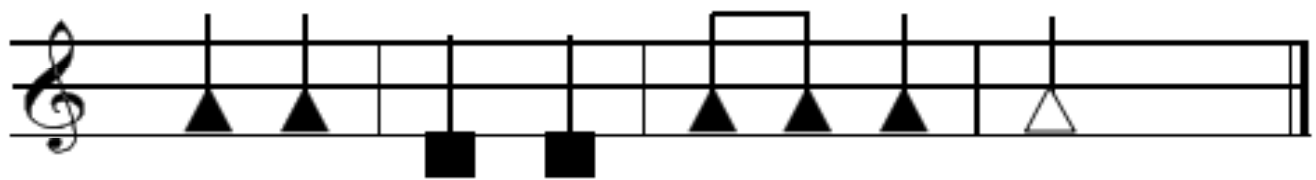
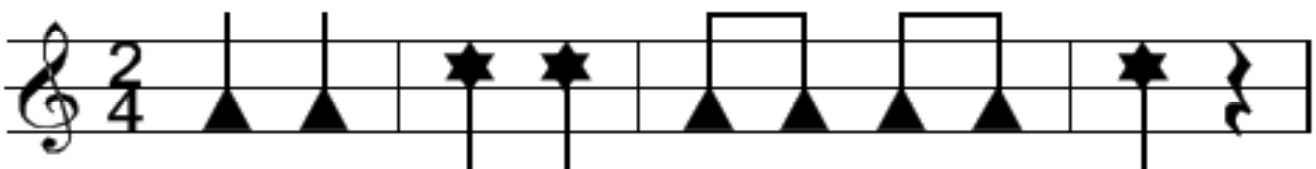
Level 1 Cello



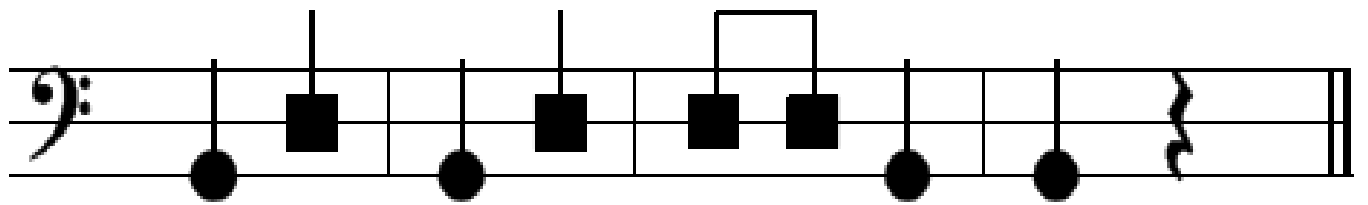
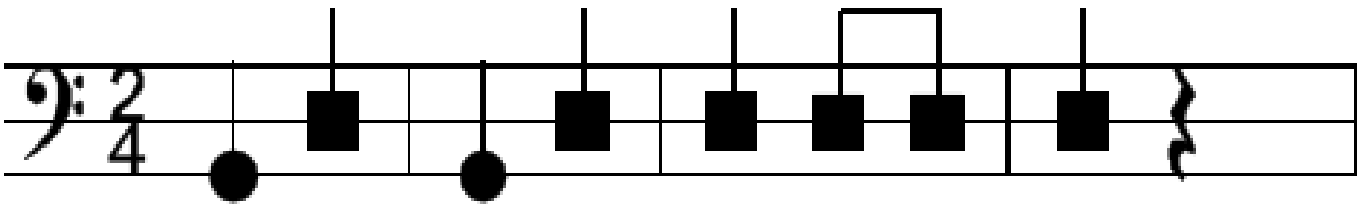
Level 2 Violin  
No.1



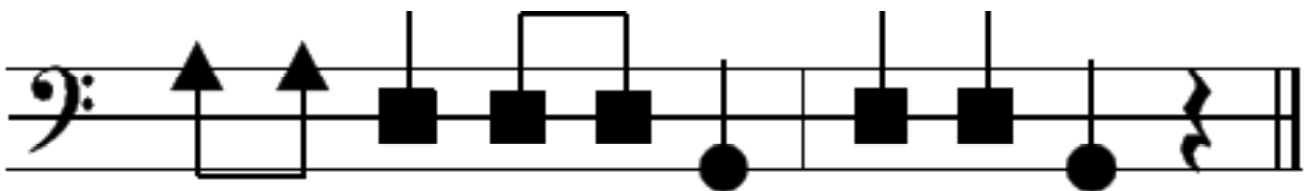
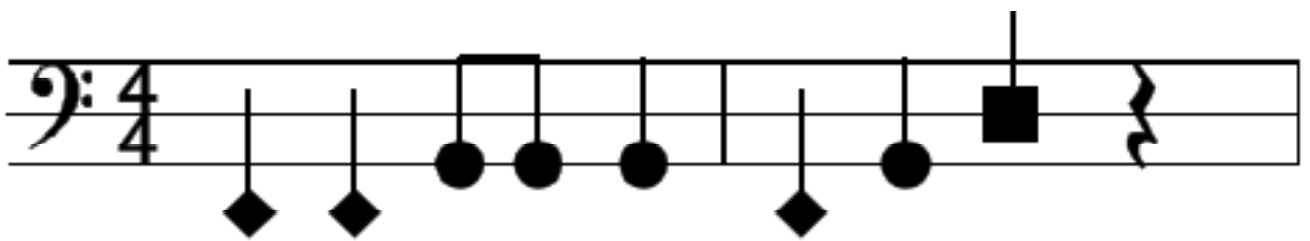
No.2



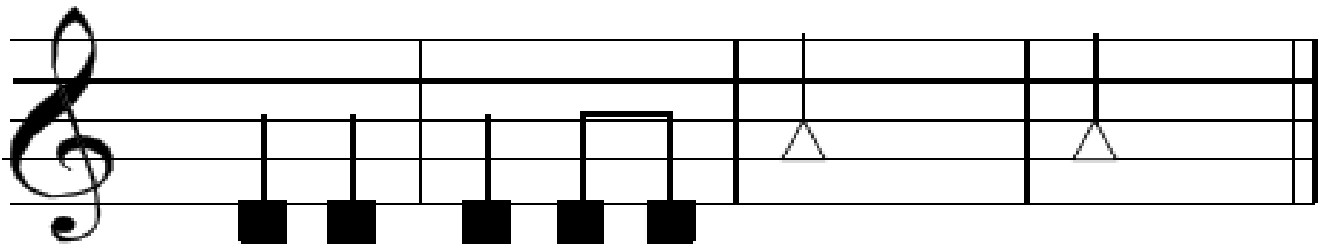
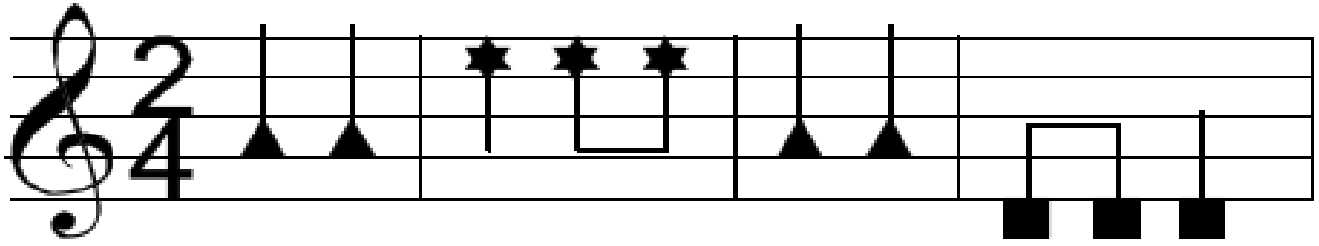
Level 2 Cello  
No.1



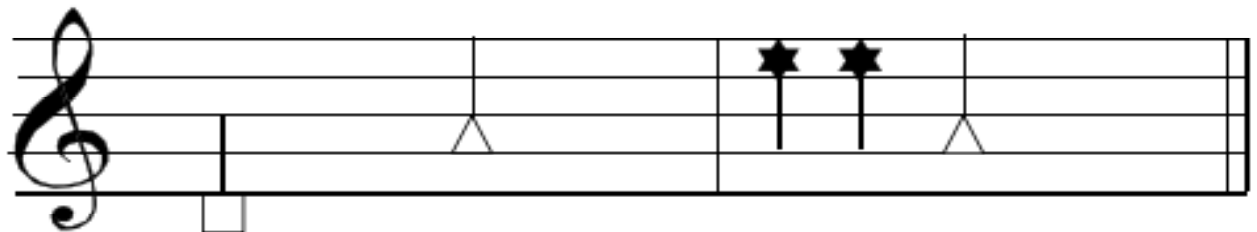
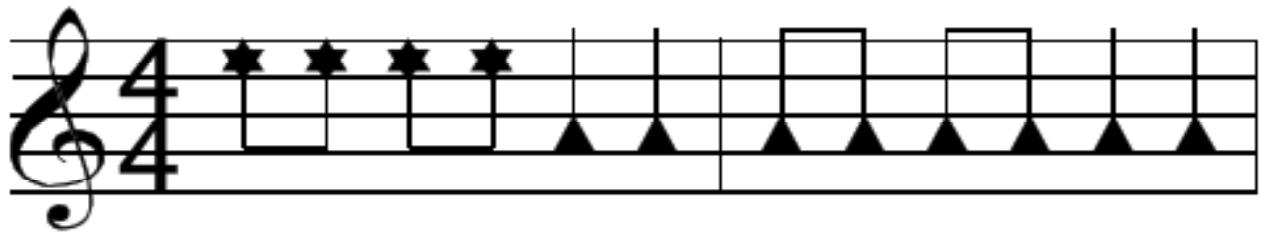
No.2



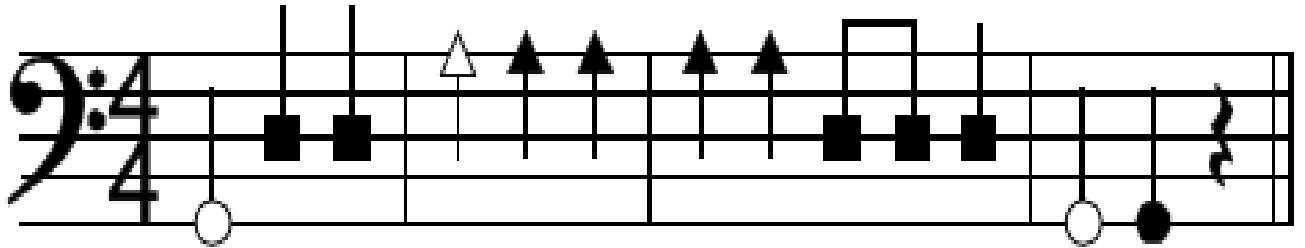
Level 3 Violin  
No.1



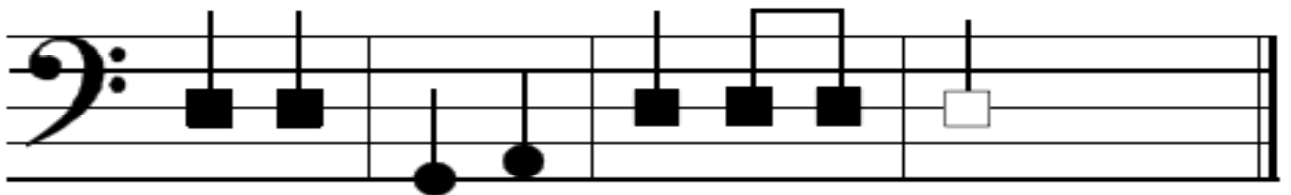
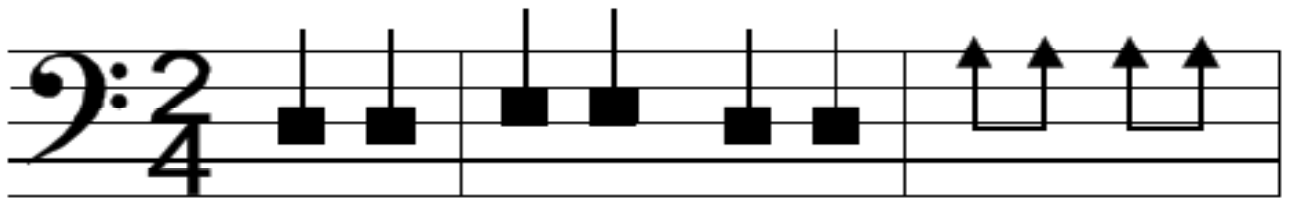
No.2



Level 3 Cello  
No.1



No.2



## Example Musicianship Tests

### Level 2

5

3rd Playing

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of music: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4; a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4; a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, an eighth note B4, a quarter note C5; and a half note G4 followed by a quarter rest. The second staff starts with a measure rest, followed by the same four measures as the first staff. The number '5' is written above the first measure of the second staff, and the text '3rd Playing' is written below the first measure of the second staff.

### Level 2

**A.** | | □ |

**B.** □ ♯ | |

**C.** | □ | □



Level 3

