

NEWS RELEASE

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From Beethoven to Barbie: Landmark Piano Syllabus pushes boundaries across repertoire, representation and learner resources

A landmark Piano Syllabus that gives students a richer learning experience, with multimedia resources 'built-in' to graded repertoire books, has been unveiled by ABRSM.

The 2027 & 2028 Piano Syllabus for Performance and Practical Grades covers Initial Grade and Grades 1 to 8. It is one of the most varied ever created by ABRSM and was developed to give musicians 'freedom to explore and flourish'.

The syllabus champions well-loved repertoire and classical greats alongside new commissions from exciting composers such as Nikki Yeoh and Nahre Sol. There are also arrangements of chart-topping hits from pop, stage and screen including from Billie Eilish (What Was I Made For? from *Barbie*), Taylor Swift (Enchanted), Stephen Swartz (Popular from *Wicked*) and Hans Zimmer (Day One from *Interstellar*) and international folk songs.

The new syllabus marks a further milestone for ABRSM, with all pieces in the repertoire books accompanied for the first time by a package of free multimedia learning resources. Pianists can scan a QR code to access audio recordings and 'birds-eye view' video performances of syllabus pieces featuring professionals and students from the Royal Schools of Music.

The new multimedia Piano Syllabus resources are available online. Designed to spark creativity and connection to the music, they also include practical exercises and tips to open up the stories behind each piece. ABRSM hopes they will motivate learners and teachers and make practice more engaging and meaningful.

ABRSM's Head of Music Development and Learning, Hazel Wieboldt, said: "The vibrant and wide-ranging repertoire in our Piano Syllabus 2027 & 2028 has been shaped by the voices of learners and teachers from all over the world. It's designed to give pianists the freedom they need to explore and flourish.

"What makes the new syllabus even more exciting are the free resources that we have built into the graded books. We have collaborated with musicians, composers and teachers to find new ways to bring the pieces to life online and deepen the learning experience for students.

"This syllabus reflects our ambition for every learner to see themselves in the music that ABRSM chooses, with new commissions and music from all genres shining side by side – alongside new ways to explore them."

The syllabus also features pieces by composers who are 'new' to ABRSM. Debut contributors include Indian composer Santosh Baynes, whose piece, *The Voyager*, features at Grade 1. Santosh is a graduate of ABRSM's composer mentoring programme which supports composers – many of them from underrepresented backgrounds - who want to write for music education.

There is also traditional music from Namibia, China and Ireland and works by classical composers, from Handel, Haydn and Bach to Clara Schumann, Florence Price, Prokofiev and Bartok. The syllabus is bookended by Beethoven pieces for Grades 1 and 8 to mark the 2027 bicentenary of his death.

Additionally, due to popular demand the new Piano Syllabus expands the options available for pianists playing with one hand. Repertoire for one hand is now available for Performance Grades at Grades 6 to 8 as well as Grades 1 to 5.

Ends

Note to editors

1. Full details of the new syllabus and accompanying resources are available [here](#)
2. The new syllabuses are available now and can be used in exams from 1 January 2027. The 2025 & 2026 syllabus remains valid until 31 December 2027.
3. Piano Exam Pieces books for Initial Grade and Grades 1 to 8, each featuring nine new pieces selected from the syllabus are available from music retailers worldwide and from abrs.org/shop for UK customers.
4. ABRSM's Piano Practice Partner apps will be refreshed with the new syllabus repertoire from June, and digital sheet music and other interactive collaborator services will be available from licenced platforms from September 2026.
5. ABRSM is The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, a global music education charity providing face-to-face and digital exams, sheet music, recordings, apps and courses for students and teachers around the world. As a charity their donations encompass a range of grants, scholarships, awards, prizes, and bursaries, for organisations and individuals. Visit the website [here](#).

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