

JAMB Music Syllabus

Last Updated: 2025

General Objectives

1. Appreciate and discuss music fairly and critically
2. Identify, through written/oral analysis, the features of the music of different periods of Western and African music theory history, peoples, its forms, and the media
3. Appreciate the influence of socio-cultural and technological factors on the lives and music of musicians
4. Attain a sound musical basis for further learning at the tertiary level

1. RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC

The staff

Content:

- great staff
- ledger lines and spaces
- open score (vocal score)
- C clef, alto (viola clef), and tenor clef

Learning Objectives:

1. identify all the components of the staff and their application

Music Notes/Rests and their corresponding values

Learning Objectives:

1. determine the relative duration of different notes and rests
2. interpret varied rhythmic patterns

Time/Time signature

Content:

- simple and compound time signatures
- the correct grouping of notes
- barring of unbarred passages

Key signatures and scales

Content:

- technical names of the various degrees of the scale
- diatonic major/minor (natural, harmonic, and melodic)
- chromatic scales
- Determination of the key of a piece of music with or without key signature NOT exceeding two sharps and two flats

Learning Objectives:

1. ascertain names of the various degrees of the diatonic scales
2. identify simple scale passages with or without key signature

Keyboard setting and enharmonic equivalents

Content:

- Accidentals

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the names of the white and black keys and their relationship,

Intervals

Content:

- Recognition of diatonic/chromatic intervals and their inversions (e.g. perfect unison, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, perfect 8ve), major/minor 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th, diminished 5th, and augmented 4th
- Recognition of consonant and dissonant intervals

Learning Objectives:

1. determine different qualities of intervals (melodic and harmonic)

Definition of simple musical terms, signs, and abbreviations

Learning Objectives:

1. interpret simple musical signs and terms

Transcription and transposition

Content:

- Transcription of music from staff into tonic solfa notation and vice-versa
- Transposition using the treble (G) and bass (F) staves NOT exceeding two sharps and two flats

Learning Objectives:

1. read music in any given notation
2. rewrite a music passage on a given stave

2. HARMONY

Triads and their inversions

Content:

- Primary triads in major keys
- Secondary triads in major keys
- Primary triads are I, IV and V in major scales but i, iv, and V in harmonic minor scales

Learning Objectives:

1. identify triads
2. compare types of triads
3. determine the use of triads

Chord progressions

Content:

- Basic chord progressions in four parts vocal style (SATB) in major keys NOT exceeding two sharps and two flats
- Dominant 7th chord in root position only

Learning Objectives:

1. determine the basic chord progressions in a music passage
2. recognize the dominant 7th chord

Kinds of motion

Content:

- Parallel, similar, contrary and oblique

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the various kinds of motion in a musical passage

Cadences

Content:

- perfect/full close cadence
- imperfect/half close/semi cadence
- plagal/Amen cadence
- interrupted/deceptive/evaded/surprise cadence

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the various types of cadences in a musical score

Non-harmonic tones/Non-chord tones

Content:

- neighboring tones/auxiliary notes
- passing tones/notes

Learning Objectives:

1. relate harmonic or non-harmonic tones to the chords with which they are associated

Modulation

Content:

- Simple diatonic modulations (using a single melodic line) from any given major key NOT exceeding two sharps and two flats to any of its closely related keys (dominant and subdominant)

Learning Objectives:

1. determine the key of a given melody and its modulation

Elementary Composition

Content:

- Setting of words to written melody
- Recognition of suitable answers to given musical phrases

Learning Objectives:

1. identify suitable melody to given words, compatible and balanced (parallel or contrasting) phrases

3. HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Nigerian folksongs

Content:

- Types: cradle, folk-tales, games, war, satirical, dirges/funeral, historical, praise and worksong, etc.
- Forms: call and response, strophic, through-composed, etc.
- Characteristics:
- Vocal styles: recitative, yodeling, ululation, incantation, heaving, whistling, etc.
- Scales/modes: tritonic, tetratonic, pentatonic, hexatonic etc.
- Metre/Rhythm: Metric and non-metric, polymetric, cross-rhythm, syncopation, hemiola, polyrhythm, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. identify various folksongs and their types
2. define and compare their forms and features

Features and forms of Nigerian traditional music and other arts

Content:

- Festivals: e.g. Osun, Ifa, Ogun, Ekpo, Ofala, Iri-ji (New Yam Festival), Ovia Osese, Mmanwu (Masquerade), Ila-Oso, Argungu (Fishing), Eyo/Adamu Orisa, Gelede, etc.
- Dances and other arts: Social, Ritual and Ceremonial e.g. Masquerade, Koroso, Atilogwu, Ikperikpe (Wardance), Egedeege, Kwaghir, Agbon, Nkwa Umuagbogho, Bata, Bori, Swange, Dundun, Kokoma, Abigbo, Okonko, etc

Learning Objectives:

1. analyze the features and forms of Nigerian traditional music and the arts
2. differentiate between the various types of festivals and dances

Nigerian traditional musical instruments

Content:

- Aerophones: kakaki, algaita, sarewa, pedete, obati, farai, kaho, imar, mongom, taluk, damalgo, etc.
- Chordophones: goge, kukuma, komo, kwamsa, kuntigi, lasha, molo, garaya, gurmi, etc.
- Idiophones: kundung, karawa, shantu, etc.
- Membranophones: ganga, tambari, taushi, banga, balle, kuntuku, kalangu, gangan-noma, tandu, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. differentiate between the various types and classes of musical instruments
2. classify them into their categories

African traditional musicians

Content:

- Nigerian musicians: Sani Sabulu, Sani Dan Indo, Hassan Wayam, Barmani Coge, Danlami Nasarawa, Garba Super, Dankwairo, Aminu mai Asharalle, Shehu Ajilo, Dan Maraya Jos, Dan Alalo, Mamman Shata, Haruna Uje, etc.
- Other African musicians: Vinoko Akpalu, Daniel Amponsah (alias koo Nimo), Efua Basa, Kwaa Mensah, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. identify different groups to which various musicians belong
2. trace their biographies
3. analyze their musical styles
4. assess their contributions to the music industry

Evolution and Development of African Popular Music

Content:

- Highlife, Afro-beat, Fuji, Apala, Reggae, Makosa, Ikwoirikwo, Okukuseku, Ekassa, Akuko na egwu, Awurebe, Waka, Hiplife, Hip-hop, Juju, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. differentiate one musical genre from another
2. examine their influence on society

African Popular Musicians

Content:

- Nigerian musicians: Bongos Ikwe, Oliver De Coque, Nelly Uchendu, Osita Osadebe, Bright Chimezie, Bobby Benson, Victor Uwaifo, Sonny Okosun, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, I. K. Dairo, Victor Olaiya, Ebenezer Obey, Sunny Ade, Fatai Rolling Dollar, Bala Miller, Alhaji Uba Rawa, Zaaki Adzee, 2Face, PSquare, Djnee, Paul Play Dairo, Eedris Abdulkareem, D'Banj, SunnyNeji, Lagbaja, Zule Zoo, Daddy Showkey, Majek Fashek, Ras Kimono, Jeremiah Gyang, Flavour, Olamide, M.I, Iyanya, Wizkid, Davido, Omawunmi, Lara George, Sola Allynson, Ara, Asa, Onyeka Onwenu, Christy Essien-Igbokwe, Nasir Hausawa, etc.

- Other African musicians: Manu Dibango, E. T. Mensah, Jerry Hansen, Kofi Olomide, Awilo Logomba, Papa Wemba, Salif Kaita, Angelina Kidjo, Lucky Dube, Yvonne Chakachaka, Brenda Fasie, Sarkodie, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. relate the musicians to the music they perform
2. trace their biographies
3. examine their type of music
4. assess their contributions to the development of music

African Art Musicians

Content:

- Nigerians: W. W. C. Echezona, Laz Ekwueme, Sam Akpabot, Ikoli Harcourt Whyte, Joshua Uzoigwe, Mosun Omibiyi-Obidike, Tunji Vidal, Ademola Onibon-okuta, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. relate the musicians to the music they perform
2. trace their biographies
3. examine their type of music
4. assess their contributions to the development of music

4. HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF WESTERN MUSIC

Historical development of Western music styles

Content:

- Medieval/Middle Age (800-1400)
- Renaissance period (1400-1600)
- Baroque period (1600-1750)
- Classical period (1750-1820)
- Romantic period (1820-1900)

Learning Objectives:

1. trace the stages of the development of western musical practice from the medieval to the end of the romantic period

Composers

Content:

- Palestrina, Claudio Monteverdi, Henry Purcell, J.S. Bach, G. F. Handel, W. A. Mozart, Franz Joseph Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Frederic Chopin, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the composers
2. assess their contributions

Music forms and media

Content:

- Binary, Ternary, Rondo, Sonata Allegro, Dance Suite, Canon, Free Fantasia, Theme and variation, etc.
- Orchestral and Band instruments and classifications
- The human voice (its types, ranges and qualities)
- Keyboard Instruments: the organ, piano and electronic keyboard, etc.
- Knowledge of other instruments: ukulele, banjo, guitar, mandolin, harp, accordion, xylophone, marimba, etc.
- Computer Music Technology: software (Finale, Sibelius, Cubase, Reason, Sound Forge Nero), tuning fork, pitch pipe, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the general forms and various types of instruments in Western music
2. relate music to modern technology

5. AFRICAN POPULAR MUSIC AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Black musicians in the diaspora

Content:

• Mighty Sparrow, James Brown, Bob Marley, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Lionel Richie, R. Kelly, Lorrinan Hill, Kirk Franklin, Tupac Shakur, Shabba Ranks, Quincy Jones, Boyz II Men, Sean Paul, Janet Jackson, Whitney Houston, Beyonce, Brandy, Usher, Kevin Lyttle, Bobby Brown, M. C. Hammer, L. L. Cool J., Dr. Dre, Snoop Doggy, Mary J. Blige, Jay Z, Chris Brown, Bruno Mars, Neo, Rihanna, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the musicians in the diaspora
2. assess their musical influence on the global society

Musical genres

Content:

• negro spiritual, gospel music, jazz, rhythm and blues, soul, calypso, rock 'n' roll, reggae, afro-beat, tango, rap, chachacha, bolero, twist, hip-hop, etc.

Learning Objectives:

1. identify the various forms of musical genres
2. trace the origins of the musical genres

Spirit of nationalism in Nigerian music

Learning Objectives:

1. identify some of the features and materials used by nationalist composers to create, project and sustain cultural and patriotic awareness
2. assess their roles in Nigerian nationalism

Recommended Textbooks

1. Akpabot, S. E. (1986). Foundation of Nigerian Traditional Music, Ibadan: Spectrum.
2. Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (1958). Rudiments of Music, London.
3. Cole, W. (1969). The Form of Music, London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.
4. Echezona, W. W. C. (1981). Nigerian Musical Instruments, Enugu: Apollo Publishing Ltd.
5. Ekwueme, L. (1993). Choir Training and Choral Conducting for Africans, Lagos: Lenaus Advertising and Publishing Company.
6. Holst, I. (1963). An ABC of Music, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
7. Hosier, (1961). Instruments of the Orchestra, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Hunt, R. (1960). Elements of Music.
9. Inanga, A. (1993). Music for Secondary Schools Vols. I and II, Ibadan: Spectrum.

10. Kamien, R. (1990). Music: An Appreciation, London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.
11. Kennedy, M. (1985). The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music, (Third Edition), London: Oxford University Press.
12. Kitson, C. H. (1978). Elementary Harmony Book 2, London: Oxford University Press.
13. Kofoworola, Z. O. and Lateef, Y. (1987). Hausa performing Arts and Music, Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.
14. Lovelock, W. (1953). A Concise History of Music, London: Bell and Hyman.
15. Lovelock, W. (1996). The Rudiments of Music, London: G. Bell and sons Limited.
16. Machlis, J. (1977). The Enjoyment of Music, New York: W.W. Norton.
17. Mensah, A. A. (Undated) Folk Songs for Schools, Accra.
18. Morris, R. O. (1974). The Oxford Harmony, Vol. I, London: Oxford University Press.
19. Nketia, J. H. (1974). African Music, New York: W. W. Norton Company.
20. Palmer, K. (1965). Teach Yourself Music, London: The English University Press Limited.
21. Reed, H. O. (1954). Basic Music: A Basic Theory Test, New York: N. Y. Mills Music Inc.
22. Taylor, E. (1989). The Guide to Music Theory, London: The Associated Board of The Royal School of Music.
23. Warburton, A.O. (1955). Graded Music Course for Schools, Books I-III, London: Longman.