

NATIONAL PIANO ASSOCIATES

PIANO DECATHLON SYLLABUS

Revised 2024

PIANO DECATHLON is a certificate program of levels for students from beginning through professional. Every level includes a technical evaluation of five items and a repertoire evaluation of five items for a total of ten (deca). The structure is designed to help students achieve their goals by setting annual benchmarks towards that goal. Senior awards are given as an incentive for students to study piano from childhood up through until the end of high school

TECHNICAL EVALUATIONS

Technical Evaluations are required of every level except Levels 12 and PD4 at which it is understood that all previous levels have been fulfilled. These evaluations consist of scales, chords, arpeggios, an etude, and a musicianship skill. TECHNICAL EVALUATIONS ARE PRE-RECORDED ONLY AND ARE DUE NO LATER THAN APRIL 1. Participants will receive an evaluation sheet with feedback from the judge and a bronze, silver, or gold medal for Satisfactory, Excellent, or Superior scores respectively. This is a prerequisite to the Repertoire Evaluation and the Repertoire Evaluation Sheet has a place for the teacher to fill in the results. Everything on the program should be performed by memory except for transposition (original key only) and lead sheets. Those who wish to read from the score for the etude requirement should apply for the recreational version of this evaluation. Recreational Technical Evaluations receive a pin in lieu of a medal.

REPERTOIRE EVALUATIONS

Repertoire Evaluations are required of every level and should be scheduled as ten minutes for beginners, twenty minutes for intermediates, thirty minutes for advanced, and a full hour for Diplomas. Participants will receive an evaluation sheet with feedback from the judge and a certificate. Additionally, an Excellent rating will receive a blue seal and a Superior rating will receive a gold seal on their certificates. Those who wish to read from the score at this performance should apply for the recreational version of this evaluation. Recreational Repertoire Evaluations are rated as Pass or Fail and are not eligible for blue or gold seals. Technical Evaluations are a prerequisite to the Repertoire Evaluation and the Repertoire Evaluation Sheet has a place for the teacher to fill in the results. Intermediate evaluations (Levels 5-8) include a Basic Musicianship Test and students Levels 9 and above should bring printed program notes. Repertoire Evaluations can be performed in person, virtual live, or pre-recorded. Live auditions take place in May on the weekend before Memorial Day in New York City. Pre-recorded auditions are due one week in advance.

CHAMBER PROGRAMS

Students of every level are encouraged to play chamber music but chamber programs are only required for Levels 9 and above. CHAMBER PROGRAMS ARE PRE-RECORDED ONLY AND ARE DUE NO LATER THAN MARCH 15. These are for verification purposes only and will not be evaluated. Chamber music need not be performed by memory except for the Concerto requirement that replaces chamber music in Levels 11, PD3, and AD2.

CONCERTO PROGRAM

A Concerto replaces chamber music in Levels 11, PD3, and AD2. CONCERTO PROGRAMS ARE PRE-RECORDED ONLY AND ARE DUE NO LATER THAN MARCH 15. These are for verification purposes only and will not be evaluated. Concerti should be performed by memory except for students that are playing a Recreational Repertoire Evaluation.

BASIC MUSICIANSHIP TEST

Intermediate students (Levels 5-8) should perform a scale and chord progression in the key of each piece at their Repertoire Evaluations except for pieces that are modal or atonal.

PROGRAM NOTES

Program notes are required at Repertoire Evaluations for Levels 9 and above. Length should be limited to one paragraph per piece.

GUIDELINES:

1. One or two sentences about the piece (key, time signature, form, tempo marking, definition of the name, collection from which the piece is from). For example: *Waltz in Bb major Opus 18 by Chopin is the first in a collection of 25 waltzes that Chopin wrote. A Waltz is a dance in 3/4 time.*

2. One or two sentences about the composer stating dates, nationality, and stylistic musical era. For example: *Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a Baroque composer from Germany.*
3. List of other repertoire by this composer for the piano. For example: *For the piano, Beethoven wrote 32 piano sonatas, several sets of variations, Bagatelles, and five concerti.*
4. Identify for what this composer is well known. For example: *Schubert is well known for his Lieder (German poetry set to music for singer and piano).* Please also include what else they wrote besides piano music. For example: *Brahms also wrote symphonies, choral music, and a great deal of chamber music.*

SENIOR AWARDS

Senior Ribbon: Any high school senior of any level that has participated in technical and repertoire evaluations will receive a ribbon.

Senior Certificate: Any high school senior that completes up to at least Level 8 of the program will receive a certificate in a certificate holder in addition to the Senior Ribbon.

Senior Diploma: Any high school junior or above that completes the requirements for the Senior Diploma will receive a diploma in a diploma case and an engraved plaque in addition to the Senior Ribbon.

POST-DIPLOMA AWARDS

Professional Diploma: Students that have already acquired the Senior Diploma or the equivalent can take the Professional Diploma Evaluation after completing levels PD 1-3 and receive a diploma in a diploma case and an engraved plaque.

Artist Diploma: Students that have already acquired the Professional Diploma or the equivalent can complete the Artist Diploma requirements and receive a diploma in a diploma case and a plaque.

LEVELS

The levels are meant to coincide with school grades for those who wish to be ready to audition for music college their senior year of high school completing a Senior Diploma. This is only a guideline and not a requirement as seniors of any level are eligible for the Senior Ribbon and seniors Levels 8 and above are eligible for the Senior Certificate. Furthermore, students planning to audition for music college may choose to work ahead by one level and perform their Senior Diplomas at the end of Junior year in order to spend Senior year focusing on audition preparation.

Levels are categorized as beginner (levels 1-4), intermediate (levels 5-8), college preparatory (levels 9-12), avocational post diploma (APD), professional diploma (PD), and Artist Diploma (AD).

Levels can be divided into two years at the teacher's discretion using the letters A and B to identify a program as the first or second year of the same level. For example: If choosing to split Level 6 into Levels 6A and 6B, Level 6A is understood to be incomplete in some way such as simplifying sections of the Technical Evaluation and performing only two of the four required pieces. All that is missing in Level 6A should be completed in 6B. For example: if the student played a Baroque and a Classical piece in level 6A, they should prepare a Romantic and Contemporary piece in Level 6B.

UNDERREPRESENTED COMPOSERS

Though not required for any of the levels or diplomas, students are highly encouraged to include an underrepresented composer in their programs. Some examples are women composers, non western composers, or composers of color in order to balance the standard repertoire with some of the contributions to the piano repertoire made by composers that have been overlooked.

RECREATIONAL TECHNICAL AND REPERTOIRE EVALUATIONS

Any student of any level may choose to play a Recreational version of their program meaning that the repertoire does not need to be played by memory. Scales, chords, arpeggios, and ear training will still need to be played by memory. These evaluations are graded as Pass or Fail and are not eligible for medals, seals, or diplomas but can still receive a Senior Ribbon in their senior year. A Recreational Technical Evaluation receives a pin, and a Recreational Repertoire Evaluation receives a certificate.

PRE-DECATHLON

Beginning students (Levels 1-4) can limit their repertoire evaluations to fewer than five pieces (minimum two) and receive a Pre-Decathlon Certificate. These are still eligible for blue and gold seals and are not considered incomplete as the student may move on to the next level.

EVALUATION GUIDELINES: BEGINNER LEVELS

Level 1

Technical Evaluation:

Scales, Chords, and Arpeggios: C Major and G Major Pentascales with broken and block triads hands separate or together

Musicianship Skill: Any Major Scale in Tetrachords ascending and descending singing solfege names (choose key for vocal ease)

Etude: any easy exercise from a method book or technique book

Repertoire Evaluation:

At least one piece from the current method book in use

At least one supplementary piece by another composer or from another series

Up to three more pieces to complete the five needed for Decathlon otherwise it can be categorized as Pre-Decathlon

Level 2

Technical Evaluation:

Scales, Chords, and Arpeggios: Major and minor Pentascales with broken and blocked triads hands together in C D E F G A and B

Musicianship Skill: a tune by ear played in three keys

Etude: an easy or arranged elementary etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

At least one piece from the current method book in use

At least one supplementary piece by another composer or from another series

Up to three more pieces to complete the five needed for Decathlon otherwise it can be categorized as Pre-Decathlon

Level 3

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: C, G, D, A, E, B and F Major, one octave hands together

Chords: Authentic Cadences with both chords in root position hands together (same keys as above)

Arpeggios: broken chords in both hands with a cross over tonic (same keys as above)

Musicianship Skill: play from a lead sheet in the original key and transpose it to one other key (score may be used in original key only)

Etude: an easy or arranged elementary etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

At least one piece from the current method book in use

At least one supplementary piece by another composer or from another series

Up to three more pieces to complete the five needed for Decathlon otherwise it can be categorized as Pre-Decathlon

Level 4

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, and Gb Major, one octave hands separate or together

Chords: Authentic Cadences in common tone voicing hands separate or together (same keys as above)

Arpeggios: Extended position one octave hands separate or together (same keys as above)

Musicianship Skill: a simple piece in the original key and transposed to one other key (score may be used in the original key only)

Etude: an easy or arranged elementary etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

At least one piece from the current method book

At least one piece from a repertoire album

Up to three more pieces to complete the five needed for Decathlon otherwise it can be categorized as Pre-Decathlon

EVALUATION GUIDELINES: INTERMEDIATE LEVELS

Level 5

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: C-a, G-e, and F-d (minors in harmonic form only), two octaves

Chords: Mixed cadence I IV6/4 I V6/3 V6/5 I both hands playing chords (same keys as above)

Arpeggios: Two octaves (same keys as above)

Musicianship Skill: play a vocalise in all twelve major keys ascending chromatically

Etude: an early intermediate etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One piece from Notebook for Anna Magdalena

One easy Classical piece

One easy Romantic piece

One easy 20th/21st century piece

Basic Musicianship Test

Level 6

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: Bb-g, Eb-c, and Ab-f (minors in harmonic form only), two octaves

Chords: Inverted Triads (same keys as above)

Arpeggios: Two octaves (same keys as above)

Musicianship Skill: a tune by ear harmonized with I IV V chords played in three keys

Etude: an early intermediate etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One piece by a Baroque composer other than Bach

One easy Classical piece

One easy Romantic piece

One easy 20th/21st century piece

Basic Musicianship Test

Level 7

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: D-b, A-f#, and E-c# (minors in harmonic form only), three octaves

Chords: Plagal and Authentic Cadences in three positions, hands together both playing chords (same keys as above)

Arpeggios: Three octaves hands together (same keys as above)

Musicianship Skill: play from a lead sheet (preferably one that includes secondary chords and seventh chords)

Etude: a mid or late intermediate etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One Little Prelude by Bach (BWV 924-943)

One mid or late intermediate Classical piece

One mid or late intermediate Romantic piece

One mid or late intermediate 20th/21st century piece

Basic Musicianship Test

Level 8

Chamber Program: open choice, highly encouraged for anyone receiving a Senior Certificate

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: B-g#, Gb-eb, and Db-bb (minors in harmonic form only), four octaves hands together

Chords: Mixed cadence I IV I V V7 I in three positions both hands playing chords and with legato pedal (same keys as above)

Arpeggios: Four octaves hands together (same keys as above)

Musicianship Skill: an early intermediate piece in the original key and transposed to one other key (score may be used in the original key only)

Etude: a late intermediate etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

- One Two Part Invention by Bach
- One late intermediate Classical piece
- One late intermediate Romantic piece
- One late intermediate 20th/21st century piece
- Basic Musicianship Test

EVALUATION GUIDELINES: COLLEGE PREPARATORY LEVELS

Level 9

Chamber Program: open choice

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: C C# D and Eb Major and parallel minor (three forms), four octaves

Chords: The Hanon Progression (ii6/5 I6/4 V7 I) in keyboard voicing (RH chords, LH octaves) in E F F# and G Major and minor

Arpeggios: Ab A Bb and B Major and minor, inverted broken chords extended to the octave

Musicianship Skill: Modulations ascending in chromatic order (Major keys only)

Etude: an early to mid advanced etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One Baroque piece by a composer other than Bach

One Classical piece

One Romantic piece

One 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Level 10

Chamber Program: a piece performed with another instrument

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: E F F# and G Major, four octaves (two octaves parallel and two octaves contrary)

E F F# and G harmonic and melodic minor, four octaves (parallel only)

E F F# and G Major in two against three

Chords: Deceptive Cadences (I IV ii V7 vi) in keyboard voicing (RH chords, LH octaves) in Ab A Bb and B Major and minor

Arpeggios: C C# D and Eb Major and minor keys in three positions, four octaves

Musicianship Skill: a tune by ear, harmonized using primary, secondary, and secondary dominant chords, arranged pianistically and including a modulation to another key OR a lead sheet following the same standards above

Etude: an advanced etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One Three Part Invention by Bach

One Classical piece

One Romantic piece

One 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Level 11

Concerto: one movement

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: Ab A Bb and B Major, four octaves in 6ths and 10ths

Ab A Bb and B harmonic minor, two octaves in parallel octaves

Ab A Bb and B melodic minor, four octaves

Chords: C C# D and Eb Major, dominant, minor, half diminished, and fully diminished inverted seventh chords

Arpeggios: E F F# and G Dominant and diminished seventh chords (root position only)

Musicianship Skill: a late intermediate piece transposed to another key (score may be used in the original key only)

Etude: an advanced etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One movement of a Baroque Dance Suite (study of the complete suite highly encouraged)

One Classical piece

One Romantic piece

One 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Level 12 (as an alternative to the Senior Diploma)

Chamber Program or Concerto: optional (level 10 chamber and level 11 concerto should have been previously completed)

Technical Evaluation: exempt (up to Level 11 should have been previously completed)

Repertoire Evaluation:

A Prelude and Fugue by J.S. Bach (from 18 Little Preludes and Fugues or Well Tempered Clavier)

One Classical piece

One Romantic piece

One 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Senior Recital: optional

SENIOR DIPLOMA

Chamber Program or Concerto: optional (level 10 chamber and level 11 concerto should have been previously completed)

Technical Evaluation: exempt (up to Level 11 should have been previously completed)

Diploma Approval Jury: teacher is encouraged to have a mid-year evaluation at which 50% of the diploma program should be performed in place of the technical evaluation

Repertoire Evaluation:

A Prelude and Fugue from the Well-Tempered Clavier

A complete Classical Sonata

One advanced Romantic piece

One advanced 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Diploma Recital: a program of at least three contrasting works

POST DIPLOMA LEVELS

***Students that are not looking towards a Professional Diploma may do an Avocational version of this program. Modifications are at the teacher's discretion and the level should be preceded by an Upper Case A. For example: APD1, 2, 3, or 4**

PD 1

Chamber Program: a complete work for four hands or two pianos

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: C C# D and Eb Major and parallel minor (three forms), four octaves

Chords: The Hanon Progression (ii6/5 I6/4 V7 I) in keyboard voicing (RH chords, LH octaves) in E F F# and G Major and minor

Arpeggios: Ab A Bb and B Major and minor in three positions, four octaves

Musicianship Skill: Modulations ascending in chromatic order (Major keys only)

Etude: an advanced etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One piece by a Baroque composer other than Bach

One Classical piece

One Romantic piece

One 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

PD 2

Chamber Program: a complete work with another instrument(s)

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: E F F# and G Major and parallel harmonic minor, four octaves (two octaves parallel and two octaves contrary)

E F F# and G melodic minor scales (parallel only)

E F F# and G Major in three against four

Chords: Deceptive Cadences (I IV ii V7 vi) in keyboard voicing (RH chords, LH octaves) in Ab A Bb and B Major and minor

Arpeggios: C C# D and Eb Major and minor, inverted broken chords extended to the octave
Two octaves regular and Alberti pattern (root, 5th, 3rd, oct)

Musicianship Skill: a tune by ear, harmonized using primary, secondary, and secondary dominant chords, arranged pianistically and including a modulation to another key OR a lead sheet following the same standards above

Etude: an advanced etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

One movement of a Baroque Dance Suite (study of the complete suite highly encouraged)

One Classical piece

One Romantic piece

One 20th/21st century piece

Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

PD 3

Concerto: complete

Technical Evaluation:

Scales: Ab A Bb and B Major and parallel harmonic minor in 6ths

Ab A Bb and B Major in double thirds and octaves, two octaves

Chords: C C# D and Eb Major, Dominant, minor, half diminished, and diminished inverted seventh chords

Arpeggios: The Eleven Arpeggios starting on E F F# and G (root position Major and minor, first inversion Major and minor, second inversion Major and minor, root position and the three inversions of the dominant seventh, and the fully diminished seventh)

Musicianship Skill: an early advanced piece transposed to another key (score may be used in the original key only)

Etude: an advanced etude

Repertoire Evaluation:

- A Baroque piece that includes a Fugue
- One Classical piece
- One Romantic piece
- One 20th/21st century piece
- Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

PD 4 (as an alternative to the Professional Diploma)

Chamber Program or Concerto: optional (level PD2 chamber and level PD3 concerto should have been previously completed)

Technical Evaluation: exempt (up to Level PD3 should have been previously completed)

Repertoire Evaluation:

- Open Choice
- Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Recital: optional

PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA

Chamber Program or Concerto: optional (level PD2 chamber and level PD3 concerto should have been previously completed)

Technical Evaluation: exempt (up to level PD3 should have been previously completed)

Diploma Approval Jury: teacher is encouraged to have a mid-year evaluation at which 50% of the diploma program should be performed

Repertoire Evaluation:

- A balanced program of solo repertoire including at least one complete work
- Program Notes for all pieces performed at this evaluation

Diploma Recital: a public performance of the Repertoire Evaluation

ARTIST DIPLOMA Year 1

Chamber Program: one complete work

Technical Evaluation: a Musicianship Project of the student's choice

Repertoire Evaluation:

Four selections planned for the Solo Recital and/or Etude Project

Coursework Proposal for all repertoire and projects for the Artist Diploma

ARTIST DIPLOMA Year 2

Concerto: one complete concerto

Technical Evaluation: an Etude project consisting of at least three etudes

Repertoire Evaluation:

A balanced program of solo repertoire that includes at least two complete works.

Program Notes for all the repertoire of the Artist Diploma

Diploma Recital: a public performance of the repertoire performed at the Diploma Evaluation