

## GUIDELINES FOR DRESSAGE TO MUSIC

Compiled by Linda Whetstone and edited by Stephen Clarke. We would like to thank Jane Kidd for material from her booklet "*Dressage to Music*," published by BD & to Ken Barnsley who largely wrote the section on Music and Interpretation. Also, for ideas from the FEI "*Dressage Handbook – Guidelines for Judging*" and notes by FEI International Judge Katrina Wust and others who gave their time, expertise, and advice in creating these guidelines.

### JUDGING A FREESTYLE

Judging a freestyle is considerably more challenging than judging a standard test because not only does the judge have to mark the movements, which are not in a set order, but they also have to assess the artistic nature of the test.

This requires considerable concentration and the ability to simultaneously assess the variety of factors included in the music, choreography, degree of difficulty, gymnastic ability, and the harmony. The judge has to be aware of the general impression and not get too focused on one particular aspect. Just to study the beat, how it relates to the hoof beats, movements and transitions is pretty demanding but the technical aspects, the choreography and so on must not be neglected.

Of the artistic marks those for 'rhythm, energy and elasticity' relate closely to the paces and impulsion mark in a standard test while the 'harmony between horse and rider' relates to the co-operation and rider mark. They are therefore very dependent on the technical marks along with the 'degree of difficulty' mark. The 'choreography' and 'music' marks are more independent from the technical marks although there is still an important relationship between them.

More than 70% of the marks in a freestyle are influenced by technical performance. Nevertheless, results in freestyles tend to be slightly higher than those in standard tests. This is because riders have the opportunity to emphasise their horse's strong points and, to a certain extent, reduce emphasis on any weaknesses. Precision is not as important as in standard tests and riders can sometimes repeat a movement that went wrong at the first attempt. Also, the choreography and music marks, which are not as closely linked to the technical marks, often warrant higher marks.

The one aspect of the music that the judges must not assess is whether they like the music. The factors they are looking at are how well it harmonises with the paces and movements, the transitions, whether the music is interpreted by the competitor, whether there is a theme to it, how well it blends from one piece to the next, and if it suits the particular horse and rider. Personal tastes do not come into it, and this can be tough. Judges can find it difficult not to be affected by music they do not like or understand.

All freestyle tests ridden at national BD shows will be ridden under BD rules. Those ridden at shows under FEI rules in the UK will be ridden under FEI rules.

## **JUDGING TECHNIQUES**

### **RECORDING SCORES**

Whereas technical marks are given in relation to a clearly held image of what is a 'good' working trot or a 'good' piaffe, the artistic marks are relative to other combinations on the day. Therefore, it is important to keep a record of the artistic marks as they are given after each test. Most judges keep a piece of paper for themselves on which they can put down the artistic marks alongside the relevant competitor. Alternatively, they can use the Artistic Marks form at the end of these notes. This means that when they are marking the third rider, for example, they can look at the choreography mark for the first rider to check that they are giving a relatively fair mark for the third rider.

### **TAKING NOTES**

With all that has to be assessed some judges keep pen and paper handy so that they can jot down symbols to indicate what needs to be taken into account in the artistic marks or they can use the Artistic Marks form where there is a space for this. However, they have to be able to do this without missing anything that is going on in the arena.

### **WRITER**

Judges have to be very clear which movement they are marking. So, unlike the set test when they just give the comments and mark, in the freestyle they have to clearly name the movement that they are assessing, the pace and sometimes whether the movement is to the left or right. They should brief the writer that marks given for movements during the test all go in the 'mark' column and after the test a fair mark is decided upon for the final mark.

### **COMMENTS**

The most important factor is to get the marks right, and there is rarely the time to give much justification by comments. If there is time, a general point can be made at the end but usually with spectators watching the emphasis is on getting the next horse started.

### **MARKS**

Half marks can be used, i.e., 6.5 etc. A mark should be given each time a rider performs one of the compulsory movements even if it is the same mark as on the previous occasion. It helps to know how many times they have done a movement

when deciding on artistic marks, and to reach a fair mark for the final mark if the marks do differ.

Occasionally riders inadvertently omit one or more of the compulsory movements. If a judge is not sure whether all of the compulsory movements have been performed, they can confer with the other judges on the panel, with the judge at C making the final decision. If they are judging alone, they have to make a judgment based on their own best assessment. If a compulsory movement is poorly performed, the judge may not be sure whether it is being attempted. In this case a dot may be put in the appropriate box and if, at the end of the test, there is no mark for that movement it may be assumed that it was performed, but poorly, and an appropriate mark given.

## **FINAL MARKS**

Different judges have different ways of dealing with the final movement marks and the collective marks at the end of a test. Some judges take the results sheet from the writer as soon as the test is finished and fill in the final movement mark and the artistic marks. The artistic marks then need to be copied onto a piece of paper or the artistic marks form. Technical marks need to be considered but do not determine all the artistic marks.

Other judges:

1. Ask the writer to write in the final movement marks where no choice has to be made, for instance either because they are all 7's or a majority are the same mark.
2. At the same time the judge puts the artistic marks directly onto the artistic marks form but ensuring they take appropriate account of the technical marks.
3. They then transfer the artistic marks to the results sheet and put in the final movement marks while the writer heads up the next sheet.

## **TECHNICAL MARKS**

## **COMPULSORY MOVEMENTS**

Technical marks are given for the compulsory movements, and these compulsory movements are different at each level of dressage competition and are set out on the respective score sheets.

## **TRANSITIONS**

When the compulsory movement being assessed is an extended/medium canter or trot, the transitions at the beginning and end of it should be taken into account. Assessment of the fluency and thoroughness of transitions generally would be considered in the mark for harmony between horse and rider, unless stated on the mark sheet.

## **STANDARDS**

Whatever the level, the marks are given in the same way as in standard tests, i.e. out of 10 (half marks can be used), and the points associated with the corresponding descriptive word - 10 for excellent, 9 for very good, 8 for good, 7 for fairly good, 6 for satisfactory, 5 for sufficient, 4 for insufficient, 3 for fairly bad, 2 for bad, 1 for very bad and 0 for not performed. More often than in a standard test judges have to give 0 as riders quite often leave out a movement or do movements both in the same direction i.e., two left pirouettes and none to the right.

## **ARTISTIC MARKS**

Artistic marks can be scored in half marks, i.e., 6.5 etc.

## **RHYTHM, ENERGY AND ELASTICITY**

This is the mark that focuses on the gymnastic ability of the horse and corresponds with the two first collective marks from the straight tests - the Paces (freedom and regularity), and the Impulsion (desire to move forward, elasticity of steps, suppleness of the back and engagement of the hindquarters).

The mark reflects:

- The consistency of the rhythm and absolute regularity in all three paces
- The correctness of the tempo of every pace
- Freedom of the paces
- Elasticity and cadence of the paces
- Liveliness of the impulsion, activity, and engagement of the hind legs
- Suppleness and the swinging back
- Fluency of the movements

## **HARMONY BETWEEN RIDER AND HORSE**

Harmony is the essence of the Freestyle for this is what turns it into an artistic performance. This mark corresponds with the third and fourth collective marks from the standard tests - the Co-operation (attention and confidence, harmony, lightness and ease of movements, acceptance of the bridle, lightness of the forehand) and the Rider's Position and Seat (correctness and effect of the aids).

The mark reflects:

- Relaxation and confidence of the horse. Is he willingly attentive and co-operative?
- The quality of the contact
- The lightness and ease of the movements
- The fluency of the transitions
- Suppleness and balance of the rider
- Rider's subtle and effective influence

## CHOREOGRAPHY

This is one of the true artistic marks and is less dependent on the technical performance although strong resistances and mistakes will reduce the marks. The choreography of a freestyle can be innovative and surprising, but it must be in accordance with classical training and also the level of the training of the horse.

Key points to take into account for higher marks:

- Use of the whole arena
- Symmetrical nature of the movements
- Originality and creativity
- A flowing pattern
- A limited number of changes of pace
- Are all the movements easily recognisable?
- Clearly recognisable and harmonious changes within the paces
- Well combined exercises
- Movements are not shown excessively but provide highlights
- A good balance between straight lines and curves, extensions and collections, highlights and quieter moments
- The choreography should be designed and focused to the short side at C with movements away from C on the diagonal or down the long sides
- Are there dramatic moments combined with quieter phases and an impressive finish?

## MARKING OF PROHIBITED MOVEMENTS

In tests under BD rules if a competitor deliberately attempts a more difficult version of a permitted movement than is allowed at the level, marks below 5.0 should be awarded for the movement and the scores for choreography and degree of difficulty should be no higher than 5.5.

For example:

- In the Pony Freestyle more than half pirouettes in walk
- In the Junior Freestyle, more than half-pirouettes in walk, flying changes in four or less tempi sequence, more than one counter change of hand in canter
- In the Young Rider Freestyle, more than half pirouettes in walk or canter, one or two tempi changes (replacing the compulsory tempi changes)
- In the Intermediate Freestyles more than single pirouettes in canter and single tempi changes (replacing the compulsory changes)
- In the Grand Prix Freestyle, more than double pirouettes in canter

In tests under BD rules, if a prohibited movement is **deliberately** attempted it will receive two penalty points off the total score in national competition and the scores for choreography and degree of difficulty should not be more than 5.5.

In tests under FEI rules if a prohibited movement is **deliberately** attempted it only affects the scores for choreography and degree of difficulty and these should not be more than 5.5.

For example:

- In the Pony Freestyle flying changes, canter pirouettes, piaffe and passage
- In Junior Freestyle canter pirouettes, piaffe and passage
- In Young Rider Freestyle piaffe and passage
- In Intermediate Freestyle piaffe and passage
- In Grand Prix Freestyles airs above the ground

This will not be the case where a combination perhaps lost balance in a half pirouette and turned more than 180 degrees or due to lack of control made some tempi changes which were not permitted. In this instance, the mark for harmony would be reduced accordingly. Piaffe pirouettes may be performed, but for the piaffe to score more than 5.0 the minimum number of steps must be performed straight as well. Passage may be performed in half pass but will score no more than 5 unless performed straight as well.

### **IF A COMPULSORY MOVEMENT IS OMITTED**

If a compulsory movement is omitted 0.0 is given and this will also be reflected in the choreography and degree of difficulty marks which cannot be higher than 5.5 if only one compulsory movement is omitted, and 5.0 if more than one is omitted.

If a compulsory movement is only executed below the requirement, i.e., too few changes in a series or too few piaffe steps, the movement should be marked as technically insufficient providing that no other form of that particular exercise had been executed correctly. The choreography and degree of difficulty mark would also be adversely affected, and deduction should be made.

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE CHOREOGRAPHY MARK**

Marks of 5.5 or below should be given when a compulsory movement is not included, there is poor use of the arena, movements are difficult to identify, there is excessive use of one pace or one movement and depends on the number of these occurrences. If more than one compulsory movement is omitted the mark should not be higher than 5.0

Marks of 6.0 and 6.5 are appropriate when the movements are performed as set out in the standard tests at the level although in a different order.

Marks of 7.0 and 7.5 are warranted when the movements are performed successfully in innovative places or with innovative combinations.

Marks of 8.0 plus are warranted when the design of the pattern is balanced, and the combination of movements and transitions are particularly innovative and successfully achieved.

## **COMPULSORY, NON-COMPULSORY PERMITTED AND PROHIBITED MOVEMENTS**

The examples set out below are there for guidance and may not be exclusive.

In the case of a rider failing to halt at the beginning of the test we advise you to ring the bell and get them to start again, giving -2 off the total score. Omissions of any other movement will not permit a restart.

Permitted movements that are non-compulsory may be used to enhance the choreography.

A few things to consider -

- Walk should be shown 20m consecutively on a straight or curved line. Walk pirouettes may be embedded into the collected walk.
- Passage must be a minimum of 15m (previously 20m)
- Shoulder-in - will only be accepted/judged when the bend is ridden to the inside of the arena, however when performed on the centre line it can be ridden in either direction and should be accepted/judged.

## **GRAND PRIX**

**Time allowed 5 1/2 - 6 minutes.**

**Compulsory movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Extended trot
- Half pass right in collected canter
- Half pass left in collected canter
- Extended canter
- Flying changes every second stride (minimum 5 times consecutively)
- Flying changes every stride (minimum 9 times consecutively)
- Canter pirouette to right
- Canter pirouette to left
- Passage (minimum 15m on one track)
- Piaffe (minimum 10 steps straight)
- Transitions from passage to piaffe and from piaffe to passage
- The entrance and halts at the beginning and end of the test



**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Counter canter in any form
- Medium walk
- Walk pirouettes
- Rein back
- Stretching in trot and canter
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand in trot and canter
- Reins in one hand for maximum of 4 movements
- Full canter pirouettes from and into walk or halt will only be considered in the harmony and choreography sections

**Prohibited movements: -**

- More than two rotations (360 degrees) in canter (double canter pirouette)
- Airs above the ground

**INTERMEDIATE I**

**Time allowed 4 1/2- 5 minutes.**

**Compulsory movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Shoulder-in right in collected trot (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Shoulder-in left in collected trot (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Extended trot
- Half pass right in collected canter
- Half pass left in collected canter
- Extended canter
- Flying changes every third stride (minimum 5 times consecutively)
- Flying changes every second stride (minimum 5 times consecutively)
- Single pirouette in canter right
- Single pirouette in canter left
- The entrance and halts at the beginning and end of the test



### **Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Counter canter
- Medium walk
- Walk pirouettes
- Rein back
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand in trot
- Counter changes of hand in canter
- Reins in one hand for maximum of 4 movements
- Canter pirouettes performed from and into walk or halt will only be considered in the harmony and choreography sections

### **Prohibited Movements: -**

- More than 1 rotation through 360 degrees in canter (canter pirouette)
- Sequence changes every stride
- Airs above the ground
- Piaffe
- Passage
- Any other movements in standard tests above Intermediate level

## **YOUNG RIDER FREESTYLE/PRIX ST GEORGES**

**Time allowed 4 1/2- 5 minutes.**

### **Compulsory Movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Shoulder-in right in collected trot (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Shoulder-in left in collected trot (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Extended trot
- Half pass right in collected canter
- Half pass left in collected canter
- Extended canter
- Flying changes every fourth stride (minimum 5 times consecutively)
- Flying changes every third stride (minimum 5 times consecutively)
- Half pirouette in canter right
- Half pirouette in canter left
- The entrance and halts at the beginning and end of the test

### **Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Give and re-take of the reins
- Counter canter
- Medium walk
- Walk pirouettes (can be embedded in walk)
- Rein back
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand at trot
- Counter change of hand in canter
- Reins in one hand maximum four movements
- Half canter pirouettes from and into walk or halt will only be considered in the harmony and choreography sections and will not receive a technical mark.

### **Prohibited movements: -**

- More than a half rotation through 180 degrees in canter (half pirouettes)
- Sequence changes of two time or fewer
- Any other movements in standard tests above Prix St George

## **JUNIOR FEI FREESTYLE**

**Time allowed 4 1/2- 5 minutes.**

### **Compulsory movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Half pirouette in collected walk to the right and/or to the left (can be embedded in the walk)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Collected trot
- Shoulder-in right (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Shoulder-in left (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Extended trot
- Collected canter
- Half pass right in collected canter
- Half pass left in collected canter
- Flying change to the right
- Flying change to the left
- Extended canter
- The entrance and halts at the beginning and end of the test

### **Non- compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Give and re-take of the reins
- Counter canter
- Medium walk
- Rein back
- Extended canter
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand in trot
- Counter change of hand in canter (single change of direction each time shown)
- Reins in one hand maximum of four movements

### **Prohibited: -**

- Sequence changes of four time or fewer
- Walk pirouettes of more than 180 degrees
- Canter pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Any other movements in standard tests above Advanced Medium level

## **ADVANCED MEDIUM**

**Time allowed 4 1/2 - 5 minutes.**

### **Compulsory Movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Collected trot
- Extended trot
- Shoulder-in right in collected trot
- Shoulder-in left in collected trot
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Collected canter
- Medium canter
- Half pass right in collected canter
- Half pass left in collected canter
- One or more single flying change left to right
- One or more single flying change right to left
- Entry and halt at the beginning and halt at the end

**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Counter canter
- Medium walk
- Walk pirouettes
- Rein back
- Extended canter
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand in trot
- Counter change of hand in canter (single change of direction each time shown).
- Reins in one hand for a maximum of 4 movements

**Prohibited movements: -**

- Sequence changes of four times or fewer
- Walk pirouettes of more than 180 degrees
- Canter pirouettes / half pirouettes
- Piaffe
- Passage
- Any other movement in standard tests above Advanced Medium level

**PONY FEI FREESTYLE**

**Time allowed 4 1/2 – 5 minutes.**

**Compulsory movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Half pirouette in collected walk to the right and/or to the left
- Shoulder-in right in collected trot (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Shoulder-in left in collected trot (minimum 12 m consecutive)
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Extended trot
- Counter canter right (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Counter canter left (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Simple change of the leg to the right
- Simple change of the leg to the left
- Collected canter including a circle 8m to the left and/or the right
- Extended canter
- The entrance and halts at the beginning and the end of the test

**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Give and re-take of the reins
- Medium walk
- Rein back
- Extended trot and canter
- Leg yield
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand at trot
- Reins in one hand maximum four movements

**Prohibited movements: -**

- Flying changes
- Walk pirouettes more than 180 degrees
- Canter pirouette/half pirouettes
- Any other movements in standard tests above Medium level

**MEDIUM**

**Time allowed 4 1/2 – 5 minutes.**

**Compulsory movements: -**

- Collected walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Extended walk (minimum 20 m consecutive)
- Collected trot
- Medium trot
- Shoulder-in left in collected trot
- Shoulder-in right in collected trot
- Half pass left in collected trot
- Half pass right in collected trot
- Collected canter
- Medium canter
- Half pass left in collected canter
- Half pass right in collected canter
- Simple change left to right
- Simple change right to left
- Entry and halt at the beginning and halt at the end

**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size

- Walk half pirouettes
- Medium walk
- Rein back
- Extended trot and canter
- Give and re-take of the reins
- Leg yield
- Travers
- Renvers
- Counter changes of hand in trot
- Counter canter
- Reins in one hand for a maximum of four movements

**Prohibited movements: -**

- Flying changes
- Walk pirouettes more than 180 degrees
- Canter pirouette/half pirouettes
- Piaffe
- Passage
- Any other movements in standard tests above Medium level

**ELEMENTARY**

**Time allowed 41/2 - 5 minutes.**

**Compulsory Movements: -**

- Medium Walk (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Free walk on a long rein (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Collected trot left including circle 10m diameter
- Collected trot right including circle 10m diameter
- Medium trot
- Leg yield left in trot
- Leg yield right in trot
- Collected canter left including circle 15m diameter
- Collected canter right including circle 15m diameter
- Medium canter
- Simple change left to right
- Simple change right to left
- Entry and halt at the beginning and the halt at the end

**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Counter canter in any form

- Give and retake the reins
- Rein back
- Stretching in trot and canter
- Large half walk pirouettes
- Counter changes of hand in leg yield
- Canter to halt
- Shoulder-in

**Prohibited movements: -**

- Flying changes
- Walk pirouettes of more than 180 degrees
- Canter pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Piaffe
- Reins in one hand
- All lateral work other than shoulder-in and leg yield
- Any other movements in standard tests above Elementary level

**NOVICE**

**Time allowed 4-5 minutes.**

**Compulsory movements: -**

- Medium Walk (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Free walk on a long rein (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Working trot left, including circle 15m diameter
- Working trot right, including circle 15m diameter
- Show some medium trot strides
- Working canter left, including circle 20m diameter
- Working canter right, including circle 20m diameter
- Show some medium canter strides
- Entry and halt at the beginning and the halt at the end

**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Give and retake of the reins
- Rein back
- Change of leg through trot
- Counter canter in any form
- Stretching in trot
- More than a few strides of medium trot or canter
- Walk to canter



**Prohibited movements: -**

- Lateral work of any sort
- Simple changes
- Canter to halt
- Flying changes
- Walk pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Canter pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Piaffe
- Passage
- Reins in one hand
- Any other movement in standard tests above Novice level

**PRELIMINARY**

**Time allowed 4-5 minutes.**

**Compulsory movements: -**

- Free walk on a long rein (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Medium Walk (minimum 20m consecutive)
- Working trot left, including circle 20m diameter
- Working trot right, including circle 20m diameter
- On a 20m circle in working trot allow the horse to stretch for at least 20m
- Working canter left, including circle 20m diameter
- Working canter right, including circle 20m diameter
- Entry and halt at the beginning and the halt at the end
- Fluency of transitions

**Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Give and retake of the reins
- Change of leg through trot
- Shallow loops of up to 5m in trot and canter

**Prohibited movements: -**

- Medium and extended trot and canter
- Counter canter
- Rein back
- Lateral work of any sort
- Simple changes
- Canter to halt
- Flying changes

- Walk pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Canter pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Piaffe
- Passage
- Reins in one hand
- Any other movements/transitions in standard tests above preliminary level

## INTRODUCTORY

**Time allowed 3 1/2-4 minutes.**

### **Compulsory movements: -**

- 10m half circle to the left in medium walk
- 10m half circle to the right in medium walk
- Medium walk (minimum of 20m consecutive)
- Free walk on a long rein (minimum of 20m consecutive)
- Working trot right, **including** circle 20m diameter
- Working trot left, **including** circle 20m diameter
- On a 20m circle in trot allow the horse to stretch for at least 20m
- Entry and halt at the beginning and the halt at the end
- Fluency of the transitions

### **Non-compulsory permitted movements: -**

- Circles and half circles of any size
- Give and re-take of the reins

### **Prohibited movements: -**

- Canter (or any movements performed at the canter)
- Medium and extended trot
- Rein back
- Lateral work of any sort
- Walk pirouettes/half pirouettes
- Piaffe
- Passage
- Reins in one hand
- Any other movements in standard tests above Introductory level

## DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

There is no degree of difficulty marks at levels below medium so there is no benefit in making things particularly difficult unless it adds to the choreography. The degree of difficulty and well calculated risk mark is closely related to the technical performance. "The primary requirement is that the combination has adhered to the principles of

classical dressage. Within this limitation, higher marks will be earned by doing either the more difficult movements more frequently or movements in a more difficult sequence, or both.

It is a challenge for the rider to try more difficult things, but they should know that a failure, if the horse does not adhere to the classical principles, is very expensive. They will lose marks in more than one section.

The technical mark will be low because they did not perform the movement well, the degree of difficulty mark will be lower because they lost the classical principles and so will the harmony mark be lower, as the horse and rider did not work together successfully. The overall rewards will be higher for a well-performed easy test, than a poorly performed difficult test. The rider must find a balance between risk and capabilities. The judge looks for a fluent test that is neither abrupt nor has obvious tension. If it seems the test is difficult then the rider is asking too much, and the degree of difficulty mark has to be lower. The classical principles are not being maintained. To get a high degree of difficulty mark, conversely, it must look easy.”

If a compulsory movement is left out or only executed below the requirement, i.e., too few changes in a series or too few piaffe steps the movement should be marked as technically insufficient providing that no other form of that particular exercise had been executed correctly. The degree of difficulty mark would also be adversely affected and probably should not be higher than 5.0.

#### **Key points to take into account for higher marks: -**

- Performing more difficult required movements such as those carrying a coefficient more often, but not excessively
- Showing more than the required minimum, e.g., changes or piaffe steps
- Well-presented combinations of difficult movements
- Executing movements on lines not supported by the boards
- Demanding transitions
- Movements with reins in one hand, limited to 4.0.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY MARK DEPENDING ON THE QUALITY OF THE PERFORMANCE**

Marks of 5.5 and below would be warranted if one or more of the following occurred. If for instance the compulsory minimum number of steps or changes were not shown e.g., in piaffe or changes, compulsory movements were left out, movements were shown above the standard allowed or the horse was over faced.

Marks of 6.0 and 6.5 would be warranted if the compulsory movements were performed according to the minimum requirements of the freestyle test for that level as would higher risk performances but with some technical mistake. The technical marks would have to be in the satisfactory range.

Marks of 7.0 and 7.5 would be appropriate if the compulsory movements were performed in more difficult ways than asked in the tests at that level and/or when the more difficult movements are performed more often. The technical marks would have to be in the fairly good range.

Marks in the range of 8.0 and upwards would be appropriate when compulsory movements were performed in more difficult ways than asked for in the tests at that standard and/or more often, or combinations of demanding exercises performed with ease. The technical marks would at least have to be in the good range.

## **EXAMPLES OF DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS**

The examples of degrees of difficulty at the relevant levels set out below are not considered exhaustive but are intended to enable judges to be somewhat consistent in assessing degree of difficulty. The degree of difficulty and well calculated risk mark does not occur below medium level.

### **GRAND PRIX**

- Appropriate repetition of more difficult movements
- A greater number of sequence changes or piaffe steps than the compulsory minimum
- Sequence changes not on a straight line
- Double pirouettes
- Steep angled half passes with counter changes of hand performed equally well in both directions
- Canter-passage-canter
- Extended canter into pirouettes
- Two-time changes into one-time changes
- Extended trot to piaffe
- Half passes in trot followed by half passes in passage
- Up to 4 difficult movements and transitions performed with the reins in one hand  
piaffe, pirouettes, passage, half passes

### **PRIX ST GEORGES / INTERMEDIATE I**

- Appropriate repetition of more difficult movements
- A greater number of sequence changes than the compulsory minimum
- Sequence changes not on straight lines
- A steep angle in the half pass combined with counter changes of hand performed equally well in both directions in either trot or canter
- Movements on lines away from the rails such as shoulder-in on centre or quarter lines
- Extended canter followed by a half pirouette (Prix St Georges) / pirouette (Intermediate I)
- Difficult transitions

- Counter canter on a tight turn
- Up to four difficult movements with the reins in one hand

## **ADVANCED MEDIUM**

- Shoulder-in off the track - on centre or quarter lines
- Changing shoulder-in from left to right (or vice versa) on continuous line
- Half pass at a more acute angle than in the tests at the level
- Single counter changes of hand in canter
- Extended trot into shoulder-in or half pass
- Extended trot on two consecutive short diagonals
- Counter canter on a tight turn
- Extended canter into counter canter
- Flying change into counter canter
- Repeated flying changes on a circle or curve (5 strides between or more)
- Up to four difficult movements with the reins in one hand

## **MEDIUM**

- Changing shoulder-in from left to right (or vice versa) on continuous line
- Half passes more acute or for longer distance than in the test
- Counter change of hand in trot
- Medium trot into shoulder-in or half pass
- Medium trot on two consecutive short diagonals
- Counter canter on circle of less than 20m diameter
- Medium canter into counter canter
- Simple change on a line away from track, straight lines, or centre line
- Simple change into counter canter
- Up to four difficult movements with the reins in one hand

## **MUSIC AND INTERPRETATION OF THE MUSIC**

### **MUSICAL STYLE AND GENRE**

The personal musical taste of the judge is not relevant. It is not for the judge to comment on or be influenced by the style and genre of the music chosen by the competitor. The judge should only assess the suitability of the music for the horse and rider and whether it enhances or distracts from the performance.

### **Is the FSM musical style enhancing what you are seeing?**

The judge should evaluate whether the music is enhancing the overall image of the horse and rider combination. For example, a 17:2hh heavyweight horse could carry a strong musical style e.g., rock music with a powerful beat. A 16:1hh lightweight probably could not. The use of novelty elements within the music can also show a high level of creativity. If performed well, it can further enhance the test.

The musical style used should not overpower the horse and rider and should not be too much in the background either. E.g., one of the common trends now is to use the music from 'Pirates of the Caribbean' by Hans Zimmer. This is extremely powerful music in terms of its style, strength of beat and full-on sound. As such, the horse and rider do risk being swamped by the music destroying the harmony of the overall picture. Conversely, let us call it 'twinkly music,' would do little if anything to enhance a large 17:2hh heavyweight, but could work well for a lightweight. If the competitor has created a theme or chosen a particular musical style that runs throughout their test, then this should be positively recognised in their score compared to those who use disparate pieces and mixed genres. The music should give the impression of being a complete performance in itself and, as such, have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The very best music can stand on its own as a musical performance in its own right. It is the competitor's responsibility to choose the right balance of music for their horse and its way of going, the judge should comment if this is not the case and reflect this in the score.

### **Does the Beat, Rhythm and Tempo of the music match the horse's paces?**

This may sound simple to identify, but care needs to be taken to recognise the difference between Rhythm, Beat and Tempo. The combination of the Beat, Rhythm and Tempo is usually called the music's time signature. For example - Rock music and Swing Jazz most commonly has a time signature of a four-beat rhythm (4/4, or four beats to the bar), a Waltz has a three-beat rhythm (3/4, or three beats to the bar). However, they can both actually have the same **tempo**. It is only the **downbeat**, or **emphasised beat**, that defines the musical rhythm as 4/4 or 3/4.

Assuming the beat and rhythm of the music is constant for a given piece; **it is the tempo of the music that defines if it is synchronised with the horse**. The tempo is simply the speed of the beat and or rhythm. Therefore, even a waltz can fit a trot or canter perfectly if the music's tempo is synchronised with the horse. Ask yourself, are the horse's hooves hitting the ground in exact time with the downbeat of the music?

Certain music, like some classical and orchestral pieces do not have a distinctive beat at all, but there will be a rhythm and tempo. If not, we can look at this as simply background music and as such disparate from the horse and only suitable for use with a walk section. For FSM in trot or canter, piaffe, passage etc. the music should have a clear beat, or rhythm and a synchronous tempo. Focussing on the tempo of the music is the only true way to judge the synchronisation to be correct or not.

### **Does the music reflect the choreography of the ground pattern?**

In trot or canter, for example, if the horse makes transitions from collected to extended, or to half pass, the music should reflect these transitions. Most music contains highs and lows or phrasing within the same piece. The competitor has done very well, if they configure their ground pattern and ride their test such that their movements are matched to the different emphases within the music. This is not an easy task and should be recognised and reflected in the score as true musical choreography.

## **Are the musical transitions natural and smooth?**

With today's technology even the most basic of home computers offer the ability to edit music competently. It should not matter if the music pieces have been edited together professionally or by amateurs. Ideally, each musical piece used in the FSM should have a natural musical edit point. The transitions between different musical pieces should also be smooth, in musical time and pleasing to the ear. At the very least the music should fade smoothly between one piece and the next. Silent gaps, thumps, or abrupt cuts between two different pieces of music should be highlighted as being sub-standard and marked accordingly.

## **The use of vocals within the music**

There is no specific rule that prohibits the use of vocals within the music. However, it is considered unacceptable if the number of vocals used diminishes the integrity of the music itself and detracts from the harmony of what the judge is seeing. Vocals should be considered to be sung words (in any language). A musical piece that uses vocals as an instrument, i.e., not specific words, but harmonic vocal sounds, should be seen as acceptable. If a piece of music only has vocals during the chorus, or only on certain key phrases, it is at the judge's discretion to determine if this is acceptable. A simple guide should be - if vocals are used, they should be with discretion and not focus the attention on the words of the song.

## **Interpretation of the music**

The way in which the rider is able to ride to the music is an important part of this mark. Are they keeping the horse in a consistent tempo and to the beat of the music? Are the changes in paces fluently with the music and in what seems to be the right place in the choreography and are the movements well matched to the different emphases in the music? For instance, is the ending well timed?

Although the music mark is not as closely related to the technical marks as the rhythm, energy and elasticity mark, the harmony mark, and the degree of difficulty mark. The quality of the way of going does affect the fluency with which the horse is able to work with the music and cannot be totally ignored. Also, disobedience and disturbances should be taken into account in this mark as in all the others.

## **Key Points**

As the judge, ask yourself:

- Was the Tempo of the music synchronised with the horse's paces neither hurrying them nor making them laboured?
- Was the music chosen suited to the horse and rider?
- Did the music reflect the character of the pace?
- Was there a musical theme or common style running through the test?



- Did the musical emphasis enhance the choreography of the test?
- Was the rider able to repeat a movement made in a precise phrase of the movement on both reins, i.e., canter pirouette?
- Did the music have smooth and natural transitions between the pieces?
- Was the performance free of resistance, disobedience, and disturbance?
- How well did the rider interpret the music, e.g. making transitions at the same time as the music, timing the movements to coincide with the emphasis of the music and finishing as the music finished?
- Is there a suitable start and clearly defined end to the music which is compatible with the test?

As always, judging is not clear-cut. It is a balancing act. Therefore, it is very important that the above are taken as a foundation from which judges can use their own initiative and according to diverse circumstances.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE MUSIC AND INTERPRETATION OF THE MUSIC MARK**

### **Marks of 5.5 and below would be warranted if some of the following were evident:**

Two or three of the paces were a poor fit for the beat of the music; the music was inappropriate for the type of horse; the music was purely background and not related to the performance; there were notable interruptions and disturbances of the performance; changes of pace were very poorly synchronised with changes in the music; there is a mixture of different types of music or the recording of the music was very poor.

### **Marks of 6.0 and 6.5 would be warranted if some of the following were evident:**

The music is a poor fit for one of the paces; it is inappropriate for the type of horse; the technical performance is satisfactory but there is no artistic interpretation; some changes of pace are poorly synchronised with the changes in the music or there is a mixture of different types of music.

### **Marks of 7.0 and 7.5 would be warranted if:**

The music is suitable for each pace and fits the type of horse; there is a fairly good general impression of the performance and interpretation of the music; there is one genre of music; the transitions are well timed, and the phrasing of the music mostly fits the character of the movements.

### **Marks in the range of 8.0 and upwards would be warranted when:**

The music fits the paces, type of horse and movements well; there is a good general impression of the performance and interpretation of the music; there is one genre of music; the transitions are well timed with the music and the phrasing of the music fits the character of the movements.

## **GENERAL DIRECTIVES**

**The judge at C** is ultimately responsible for arriving at a decision if there is disagreement on an issue.

**If there is a tie** the combination with the highest artistic mark will be the winner. If the artistic marks are the same the combination with the highest mark for harmony will be the winner and if these are the same there will be a tie.

### **Timing**

Entry must be within 20 seconds of the music starting, if not a warning will be given by the judge. The test is timed from the move off after the first halt to the final halt.

### **The entrance and halts**

A halt is required at the beginning and end of the test. It must be on the centre line facing the judge. If the horse is not immobile then this is deducted in the halt mark, an attempt to halt must be made otherwise a 0 is given for the movement. The choreography mark cannot be higher than 5.5 if the halt was the only movement missing, or more than 5.0 if more than one is missing. The entrance will be taken account of under the halt movement and to a certain extent under the degree of difficulty and choreography mark, whether or not it is mentioned on the sheet.

### **Removal of hat**

Removal of hat is not allowed.

### **Reins in one hand**

In all FEI tests whether run under BD rules or at FEI events reins can be held in one hand for no more than four movements. If more, this is deducted under Degree of Difficulty and Choreography marks in the artistic section.

### **Music Stops**

In the case of a technical failure that will interfere with the competition, the judge at C will ring the bell. In the case of the rider's music failing, skipping, or jumping during a test, the rider may make one request to restart, or the judge can suggest that they restart. When possible, the restart should be immediate, but if not, the rider should return to complete or restart their test during a scheduled break or at the end of the competition. If the music continues to fail after the restart they will be eliminated. During extreme weather conditions or other extreme situations, the judge at C may ring the bell for interruption of the test. The rider should return to complete their test when conditions permit. It is up to the rider whether to restart the test from the

beginning or to commence from the point the music failed. In either case, the marks already given to the point at which the music failed will not be changed.