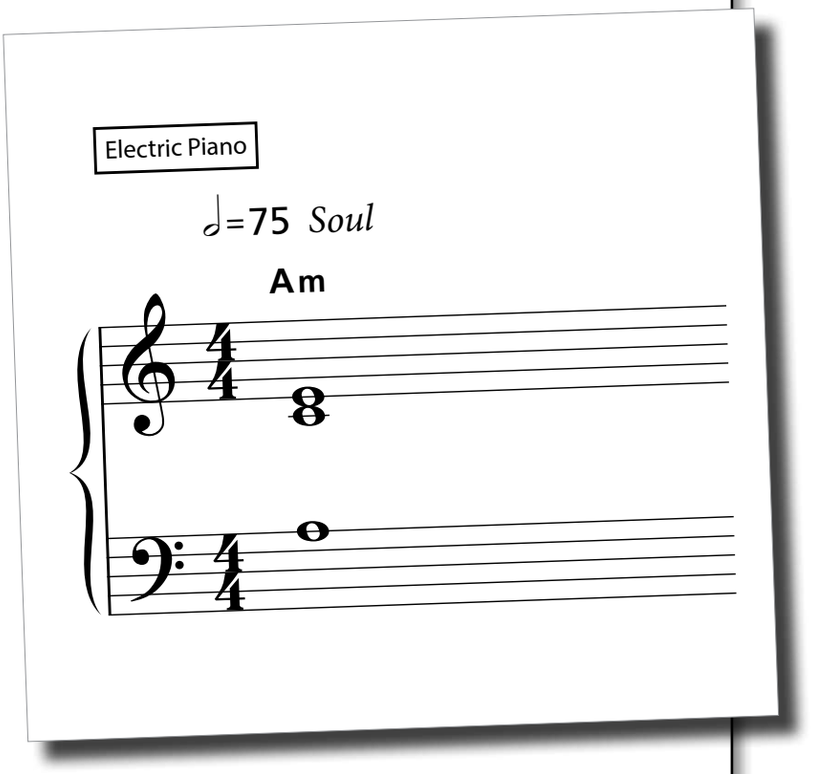
Ain't No Sunshine

SONG TITLE: AIN'T NO SUNSHINE
ALBUM: JUST AS I AM
LABEL: SUSSEX
GENRE: SOUL/R&B

WRITTEN BY: BILL WITHERS
PRODUCED BY: BOOKER T. JONES

UK CHART PEAK: 40



'Ain't No Sunshine' is regarded by many as a songwriting masterpiece. It was released in 1971 and quickly became a classic all over the world. It reached the number 3 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 and has been covered by many artists since.

Withers wrote the song after watching the movie *The Days of Wine and Roses*. He was 31 years old when the song was released and at the time he was working in the assembly line of a factory, making toilet seats for Boeing 747s. It is said that with this in mind the record company presented Withers with a golden toilet seat when the record went gold. It was the first of his three gold records in the US.

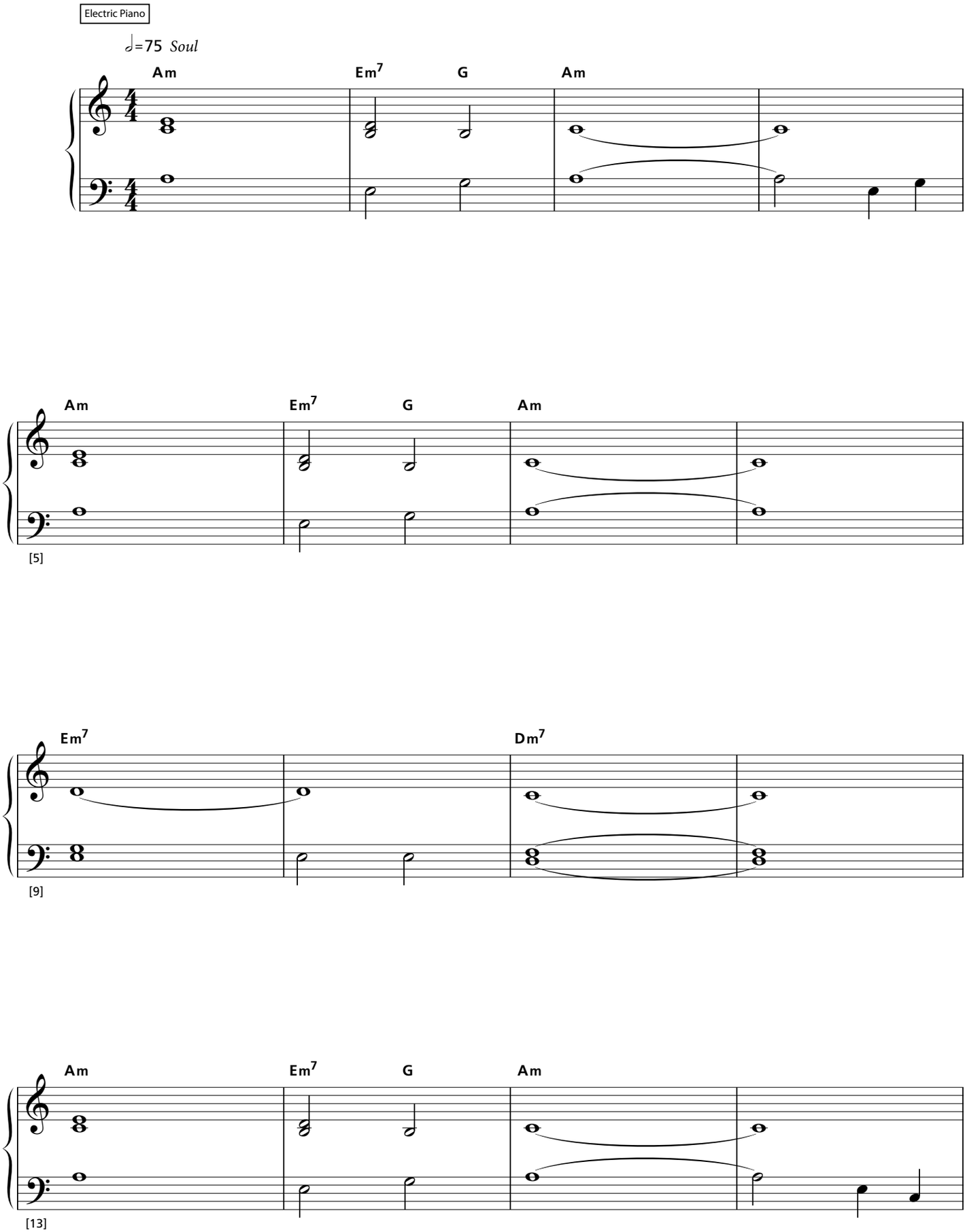
'Ain't No Sunshine' was actually a B side to Withers' single 'Harlem', but DJs hugely favoured the hit and played it instead. The record was produced by Booker T. Jones and his band, the MG's, were used to back Withers. The band was by then a seasoned outfit that had played on countless records on the Stax label – amongst them was none other than '(Sittin' On) The Dock The Bay' by Otis Redding.

'Ain't No Sunshine' won a Grammy Award at the 14th annual ceremony in 1972. Withers followed its success with the massive hits 'Lean On Me' and 'Use Me'.

In 1975, after signing with Columbia Records and returning to recording after a hiatus produced by contractual complications, he recorded three successful albums, one of which was his 1977 album, *Menagerie*, which contained the now classic song 'A Lovely Day'. Further contractual complications followed but Withers managed to continue collaborating with other musicians and recorded the classic 'Just The Two Of Us' with saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. (included on the best-selling *Winelight*) and 'In The Name Of Love' with percussionist Ralph MacDonald. He also penned the successful 'Grandma's Hands'.

Numerous legal complications connected with his record contracts led Withers to decide he was going to retire form the music industry, including live performance, in the mid 1980s. Although his music continues to gain attention in various forms, he has expressed comfort with his decision and says his relatively late arrival in the business equipped him to deal with it with no regrets.

Bill Withers



Words & Music by Bill Withers
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Technical Exercises

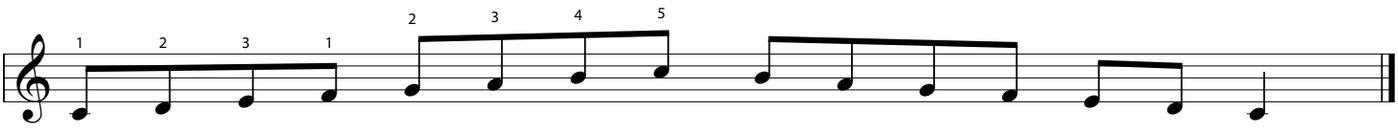
In this section you will be required to play a selection of exercises drawn from each of the groups below. The examiner will be looking for the speed of your response and will also give credit for the level of your musicality. Please see the syllabus guide for details on the marking criteria.

All scales and arpeggios need to be played hands separately, in straight feel, ascending and descending, in the keys, octaves and tempos shown. Pentatonic scales are right hand only. You may use your book for Group A and Group B. Group C exercises must be played from memory.

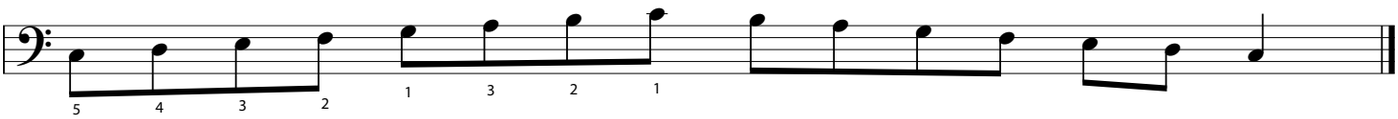
Note that Groups A and B need to be played to a click and any fingerings shown are suggestions only.

Group A: Scales
The tempo for this group is ♩ = 52 bpm.

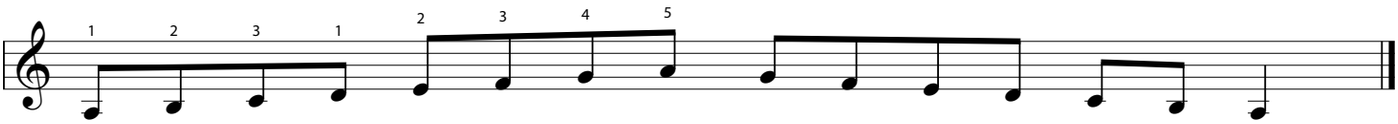
1. C major scale | right hand



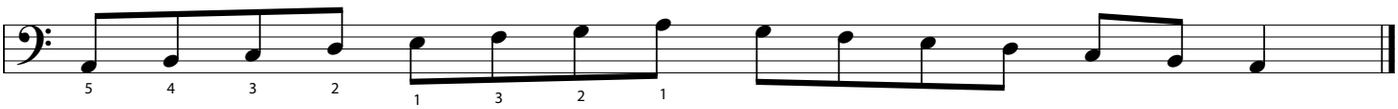
2. C major scale | left hand



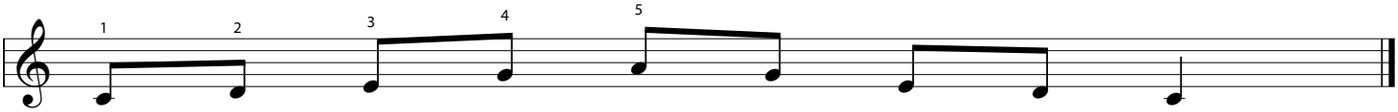
3. A natural minor scale | right hand



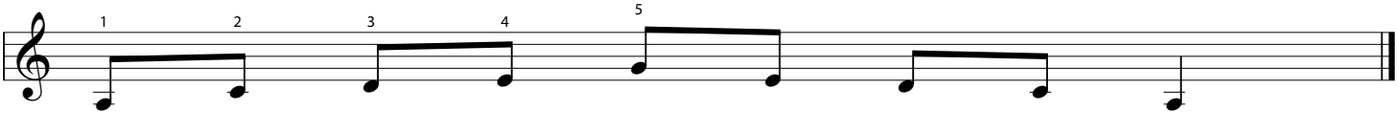
4. A natural minor scale | right hand



5. C major pentatonic scale | right hand

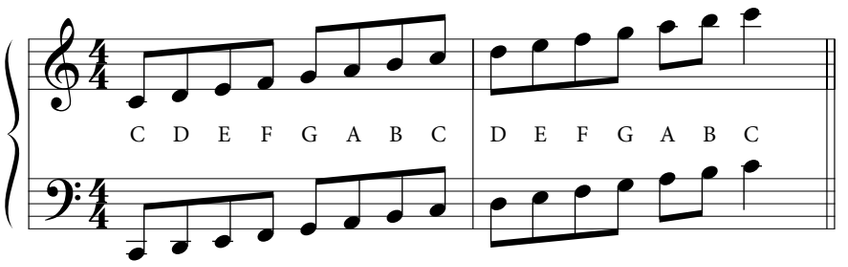


6. A minor pentatonic scale | right hand

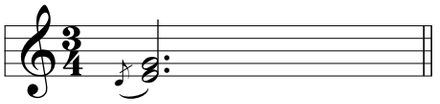


Keys Notation Explained

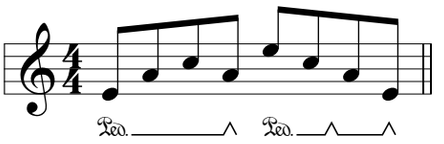
THE MUSICAL STAVE shows pitches and rhythms and is divided by lines into bars. Pitches are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet.



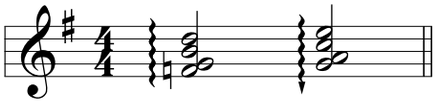
Grace Note: Play the grace note on or before the beat depending on the style of music, then move quickly to the note it leads onto.



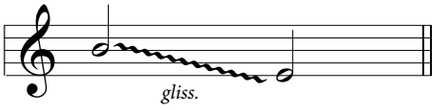
Pedal Marking: Depress and then release the sustain pedal. Multiple pedal operations in a short space of time may be simplified as shown in the last two beats of the bar below.



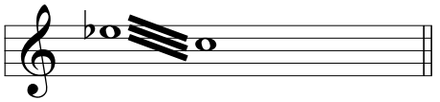
Spread Chord: Play the chord from the bottom note up (top down only if there is a downward arrow head). The final note should sound by the appropriate notated bar position.



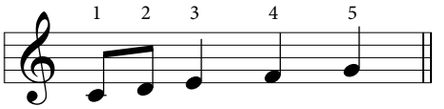
Glissando: Play the notes between the notated pitches by sliding over the keyboard with the fingers or fingernails.

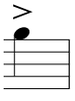


Tremolando: Oscillate at speed between marked notes.

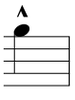


Finger Markings: These numbers represent your fingers. 1 is the thumb, 2 the index finger and so on.



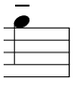


(accent) • Accentuate note (play it louder).



(accent) • Accentuate note with great intensity.

(staccato) • Shorten time value of note.



(accent) • Accentuate note with more arm weight.

D.%. al Coda

• Go back to the sign (%), then play until the bar marked ***To Coda*** ⊕ then skip to the section marked ⊕ ***Coda***.

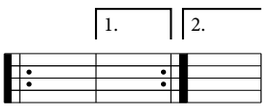
D.C. al Fine

• Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the bar marked ***Fine*** (end).

Una Corda

• Use soft pedal

• Repeat the bars between the repeat signs.



• When a repeated section has different endings, play the first ending only the first time and the second ending only the second time.