

Specimen Improvisation Tests

Stylistic Stimulus

for Trinity College London exams from 2017

Initial-Grade 8

C Instruments – Treble Clef

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Stylistic stimulus

The stylistic stimulus requires candidates to improvise over a notated piano part played by the examiner. Candidates are given a stimulus which includes the notated piano part and chord symbols. The stimulus begins with a two-bar introduction played by the examiner alone, followed by a further section over which candidates must improvise for a specified number of repeats. In the exam, the examiner plays the stimulus twice for candidates' reference, without repeats. Candidates are then given 30 seconds' preparation time, during which they may prepare for their improvisation aloud if they wish. The test then follows. The examiner then plays the stimulus again, and candidates join after the introduction, improvising for the specified number of repeats. Candidates should aim to improvise in a way that complements the musical idiom of the stimulus.

Initial

Example 1

March ♩ = 92

C G G C

Example 2

Lullaby ♩ = 72

C G G C

Grade 1

Example 1

Fanfare ♩ = 112

C G G C

to be played through twice

Example 2

Moderato ♩ = 100

G D D G

to be played through twice

Grade 2

Example 1

Tango ♩ = 120

F B \flat C F

to be played through twice

Example 2

Andante ♩ = 82

Am Dm E Am

to be played through twice

Grade 3

Example 1

Waltz ♩ = 104

Dm Gm A Dm

to be played through twice

Example 2

Allegretto ♩ = 112

B♭ Cm F B♭

to be played through twice

Grade 4

Example 1

Quick Waltz ♩ = 124

Gm Cm D Gm

to be played through three times

Example 2

Adagio ♩ = 60

D Em G D

to be played through three times

mf

Grade 5

Example 1

Vivace ♩ = 90

A D Bm E A

to be played through three times

mp

Example 2

Grazioso ♩ = 104

E♭ A♭ Cm B♭ E♭

to be played through three times

mp

Grade 6

Example 1

Agitato ♩ = 132

Cm G7 Cm

to be played through twice

f

Fm Cm Ab G7 Cm

Example 2

Nocturne ♩. = 63

The first system of the musical score is in F# major, 12/8 time, and begins with a treble clef. The right-hand part (RH) starts with a whole rest for two measures, followed by a repeat sign and four eighth notes (F#, C#, G#, D) marked "to be played through twice". The left-hand part (LH) starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a melodic line in the upper register and a bass line in the lower register. The key signature is F# major, and the time signature is 12/8.

The second system continues the piece with a treble clef. The RH part features a series of chords: C#, C#7, D, Bm, C#, and C#7, each accompanied by a rhythmic pattern of four eighth notes. The LH part continues with its melodic and bass lines. The key signature remains F# major, and the time signature is 12/8.

The third system concludes the piece with a treble clef. The RH part features a series of chords: Bm, F#m, C#, C#7, and F#m, each accompanied by a rhythmic pattern of four eighth notes. The LH part continues with its melodic and bass lines. The key signature remains F# major, and the time signature is 12/8.

Grade 7

Example 1

Grave ♩ = 42

E B C#m

to be played through twice

p

G#m A maj7 B B7 E

Example 2

Gigue ♩ = 92

Chord symbols for the first system: $A\flat$ $E\flat$ $A\flat$ $E\flat^7$ $A\flat$

to be played through twice

Chord symbols for the second system: C C^7 Fm C^7 Fm $E\flat$ $A\flat$ $E\flat^7$ $A\flat$

mp

Grade 8

Example 1

Lively Dance ♩ = 138

Fm C Db Ab Db Ab

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 5/4 time signature. It contains a whole rest followed by a repeat sign and six measures of rhythmic slashes. Below the treble staff, the text "to be played through twice" is written. The middle and bottom staves are grand staff staves (bass and tenor clefs) with the same key signature and time signature. The middle staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed eighth notes.

Bbm7 C Fm C Db Ab Db Fm C7 Fm

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of three flats and a 5/4 time signature. It contains six measures of rhythmic slashes. The middle and bottom staves are grand staff staves with the same key signature and time signature. The middle staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed eighth notes. The bottom staff contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed eighth notes. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Example 2

Impressionistic:
Slow and smooth ♩. = 63

Chords for the first system: C#m⁹, F#m, C#m⁹, F#m, Emaj7, A

to be played through twice

Chords for the second system: Emaj7, A, F#m7, G#7, F#m7, G#7, C#m⁹, F#m, C#m⁹