

Specimen Improvisation Tests

Stylistic Stimulus

for Trinity College London exams from 2017

Initial-Grade 8

C Instruments – Alto 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

f

Example 2

Lullaby ♩ = 72

C G G C

p

Grade 1

Example 1

Fanfare ♩ = 112

C G G C

mf

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

Grade 5

Example 1

Vivace ♩ = 90

A D Bm E A

to be played through three times

Example 2

Grazioso ♩ = 104

E♭ A♭ Cm B♭ E♭

to be played through three times

Grade 6

Example 1

Agitato ♩ = 132

Cm G⁷ Cm

to be played through twice

f

Fm Cm A^b G⁷ Cm

Example 2

Nocturne $\text{♩} = 63$

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a guitar staff (top) and a piano staff (bottom). The piano staff is divided into two parts: the upper part for the right hand and the lower part for the left hand. The guitar staff contains a chord chart with the following sequence of chords: F#m, C#, C7, D, Bm, C#, C7, Bm, F#m, C#, C7, F#m. The piano staff includes a dynamic marking of *mf* in the first system and a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 63$. The first system includes the instruction "to be played through twice". The score is written in the key of F#m and 12/8 time.

Grade 7

Example 1

Grave ♩. = 42

E B C#m

to be played through twice

p

G#m Amaj7 B B7 E

The musical score is written for a C instrument in alto clef. It is in 6/8 time and has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'Grave' with a quarter note equal to 42. The score is divided into two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef staff containing a whole rest, followed by a repeat sign and three measures of eighth notes. Above these measures are the chord symbols E, B, and C#m. Below the treble clef staff is a grand staff with piano accompaniment. The piano part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system begins with a treble clef staff containing three measures of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign. Above these measures are the chord symbols G#m, Amaj7, B, B7, and E. Below the treble clef staff is a grand staff with piano accompaniment. The instruction 'to be played through twice' is written below the first system's treble clef staff.

Example 2

Gigue ♩. = 92

Ab Eb Ab Eb7 Ab

to be played through twice

mp

C C7 Fm C7 Fm Eb Ab Eb7 Ab

The musical score is written for piano and alto clef. It consists of two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked 'Gigue' with a quarter note equal to 92. The first system has five measures. The first two measures are rests in the treble clef. The last three measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked 'to be played through twice'. The piano part starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piece with a treble clef and the same key signature. It also has five measures. The treble clef part contains a series of chords: C, C7, Fm, C7, Fm, Eb, Ab, Eb7, and Ab. The piano part continues with its melodic and bass lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Grade 8

Example 1

Lively Dance ♩ = 138

Fm C D \flat A \flat D \flat A \flat

to be played through twice

B \flat m7 C Fm C D \flat A \flat D \flat Fm C 7 Fm

Example 2

Impressionistic:

Slow and smooth ♩ = 63

C#m⁹

F#m

C#m⁹

F#m

Emaj7

A

to be played through twice

Emaj7

A

F#m7

G#7

F#m7

G#7

C#m⁹

F#m

C#m⁹