

EXPLORING THE REPERTOIRE

Piano Initial-Grade 2

Naomi Yandell



Naomi Yandell introduces Trinity's 2021-2023 Piano syllabus and explores some of her favourite pieces from the repertoire.

Motivating students to practise is the subject that tends to dominate teachers' forums – and rightly so, because teachers need to galvanise their students to spend time at the (right kind of!) keyboard each day in order to make progress. Once students perceive their own progress this tends to kick-start a virtuous circle where students feed off their own success, and obviously the earlier this happy state of affairs begins, the more likely it is to gain momentum.

Despite ingenious reward charts, games and other gismos, it is pretty well established that the choice of good and appropriate repertoire is vital to incentivise students to practise. This Piano syllabus contains a huge range of music to tempt students of all ages and tastes; the wonderful thing about music is that we all react to it in different ways – and what appeals to one student won't necessarily fire up another.

And while the idea is to give lots of options, the hope has to be that the choices will be so difficult to make that students will want to learn and enjoy many more than the number they have to play for the exam.

The pieces are specially selected to help develop core skills – such as balancing melody and accompaniment, experimenting with different articulation and dynamics, and learning to convey a sense of musical shape and phrase.



Initial

There is a wide range of styles on offer here, with music from or inspired by the Medieval, Renaissance, Classical and Romantic periods, plus contemporary repertoire. There are also character pieces, such as Papp's 'The Giant' and Thuntawech's 'Muay Thai', that fuel the imagination and are likely to be popular choices. Students drawn to the Middle Eastern sound will like the dreamy exotic 'Merlin's Incantation' by Walker, while those who like a boogie woogie feel will enjoy 'Boogie' by Daxböck and 'Kindergarten Blues' by Gruber. A gentler, more lyrical piece is to be found in 'Summer Swing' (Müller), while those who like a story element will enjoy the duet – a gentle little Mexican number, 'Please Stay, Chihuahua' (Gerou).

THUNTAWECH / Muay Thai

Allegro ♩ = 100

mp

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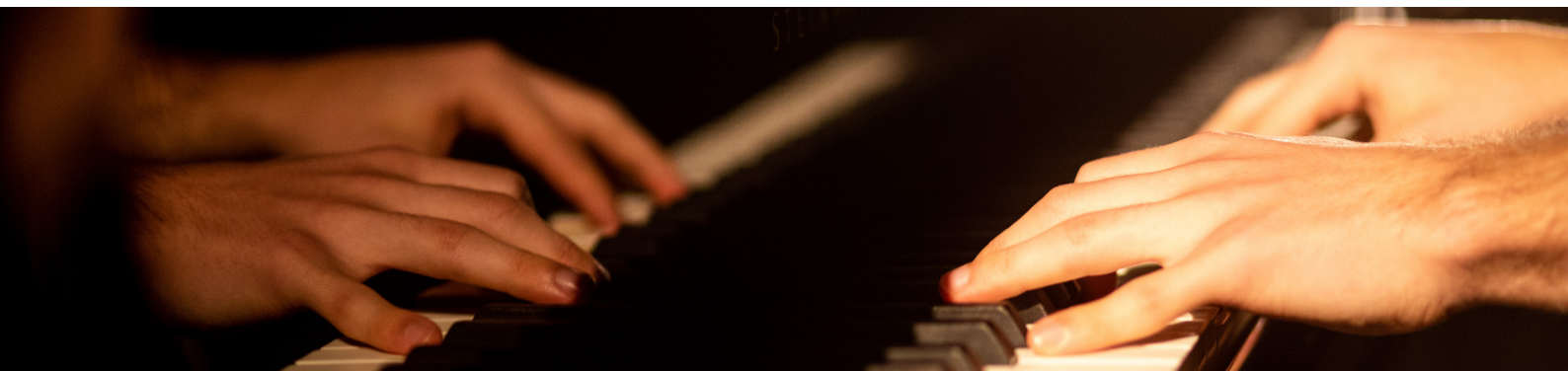
PRAETORIUS / Old German Dance

Steady ♩ = 80-100

mf

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Grade 1

Clarke's rousing and jubilant 'King William's March' opens the rich Grade 1 selection, again offering students a wide range of inspiring choices. Here the character pieces are particularly enticing; students who like dinosaurs will no doubt clamour to play 'The Very Vicious Velociraptor' by Hall & Drayton, while those who love pirates will enjoy the energy of 'Pirate Stomp' and 'Viking Village'. Animal lovers will most probably want to try 'The Croc That Swallowed a Clock' by Tanner, and Holland's 'Donkey Trot'.

There's plenty to tempt students of a quieter, more contemplative nature too, with more lyrical choices such as 'Walking Together' (particularly poignant post the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic) and Terzibaschitsch's duet 'Last Waltz'. At the same time, atmospheric pieces are well represented with 'Stealth Mode' (Bober) and 'Space Walk Rag' (Hawthorn & Suschitzky), both of which contain chromatic shading.

YANDELL / Pirate Stomp

With lots of energy ♩ = 144

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CLARKE / King William's March

March tempo ♩ = 100

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Grade 2

In addition to familiar Baroque and Classical pieces in this grade selection, there are a couple of 20th century pieces freely inspired by music of earlier periods – ‘FreuDich/Feelicious’ by Proksch, which draws on the famous Pachelbel ‘Canon’, and ‘Orpheus in his Underpants’ by Tanner, based on Offenbach’s can-can from ‘Orpheus in the Underworld’.

The early Romantic period is represented by one of the comparative rarities in this selection – the ‘Mazurka’ by Polish composer Maria Szymanowska, a professional concert pianist contemporary with Chopin.

There is much modern music to choose from too – with Donkin’s ‘The Penguin Parade’ in jazz style, Gumbley and Crosland’s pieces in contemporary rock ‘n’ roll style and my blues piece ‘Fun Fair Blues’. These offer robust, catchy choices while the duet – ‘Island in the Sun’ by Heumann – is of a gentler persuasion, as is the lovely ‘Floating Balloons’ by Thai composer Sukontapatipark.

YANDELL / Fun Fair Blues

Steady and confident (swung quavers) ♩ = 120

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SZYMANOWSKA / Mazurka

Moderato ♩ = 88

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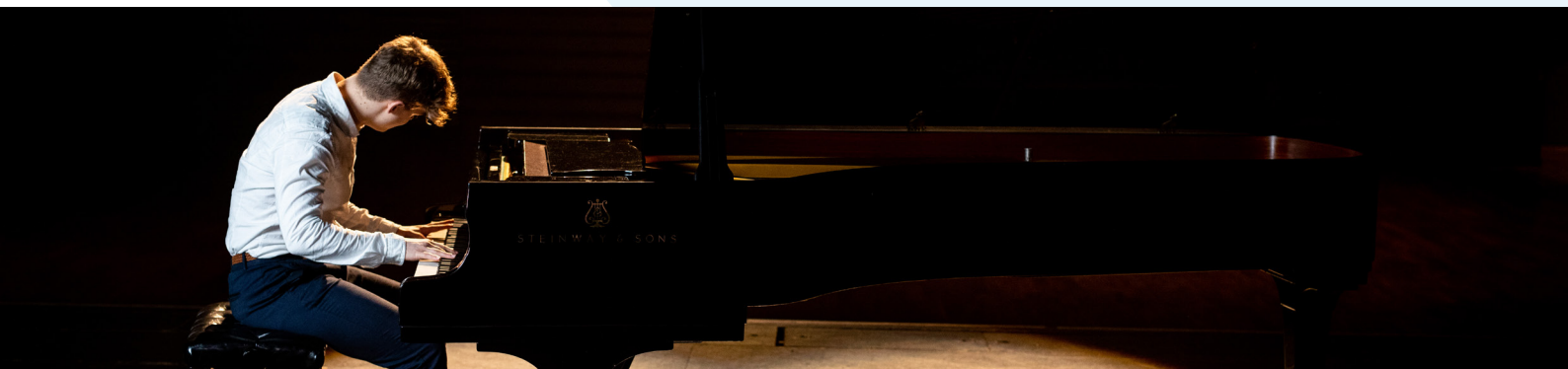


Naomi Yandell

Naomi Yandell studied cello with Michael Evans and Ioan Davies. Since reading Music at York University she has pursued a varied career in music publishing (contemporary and educational), consultancy and teaching (cello, piano and music theory).

Naomi is the author of Trinity's *Theory of Music Workbooks Grades 1-8* and the new *Introducing Theory of Music – First Writing Skills for Musicians*. Together with Celia Cobb she has written *Take Your Bow* and *Sight Reading – A Progressive Method* for string players, all published by Trinity College London Press.

Naomi organises string teaching events and charity events in Cambridge. A number of current students are in the National Children's Orchestra, and many previous students have won scholarships to major public schools, and places at UK conservatoires and specialist music schools.



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