

## Exams and repertoire books designed to develop creative and confident piano players

The 2015-2017 Piano syllabus from Trinity College London offers the choice and flexibility to allow candidates to play to their strengths, enabling them to gain recognition for their own unique skills as performers. The syllabus includes brand new repertoire lists and technical work, designed to offer an enticing range of music to choose from.

New graded repertoire books are available for Initial to Grade 8, featuring new pieces and exercises. The books include previously unpublished original pieces selected from hundreds of submissions by composers from all over the world. The exercises have been designed as valuable teaching tools, covering key aspects of technique.

In addition to the repertoire featured in the books, alternative repertoire lists offer a wide range of styles and genres to explore. High quality recordings of all repertoire and technical work are available on CD.

## Why a Trinity Piano exam?

Trinity's Piano exams have been designed to develop confident, creative and skilled musicians through a structured learning framework, which nurtures development and evaluates a musician's progress at every level.

- ▶ Choice and flexibility – candidates choose three pieces from the repertoire lists and may offer their own composition in place of one listed piece
- ▶ At Initial to Grade 5, candidates may choose two supporting tests from four options: sight reading, aural, improvisation and musical knowledge. At Grades 6-8, sight reading is compulsory and candidates choose one other test
- ▶ A range of specialist contributors – resulting in an enjoyable and diverse range of styles
- ▶ Varied and exciting repertoire lists – including previously unpublished repertoire, popular classics and undiscovered gems
- ▶ Newly composed exercises – covering key aspects of technique to complement scales and arpeggios
- ▶ Uniquely diagnostic mark scheme – providing detailed and specific musical feedback
- ▶ Internationally recognised qualifications with UCAS points available at Grades 6-8
- ▶ A range of support materials including graded repertoire books, sight reading books, scales and arpeggios books and teaching notes



# How is the exam structured?

## Pieces

Up to Grade 3, candidates play three pieces freely chosen from the repertoire list for the grade. From Grade 4 onwards, pieces are selected from two different groups, with at least one piece from each group. Candidates may substitute one piece for their own composition if they wish. This part of the exam is designed to provide the right balance of flexibility and structure, enabling candidates to demonstrate their own musical personalities while requiring them to present a balanced programme.

## Technical work

Candidates perform scales, arpeggios and exercises in the exam. This gives candidates a balanced suite of technical tasks that support good teaching and learning.

### Scales and arpeggios

A small selection of scales is set for each grade, structured progressively through the grades to assist with theoretical understanding. Candidates prepare the scales and arpeggios set for the grade, and play a selection as requested by the examiner. Up to and including Grade 1, candidates may choose to play either harmonic, melodic or natural minor scales. At Grades 2-5 candidates have a choice of harmonic or melodic and at Grades 6-8 both harmonic and melodic minors must be played.

### Exercises

Candidates choose three exercises, of which two are played in the exam. One is chosen by the candidate and one by the examiner. The exercises are designed to demonstrate tone, balance and voicing; co-ordination; and finger and wrist strength and flexibility.

## Supporting tests

At Grades 1-5, candidates choose two supporting tests from four options: sight reading, aural, improvisation and musical knowledge. At Grades 6-8, sight reading is compulsory, and candidates choose from improvisation or aural for their second test. This flexibility is designed to give candidates choice in how they demonstrate their broader musical skills, while recognising that sight reading is an important skill as candidates reach the higher grades.

### Sight reading

The sight reading test is designed to be musically intuitive and natural. Candidates perform a short, accessible musical extract after a brief period of preparation, at a level approximately two grades lower than the exam being taken.

### Aural

The aural test assesses candidates' skills in musical perception and understanding through carefully graded questions about a single musical extract played at the piano by the examiner. At most grades candidates are asked to describe various features of the extract such as dynamics, articulation, texture and style. Except at Initial level, no singing is required.

### Improvisation

This test assesses candidates' ability to respond fluently and creatively to a musical stimulus, which can be melodic, rhythmic or chordal at the candidate's choice.

### Musical knowledge

The musical knowledge section of the exam is based exclusively upon the repertoire played by the candidate in the pieces section of the exam. It is delivered conversationally by the examiner, who draws out what the student knows through questions such as 'point out the most interesting features of this piece'.

### Syllabus overlap arrangements

Syllabus overlap arrangements are in place, for further information visit [www.trinitycollege.com/music](http://www.trinitycollege.com/music)



## SAMPLE EXERCISE

Grade 3

Royal Visit

**Maestoso** ♩ = 66

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### About Royal Visit

In this exercise the left hand strides out with majesty, outlining important chord structures and practising a variety of stretches and manoeuvres. The key of D major adds a touch of nobility to the character of the exercise. Chord work is the focus of the right hand. There are delicately articulated interjections of alternating and repeated thirds, requiring evenness of finger technique and well-honed listening skills. In the second half of the exercise, the right hand adopts an accompanying role, as the two hands join together in a crescendo towards the jubilant final bars.

## SAMPLE PIECE

Grade 2

The Penguin Parade

Christine Donkin  
(born 1967)

### About The Penguin Parade

A witty treatment of the recognisable march-style. The easy flow of the swung quaver groups combine a catchy rhythmic pattern with the technique of a gradually shifting hand position – perfectly designed for practising ‘feeling your way’ around the keyboard. The piece includes techniques such as effective cross-accentuation in bars 4 and 11, a *poco rit.* towards the end of the second line and crossing of hands in the final bars.

**Cheerfully** (♩ = 108) (♩♩ = ♩♩♩)

Composer's original metronome mark is ♩ = 126

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## SAMPLE EXERCISE

Grade 8

### Ever So Slightly Dizzy

#### About Ever So Slightly Dizzy

This exercise serves to combine right-hand finger strength and agility with rapid arpeggio-like grace note figures. The semiquaver groups are often constructed around the interval of a third and as the exercise proceeds, the hand moves through a series of extensions and contractions. Acquisition of these techniques, coupled with the ability to respond to quickly changing hand shapes will encourage the student to develop confidence and precision in finger placing.

Musical score for 'Ever So Slightly Dizzy'. The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 72 (♩ = 72). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system starts with a right-hand melody featuring grace notes and semiquaver groups, with fingerings 4, 3, 1, 4 and 3 indicated. The left hand provides a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the right-hand melody with more complex grace note figures and semiquaver groups, with fingerings 3, 5, 3, 4, 5 and 3, 4 indicated. The dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). The tempo marking '(non rit.)' is present.

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## SAMPLE PIECE

Grade 7

### Struttin' at the Waldorf

#### About Struttin' at the Waldorf

The rhythms of this piece swagger with self-confidence, reflecting the setting of the Waldorf Hotel in 1935. A left-hand accompaniment provides a buoyant lift to the texture, while the right hand is either negotiating a range of sophisticated chord structures or indulging in the comparative simplicity of an elegant and subtly decorated solo melody line. Throughout the composition, the composer stylishly combines technical demands with a high degree of sheer musical enjoyment. A satisfying piece to perform, and with a couple of surprises awaiting the performer on the second page.

Musical score for 'Struttin' at the Waldorf'. The tempo is marked 'With swagger' with a quarter note equal to c. 58 (♩ = c. 58). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is in 2/2 time. It consists of two systems. The first system starts with a right-hand melody featuring a 'swagger' rhythm, with fingerings 1, 2, 4, 1 indicated. The left hand provides a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the right-hand melody with more complex chord structures and a 'swagger' rhythm, with fingerings 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1 indicated. The dynamics include *f* (forte) and *con Ped.* (con pedale). The tempo marking '(non rit.)' is present.

Philip Lane  
(born 1950)

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# Contributors

Trinity developed the Piano syllabus with input from a team of teachers, specialist musicians and composers with a variety of musical backgrounds and training. This resulted in a wide range of repertoire options in an array of styles and genres.

## Contributors included

**Paul McClure** has been a Trinity examiner for over 20 years, and has examined all over the world. He also conducts the Exeter University Chamber Orchestra, and has worked with Opera Box, Green Branch Opera and the Exeter Northcott Theatre. Paul has also published articles on piano technique and on the music of Britten.

**Philip Lane** taught music at Cheltenham Ladies College for 23 years. He has been an examiner with Trinity for over 30 years. His concert works have been performed at major festivals including Bath, Cheltenham and the Three Choirs Festival, broadcast in the UK and overseas. He has composed scores for several BBC classic plays as well as for advertisements and a number of TV series.

**Peter Wild** studied at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and the Royal Academy of Music in London. He also taught in the Junior Department at the Academy while studying, and is a sought-after teacher and consultant in piano pedagogy. Peter is also an accompanist, and has performed at recitals for BBC Radio and Granada Television. He has been a Trinity examiner for 12 years and is now an associate chief examiner.

**John York** was awarded the International Debussy Prize in Paris in 1973, and travelled around the world as a soloist with orchestras such as the London Philharmonic and London Mozart Players. He was a professor for over 33 years at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and is now senior music head of department (keyboard) at St Paul's Girls' School in London.

## Repertoire books

The Trinity College London Piano graded books contain everything candidates need to prepare for the pieces and technical work sections of their exam. With a dedicated book (and optional CD with audio recordings) for each grade, Trinity offers full support to candidates as they work towards their exams.

*Sound at Sight Piano* books offer a wealth of carefully graded practice tests for the sight reading test and *Piano Scales & Arpeggios* books offer guidance for the technical work component. A *Teaching Notes* book offers guidance on teaching all 2015-2017 Piano exams including alternative repertoire.

The books are all available from your local music shop or online at [www.trinitycollege.com/shop](http://www.trinitycollege.com/shop)

## Recognition

Trinity exams are fully accredited by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) and other education authorities in many countries around the world. Grades 6-8 are also eligible for UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) points for those applying to UK colleges and universities.





## Teacher support

At the heart of Trinity College London's activity in music education is teacher support. The focus of our activity is supporting and building a community of educators through high-quality online and face-to-face professional development.

### Discover Trinity College London

We hold a wide range of teacher support events all over the world. Details can be found on our website or through contacting your local representative.

### Online Learning Platform

Developed to support Trinity teachers, our online learning platform provides free access to teaching resources, articles, discussion forums and more. Teachers can develop their skills through our range of professional development resources, learn more about our range of exams and qualifications and engage with our online community of educators.

**Syllabus support** – get up-to-date information about our syllabuses and try our interactive guide to the improvisation test.

**Resource library** – access free materials for your teaching practice and professional development, including articles, guidance materials and teacher activities.

**Community** – engage in our discussion forum for teachers where you can ask questions and share your ideas and experiences of teaching music as well as specific aspects of Trinity's syllabuses.

**CPD for teachers** – engage with our continuing professional development programme, developed in partnership with The Open University and other organisations. No prior experience or level of expertise, accreditation or qualification is needed.

Find out more at [www.trinitycollege.com/support](http://www.trinitycollege.com/support)

## Certificate exams

Trinity's certificate exams provide an alternative to graded music exams, focusing solely on performance. Structured as a mini-recital, the candidate is given the choice and flexibility to put together a programme from a wide repertoire list and can include their own compositions. Marks are awarded for the performance of the chosen pieces and on programme planning, giving good preparation to progress to diploma level. Certificate exams are available at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels.

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