

## Guidelines for exam room set-up Graded, certificate and diploma exams

### CHOOSING A SUITABLE ROOM

The exam room should be:

- ▶ **Secure** – the exam steward is responsible for ensuring the exam room is secure. The room should be able to be either supervised or locked if not in use, to ensure that confidential materials are safe
- ▶ **Quiet** – candidates should be undisturbed by outside noise, and any internal fans or air conditioning units should be kept to a minimal level
- ▶ **Appropriately heated/ventilated** – a comfortable temperature (18-23°C) should be maintained; particularly if exams are taking place outside the building's regular hours (eg weekends at a school), check that heating or similar facilities will be in operation. If windows are the only source of ventilation, it should be possible to open them without the risk that sound to or from the exam room (or warm-up/waiting room) will pose problems in the conduct of exams
- ▶ **Adequately lit** – with uniform lighting in all task areas, such as the examiner's desk and candidate's performing space
- ▶ **Not adjacent to waiting/warm-up areas** – no one is permitted to wait or listen directly outside the exam room
- ▶ **Marked with appropriate signage** – ensure an **Exam Room** notice is on the entrance to the exam room and **Quiet Please** and **Silence – Exams in Progress** are in the vicinity, especially in areas of traffic (corridors, stairs, etc)
- ▶ **Compliant with Health and Safety and disability access requirements** as set out in national legislation

The exam room should have:

- ▶ **A suitable size and proportion** – candidates should be able to perform effectively, maintaining a 2m distance from the examiner. The minimum viable sizes are 4m×4m for grades and 4m×5m for diplomas; larger rooms can provide more flexibility for set-up
- ▶ **Suitable acoustics** – heavy curtains and thick carpets may absorb sound, and so should be avoided, especially in smaller rooms; different considerations apply to drum kit and percussion – see separate note below
- ▶ **Mains power supply and extension leads** – as needed for the examiner's devices (eg laptop), for electronic/digital keyboards, digital drum kits and playback equipment
- ▶ **Reliable WiFi** – for the examiner to be able to access Trinity systems as needed
- ▶ **A device which the examiner could use should theirs fail** – enabling them to access the internet and view PDFs
- ▶ **Support for the examiner** – if they need to access information provided on a USB memory stick

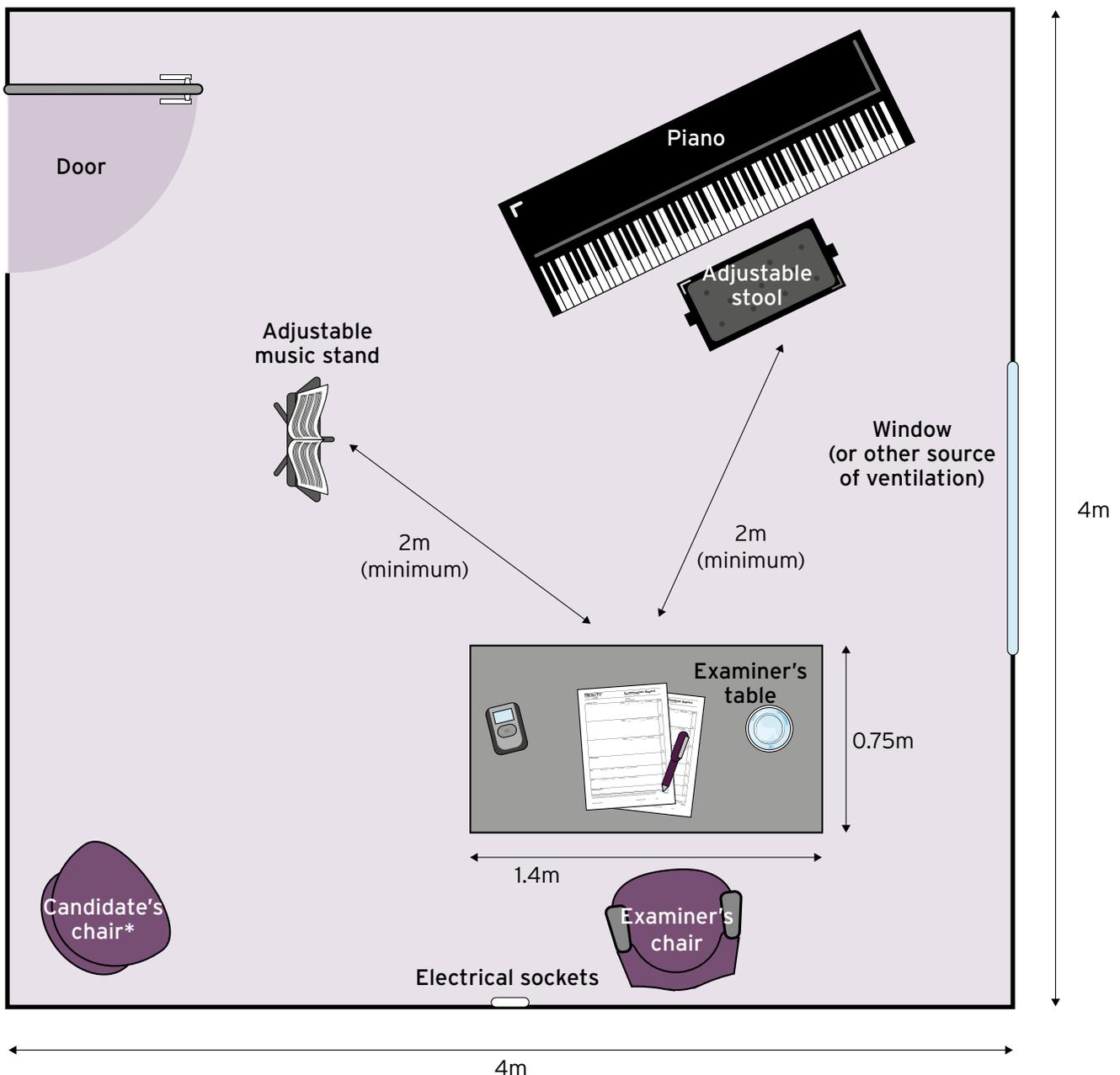
#### Additional considerations for drum kit/percussion:

- ▶ A room size of at least 3.5m×5m is recommended to enable enough distance between the instruments and the examiner. Large percussion instruments (especially timpani) can be very bulky and not all venues will be able to reasonably accommodate these exams.
- ▶ Wooden floored rooms are generally not ideal for Drum Kit exams. The room should be carpeted with suitable acoustic dampening.

The following diagrams show examples of suitable room layouts for graded and diploma exams. Please note that:

- ▶ Examiners are in charge of the exam day and may wish to adjust room set-up at the start of the session
- ▶ Examiner tables should be positioned at least 2m from the candidate to ensure that crowding does not occur (3m in the case of Drum Kit exams), but not so far away that there is a sense of remoteness
- ▶ Aural tests must be conducted so that the candidate does not have sight of the examiner's confidential materials or the piano keyboard
- ▶ Instrumental and vocal performers should have eye contact with their accompanists
- ▶ Care should be taken to avoid obstacles such as pillars

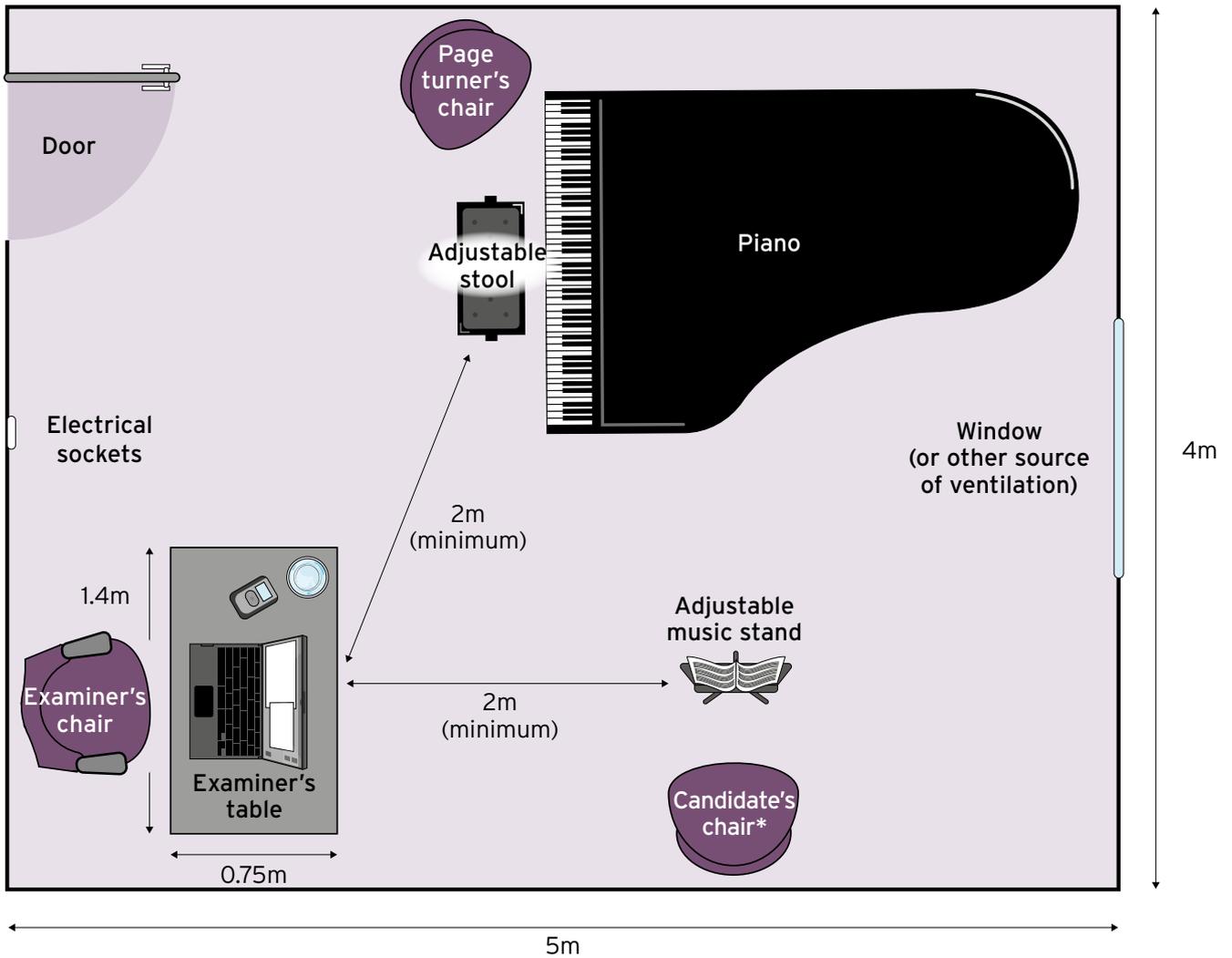
### EXAMPLE ROOM LAYOUT FOR MUSIC GRADED EXAMS



\*The candidate's chair, for guitarists, cellists and any other candidate who may prefer to sit, should have a flat or angle-adjustable seat and no arms. It can also be used by a page turner, duet player, interpreter etc as needed.

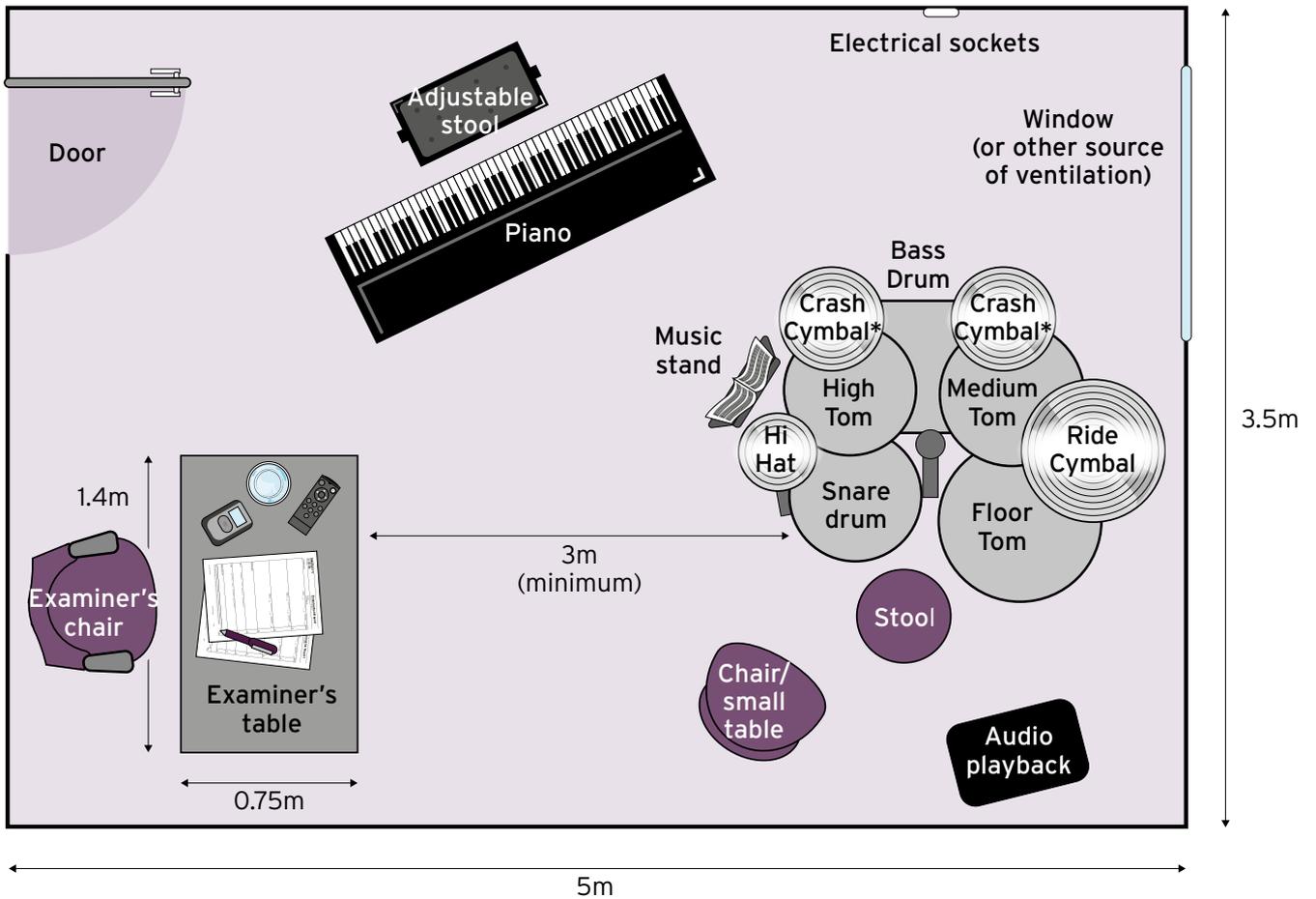
## EXAMPLE ROOM LAYOUT FOR MUSIC DIPLOMA EXAMS

Large centres may offer a second piano for FTCL piano candidates who wish to perform a concerto, but are not obliged to do so.



\*The candidate's chair, for guitarists, cellists and any other candidate who may prefer to sit, should have a flat or angle-adjustable seat and no arms. It can also be used by a page turner, duet player, interpreter etc as needed.

### EXAMPLE ROOM LAYOUT FOR DRUM KIT EXAMS



\*In either position or both.

## ROOM REQUIREMENTS

### For examiners

- ▶ A good-sized table (eg 0.75m×1.4m) with adequate space for both report writing and keeping reference materials, such as music, syllabuses, laptop computer etc. The table should be well supported and stable (it should not wobble). It is helpful, during longer exam sessions, to have access to a lockable drawer to store materials such as syllabuses.
- ▶ Access to a power point, so they can keep their device charged
- ▶ Adequate lighting of all task areas, with uniform light
- ▶ A comfortable and supportive chair
- ▶ A jug of drinking water and a glass
- ▶ Similar requirements for a second examiner as necessary, if exam monitoring is taking place
- ▶ See also instrument requirements below (as appropriate)

### For candidates

- ▶ A robust music stand with adequate support and height adjustment
- ▶ A chair, with a flat or angle-adjustable seat and without arms, for guitarists, cellists, and any other candidates who may prefer to sit (as appropriate)
- ▶ A second chair for an interpreter or page turner (as appropriate)
- ▶ Drinking water
- ▶ See also instrument requirements below (as appropriate)

## INSTRUMENT REQUIREMENTS

### Pianos

#### Selection of piano

- ▶ For **graded and certificate exams**: acoustic (grand or upright) or digital pianos may be used. Centres should ensure that the instrument keyboard is clean. In the case of digital pianos, prior consent must be obtained from all candidates.
  - Acoustic pianos must have a minimum range of 85 notes (A0 to A7), tuned in the range A=438 to 442 Hz, with effective noiseless action, *una corda* and sustaining pedals, without squeaks or rumbles.
  - Digital pianos must have a minimum range of 85 notes (A0 to A7), sensitivity at least for hard, medium and soft touch, 32-note polyphony, *una corda* and sustaining pedals (8-position from Grade 5 upwards), master volume control and 2×50W amplifiers.
- ▶ For **diploma exams** (ATCL, LTCL, FTCL): an acoustic grand piano must be provided for solo Piano candidates, and an acoustic piano (grand or upright) for accompaniment, that meet the above requirements. It is desirable that the piano has a sostenuto (third) pedal, particularly for solo Piano exams at FTCL level.
- ▶ Examiners report on the piano at each centre after each exam session and representatives will be advised of any problems, which they must act upon.

#### Piano set-up

- ▶ Acoustic pianos must be tuned before the exam session. In the case of an extended session, representatives must be prepared to call in a professional tuner if requested by an examiner.
- ▶ The instrument should have a smooth, balanced and well-regulated touch and the pedal mechanism must be in good working order, operating noiselessly and effectively. The tone quality of the instrument should be capable of fulfilling the demands of the wide range of repertoire found in the graded and diploma syllabuses.
- ▶ An adjustable piano stool must be provided: the use of cushions on chairs is not acceptable. If the pedals are high off the ground, there must be suitable provision to assist smaller candidates.
- ▶ A second piano stool is required for pianists who choose the improvisation test accompanied by the examiner, or who choose to play a duet at Initial-Grade 3. This will not necessarily be clear from the appointment form so it is advisable to provide a second stool as standard. Unless there are exams in Piano Duet or Piano Six Hands, this stool will not be used by a candidate so a lesser quality is acceptable – for example a non-adjustable stool or a different type of stool, as long as it can reasonably be used for the purpose.

## Drum kit and percussion

The guidelines in this section should be followed in the case of Drum Kit or Percussion exams.

### Instrument and equipment requirements – drum kit

- ▶ A piano (digital pianos are acceptable) and piano stool are required for supporting tests in all Drum Kit exams.
- ▶ A CD player (required for unpitched aural tests) and appropriate audio playback equipment must be provided for Drum Kit exams.  
See separate section below for guidance on playback equipment.
- ▶ Drum kit specifications are given in the current Percussion syllabus. The kit should consist of:
  - snare drum with adjustable drum kit size stand (not orchestral)
  - 2 mounted toms (high/medium)
  - floor tom (low)
  - bass drum (18-22")
  - hi hat (12-14")
  - ride cymbal (18-22")
  - 2 crash cymbals (14-18")
  - splash cymbal for Grades 5-8
  - adjustable drum stool
- ▶ Drum heads should be in good condition and tuned correctly, and all stands and pedals should be in good mechanical order.

### Set-up

As shown on page 4, the drum kit should be set up so that the candidate is facing sideways to the examiner, and not facing the examiner. This position allows the examiner to see the candidate's feet and hands, and the ride cymbal. If the candidate is left-handed, it would still allow the same view, but the examiner may need to sit a little more to the right.

It is important that the stool, snare drum and high tom are aligned in a straight line, facing the same direction as the bass drum, with the feet equidistant around the snare. The centre representative or the examiner can check this before starting by sitting at the drum kit.

Cymbals can be placed in a variety of positions and heights; it is up to the candidate to choose. The important point is that each cymbal is placed within easy reach.

As a change from stick to brushes or beaters is called for at some grades, a chair/small table should be made available as indicated.

#### Electronic drum kits:

Centres accommodating Drum Kit exams are expected to provide an acoustic kit as detailed above. Electronic/digital drum kits are suitable up to and including Grade 6 Rock & Pop Drums/Grade 5 Drum Kit at private exam centres, or at non-specialist public centres where arrangements have been made for the candidate to provide their own kit.

However, it is vital that the instrument is capable of producing all timbral and dynamic variety demanded by the score with full clarity, as well as any particular effects that individual pieces may call for. As a minimum, any electronic drum kit should include the following features:

- ▶ Mesh heads
- ▶ choke-able cymbal pads
- ▶ ride cymbal with bell trigger
- ▶ toms with rim triggers
- ▶ snare with rim click trigger

As a guide the following electronic kit types are considered sufficient for exams:

- ▶ Roland TD-17KV
- ▶ Yamaha DTX502 series
- ▶ Alesis DM10 MKII Studio Kit

- ▶ Normally a mid-sized kit (often referred to as a 'fusion kit') is best for exam purposes as younger candidates will be able to play comfortably. Older or taller players may in this case request to use their own, larger kit, at the discretion of the representative.
- ▶ In all cases candidates must provide their own sticks, which must be in good condition and suitable for the repertoire being performed; they may also bring their own pedals and cymbals.
- ▶ Candidates should provide their own additional percussion instruments (eg cowbells) where required.
- ▶ Trinity recommends the use of ear defenders by candidates and examiners for the performance of drum kit repertoire for health and safety reasons. These should be used for all pieces and exercises.

### Adjustments

The drum kit will need to be adjusted to suit each particular candidate. It is worthwhile to take time looking over the kit when setting up the room, and in particular to have a spare chair or stool to hand in case the drum kit stool is not the right height for a candidate, as some stools can take time to adjust.

Assistance in setting up and adjusting the drum kit is permitted up to and including Grade 5. From Grade 6 onwards, candidates are expected to adjust and set up the kit unaided. Candidates should be encouraged to use the adjustment screws to adjust the angles of the drums or cymbals, rather than just pulling on the instruments. This will ensure that the drum kit will continue to be in working order for the full session.

### Headphones

Candidates may prefer to play using headphones for accompanied pieces. A separate headphone mix or a splitter should be used as the examiner must be able to hear the backing track through the main speaker system. Candidates are responsible for providing their own headphones and cables. Due care should be given to the balance of the kit and the backing track in the room during the performance.

### Four and five-piece drum kits

It is important to note that all pieces can be played using a standard five-piece kit. However, should a candidate wish to alter the set-up in any way, for example to remove the middle tom and bring the ride cymbal nearer to the body in a classic four-piece set-up, they are free to do so, either at the beginning of the exam or between pieces.

### Playback equipment

Drum Kit exams require use of playback equipment to be provided by the centre.

- ▶ A CD player (required for unpitched aural tests) and audio playback system audio system must be provided, of a quality that reflects the grades being examined. For higher grades the system must be able to handle higher volumes, and it is essential that the accompaniment/backing track can be heard clearly, with a good balance and without distortion.
- ▶ The CD player must be operable from the examiner's desk, with the speakers positioned near the candidate.
- ▶ It is preferable that any leads do not go across the main floor area, but if this is unavoidable they should be taped securely to the floor.
- ▶ Other instruments permit the use of recorded accompaniments as follows:
  - Jazz Woodwind at all grades
  - Acoustic Guitar at all grades
  - Other accompanied instruments for Initial to Grade 3, including percussion

For these instruments it is the candidate's responsibility to provide the playback equipment.

### Equipment requirements for other Percussion exams (Tuned Percussion, Snare Drum, Timpani, Orchestral Percussion)

- ▶ A piano (digital pianos are acceptable) and piano stool are required for supporting tests in all Percussion exams.

### **Snare Drum exams**

- ▶ Snare Drum exams may be taken using the snare on a drum kit, or may be taken using an orchestral snare drum.
- ▶ Candidates must provide their own sticks, which must be suitable for the repertoire being performed.

### **Timpani exams**

- ▶ Timpani pieces may require from two to five drums, depending on the grade.
- ▶ Hand- or pedal-tuned timpani may be used up to Grade 5. For Grades 6-8, pedal-tuned timpani must be used.

### **Tuned Percussion exams**

- ▶ Tuned percussionists may use a xylophone, marimba, vibraphone or glockenspiel.
- ▶ Technical work for Grades 6-8 will require an instrument with at least a four octave range.

### **Orchestral Percussion exams**

- ▶ Orchestral Percussion exams will require a snare drum piece, timpani piece and tuned percussion piece to be played. The equipment required is therefore very substantial. Please ensure that the applicants are fully aware of what is and is not available at the centre before accepting entries.
- ▶ If the centre does not have the required equipment available for use then it may be necessary for the applicant or candidate to supply these. Please make sure that you communicate clearly with the applicants in this case to ensure that everyone knows exactly what they need to supply. It will be a benefit to timetable the Percussion exam(s) at the end of a day or adjacent to a break in order to allow for set-up time where equipment is provided by a candidate or applicant.