

# **Specimen Improvisation Tests**

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## **Stylistic Stimulus**

for Trinity College London exams from 2017

Initial-Grade 8

**E<sub>b</sub> 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

*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 Bb 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

Eb Ab Cm Bb Eb

*to be played through three times*

# Grade 6

## Example 1

**Agitato** ♩ = 132

Cm G<sup>7</sup> Cm

*to be played through twice*

Fm Cm A♭ G<sup>7</sup> Cm

Example 2

Nocturne ♩ = 63

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece in F#m, 12/8 time, with a tempo of ♩ = 63. The piano part starts with a *mf* dynamic. The guitar part features a series of slurs. A double bar line with repeat dots is followed by the instruction "to be played through twice".

The second system continues the piece with a series of chords: C#, C#7, D, Bm, C#, and C#7. The piano part continues with its melodic line, and the guitar part provides harmonic accompaniment.

The third system concludes the piece with chords: Bm, F#m, C#, C#7, and F#m. The piano part ends with a final cadence, and the guitar part provides a concluding accompaniment.

# Grade 7

## Example 1

Grave ♩ = 42

E B C#m

*to be played through twice*

G#m Amaj7 B B7 E

Example 2

Gigue ♩ = 92

Ab Eb

*to be played through twice*

mp

Ab Eb7 Ab C C7

Fm C7 Fm Eb Ab Eb7 Ab

# Grade 8

## Example 1

**Lively Dance** ♩ = 138

Fm C D♭ A♭ D♭ A♭

*mf*

*to be played through twice*

B♭m7 C Fm C D♭ A♭ D♭ Fm C7 Fm

The musical score is for a piece titled "Lively Dance" in 5/4 time, with a tempo of 138 beats per minute. It is written for E♭ instruments in treble clef and piano in bass clef. The key signature has three flats (B♭, E♭, A♭). 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 six measures of rhythmic slashes. Above these slashes are the chords Fm, C, D♭, A♭, D♭, and A♭. Below the treble staff is the instruction "to be played through twice". The piano part starts with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The piano staff consists of two staves. The upper piano staff contains chords and some melodic fragments, with an asterisk marking a specific chord. The lower piano staff contains a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system continues the piano accompaniment and includes a treble clef staff with rhythmic slashes and chords: B♭m7, C, Fm, C, D♭, A♭, D♭, Fm, C7, and Fm. The piano part concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Example 2

**Impressionistic:**  
*Slow and smooth* ♩ = 63

C#m<sup>9</sup> F#m C#m<sup>9</sup> F#m Emaj<sup>7</sup> A

*to be played through twice*

*p*

Emaj<sup>7</sup> A F#m<sup>7</sup> G#<sup>7</sup> F#m<sup>7</sup> G#<sup>7</sup> C#m<sup>9</sup> F#m C#m<sup>9</sup>