

Specimen Improvisation Tests

Stylistic Stimulus

for Trinity College London exams from 2017

Initial-Grade 8

F 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

Example 2

Lullaby ♩ = 72

C G G C

Grade 1

Example 1

Fanfare ♩ = 112

C G G C

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

A m D m E A m

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 \flat Cm F B \flat

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

mf

Grade 5

Example 1

Vivace ♩ = 90

A D Bm E A

to be played through three times

mp

Example 2

Grazioso ♩ = 104

E \flat A \flat Cm B \flat E \flat

to be played through three times

mp

Grade 6

Example 1

Agitato ♩ = 132

Cm G⁷ Cm

to be played through twice

Fm Cm A^b G⁷ Cm

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

Ab Eb7 Ab C C7

Fm C7 Fm Eb Ab Eb7 Ab

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 C⁷ Fm

The musical score is for a piece titled "Lively Dance" in 5/4 time, with a tempo of 138 beats per minute. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes a piano part and a guitar part. The piano part begins with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The guitar part consists of a series of chords: Fm, C, D \flat , A \flat , D \flat , and A \flat . A double bar line with repeat dots follows, and the instruction "to be played through twice" is written below. The second system continues the piano part and guitar part. The piano part features a more complex melody with some grace notes and slurs. The guitar part continues with the chord progression: B \flat m⁷, C, Fm, C, D \flat , A \flat , D \flat , Fm, C⁷, and Fm. The piece concludes with a final double bar line.

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