

ACOUSTIC GUITAR SAMPLE BOOKLET

A selection of pieces and technical work for Trinity College London exams 2020–2023

PELLS

WALKER

MORANDELL

DAWES

NOT FOR SALE

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Trinity's Acoustic Guitar Syllabus 2020-2023

The Acoustic Guitar syllabus reinvents the Plectrum Guitar exams, recognising the importance of the acoustic guitar in today's music. We've kept the most popular plectrum guitar pieces but added a much wider range of styles. This ensures that guitarists develop the blend of fingerstyle and plectrum technique they need to play the music they know and love.

Styles

This syllabus bridges the gap between classical and electric guitar, incorporating folk, acoustic, rock and pop, jazz, blues and country styles. It ensures relevance to contemporary guitarists by giving teachers and learners the flexibility to develop both fingerstyle and plectrum playing. Explore pieces by Ed Sheeran, Bob Marley and Led Zeppelin alongside Django Reinhardt and Chet Atkins.

Techniques

The technical work is relevant to a whole range of popular music styles as it includes chord patterns and progressions, jazz scales, blues scales and modes in addition to the standard scales and arpeggios. Many of the pieces, particularly at the lower grades, can be played either with fingers or plectrum, to suit learner preference.

Books and backing tracks

There are three books available – for Initial to Grade 2, Grades 3-5 and Grades 6-8 – which contain a wide range of styles, allowing candidates to follow distinct stylistic pathways as they progress.

All pieces are available in both standard and TAB notation so are accessible for any learner. Some pieces are solo arrangements, while others have free downloadable backing tracks recorded by professional session players, allowing guitarists to practise as part of a band and learn crucial ensemble skills.

Pro-skills

The syllabus is designed to reflect real-life demands and so includes material that features the different roles an acoustic guitar can fulfil: as a self-contained solo instrument, as a solo lead-line instrument or as an accompanying instrument. Many of the pieces include fingerstyle techniques (including thumb independence), or use of plectrum and modern percussive techniques, while others offer short improvised sections, or playing from chord symbols.

Developed by professional guitarists, our online support resources show you what an exam is like, explore professional technique and look at where our exams can take you: trinitycollege.com/acoustic-guitar-resources

Recognition and UCAS points

Trinity College London is an international exam board regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) in England, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland and by Qualifications Wales. Various arrangements are in place with governmental education authorities worldwide. In the UK, Grades 6-8 are eligible for UCAS points for those applying to colleges and universities. Trinity exams are aligned to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

DOWNLOAD OUR ACOUSTIC GUITAR SYLLABUS 2020-2023: trinitycollege.com/acoustic-guitar

Contributors

Trinity worked with a team of experts, including the following consultants, to develop the syllabus.



Anders Rye obtained his Popular Music degree from London College of Music and Media and has worked as a professional live and studio musician, appearing on various radio and TV shows. He has performed all over the world, including at the legendary Cavern Club in Liverpool, and most recently with artists like Shalamar and Jason Donovan. In addition to his work as a consultant for Trinity's Rock & Pop and Acoustic Guitar syllabuses, Anders is a member of the Trinity Rock & Pop examiner panel, and also wrote the teaching notes for the classical guitar book series *Raise the Bar*.



Mike Dawes is hailed as one of the world's most creative modern fingerstyle guitar performers. He is known for composing, arranging and performing multiple parts simultaneously on one instrument using unique and extended micro-techniques. Named 'Best acoustic guitarist in the world right now' by *Total Guitar/MusicRadar* in 2017 and 2018 readers' polls, his repertoire spans solo viral video hits in addition to mainstream chart successes. His playing can be heard in TV and film, including *Better Call Saul* and Sky TV's *Guitar Star*. Mike has a strong reputation as an educator, and is a columnist for *Guitar World*, *Acoustic* and other major publications.



Robert Morandell, based in Austria, has been teaching classical guitar, electric guitar, electric bass, ensemble and musicianship since 2000 at the Tyrol Music Service where he is head of plucked instruments and jazz, rock & pop. His electric guitar tutor series *Rockodile*, co-authored with Christoph Gruber, has been published in English translation by Trinity, and his other educational publications include *Guitar Tiger*, *Herculean Etudes* and *Jukebox*. His compositions, published internationally, cover many musical styles, genres and instruments. He lends his expertise through providing workshops, organising musical competitions and as an adjudicator.



Tim Pells studied at the Royal Academy of Music, and started coordinating guitar teaching in London schools for the Inner London Education Authority. Tim is now the instrumental studies coordinator at University Centre Colchester, where he teaches guitar, songwriting, education practice and performance. He has been head of guitar at the Centre for Young Musicians (Guildhall School of Music & Drama) since 1984 and is a member of the English Guitar Quartet, with whom he has toured and recorded internationally.



T J Walker started playing the ukulele banjo aged four and took up guitar when he was seven. By the time he was 15 he had started working in professional bands and has since performed all over the world in venues including the Royal Albert Hall and the O2 Arena. He also writes music for radio, TV and film, and his credits include BBC 6 Music themes and the BBC Radio One Live Lounge theme. T J's solo album of original songs, *The Long Game*, was released at the end of 2019.

The exam at a glance

About the exam

PIECES 66 marks Choose three pieces each worth 22 marks.



TECHNICAL WORK 14 marks

Scales, arpeggios, broken chords, exercises, chord sequences and cadences, depending on the grade.

SUPPORTING TESTS 20 marks

A combination of two tests from sight reading, aural, improvisation and musical knowledge, depending on grade and candidate choice.

Pieces

Candidates can express their musical identity by choosing pieces from our varied lists. There are options to play with backing tracks, as well as to play a duet at Initial to Grade 5 (with a live or recorded duet part). At all grades, candidates can perform an own composition in place of one of the listed pieces.

Technical work

This section of the exam supports the development of technical skills by assessing candidates' performance in a range of technical work requirements. All candidates play scales and arpeggios, and depending on grade, candidates also play chord progressions, cadences and exercises.

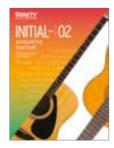
Supporting tests

Trinity's supporting tests encourage the development of the broader musical skills of sight reading, aural, improvisation and musical knowledge. The choice offered to candidates in this part of the exam allows them to demonstrate their own musical skills in different ways.

Exam structure and mark scheme

Initial-Grade 5	Maximum marks	Grades 6-8	Maximum marks
PIECE 1	22	PIECE 1	22
PIECE 2	22	PIECE 2	22
PIECE 3	22	PIECE 3	22
TECHNICAL WORK	14	TECHNICAL WORK	14
 Scales, arpeggios, broken chords, chord sequences (depending on g 		 Scales, arpeggios, cadeno (depending on grade) 	ces, chord progressions
SUPPORTING TESTS	20	SUPPORTING TEST 1	10
Any TWO of the following:		■ Sight reading	
Sight readingAuralImprovisation		SUPPORTING TEST 2	10
Musical knowledge		ONE of the following:	
		AuralImprovisation	

Acoustic guitar exam books Pieces



Initial

AIN'T NO SUNSHINE	Bill Withers, arr. Anders Rye
AMAZING GRACE	John Newton, <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
OH WHEN THE SAINTS	Trad., <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
REDEMPTION SONG	Bob Marley, <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
ROCKIN' THE COUNTRY	Brett Duncan
STEGOSAURUS STRUT	Nick Powlesland
SUMMER RAIN	T J Walker
SURFIN' SAFARI	The Beach Boys (Brian Wilson & Mike Love)
WHITE WINDMILL	T J Walker

Grade 1

CUBA KICK!	Tim Pells
A FISTFUL OF PESOS	Nick Powlesland
THE HUNGRY GHOST	Leslie Searle
PERFECT SKY	T J Walker
PHOTOGRAPH	Ed Sheeran (with John McDaid, Tom Leonard & Martin Harrington), arr. Anders Rye
SAILOR'S HORNPIPE	Trad., arr. James Burden
A TALE OF THE GREEN ISLE	Robert Morandell
TANGO MEMORIES	Tim Pells
WATERLOO SUNSET	The Kinks (Ray Davies), arr. T J Walker

Grade 2

BAD JACK	Nick Powlesland
BLUE RAG	Robert Morandell
HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN	Trad., <i>arr.</i> Tim Pells
JAMAICA	Nick Powlesland
NEW MEMORY LANE	Tim Pells
ROCKODILE REGGAE	Robert Morandell
SAIL AWAY	T J Walker
TURKEY IN THE STRAW	Trad., arr. Fred Sokolow
WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD	Louis Armstrong (Bob Thiele & George David Weiss), <i>arr</i> . T J Walker



Grade 3

ANNIE'S SONG	John Denver, <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
BAYOU BLUE	T J Walker
HOTEL CALIFORNIA	Eagles (Don Felder, Don Henley & Glenn Frey), <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
JOYRIDE IN A PINK CADILLAC	Robert Morandell
SETTING SAIL	Tim Pells
TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER	Nick Powlesland
TUESDAY BLUESDAY	Nick Powlesland
TURN TO DUST	Nick Powlesland

Grade 4

CHILLOUT	Nick Powlesland
IN THE KNOW	T J Walker
LOVE YOURSELF	Justin Bieber (with Ed Sheeran & Benny Blanco)
MEAN STREET	Nick Powlesland
PINKY PLAYS THE BLUES	Robert Morandell
SEPIA TONED	T J Walker
SUN SONG	Bryan Lester
YOUR SONG	Elton John & Bernie Taupin, arr. Mark Rose

Grade 5

BONNIE'S BOUNCE	T J Walker
HO HEY	The Lumineers (Jeremy Fraites & Wesley Schultz), <i>arr</i> . Mark Rose
MARRY YOU	Bruno Mars (with Philip Lawrence & Ari Levine), <i>arr.</i> Robert Morandell
ONE MORE TIME	Roy Chilton
REWRITE THE STARS (from The Greatest Showman)	Zac Efron & Zendaya (Benj Pasek & Justin Paul), <i>arr.</i> T J Walker
ROCKROACH	Nick Powlesland
SONG FOR DOROTHY	Ben Crosland
STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN	Led Zeppelin (Jimmy Page & Robert Plant)
THAT'S THE WAY IT IS	Robert Morandell

Support publications



Grade 6

COUNTRY PICKIN'	Roy Chilton
HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE	The Beatles (John Lennon & Paul McCartney), arr. George Adie
HOW DO I LIVE	LeAnn Rimes (Diane Warren), <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
MINOR SWING	Django Reinhardt & Stéphane Grappelli, <i>arr</i> . T J Walker
NEVER SO CLOSE	Roy Chilton
OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY	Led Zeppelin (Jimmy Page & Robert Plant)
RUBY BLUE	T J Walker
SWING THING	Nick Powlesland
YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND	Carole King, arr. Robert Morandell

Grade 7

ALIEN WAFFLE HOUSE	Mike Dawes
ANJI	Davy Graham, arr. Clive Carroll
BALLAD	Roy Chilton
BE DEEDLE DE DO	Barney Kessel
CLASSICAL GAS	Mason Williams
FLY ME TO THE MOON	Bart Howard, arr. Andy Jones
HOLE HEARTED	Extreme (Nuno Bettencourt & Gary Cherone)
(SOMEWHERE) OVER THE RAINBOW	Chet Atkins (Harold Arlen & E Y Harburg)
SOUL AGENT	Roy Chilton

Grade 8

BLUE BOY	Barney Kessel
DEEP RIVER BLUES	Trad., arr. Doc Watson
FOR MY FATHER	Andy McKee
MISTER PUNCH	Roy Chilton
MISTER SANDMAN	Chet Atkins (Pat Ballard)
NIGHT AND DAY	Joe Pass (Cole Porter), arr. François Leduc
OVERLAP	Roy Chilton
SOLO NO. 2	Lucky Elden



Scales, Arpeggios & Studies

These volumes contain all the scales, arpeggios and studies required for Trinity's Classical Guitar and Acoustic Guitar exams for Initial to Grade 8. Intuitive and bespoke technical work is a hallmark of Trinity exams, enabling learners to build confidence in their technique.

Sample pieces – About the pieces

Grade 1: CUBA KICK! / Pells

'Cuba Kick!' is a fun, Latin/pop style piece which can be played either with the pick or fingerstyle, and can be performed unaccompanied or with a backing track. The repeating syncopation should be relatively easy to achieve when used with the optional backing track.

Grade 2: SAIL AWAY / Walker

The guitar part for 'Sail Away' demonstrates how the acoustic guitar can be used in a modern pop production in a similar way to artists such as Ed Sheeran. It has an optional contemporary sounding backing track. The piece has a range of strumming and arpeggiated passages showing variations within the style.

Grade 3: JOYRIDE IN A PINK CADILLAC / Morandell

'Joyride in a Pink Cadillac' is a feel-good blues: imagine cruising with your car (or bike or electric scooter) on a sunny afternoon with a smile on your face. The first 12 bars of the song are the theme, while the next 12 bars are like a little written improvisation that picks up the idea of the theme in bar 9 but takes it to a more dramatic ending to properly prepare for the turnaround. The tune works as a solo piece but, as is often true in real life, playing it with someone else as a duet is even more fun.

Grade 5: BONNIE'S BOUNCE / Walker

'Bonnie's Bounce', named after T J's daughter, is based on a 12-bar blues sequence and includes several stylistic elements reminiscent of those used by jazz guitarists such as George Benson. These include chromatic melodic passages, jazz-voiced chord accompaniment, walking bass lines and an improvised section. There are some tricky but fun sections in this piece!

Grade 7: ALIEN WAFFLE HOUSE / Dawes

'Alien Waffle House' combines regular application of the Travis picking technique along with Jerry Reed influenced runs in the North American tradition. The piece also provides room for improvisation within the context of a 12-bar blues.

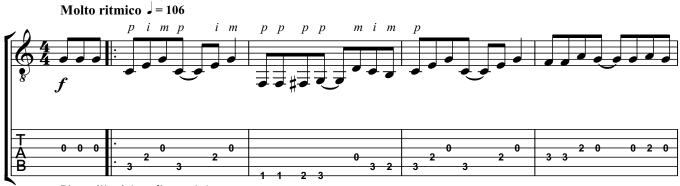
ORDER YOUR BOOKS FROM OUR ONLINE SHOP: trinitycollege.com/shop-acoustic-guitar

Sample pieces

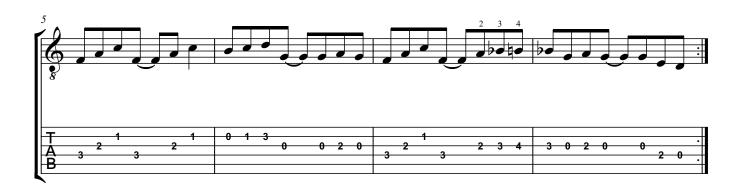
Grade 1

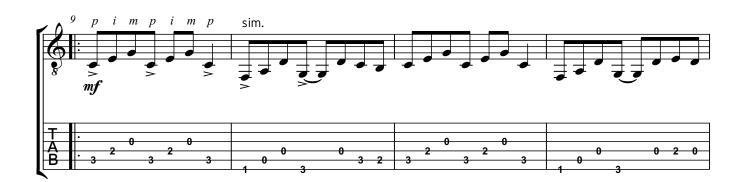
Cuba Kick!

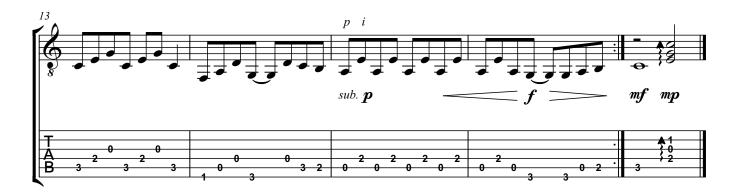
Tim Pells



Play with pick or fingerstyle



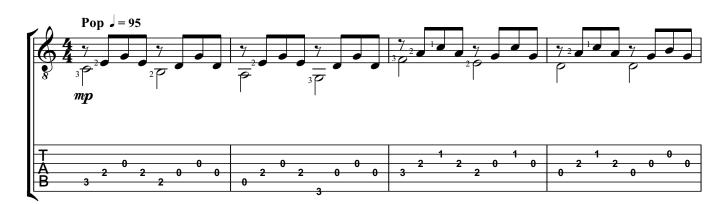


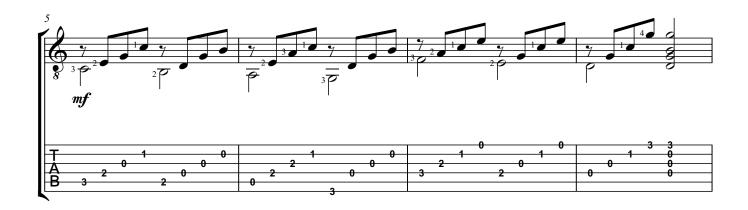


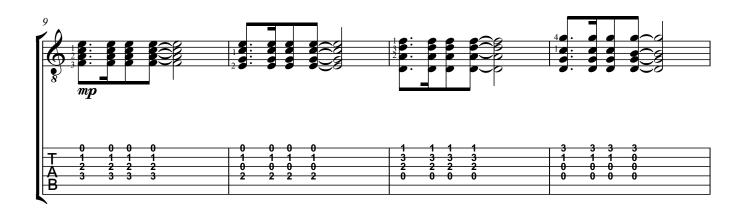
Grade 2

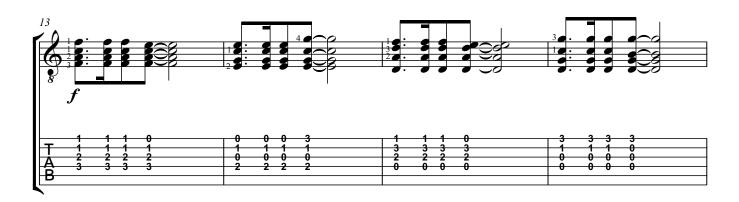
Sail Away

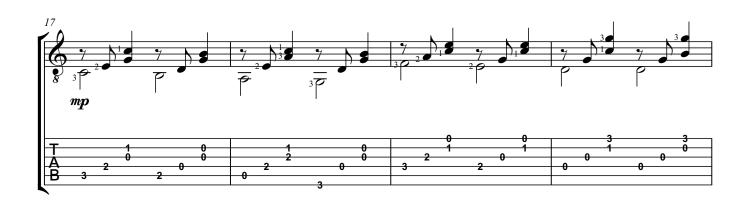
T J Walker

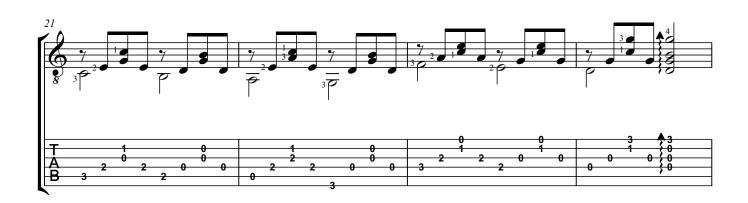


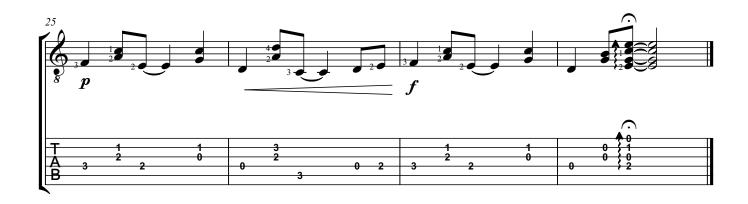






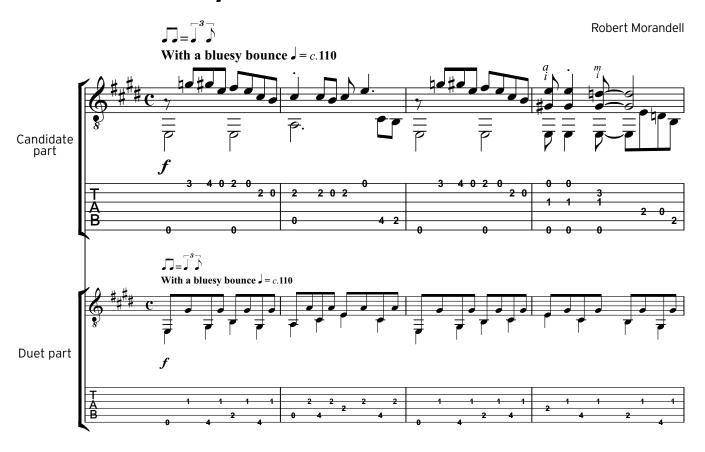




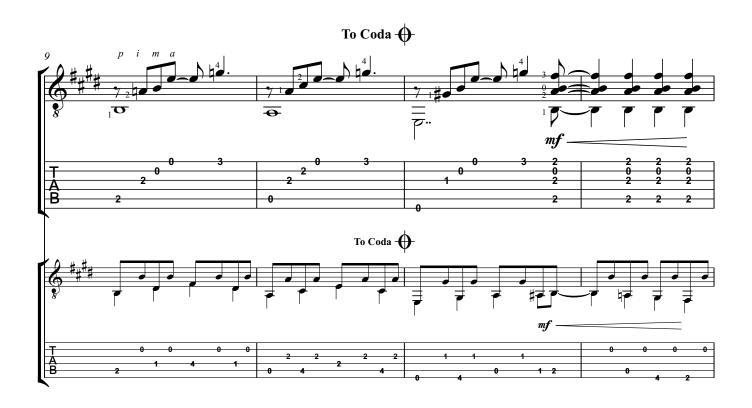


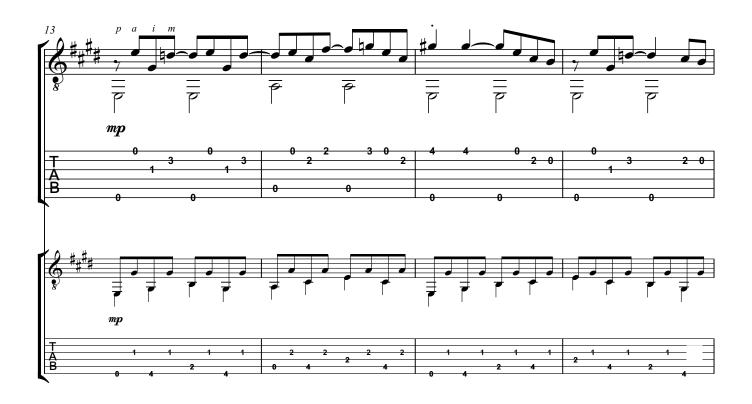
Grade 3 (extract)

Joyride in a Pink Cadillac



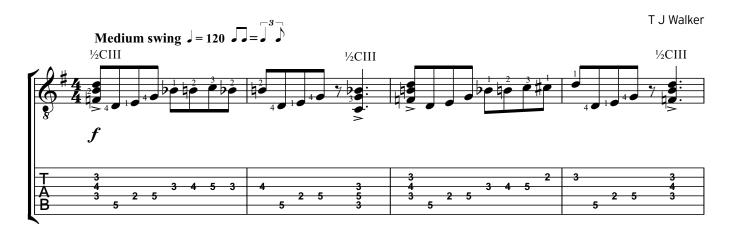


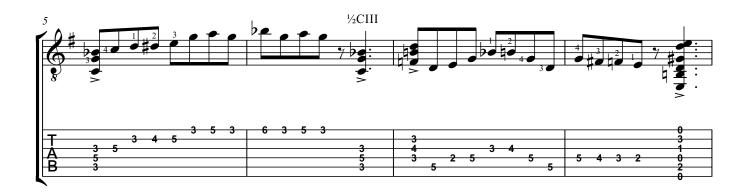


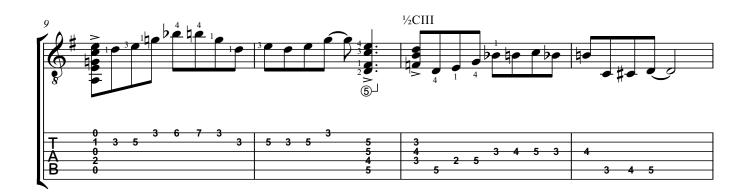


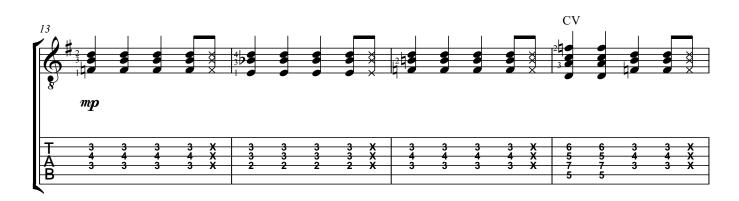
Grade 5 (extract)

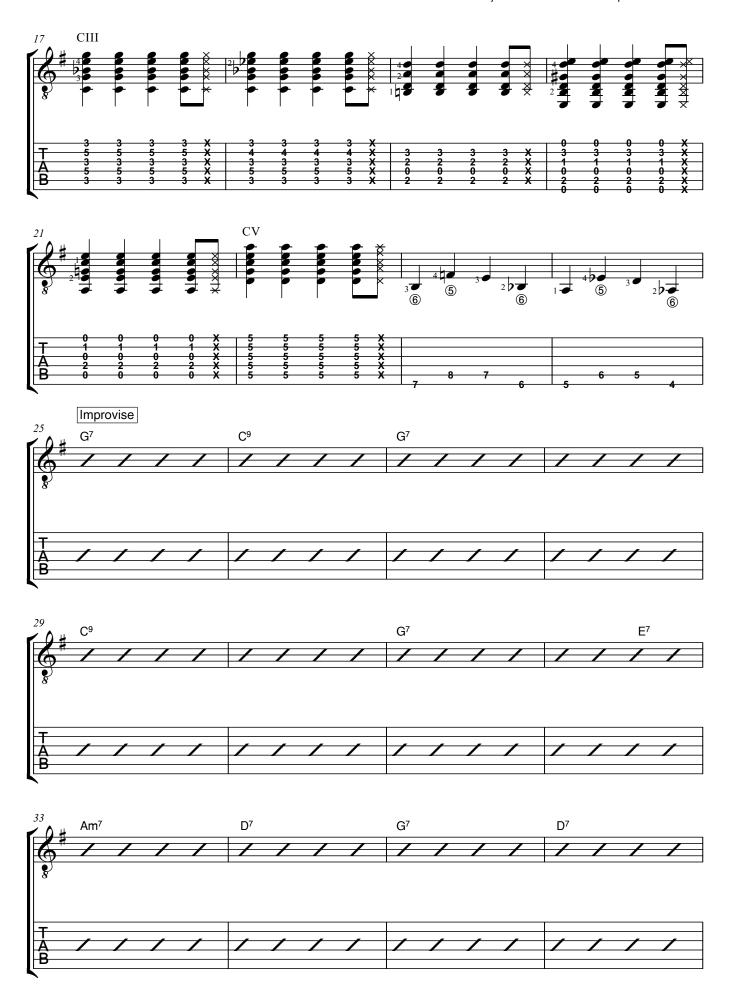
Bonnie's Bounce





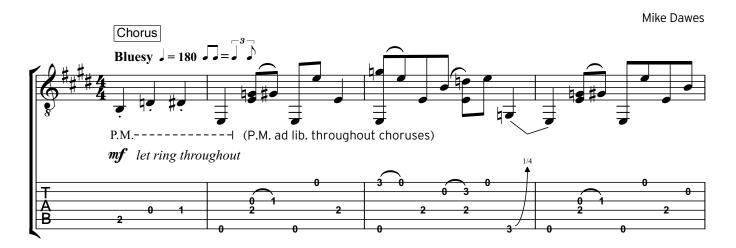


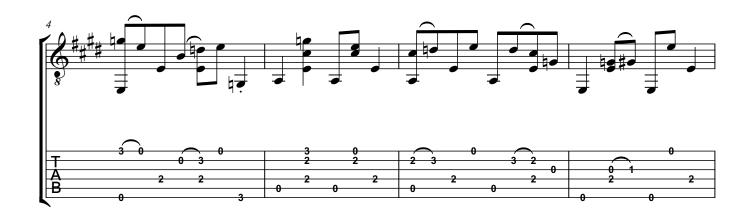


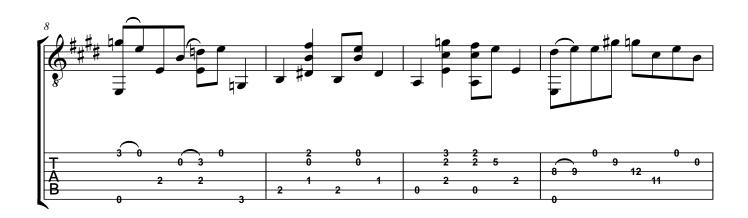


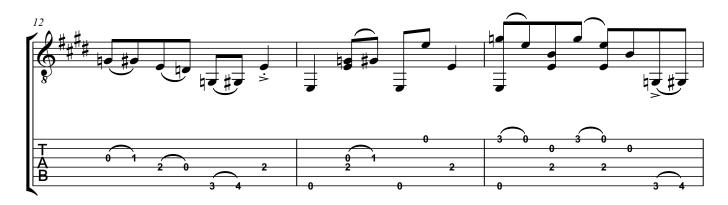
Grade 7 (extract)

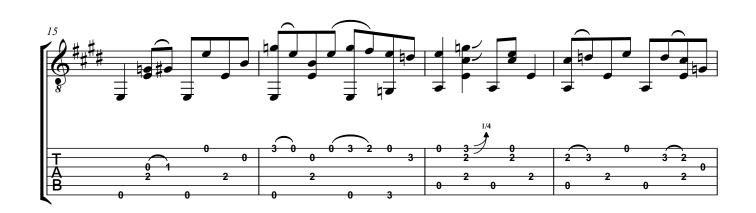
Alien Waffle House

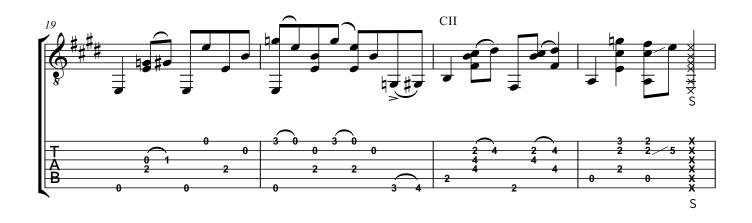














Sample technical work

This section of the exam supports the development of technical skills by assessing candidates' performance in a range of technical work requirements relevant to popular music styles, including scales and arpeggios, chord sequences, cadences and exercises.

Scales

Grade 3

This Grade 3 pentatonic major scale is great for improvising, and forms the basis for many folk songs such as 'Skye Boat Song'.

G pentatonic major scale (two octaves)



Also common in many folk and blues songs are modal and blues scales, which feature at higher grades:

Grade 6

Dorian scale on C (two octaves)



Grade 7

Blues scale on E (two octaves)



Chord progressions and cadences

Chord progressions and cadences are included in the technical work section to help build an understanding of common harmonic structures that underpin popular forms in contemporary music, such as the 12-bar blues, 1950s progression (I-vi-IV-V) and more.

Grade 1

The Grade 1 chord sequence is based around the common I-V⁷-I progression, found extensively in songs in all styles, including 'Cuba Kick!', 'The Hungry Ghost' and 'Sailor's Hornpipe'.

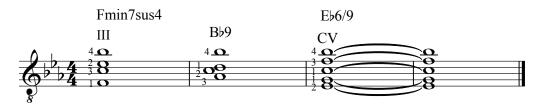
I-V⁷-I in C major



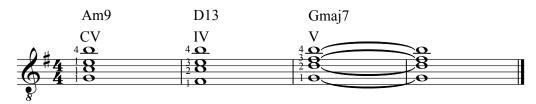
Grade 7

These Grade 7 sequences are based around the ii-V-I progression, a cornerstone of jazz harmony, and are found in pieces at the grade including 'Fly Me to the Moon' and '(Somewhere) Over the Rainbow'.

Fmin⁷sus⁴-Bb⁹-Eb^{6/9}



Am9-D13-Gmaj7



Acoustic guitar resources

Join us online to access a range of resources to support teaching and learning at trinitycollege.com/acoustic-guitar-resources

Discover digital content, including videos and articles from teachers and leading musicians, with advice and support on:

- Pieces, performance and technique
- Technical work
- Supporting tests
- Life in the music industry

Contact us

For further help you can contact the music support team at Trinity's central office at music@trinitycollege.com, or find the contact details of your local representative at trinitycollege.com/worldwide

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