

Exams and repertoire books designed to develop creative and confident electronic keyboard players

The Electronic Keyboard syllabus from Trinity College London offers excellent choice and flexibility, allowing candidates to express their individuality. Candidates are encouraged to be creative and inventive through the inclusion of pieces which incorporate own interpretation and elements of improvisation. These elements are not compulsory, enabling students to play to their individual strengths. Trinity's Electronic Keyboard syllabus includes exciting repertoire, arranged or composed specifically for each exam and covering a broad range of styles and genres.

A full set of graded repertoire books is available for Initial to Grade 8. Each book contains Pieces and Technical Work. The Technical Work has been designed to develop the important skills necessary to master the Electronic Keyboard, and includes scales, chord knowledge and exercises.

Why a Trinity Electronic Keyboard exam?

Trinity's Electronic Keyboard exams have been designed to develop creative, confident 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 for the exam from the repertoire list. They may substitute one piece for their own composition
- ▶ A range of specialist contributors – resulting in an enjoyable and diverse range of styles
- ▶ Varied and exciting repertoire list – including popular classics through to pop and jazz
- ▶ Optional pieces including elements of improvisation and own interpretation
- ▶ Exercises designed to develop important skills and techniques – covering bass clef reading and finger dexterity, chord knowledge and arpeggios, and keyboard functions
- ▶ Internationally recognised qualifications with UCAS points available at Grades 6-8
- ▶ Great value graded repertoire books, containing everything the candidate will need to prepare for the Pieces and Technical Work sections of their exam



How is the exam structured?

Pieces

Candidates play three pieces chosen from the syllabus. Candidates may substitute one piece for their own composition if they wish.

Technical Work

Candidates can choose between Scales & Chord Knowledge and Exercises.

Scales

A small selection of scales is set for each grade, structured progressively through the grades to assist with theoretical understanding. Scale requirements cover harmonic, melodic and natural minors. The inclusion of pentatonic and blues scales in the right hand only is designed to assist with the improvisational and creative nature of the electronic keyboard.

Chord Knowledge

Candidates play a selection of set chords and triads and their inversions for each grade. Chord knowledge is recognised as being vitally important when learning the electronic keyboard due to the nature of the music, where immediate recognition of chord symbols is necessary. The chord knowledge for each grade relates to the scales, and the level of difficulty progresses through the grades.

Exercises

Candidates prepare three exercises which each focus on a particular technique. Only two exercises are heard in the exam. At Initial to Grade 5 the exercises are: 1. Bass clef reading and finger dexterity 2. Arpeggios and chord use, and 3. Using keyboard functions. From Grade 6 onwards the exercises are different at each grade.

Supporting Tests

For Initial to Grade 5 exams, candidates choose two out of four Supporting Tests for their exam: Sight Reading, Aural, Improvisation or Musical Knowledge. From Grade 6, Sight Reading becomes compulsory and candidates can choose between Aural and Improvisation.

Sight Reading

Sight Reading is not a compulsory assessment until Grade 6 and is designed to be musically instinctive. The standard of a Sight Reading test is normally that of the repertoire two grades lower than the exam being taken.

Aural

Aural tests require responses based on listening and depend less on memory, singing and theoretical knowledge. At most grades candidates are asked to describe various features of the test music such as dynamics, articulation, texture and style.

Improvisation

In the exam, candidates are offered a choice of musical stimuli on which to base their improvisation. In each case the candidate will be asked which type of stimulus they would like to prepare; this can be Melodic, Rhythmic or Chordal. For Chordal tests, candidates may either opt to play the chords and/or bass line for themselves or may ask the examiner to play the chord pattern while they improvise a melodic line.

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. Musical Knowledge is managed conversationally by the examiner, seeking what the student knows and asking open 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.co.uk/music



Contributors

Trinity developed the Electronic Keyboard syllabus with input from a team of teachers, specialist musicians and composers from 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



Joanna Clarke is currently an examiner for Trinity College London. She teaches privately and in schools, and also performs as a soloist and accompanist. Joanna has helped develop and arrange pieces in the Electronic Keyboard syllabus and has also presented workshops to teachers and examiners, both in the UK and abroad.



Dr Kuljit Bhamra MBE was invited to compose several pieces for Trinity, bringing his wealth of experience and skills to the syllabus and diversifying the range of compositions. His pieces are modern and exciting, covering a range of Indian music without adopting special articulation or traditional Indian ornamental styles.



Andrew Smith is based in Manchester where he works as a teacher, arranger and accompanist. His teaching positions have taken him to Egypt and Iceland before he returned to the UK and joined Trinity College London as an examiner in 2004.



Victoria Proudler composed and arranged several of the pieces and advised on the development of the Electronic Keyboard syllabus. Victoria has a wide range of performing experience, teaches piano and keyboard and has presented workshops to teachers and examiners.

Repertoire books

The Trinity College London Electronic Keyboard graded books contain everything the candidate needs to prepare for the Pieces and Technical Work sections of their exam. With a dedicated book for each grade (Initial to Grade 8), Trinity offers full support to candidates along their learning process.

The Electronic Keyboard series is available from your local music shop or online at www.trinitycollege.co.uk/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.



SAMPLE EXERCISES

Grade 3

A Little Waltz – bass clef reading and finger dexterity

Voice: Violin (dual voice*)
Style: Waltz
♩ = 90

Violin
mp

Add dual voice
To Accomp. B

f

rit.

* Candidate's choice of dual voice.

About A Little Waltz

This waltz style exercise focuses on the use of keyboard functions. A one-bar rest midway enables the addition of dual voice and change of accompaniment pattern, while the rit. at the end can be achieved by the left hand slowing down the overall tempo.

SAMPLE PIECE

Grade 2

La Cumparsita

About La Cumparsita

A classic example of the Argentinian Tango (where the emphasis is on the fourth beat of the bar), this remains one of the most popular competition dance melodies to this day. This has a strong rhythmic pulse throughout and clear articulation is very important. As an improvisation piece, the marked bars indicate where the melody is to be improvised in the right hand.

Improvisation

Voices: Alto Saxophone/Strings
Style: Tango
♩ = 115

Gerardo Matos Rodriguez
arr. Nancy Litten

Alto Sax.

to Coda

Fill

To Strings

D.C. al Coda
To Alto Sax.

Coda

This piece is published under licence from Nancy Litten.

SAMPLE EXERCISES

Grade 8

All Fired Up

Voice: Piano
Style: None

About All Fired Up

A piano-style exercise which focuses on independent hand playing while concentrating on the technical elements of stride bass technique in the left hand and playing of broken chords in the right hand. Articulation and dynamics are also crucial here.

Musical score for 'All Fired Up' in 4/4 time, tempo 132-140. The score is for piano accompaniment and rhythm. It features independent hand playing with stride bass in the left hand and broken chords in the right hand. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. The score is divided into three systems of four bars each.

SAMPLE PIECE

Grade 7

Nutcracker Mash

Voices: Bassoon, Celesta, Flute, Orchestral, Strings, Pizz. Strings, Woodwind

Style: Hip Hop (bars 1-68 and 90-end) and Dance (bars 69-89)

Split points: Accomp. bars 5-20 and 89-97 A2, 29-36 D#2, 53-72 and 77-80 G#2 Left Voice bars 5-20 B3, 22-24, 26-28 and 37-44 F3, 45-52 G3, 73-76 and 81-84 G2

Pedal: Pedal function should be set to Fill
Other info: Fingered on bass chord setting to be used throughout. All voices to sound at written pitch using octave transpose as necessary (e.g. bars 37-44 to be played one octave higher with octave transpose set to -1 in RH, -2 in LH).

About Nutcracker Mash

A medley of pieces taken from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* suite with a modern twist. This 'mash-up' contains some of the main themes including *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, *Russian Dance*, *Dance of the Reed Pipes* and *March*. It features two different styles (hip hop and dance) which give this an energetic and rhythmic drive, yet still the piece retains some of its original feel with the use of orchestral voicing and independent hand work.

Musical score for 'Nutcracker Mash' in 4/4 time, tempo 110-120. The score is for piano accompaniment and rhythm. It features independent hand playing with hip hop and dance styles. Dynamics include *p* and *mp*. The score is divided into three systems of four bars each. Chord progressions are indicated above the staff. Pedal markings include 'Fill' and 'Accomp. on'. The score includes instructions for 'Rhythm on (Accomp. off)' and 'Rhythm off'. The score is divided into three systems of four bars each.

This piece is copyright Trinity College London



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 in Electronic Keyboard are available at Foundation and Intermediate levels.

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.

SoundEd CPD – engage with our new continuing professional development programme, developed in partnership with The Open University. An online open access learning resource, SoundEd CPD is designed to support anybody engaged in music teaching of any kind, with any age group and in any context. No prior experience or level of expertise, accreditation or qualification is needed. SoundEd CPD offers a flexible introduction to teacher development that can fit around a busy teaching career and be tailored to support teachers' individual requirements.

Find out more at www.trinitycollege.co.uk/support

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