

## Exams and repertoire books designed to develop creative and confident singers

The 2015-2017 Singing syllabus from Trinity College London offers the choice and flexibility to allow candidates to play to their strengths, enabling them to gain recognition for their own unique skills as performers.

In response to positive feedback, the new syllabus retains our popular wide-ranging repertoire lists, designed to offer an enticing range of music to choose from with few limitations placed on programme selection. Candidates may also sing one of their own compositions in the exam, allowing them to express their individuality.

Following requests from teachers and candidates, sight reading is now accompanied at Grades 6-8, so all our sight reading tests for singers are now accompanied. Example sight reading tests are available in the range of *Sound At Sight* books, and a variety of musical theatre pieces are provided in our *Sing Musical Theatre* series, along with performance notes, singing tips and exercises. Most of the repertoire listed in our syllabus can also be found on our online shop.

## Why a Trinity Singing exam?

Trinity's Singing exams have been designed to develop confident, creative and skilled performers through a structured learning framework, which nurtures development and evaluates a singer's progress at every level.

- ▶ Choice and flexibility – candidates choose three pieces from the repertoire lists and may offer their own composition in place of one listed piece
- ▶ At Initial to Grade 5, candidates may choose two supporting tests from four options: sight reading, aural, improvisation and musical knowledge. At Grades 6-8, sight reading is compulsory and candidates choose one other test
- ▶ Technical work has been designed to offer a choice of different exercises, including unaccompanied folk songs, through which candidates can demonstrate their technical ability
- ▶ Extensive repertoire lists – covering a wide range of styles and genres
- ▶ Uniquely diagnostic mark scheme – providing detailed and specific musical feedback
- ▶ Internationally recognised qualifications, with UCAS points available at Grades 6-8
- ▶ A range of support materials including sight reading and repertoire books



# How is the exam structured?

## Pieces

Candidates perform three pieces selected from different groups, with no more than two songs from each group. Candidates may substitute one piece for their own composition if they wish. This part of the exam is designed to provide the right balance of flexibility and structure, enabling candidates to demonstrate their own musical personalities while requiring them to present a balanced programme.

## Technical work

Candidates can choose to perform either Bray exercises, a Vaccai study or an unaccompanied folk song in the exam. This is designed to enable candidates to demonstrate their technical ability in a way that plays to their strengths as musicians.

### Bray exercises

Candidates perform the set Bray exercises for the grade, which test their ability to produce clear vowel sounds and other technical points. At Grades 5-8, Bray exercises are offered for both high and low voices.

### Vaccai studies

Candidates perform the set Vaccai study for the grade in Italian, which tests the ability to pitch intervals and sing in Italian.

### Unaccompanied folk song

Candidates choose to perform one of the set unaccompanied folk songs for the grade. These songs require pitch to be held and long phrases to be sustained, and they may be transposed to suit the candidate.

## Supporting tests

At Grades 1-5, candidates choose two supporting tests from four options: sight reading, aural, improvisation and musical knowledge. At Grades 6-8, sight reading is compulsory, and candidates choose from improvisation or aural for their second test. This flexibility is designed to give candidates choice in how they demonstrate their broader musical skills, while recognising that sight reading is an important skill at the higher grades.

### Sight reading

The sight reading test is designed to be musically intuitive to enable candidates to demonstrate their sight reading skills to the best of their ability. Candidates perform a short, accessible musical extract after a brief period of preparation, at a level approximately two grades lower than the exam being taken.

### Aural

The aural test assesses candidates' skills in musical perception and understanding through carefully graded questions about a single musical extract played at the piano by the examiner. At most grades candidates are asked to describe various features of the extract such as dynamics, articulation, texture and style.

### Improvisation

This test assesses candidates' ability to respond fluently and creatively to a musical stimulus, which can be melodic, rhythmic or choral at the candidate's choice.

### Musical knowledge

The musical knowledge section of the exam is based exclusively upon the repertoire sung by the candidate in the pieces section. It is delivered conversationally by the examiner, who draws out what the student knows through questions such as 'point out the most interesting features of this piece'.

### Syllabus overlap arrangements

Syllabus arrangements are in place, for further information visit [www.trinitycollege.com/music](http://www.trinitycollege.com/music)



## SAMPLE PIECE

Grade 5

There Must Be More

(Sing Musical Theatre, Whistle Down the Wind)

### About There Must Be More

Taken from the Youth Music Theatre UK production *Grace Online*, this song deals with teenage boredom and frustration with a distinctly 21st century feel. The opening is almost recitative with fragmented lyrics and swooping intervals for the singer to negotiate as the sense of being trapped opens out into a yearning for freedom. As the song progresses, a short section of increased emotional intensity is marked by the speed picking up and the piano accompaniment thickening in texture. This requires the singer to project strongly without forcing the tone, then allowing the voice to decrescendo for the final repeated statements of 'I'm lonely'.

Andante  $\text{♩} = 80$

Why do my pa-rents make these stu-pid rules? My life's spent on a lap-top, I can't e-ven go to school. My

3  $\text{Bm}^9$   $\text{D/E}$   $\text{A}^7\text{sus}^4$   $\text{A}^7$  *andante*  $\text{Dadd}^9$   $\text{Gm}^4$

bed-room may as-well be a pri-son cell, if I could see the things that

4  $\text{Dmaj}^9$   $\text{Gm}$   $\text{B}^{\flat}\text{maj}^7$   $\text{A}^7/\text{G}$   $\text{A}^7\text{sus}^4$   $\text{A}^7$

o - thers see I'd find my way, if I were free. There must be

9  $\text{Dadd}^9$   $\text{Gm}^4$   $\text{Dmaj}^9$   $\text{Gm}$   $\text{E}^{\flat}\text{maj}^7$   $\text{Dm}^7$   $\text{B}^{\flat}\text{maj}^7$

more be-yond this bed-room door, some-day I'll fly a - way, but for

12  $\text{A}^7\text{sus}^4$   $\text{A}^7$   $\text{Dadd}^9$   $\text{Gm}$   $\text{Dadd}^9$   $\text{A}^7\text{sus}^4$

now it's o - luy,

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## SAMPLE SIGHT READING TEST

Grade 3

Example 7

(Sound at Sight Book 2)

### About Example 7

Sight reading is a useful skill, and an effective sight reader will get as much information as quickly as possible from a new piece. In this example, understanding the D minor tonality, the rather fast tempo and the waltz feel will establish the basis for a confident reading. Looking at the shapes of phrases and how the accompaniment supports the vocal line also helps. This piece starts on an anacrusis so counting carefully during the piano introduction is vital. Breathing in time and preparing the first note also ensures a neat start.

7 *Allegretto*



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# Contributors

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

**Linda Hirst** was a Swingle Singer in the 1970s and co-founded Electric Phoenix in 1979. She travelled the world with both groups, which led to an international solo career in concert, opera, television and recordings. Shoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* has been a constant thread throughout her career, and she sang it at La Fenice for the composer's daughter's 80th birthday in 2012. She has been head of vocal studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance for 20 years.

**Christopher Goldsack** won the Toulouse and Paris International Singing Competitions before pursuing a career in opera and concert in England and abroad. He now teaches extensively, both privately and as a visiting teacher at Epsom College, and directs several youth choirs. He also enjoys producing resources for singing teachers.

**Luise Horrocks** studied at the Royal College of Music, and as a soprano soloist has performed extensively in the UK, Europe, the USA and South Africa. She is a sought-after teacher and consultant and has worked in both the Junior and Senior departments of Birmingham Conservatoire and on many residential singing courses. She has been a Trinity examiner for 15 years and is now an associate chief examiner, with special responsibility for singing.

**David Hitchin** graduated from the Royal Manchester College of Music, and has worked as an actor, singer and musician. He has played leading roles in many West End musicals, and in productions at the National Theatre. He teaches singing at The King's School, Canterbury, and is also director of performing arts at Cranleigh Preparatory School.

## Repertoire books

*Sound at Sight Singing* books offer a wealth of carefully graded practice tests for the sight reading test.

Our graded *Sing Musical Theatre* books each feature 15 musical theatre songs in a range of styles, both classic and contemporary. Each book includes useful background and performance notes, handy singing tips and exercises, and a backing track CD.

These books are all available from your local music shop or online at [www.trinitycollege.com/shop](http://www.trinitycollege.com/shop). Candidates can also locate sheet music for many of the pieces listed in the Singing syllabus on the online 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.





## 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 by 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** – take part 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.

**CPD for teachers** – engage with our continuing professional development programme, developed in partnership with The Open University and other organisations. No prior experience or level of expertise, accreditation or qualification is needed.

Find out more at [www.trinitycollege.com/support](http://www.trinitycollege.com/support)

## 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 are available at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels.

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