

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

The 2015-2018 Electronic Keyboard syllabus from Trinity College London offers the choice and flexibility to allow candidates to play to their strengths and gain recognition for their own unique skills as performers. The syllabus includes brand new repertoire lists and technical work for Initial to Grade 5.

Newly commissioned repertoire spans a wide range of styles and genres, including original compositions and arrangements of familiar pieces. Candidates are encouraged to be creative and inventive through optional pieces which incorporate own interpretation and improvisation.

The technical work has been designed to develop the important skills necessary to master the electronic keyboard, including keyboard functions, scalar exercises and pianistic exercises.

New graded repertoire books are available for Initial to Grade 5, featuring new pieces and exercises. Books are also available for Grades 6-8, and high-quality exemplar recordings are available on CD.

Why a Trinity Electronic Keyboard exam?

Trinity's Electronic Keyboard exams have been designed to develop confident, creative 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 from the repertoire lists and may offer their own composition in place of one listed piece
- ▶ 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 keyboard functions, scalar exercises and pianistic exercises
- ▶ Uniquely diagnostic mark scheme – providing detailed and specific musical feedback
- ▶ Internationally recognised qualifications, with UCAS points available at Grades 6-8



How is the exam structured?

Pieces

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

Technical work

Candidates can choose between scales and chord knowledge, and exercises.

Scales

A small selection of scales is set for each grade, structured progressively 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 fall into three categories: keyboard functions, scalic techniques, and pianistic techniques. At Grades 6-8, different techniques are tested at each level.

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 choose between aural and improvisation.

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. The standard of a sight reading test is normally that of the repertoire 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. Except at Initial level, no singing is required.

Improvisation

In the exam, candidates are offered a choice of musical stimuli on which to base their improvisation. In each case the candidate is 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. 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 overlap arrangements are in place. For further information visit www.trinitycollege.com/music



SAMPLE EXERCISE

Grade 2

Groovy Moves – keyboard functions exercise

Voices: Brass, Saxophone

Style: Big band or Swing

This exercise focuses on the use of keyboard functions. It alternates between *staccato* and *legato* articulation, and requires the quavers to be played with a swung feel. The one-bar rest allows time for a change of voice as well as a fill leading into a change of accompaniment pattern. A second fill is needed before the final phrase is played.

SAMPLE PIECE

Grade 3

Skater's Waltz

Voices: Clarinet, Strings

Style: Waltz

French composer Emile Waldteufel was inspired to write this famous waltz after watching the moves of ice skaters, which he likened to dancers performing a waltz. The *legato* outer sections of the piece depict a graceful and swirling dance, while the clarinet section in the middle reflects a much more active dance, with a leaping melody. Contrasting playing styles and subtle use of dynamics will help to capture this depiction of the ice skater's moves.

SAMPLE EXERCISE

Grade 8

All Fired Up

Voice: Piano
Style: None

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.

♩ = 132-140
Accomp. and Rhythm off

The score consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning with a tempo of 132-140. The first staff is the right hand (RH) with dynamics *mf* and *mp*, featuring broken chords and articulation marks. The second staff is the left hand (LH) with a similar dynamic range, showing stride bass technique with octaves and chords. The second system continues the piece with similar technical challenges. The third system features a *f* dynamic and includes fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) for the right hand.

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: Fingering on bass chord setting to be used throughout. All voices to sound at written pitch using octave transpose as necessary (eg bars 37-44 to be played one octave higher with octave transpose set to -1 in RH, -2 in LH).

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.

Accomp. and Rhythm off
Pizz. Strings

Rhythm on (Accomp. off)

Accomp. on

The score is divided into sections with specific performance instructions. The first section is marked 'Accomp. and Rhythm off' and 'Pizz. Strings'. The second section is 'Rhythm on (Accomp. off)'. The third section is 'Accomp. on' and includes a 'Fill' instruction. The score includes guitar chords in boxes: Em, Am/E, E^{o7}, E⁷, F^o/E, Em, Am/E, Em, A^{#o7}, A^{o7}, Em/G, F⁷, Bm/F[#], F⁷, B, C[#]/B, B, C^{#o7}, B⁷, E⁷, A⁷, D⁷, G, B⁷, Em. It also includes performance instructions like 'To Celesta', '(Celesta)', 'Left Voice Synth. RH', 'RH', 'Accomp. off 1 (Rhythm on)', and 'Remove Left Voice'.

Contributors

Trinity developed the Electronic Keyboard 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:



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.



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



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

Repertoire books

The Trinity College London Electronic Keyboard graded books contain everything candidates need 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.com/shop



Recognition

Trinity exams are regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) and are recognised by 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.





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 own choice pieces and their own compositions. Marks are awarded for the performance of the chosen pieces and on programme planning, giving good preparation for further progression. Certificate exams in Electronic Keyboard are available at Foundation and Intermediate levels. See the Certificate Exams syllabus or visit our website for full details.

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.

Trinity's music support site

Developed to support Trinity teachers, our music support site 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.

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