

GUITAR: CLASSICAL & PLECTRUM 2016-2019

Initial-Grade 8

Exams to support the way guitar players learn, testing performance and technique through exciting repertoire including duets, as well as cleverly designed technical work and exercises

The 2016-2019 Guitar syllabus from Trinity College London includes classical and plectrum guitar and 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.

Repertoire lists cover a wide range of styles and genres, and include options for candidates to perform duets at Initial to Grade 3. The technical work suite of scales and arpeggios features specially commissioned progressive studies and innovative use of concerto extracts to help guitarists master the techniques and musical challenges of the instrument.

Repertoire books for guitar are available for Initial to Grade 8, featuring a range of pieces including special commissions and duets for Initial to Grade 3. High-quality exemplar recordings are available on CD.

Technical work books are available, including technical exercises, scales and arpeggios, studies and concerto extracts, alongside our *Raise the Bar* and *Sound at Sight* series.

Why a Trinity Guitar exam?

Trinity's Guitar 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.

- Unparalleled choice and flexibility to allow candidates to play to their strengths, enabling them to gain recognition for their own unique skills as performers
- 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
- Varied and exciting repertoire lists – including a range of genres and styles
- 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 books of repertoire, sight reading and technical work



How is the exam structured?

Pieces

Candidates play three pieces selected from two different groups, and 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 perform a technical exercise in the exam, and can then choose to perform either scales and arpeggios or studies/concerto extracts (according to the grade). This is designed to enable candidates to demonstrate their technical ability in a way that plays to their strengths as musicians.

Technical exercises

All candidates begin the technical work section by performing a technical exercise. These are based on scale, arpeggio and/or chord patterns, increasing in length and complexity as the grades progress.

Scales & arpeggios

The suite of scales and arpeggios is structured progressively to develop technique and awareness of keys. Candidates prepare the scales and arpeggios set for the grade, and play a selection in the exam as requested by the examiner.

Studies (Initial to Grade 7)

Specially commissioned studies provide an alternative to scales and arpeggios, and focus on three technical areas of particular relevance to guitarists: tone and phrasing, articulation and idiomatic elements. Candidates prepare three studies from a choice of six, of which two are played in the exam. One is chosen by the candidate and one by the examiner.

Concerto extracts (Grade 8)

At Grade 8, candidates may opt to play extracts from core repertoire guitar concertos as an alternative to scales and arpeggios. Two extracts are played in the exam, one chosen by the candidate and one by the examiner.

Supporting tests

At Initial to Grade 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. No singing is required.

Improvisation

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

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'.



Sample study

Grade 4

Flamenco Fantasy

With intensity ♩ = 116

tasto *p* *p* *p* *i* *p* *pont.* *mf* *cresc.* *nat.* *p*

6 *cresc.* *Harm. 12* *tasto* *p* *molto rit.* *a tempo* *nat.* *ff* *L.v.* *pp*

10 *p* *ff* *pp*

Studies are categorised in three groups at all levels: tone and phrasing, articulation, and idiomatic elements. Within these categories a wide range of technical elements is explored, including different types of articulation, chords, dynamics, barré and half barré, harmonics, tremolo, campanella and étouffé.

This Grade 4 study by Nicholas Powlesland explores some of the different tone colours possible on the guitar, with several changes of right hand position. Use of the full dynamic spectrum will help to achieve the dramatic effect of this flamenco-inspired study.

Sample piece

Grade 3

Surf Rider

Surf Rider, by acclaimed guitarist and composer Gary Ryan, is one of several pieces specially written for this syllabus. As indicated at the top of the score, rhythmic precision is key to a successful performance – both in the simple repeated patterns of the opening and in the syncopated passages later in the piece where adept co-ordination is needed to bring out the interplay between the two parts.

Gary Ryan
(b. 1969)

Bold and rhythmic ♩ = 126

mf *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

5 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

9 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

13 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

17 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

21 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

25 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

29 *mf* *sim.* *m* *i* *m* *a* *f* *mp* *p*

Grade 7

In the technical work section all candidates begin with a technical exercise, and then opt to perform scales and arpeggios or studies/concerto extracts.

The technical exercises combine scale, arpeggio and chord patterns, increasing in length and complexity as the grades progress. This Grade 7 exercise contains elements of the scale and arpeggio of B major with variations in rhythm, articulation and dynamics, concluding with a glissando slide and accented notes in octaves.

♩ = 102

VI 2 4 1 2

f *p*

6 IV CIV

f *p*

11 CIV II IV VI VII

f *p* *f* *p* *gliss.*

Sample duet

Initial

The Cuckoo

At Initial to Grade 3, candidates have the option to perform up to two duets. The lower part may be played by their teacher or another player, or may be pre-recorded. This arrangement of the traditional Swiss folksong *The Cuckoo* requires a high degree of co-ordination between the players, especially in bars 11-12 where rhythmic precision and echo-style dynamics will help to portray the characteristic call of the cuckoo effectively.

arr. Lee Sollory

Traditional Swiss

Giocoso ♩ = 100–108

Solo

Accomp.

mf

mf

15

1. 2.

mf

Play the repeat in the exam.

Contributors

Trinity developed the Guitar 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:

Nicholas Powlesland has been a professional musician since graduating from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in 1984, where he studied guitar and piano. He has enjoyed many years performing as a soloist, as well as playing in a number of chamber ensembles. Nicholas has been a Trinity examiner since 2005 and has examined extensively in the UK and Europe. Nicholas is also a teacher and composer; since 2000 he has held a number of posts for the Lancashire Music Service, where he is currently an instrumental teacher and area team leader for Preston. He also teaches privately and has written a considerable number of pieces, predominantly for guitar.

Lee Sollory is the author of several works for guitar and other instruments. His music is performed all over the world, from simple teaching materials to some of the most technically challenging music in the modern repertoire today. He taught at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance for 15 years and now continues his teaching at Highgate School, London. Lee is a highly experienced music examiner and has also collaborated on the design and compilation of a number of guitar syllabuses.

Repertoire and support books

A range of publications is available to support candidates as they work towards their exams.

Repertoire books for guitar (Initial to Grade 8) contain a wide range of pieces including commissions and duets for Initial to Grade 3. High-quality exemplar recordings are available on CD. A set of technical work books is also available, containing all the technical exercises, scales, arpeggios, studies and concerto extracts featured in the technical work section of the exam.

Repertoire collection books are also available for plectrum guitar (Initial to Grade 8). There are three books (Initial to Grade 2, Grades 3-5 and Grades 6-8) and each book contains six pieces for each grade.

Books in the *Raise the Bar Guitar* series bring together the most popular pieces from past Trinity syllabuses, and *Sound at Sight* books provide examples of the sight reading tests.

The books are available from your local music shop or online at trinitycollege.com/shop

Recognition

Trinity exams are externally regulated in the UK and 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.





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. To find out more visit trinitycollege.com/discover, 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

Certificate exams

Trinity offers certificate exams which provide an alternative to graded music exams and focus solely on performance. To find out more visit trinitycollege.com/musiccertificates

Theory exams

Theory exams are available from Grade 1 to support learners to develop their understanding of the technical language of music. To find out more visit trinitycollege.com/theory

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Find out more:
trinitycollege.com/guitar

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