

PROGRAMME EXAMPLES FOR MUSICAL THEATRE

GRADE 8



At Grade 8, candidates are expected to take full ownership of their material, delivering FOUR pieces in a 14 minute continuous programme of integrated song, acting and movement/dance and 4 minutes to deliver the lyrics of one of those songs as a monologue in a new context that explores a different interpretation. They should sustain their energy and concentration.

TOP TIPS

- ▶ Encourage the candidate to read and research widely, to understand a range of musical theatre styles.
- ▶ Ensure that the material has dramatic progression and is suitably challenging for this level. Songs can be sung by any gender but they should suit the candidate's vocal range and technical ability.
- ▶ Encourage personal interpretation rather than replicating a recorded performance.
- ▶ Practise the sequence of the programme to help build stamina and ensure smooth transitions .
- ▶ The candidate should showcase their abilities through a structured and well-balanced programme with a variety of genres and styles. The integration of moment and voice should be highly proficient.
- ▶ Movement must be technically assured; it should flow and connect the lyrics to the story. There should be intention behind the actions, strong controlled *adagé* or broad exciting *allegro*. The candidate must work to their strengths and if singing is their strongest skill, then movement must be carefully crafted to ensure there is no uncertainty in delivery and the level of achievement is not unrealistic. Stillness can be powerful, but it still requires a strong physicality and connection.

All pieces are available in published versions. A variety are available online and in the [Trinity Anthology](#).

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 1

This programme shows the examiner a range of characters and contrasting musical styles. Candidates should be able to respond both vocally and physically to the different material.

WHAT

Performance – continuous programme of four songs

1. 'I Dreamed a Dream' from Les Misérables (Claude Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil)
2. Witch's entrance from the 'Prologue' in Into the Woods (Stephen Sondheim) with spoken introduction
3. 'Defying Gravity' from Wicked (Stephen Schwartz)
4. 'Mein Herr' from Cabaret (John Kander and Fred Ebb)

WHY

This programme includes a range of musical styles. Although the characters are very different, there is an opportunity to create a through-line from past memories and dashed dreams to acceptance and determination. The programme will showcase good technical skills and an ability to inhabit the characters physically.

Connection to the Lyrics

The lyrics of ONE of the songs from tasks 1-3 as a monologue in a new context exploring a different interpretation.

'Defying Gravity' from *Wicked*

The candidate could imagine a new context of a scientific laboratory. Working late into the night, the scientist could be on the verge of a ground-breaking discovery but having to wait patiently for the results. This would change the purpose of the lyrics, allowing the candidate to make new and brave choices to communicate the new meaning to an audience.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 2

This programme shows the examiner a range of characters and contrasting musical styles. Candidates should be able to respond both vocally and physically to the different material.

WHAT

Performance – continuous programme of four songs

1. 'Everybody Loves Louis' from *Sunday in the Park with George* (Stephen Sondheim)
2. 'Not a Day Goes By' from *Merrily We Roll Along* (Stephen Sondheim)
3. Fanny Brice monologue into 'Don't Rain on My Parade' from *Funny Girl* (Bob Merrill and Jule Styne)
4. 'Time Heals Everything' from *Mack and Mabel* (Jerry Herman)

WHY

This programme will appeal to Sondheim fans, showcasing two very different characters from his shows. The material will allow the candidate to create an inner storyline with some dramatic progression to add cohesion, while demonstrating technical agility and a good integration of skills.

Connection to the Lyrics

The lyrics of ONE of the songs from tasks 1-3 as a monologue in a new context exploring a different interpretation.

'Not a Day Goes By' from *Merrily We Roll Along*

The candidate could imagine that they are on a phonecall with an old lover who persists with calling even though their relationship is over. Finally the character snaps and shows their frustration by shouting. Perhaps they slam the phone down in anger, only for it to ring again. This would give opportunities for a change of tone or strategy mid-way through.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 3

This programme shows the examiner contrasting musical styles, good dramatic progression and thoughtful integration of skills. Candidates should be able to respond both vocally and physically to the different material.

WHAT

Performance – continuous programme of four songs

1. 'Wall in My Head' from *Everyone's Talking About Jamie* (Dan Gillespie Sell and Tom MacRae)

2. Extract from Paul's monologue from *A Chorus Line*

First line: 'See, when I quit school' into 'Sweet Transvestite' from *The Rocky Horror Show* (Richard O'Brien) or 'I am Lola' from *Kinky Boots* (Cyndi Lauper)

3. 'Being Alive' from *Company* (Stephen Sondheim)

4. 'I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise' from *An American in Paris* (George Gershwin)

Connection to the Lyrics

The lyrics of ONE of the songs from tasks 1-3 as a monologue in a new context exploring a different interpretation.

'Being Alive' from *Company*

WHY

This programme includes themes of identity and self-discovery, allowing candidates to explore the dramatic progression through their own interpretation. There are a range of musical styles and periods, as well as opportunities to build character and integrate movement while showcasing a range of technical skills.

The candidate could change the context to a drug-induced trance, in which the character experiences many different images and begins to paint a huge picture to incorporate all of the visions in his head. This would allow the candidate to think about each of the phrases separately rather than building a single narrative thread.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 4

This programme shows the examiner a range of styles, contexts, and contrasting choices. There is considerable opportunity to explore emotional range, dynamics, story, creativity in transitions and integrated vocal and movement/dance skills.

WHAT

Performance – continuous programme of four songs

1. Scene into song – a self-written monologue telling of the realisation and acceptance of love in their life and their own place in a relationship into 'Bill' from *Showboat* (Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern)

2. 'He's a Queer One That Man O'Mine' from *Schmigadoon* (Cinco Paul and Christopher Willis)

3. 'When You're Good to Mama' from *Chicago* (John Kander and Fred Ebb)

4. 'I'm Here' from *The Colour Purple* (Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray)

WHY

This programme has a loose theme of realisation and acceptance, be it of others or of self. It includes a variety of genres and styles – from the traditional style of *Showboat* to the ironic comedic subtleties in *Schmigadoon*. It also offers the opportunity to demonstrate choreography in the style of Fosse in *Chicago* followed by a change of mood with a deeply moving song from *The Colour Purple*. This is a mature and challenging programme with all the elements and complexities of musical theatre that should be evident at this level.

Connection to the Lyrics

The lyrics of ONE of the songs from tasks 1-3 as a monologue in a new context exploring a different interpretation.

'I'm Here' from *The Colour Purple*

Changing the context of I'm Here to a school playground in which the character exchanges taunts with other children in a game of one-upmanship, trying to score points and win the argument - the context and dramatic intention of the song could be completely changed. This would give the candidate the creative licence to play a younger, less emotionally complex character.

PREPARE TO PERFORM

COMBINE ACTING, SONG AND
MOVEMENT THROUGH PERFORMANCE

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