

Specimen Improvisation Tests

Harmonic Stimulus

for Trinity College London exams from 2017

Initial-Grade 8

Harmonic stimulus

The harmonic stimulus requires candidates to improvise unaccompanied in response to a chord sequence. Candidates are given a notated chord sequence, including chord symbols, which the examiner plays twice on the piano for candidates' reference. Candidates are then given 30 seconds' preparation time, during which they may prepare for their improvisation aloud if they wish. The test then follows. Candidates should improvise for the specified number of repeats, following the chord sequence. Please note that this test is always unaccompanied and the examiner will not provide a piano accompaniment for melodic instruments.

Initial

Example 1 (all except violin & viola)

C G C C

improvise for 4 bars

Example 2 (violin & viola)

D A D D

improvise for 4 bars

Grade 1

Example 1 (all except violin, viola, cello & double bass)

C G G C

improvise for 8 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Example 2 (violin, viola, cello & double bass)

D A A D

improvise for 8 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 2

Example 1 (all except violin, viola, cello & double bass)

Musical notation for Grade 2 Example 1. The piece is in F major (one flat). The right hand plays chords: F (F4, A4, C5), C (E4, G4, B4), Bb (Bb4, D5, F5), and F (F4, A4, C5). The left hand plays single notes: F3, C3, Bb3, and F3. The sequence is repeated twice.

improvise for 8 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Example 2 (violin, viola, cello & double bass)

Musical notation for Grade 2 Example 2. The piece is in D major (two sharps). The right hand plays chords: D (D4, F#4, A4), A (A4, C#4, E4), G (G4, B4, D5), and D (D4, F#4, A4). The left hand plays single notes: D3, A3, G3, and D3. The sequence is repeated twice.

improvise for 8 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 3

Example 1 (all except violin & viola)

Musical notation for Grade 3 Example 1. The piece is in G major (one sharp). The right hand plays chords: G (G4, B4, D5), Am (A4, C5, E5), D (D4, F#4, A4), and G (G4, B4, D5). The left hand plays single notes: G3, Am3, D3, and G3. The sequence is repeated twice.

improvise for 8 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Example 2 (violin & viola)

Musical notation for Grade 3 Example 2. The piece is in A major (three sharps). The right hand plays chords: A (A4, C#4, E4), Bm (B4, D5, F#5), E (E4, G#4, B4), and A (A4, C#4, E4). The left hand plays single notes: A3, B3, E3, and A3. The sequence is repeated twice.

improvise for 8 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 4

Example 1

Musical notation for Grade 4 Example 1. The piece is in A minor (no sharps or flats). The right hand plays chords: Am (A4, C5, E5), Dm (D4, F5, A5), E (E4, G#4, B4), and Am (A4, C5, E5). The left hand plays single notes: A3, D3, E3, and A3. The sequence is repeated three times.

improvise for 12 bars (ie 3 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 5

Example 1

Em C B Em

improvise for 12 bars (ie 3 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 6

Example 1 (major)

F B \flat C F Gm C C 7 F

improvise for 16 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Example 2 (minor)

Gm Cm Gm D Gm Am(b^5) D 7 Gm

improvise for 16 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 7

Example 1 (major)

B \flat Dm E \flat Gm E \flat B \flat F 7 B \flat

improvise for 16 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Example 2 (minor)

Em B C G Am F \sharp m(b^5) B 7 Em

improvise for 16 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Grade 8

Example 1 (major)

Musical notation for Example 1 (major) in D major. The piece consists of 8 measures. The chords are: D, F#m, Bm, G, D, Em, A⁹, and D. The bass line consists of a single note in each measure: D, F#, B, G, D, E, A, and D. The treble clef contains the chord voicings.

improvise for 16 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)

Example 2 (minor)

Musical notation for Example 2 (minor) in D minor. The piece consists of 8 measures. The chords are: Bm, A, G, D, Em, F#(SUS4), F#, and Bm. The bass line consists of a single note in each measure: B, A, G, D, E, F#, F#, and B. The treble clef contains the chord voicings.

improvise for 16 bars (ie 2 repetitions of the chord sequence)