



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**MUSIC
A LEVEL**

SUMMER 2022

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
Component 1 Performing	1
Component 2 Composing	4
Component 3 Appraising	10

MUSIC
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2022
COMPONENT 1 PERFORMING

General Comments

Please note that some of the comments (*) contained in this report appertain to the expected return of the full specification in 2023. These requirements may change if there are new government directives regarding adaptations in the future.

A warm welcome back was given to all examiners and the majority of candidates performed to their highest personal standards and seemed to enjoy the experience of performing live. There were, understandably, some cases of nervousness and anxiety amongst candidates who had not taken any public examinations for two years.

In most cases, the administration and timetabling of the examinations was excellent with many centres providing running orders. In the case of longer sessions at colleges and where there are consortium arrangements between centres, please continue to build into your timetables comfort breaks for the examiners. * Allowing 15 minutes for each candidate seems ideal in most cases. Please be aware of school bells and tannoy announcements which may impact on your candidate's performance. If at all possible, please timetable AS and A level examinations separately. Please note that examiners may arrive up to 30 minutes before the examinations are due to commence in order to set up and ensure a prompt start. Thank you for reserving a parking space for the visiting examiner, especially if you are aware that parking is an issue at your centre.

*Please note that A level Option A requires a minimum of THREE pieces, one of which must be a solo.

Most centres had downloaded the correct forms as required but, in some instances, these had been completed by the candidates themselves. Please double-check these for accuracy. In addition, forms need to be completed neatly and legibly. In some instances, examination numbers were missing from the forms when they were given to examiners. Please include the names of composers, in addition to the titles of the pieces to be performed. Examiners will time the live performances themselves and, therefore, timings should not be added to the marksheets in advance of the examination.

* Please ensure that the link with an Area of Study has also been completed. At A level the links are Western Classical Tradition, Baroque, Classical or Romantic Music, 20th and 21st Century Art Music, Rock and Pop, Musical Theatre and Jazz. On occasions, the links made are rather tenuous.

Examination rooms were, on the whole, fit for purpose. Please ensure that the instruments used, particularly the pianos, are in good working order (including the pedals) and have been recently tuned. Some centres choose to use electronic keyboards.

In cases where the standard of the repertoire is known, it would be helpful if this information was given on the form.

Most candidates provided copies of their music for the examiners. Photocopies of the originals on A4 paper need to be made as the examiners will take these away at the end of the session. Please ensure these are correctly labelled with the candidate's name and number. Please ensure that the music provided accurately reflects the performance being given, especially when downloading tab from the internet. In order to achieve the top marks for accuracy, singers must ensure that the vocal line has been added to lead sheets which also gives lyrics and chords. Please clearly mark any repeats, cuts or any other modifications on the copies. In addition, ensure that the edge of the music has not been cut off on the photocopy.

Comments on individual questions/sections

There were many excellent performers, but some candidates need to give more careful consideration to their choice of programme as some are over-ambitious. Conversely, the occasional candidate performed a lower standard piece (* amongst more difficult repertoire) which resulted in a lower overall mark. When using a backing track, please ensure that the track is a true backing track, with the candidate's part omitted, not a complete recording which includes the part the candidate is performing.

In some instances, more care is needed in choosing ensemble repertoire in order to ensure that the individual parts are significant and of the required standard. These parts must not be doubled by any other performer. Note that including an ensemble is not compulsory at A Level. Candidates also need to be aware of the technical challenge afforded by their own compositions. Teachers and candidates should familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria.

Standards of accompaniment were very good on the whole. Some centres now bring in professional accompanists.

Performers need to ensure that they pay attention to the performance directions on the music. Some drummers and guitarists are not aware of the need for contrast, especially of dynamics. **There should be no audible click tracks.** Some singers lack projection and communication due to over-reliance on their music. If the music or lyrics are needed, it would be preferable for them to be placed on a stand, slightly to the side of the performer. Best practice includes rehearsing the performances "in situ", giving careful consideration to the position of the candidate in relation to the accompanist and the examiner; also give careful consideration to the position of an audience if present, behind, and not encroaching on, the examiner, especially considering the recording equipment the examiner is using. As per examination guidelines, there should be no mobile phones present in the examination room (other than that being used by the examiner as a timer, which is preset to Airplane Mode.)

In most instances, electronic equipment had been set up and sound-checked in advance allowing the examination to proceed without hold-ups. Take care with the positioning of microphones and consider carefully whether microphones need to be used for an acoustic performance, especially in a small room or classroom.

More careful timing of recitals is necessary in some instances in order to ensure that candidates do not fall short of the minimum requirement as stated in the specification. **It should be noted that long piano intros (e.g.) orchestral expositions in concerti, and outros will not be included when calculating the time of a recital.**

On the whole, the feedback from the examining team was very positive and I am very grateful to all those involved, including the team based in the office in Cardiff.

Summary of key points

- Please check the website for the most up to date information regarding the duration of the performance, number of pieces required and links to Areas of Study.
- Time all performances carefully in rehearsal.
- Check levels of difficulty of pieces chosen.
- Sound check the performing venue.

MUSIC
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2022
COMPONENT 2 COMPOSING

General Comments

Administration

The uploading process was generally well executed this year. Most centres had ensured that candidate work was clearly labelled, although there still is not a consistent approach as suggested in the official guidance and as advised in previous examiner reports. Some files were not clearly labelled at all, so it was unclear what was in each file. Missing candidate logs, or authentication signatures and faulty uploads were quickly rectified. Some centres used zip files which are not acceptable for any Music submissions at any level. Centres submitting ZIP files were contacted via the examinations officer or head of centre and asked to provide files in the correct format.

Candidate Logs

The logs were, in the main, very good, containing real detail and insight to the composing process as well as referencing pieces and composers that had laid an influence for the submitted piece(s). Some candidates had gone to extraordinary length to justify their compositional process, which, for a two-minute piece was a little excessive.

Only a few logs were handwritten, but these were satisfactory and easy to read with good quality scanning. The remainder were split evenly between PDFs and Word docs (with PDF docs being more easily accessible). Unfortunately, there were candidates who did not supply the information required by the log. Instead of capturing the process, they simply listed the devices employed, which provided very little insight to the reasoning and thinking behind their use. Some candidates completed an analysis of their compositions but failed to discuss the process itself.

Candidates must give the log careful attention. Admittedly, it is not assessed, but it is considered crucial in supplying the examiner with the background knowledge of the composition and the recording processes.

Scores and Recordings

Most of the scores as taken from software were excellent in terms of musical presentation, with many candidates including a very good level of detail through thoughtful dynamic markings, articulation, and expression. (This is directly assessed in the third column of the assessment criteria, i.e., 'Technical and Expressive Control of Musical Elements'). There were also some handwritten scores (perfectly acceptable if they are legible). Some scores were too small to read easily (e.g., orchestral scores with large numbers of instruments) and it was difficult to see the actual notes/markings; others had been incorrectly scanned with inappropriate orientation.

There was a higher proportion of scores submitted this year which had been generated from within a sequencer, most often either Logic or GarageBand. These scores mostly lack necessary detail (e.g., a title) with little or no dynamic or performance instruction, at times not properly quantised, indicating a notation far more complex than the audio content. Often, orchestral instruments within this type of software do not follow conventional ordering which makes following a score more difficult, particularly when there is no staff labelling for instruments either. Tempo markings were also often absent in these situations, along with dynamics and expression. There seemed to be a greater usage of sequencers this year to generate a 'WCT' style piece using orchestral instruments.

Most supporting annotations for more 'pop-based' compositions demonstrated detail and a real effort to explain and highlight the processes involved, with good insight to the use of synths and their manipulation. While there were some excellent lead sheets with supportive explanatory notes, others were lacking in sufficient explanatory detail. Some candidates presenting songs failed to include the lyrics and other necessary musical explanation. A few centres submitted screenshots without any annotations. Please note that the score itself is not assessed, but it is used by the examiner in assessing the composition, so clarity is advised.

There is no requirement for the scores to be heavily annotated indicating every aspect of the piece's elements or features of interest, as some were. For a serial work, this makes more sense; however (generally speaking) highlighting the place where a particular chord is, or, completing a full colour-coded analysis of the piece, is unnecessary for the examiner.

Most recordings taken directly from the software accurately expressed the composition. These were mostly of high quality (some superb) and more than adequate to be able to hear the intentions of the piece. There was a very small minority recorded with inferior equipment, and some where the balance of the recording and not been carefully checked – this occasionally affected the portrayal of the composition.

It was pleasing to note that a significant proportion of the candidates had submitted live recordings – some of which were described by one examiner as phenomenal. They ranged from piano solos and string quartets to works for full orchestra and all were of fantastic quality. Many of the live vocal performances on top of a Logic-generated backing track also gave a real sense of professional quality, with some great layering of backing vocals and additional countermelodies.

However, live performances were not always an asset to candidates. There were some vocal pieces where voices were out of time/out of tune, and some where instruments were not in tune. Several examiners reported that candidates had stated in their logs that the 'midi recording was more accurate' (though the midi recording was not submitted for consideration), and some candidates referred to the software version as 'the correct version'. There were live recordings that were inaccurate when compared to the score, not advisable when the outcome is intended for important examination purposes.

Please be advised that while it is exciting and rewarding for the candidate to hear a composition brought to life (and much appreciated by examiners) – if it is not accurate, or well performed, then it is regarded as unnecessary if there is a digital version available. We are examining the composition, not the performance in this Component. If the candidate's musical intentions are made clear, this is not a problem.

A minority of candidates choose to use the drummer function on Logic, rather than creating their own MIDI drum track, which is a pity – credit is given for work created by the candidate, but not for pre-existing musical ideas included in the composition.

In quite a few cases, it was made clear in the log that a live performance was part of the recording, though the candidate was not performing themselves, instead relying on other performers to deliver their intentions and ideas. But - scores had not been presented, so there was no real evidence as to how other live performers knew what to do and what to play. It would be far better to upload as part of the submission, a scan of whatever was provided to the live performer, however scruffy or draft-like it may be, for an examiner to appreciate the process and understand how the live performer was able to perform the part following the intentions of the composer. 'I gave them the chords' is not sufficient; 'I recorded a guide drum track' – with no evidence of it, is not sufficient. Some candidates stated that a teacher had performed a guitar part, with very minimal detail of how the teacher knew what (or how) to play for the candidate, apart from a chord progression. Often performers (other than the candidate) add their own interpretation to the performance – which cannot be credited. Candidates in this situation are in real jeopardy of having their work penalised if it is not clear it is all their own work and musical ideas. One candidate writing a jazz piece stated in the log '...the dynamics and tempos would be decided by the players'. This is slightly missing the point of the exam.

Please remind candidates of the necessary requirement to fully complete the section of the log which asks how a live recording was produced. When there is no score and other performers are involved in a live recording, how the candidate retains responsibility for the creation of the musical content is often not at all convincing. Guide instrumental or vocal lines, either sung, or played on keyboard by the candidate must be included. Examiners can only assess what work is clearly the work of the candidate.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Content

For 2022, the requirements for Component 3 were amended:

Option A: *One composition (at least 2 minutes), **either** in response to a brief set by the WJEC **or** a free composition where candidates set their own brief.*

Option B: *Two compositions (at least 4 minutes). **Either** one composition in response to a brief set by the WJEC **and** a free composition where candidates set their own brief, **or** two free compositions where candidates set their own briefs – one of which must link to an area of study.*

The overall standards were very diverse, as expected, with some examiners reporting that the spread between the best quality work and the lowest quality work was greater than in previous years.

Briefs

The range of styles and intentions here was immense. Many candidates chose to write in Western Classical Style, with influences mentioned including Borodin, Tchaikovsky, Poulenc, Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Beethoven, and Mozart. There were many 'classical' style sonatas as well as virtuosic Romantic style writing. There was good evidence of wider listening and pieces mentioned included Schubert 'Arpeggione Sonata', Fauré 'Fantaisie', and Beethoven 'Pathétique Sonata', amongst many others. The usual excursions into Impressionism, Expressionism and Neo-classicism were present, while in terms of popular styles examiners reported Indie, Rock, EDM, Jazz Fusion, and 'Pop' styles, with many influences including Oasis, Arctic Monkeys and Nirvana.

Chosen briefs included fantasy film scores, music for video games, programme music (based on places, poems, or paintings) and overtures. There was also a trumpet concerto, 'Music for a Greek Tragedy', pieces with a 'Royal' influence, Christmas film music, Japanese Anime, Scottish sea-shanty inspired, Klezmer music, Latin American inspired pieces and more. There were some excellent submissions in a musical theatre style where candidates had really thought about how their piece would fit into the plot line of a musical. There were also some incredible jazz compositions and film music scores.

The best works had well informed briefs that demonstrated a clear musical understanding and an appreciation (following research) of the selected style, presented with an appropriate and relevant title which imaginatively reflected the intentions of the composer to produce an effective response to the selected brief. Most of these were clear and precise, and suitable for submission for an A-Level examination. Some of the 'free' briefs were too vague and generalised. 'A piece of music to be performed at a concert' for example, was not considered sufficient as it gave no indication of the nature of the concert or its repertoire. The weakest briefs made no sense at all on listening to the piece. Some candidates did not stipulate any brief at all for their composition, and it was not always possible for the examiner to identify the composer's intentions when reading the log. Please remind future candidates that this is an essential requirement of this examination, as the way that the candidate responds to the brief is directly credited in the first assessment column (i.e., Creating Musical Ideas).

It was evident that some centres had done an excellent job in encouraging their candidates to play to their strengths, and compose for instruments they knew about, and styles they were interested in. These compositions tended to score highly. On the other hand, a minority of centres adopted the 'class task' approach where all candidates were instructed to do the same thing (for example 'compose a string quartet in sonata form'). Unfortunately, these often (though not always) led to some mediocre compositions, all sounding rather similar and seemingly restrictive on individual candidate creativity.

Overall standards:

There was a real mix in the range of marks this year, from very low in Band 2 to sophisticated works in Band 4, with some examiners noting some exceptional and exciting compositions. A significant number deserved full marks as they were so advanced in musical content.

At this level, excellent understanding was shown in the chosen instrumentation and genre, with fluency and focus on the initial content and an effective development of thematic, harmonic, and textural ideas. Candidates created strong melodic ideas and had extended and manipulated their thematic material using a wide range of compositional devices. Harmony was sometimes very sophisticated and well-handled (seen in the use of cadences, modulations and chord progressions and positions, circle of 5ths, and suspensions).

Many candidates that chose to write within the Western Classical tradition for their free composition did so competently, using typical compositional and stylistic features to good effect. There were a few very good examples of fugal writing with some achieving top band accreditation for their handling of such a tricky form, devising suitable subjects to allow for stylistic development and usage throughout the piece. The most successful songs were clearly written by singers, who often then performed the melody live, and their awareness of the style was evident.

At the lower end of the range, some ideas were musical but simple and others used basic musical patterns. Most work was coherent, even when simple, but not all. In the less successful pieces, there was little development, with the outcome often overly reliant on repetition or basic manipulation of the material (e.g., repeating the melody but adding trills, putting it up an octave, simple echoing / imitation of motifs). The same compositional errors occurred - busy structures lacking direction, lack of sufficient development, far too much repetition of material, a lack of full harmonic usage and understanding, and meandering notes without proper structure and form.

Such pieces were often short and tended to be in Binary or Ternary Form. Some Ground Bass pieces lacked sufficient harmonic exploration and textural variety, and word-setting in vocal pieces was not carefully or thoughtfully utilised at this level. Many of the candidates wrote almost entirely syllabically with insufficient attention to the metre of the text and its stresses.

Overall, weaker pieces were inconsistent in their use and application of the musical elements. Too often once the initial idea has been stated, pieces tended to meander through a variety of sections, seemingly unlinked, at times with multiple modulations (mostly not securely worked).

In terms of timing, some compositions submitted were too long and lost focus. With a recommendation of an individual piece to be two and a half minutes, a piece that lasts for eleven is, ill-conceived, and often lacks the musicality to sustain interest for that length of time. Shorter pieces did not have sufficient time to develop thematic material, often ending abruptly with a lack of resolution. Some pieces were overly busy and there was a lack of textural variety and clarity; melodic ideas became lost in the 'wash' of sound.

Neo-Classical pieces tended to be varied in their effectiveness, with some candidates recognising appropriate use of chromaticism and harmony; others were less successful and confident in composing in this idiom.

Amongst the weaker work were many pop songs. These also fell into the trap of being over simplistic and not developing musical ideas enough. They often utilised very basic harmonies which did not meet the requirements at A level standard. Such candidates would be well-advised to consider additional sections (solos, a middle 8) and include a variety of textural contrasts in their work, to meet the required standards of the examination.

There were a lot of examples of EDM. Some of these were a great listen and candidates were obviously highly experienced with Music Technology. However, the simplistic repeated patterns that are the nature of this music do not always perform well at A Level, as they do not satisfy the assessment criteria in terms of the musical content requirements.

There were several pieces where the choice of instrumentation was eclectic, but this was particularly evident in technology-based pieces where the focus tended towards sounds, rather than musical material.

Across the various styles, some writing for instruments was awkward and unstylistic. Some instrumental writing was rather 'stave-bound' and did not utilise the range of instruments and some vocal music lacked sufficient exploration with range and texture. There was much piano writing (and music for harp) that was close to being unplayable. Flute writing was often too low, and brass writing often too high. Whilst some candidates wrote effectively for orchestras, it was evident that handling the more extensive forces resulted in substantial doubling and cumbersome texture in some cases.

Candidates who chose Option B were either extremely imaginative and talented in composing or were perhaps less confident in performing and felt that preparation of a coursework portfolio would be easier to manage.

There were some very mature compositions submitted, with most candidates safely gaining recognition at the highest level. They produced interesting, coherent, and sophisticated works which displayed an abundance of expressive and skilful control. Certain examiners reported of pieces which were 'astounding' – what a credit to their departments and the guidance that they had received. The few who only reached Band 2 marks fell into the trap of repetition and insufficient development in their work, as well as lacking strong initial ideas in the first place. Some candidates evidently spent the bulk of their time on one piece, meaning that other was not completed to the same standard. Finally, a reminder that all musical ideas gained and used by the candidates from research, additional listening and musical study must be evidenced in the log. Though themes were not 'directly quoted' or plagiarised, the work of one candidate had evidently been heavily influenced by several themes composed by John Williams, from various Star Wars films, none of which had been mentioned in the log.

Summary of key points

Please label all required uploads according to WJEC guidelines.

- Ensure that the chosen brief for a free composition piece is achievable and clearly stated in the log, remembering that part of the assessment is directly related to 'the response to the chosen brief'.
- Check all files before submission, including the audio files for completion, clarity, and balance.
- Best practice in completing candidate logs was noted when all sections were completed correctly, and the information provided supported the musical outcome as heard. There is no need to include a detailed analysis of the piece if a score has been included.
- Refine the initial musical content to ensure musicality, conviction, general theoretical and stylistic understanding, and coherency.
- Remember that no marks are awarded for existing musical ideas or an interpretation of an idea by a performer that is not the work of the candidate. Guide tracks must be included when there is no score for performers other than the composer. Credit can only be given for ideas (including expression and interpretation) that is the work of the candidate.
- Avoid using repeat marks for the sole purpose of extending ideas.
- Keep the requirements of the assessment criteria at the forefront of all thinking.
- When a score has not been submitted, candidates should be encouraged to use the elements of music in both lead sheet and annotations to provide enough detail.
- Ensure the score is presented in the best orientation so parts can be seen, and hide parts/bars which are not being used.
- Live recordings: ensure all parts are balanced, to do the work justice. Instruments must be tuned if candidates/centres submit a live recording.
- Avoid 'class tasks' as this tends to lead to disparate outcomes from students. Encourage candidates to compose for their own instrument(s) and interests as these tend to have more successful outcomes.
- Do not use repeat marks to extend the length of the piece. Where they may be considered a stylistic feature of the structure (e.g., as in Binary Form, or Sonata Form) please not include the musical repeat in the audio recording, especially in the case of more extended compositions.
- Keep the requirements of the assessment criteria at the forefront of all thinking.

MUSIC

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3 - APPRAISING

General Comments

After the upheaval of the past two years, centres and candidates are warmly congratulated and thanked for their preparation and completion of this component as a written examination this year, despite ongoing challenges.

Similar to previous years, AOS B, Rock and Pop, was less frequently answered than AOSs C and D, Music Theatre and Jazz. Very few candidates answered on AOS F, Into the 21st Century, or chose set work Mendelssohn Symphony No 4 in AOS A, The Western Classical Tradition. A few completed answers on both the Haydn and Mendelssohn set works, in which case, the better answer was taken.

Examiners report that the wider listening question at the end AOSs E and F is an area for improvement. Comments on the chosen works are often too general in nature. Candidates need to show they have studied these works in more depth and detail, so that they include clear, specific facts about them in their answers. This question does not ask candidates to compare their chosen work with the extract they have heard in question 8 or 10, just describe features on the aspect specified in the question.

Many candidates seem to run out of steam at 1830 in their responses for the essay question, no 14, assuming Berlioz is sufficient as a representative of Romantic Symphonic Style. As the time period goes from 1750 to 1900, this precludes nearly half the time span, and is actually the cut-off date for the AS time period, ignoring the years of study set for A level. Candidates often include convincing detail on the first half of the time period, but very little on the latter half. This inevitably affects the mark awarded, sadly.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Area of Study B: Rock and Pop

- Q.1 This question was generally well answered, though for e) a more specific description such as Grunge, Alternative Rock or Hard Rock was needed rather than just Rock. Quite a few put Punk which was not correct. A variety of dates was offered in f).
- Q.2 The one-mark answers were moderately well answered, with most identifying the organ in b). For longer questions, candidates should not forget to pick out and name the obvious features – e.g., the finger clicks, hand snaps in d). Many sadly lost marks by not supporting answers in f) with line references. Sometimes points made were not related to the vocal melody as asked, so were not credited.
- (h) NB – see advice in General Comments above. Where candidates did compare extract 2 to extract 1, there were often some detailed answers on Nu metal style. Candidates can tabulate their answers, and many did this, successfully pointing to the similarities and differences that extract 2 showed in comparison to extract 1. Detail is needed in order to access the higher mark bands for this question.

Area of Study C: Musical Theatre

- Q.3 (a) Not that many identified ostinato, and c) was quite weakly answered, candidates seeming confused by 'degree of the scale'. d) to g) were generally well answered.

Candidates did not answer c) as well as they could have by failing to give line numbers (as asked in the question) in support of points made. Answers were often very vague here, many making general comments about ascending and descending, but not linking them specifically enough to words in the lines. There were some effective comments on word-painting in line 4 though, when linked to specific words.

- Q.4 Despite its presence in the Harry Potter music, the celeste was infrequently identified in a), a variety of other tuned percussion offered instead. b) and c) were generally well answered, though in d), many erroneously opted for Whole tone rather than Pentatonic.

Despite offering a wealth of opportunity, e) was disappointingly answered on the whole, responses too general and narrative, lacking specific musical detail. Many got side-tracked into telling the story of West Side Story or comparing it with Romeo and Juliet.

Answers to f) revealed a stronger grasp of time of composition than equivalent ones in AOSs C and D.

- (g) NB – see advice in General Comments above. As with e), some answers got carried away with a discussion of the story, explaining why a chorus was present at that point in the musical, rather than homing in on details about the music itself in extract 2 compared to extract 1. Some similarities were mentioned, though the differences were less convincingly pinpointed.

Area of Study D: Jazz

- Q.5 This was a well-answered question on the whole, with some responses, very strong. Saying that, not many identified the tenor saxophone in a) though, the vast majority putting alto saxophone for which there was no credit. Most candidates scored at least 2/3 in e), and f) was particularly well answered, most gaining full marks. Conversely, g) was poorly answered, many wrongly putting 1949 instead of 1959.

- Q.6 Overall, this question was quite well answered too, though there was a tendency for candidates to rely on stock phrases (such as walking bass, swing/syncopation, improvised etc.) which did earn marks where relevant, rather than picking out other specific detail. This was true of questions a) and f). Many of the one-mark answers in this question were accurate, the majority of candidates correctly identifying Chet Baker.

- (h) NB – see advice in General Comments above. Of all the three comparison questions in AOSs B, C and D, this one was the most successfully answered, some excellent responses giving accurate, specific detail about the solo sections, and showing many clear similarities and differences in extract 2 compared with extract 1. There was some confusion over jazz styles, some candidates describing both extracts as Cool Jazz, ignoring the Bebop elements of extract 2, or erroneously describing extract 1 as Bebop. Many correctly referred to the impressionistic style of the opening of Extract 2.

Area of Study E: Into the Twentieth Century

- Q.7 (a) (i) This was well answered on the whole, most responses identifying the presence of sequence, 2-bar fragments, repetition and homing in on the whole-tone/octatonic elements. Weaker responses failed to comment on the viola/cello melody, describing dynamics, orchestration etc. instead.
- (ii) The most common answer was about rhythmic differences, though some commented on the increased chromaticism.
- (b) For the similarity, most picked up on the crotchet movement, this aspect of the question better answered than that of the differences. Correctly identified differences mentioned pedal (though answers needed to be specific about pitch to gain credit), syncopation, pizzicato or fuller texture. Again, answers on dynamics did not score marks, as this is not describing the musical material as asked in the question.
- (c) (i) This was generally well answered, the B pedal most commonly mentioned.
- (ii) Sadly, some misread the question here, not describing features of the accompaniment. Those that did, usually mentioned pizzicato, syncopation or oscillating chords.
- (d) The majority of correct answers cited Rotation 3, with a few correctly describing alternative structural answers.
- (e) Some did not take on board the fact that this question was asking about orchestration, incorrectly mentioning other areas, but most correct answers cited the use of the harp.
- (f) This question elicited a wide range of responses, ranging from very strong answers where candidates quickly gained 5 marks for correctly identifying five chords/features of harmony, to very weak answers where responses constituted narrative descriptions of aspects other than harmony such as scales and melody lines. The stronger candidates often got their marks from discussing the presence of augmented, half-diminished, parallel V7 chords and whole tone chords in bars 59 to 63, showing a detailed knowledge of the music. Some answers veered off into discussing tonality instead.
- Q.8 (a) (i) Hardly anyone correctly identified the instrument as a trombone, answers ranging from Cor Anglais to Fog Horn.
- (ii) This was not particularly well answered, many responses failing to home in on aspects of the melody itself, instead describing how it was played, or describing features other than the melody.
- (b) The description of melody here was more successful, most answers mentioning its disjunct quality, but some also showing a successful grasp of style by referring to Klangfarbenmelodie.
- (c) Most decided the best description was contrapuntal.

- (d) The majority of answers correctly described how the metre was not easy to discern.
- (e) This was well answered, most responses mentioning the violins' use of the high register, though some identifying the accompanying role of the strings.
- (f) & (d) Most candidates gained a mark for realising and stating that the form/structure is not clear, though less went on to earn a second mark by expanding their answer by describing any features/qualities of the different sections.
- (g) The majority of answers correctly identified the style as Expressionism (or Serialism, which was accepted).
- (h) NB – see advice in General Comments above. Whilst there were a few answers that correctly incorporated detail about the use of tonality in the chosen work, many either erroneously compared it to the Q8 extract, or spent time describing the work in general terms, including points on features other than tonality. Some candidates used other set works (e.g., Poulenc Piano Trio or Debussy Nuages) which, as the information to centres states, is not allowed. Despite correctly identifying the style, some candidates then used a work from a different style, rendering their answer not relevant. Sometimes chosen works were not accompanied by the correct composer. Centres are strongly advised to choose works for wider listening carefully, as some were more suitable than others. Most common here were Schoenberg's Peripetie, Webern's Quartet op 22 or Schoenberg's Der Kranke Mond, the last less suitable in this instance, where, after stating the work was atonal, points veered off to discuss the use of instruments and texture.

Area of Study F: Into the Twenty-First Century

- Q.9 Very few indeed answered on this AOS. Where they did, the responses were generally successful, overall, many showing a convincing knowledge and understanding of how Boardwalk is based on Beethoven's String Quartet op 18 no. 4. There were some detailed responses to a) and b), specific features pinpointed, though sadly, sometimes not getting the full credit due to a lack of clear bar/beat/instrument references.
- (c) This was generally well answered, many candidates correctly identifying homorhythmic, and also one other textural feature.
 - (d) Most answers identified rhythmic differences and the tendency for the melodic line to be more lyrical.
 - (e) This was mainly correctly completed, with a few inaccurate bar numbers for sections.
 - (f) Beamish's use of harmony/tonality was less convincingly discussed. Often, it was clear that candidates did have some idea about the overall tonal centres visited, but were uncertain about whether they were major, minor or modal, and similarly, chords were sometimes partially correct, though not fully.

- Q.10 (a) Most correctly identified the ensemble as a string quartet and stated two features about the opening two bars in b).
- (c) Surprisingly, 'muted' was very seldom given as an answer here.
- (d) Both parts of this question were answered with limited success, though when answers were correct, it was usually the repetition of small intervals in (i) and the 5th interval in (ii) that were mentioned.
- (e) Quite a few answers noted the repetition/return of the opening A section material and the contrast that the subsequent more lyrical viola/violin theme provided.
- (f) Some quite convincing answers here, revealing technical security of textural terminology.
- (g) NB – see advice in General Comments above. As with answers in Q8, the main cause of candidates not scoring more highly, was answers not homing in on specific features of tonality in their wider listening piece, instead giving a general description of it that included other aspects of style, and/or comparing it with the Q10 extract. Some popular choices of work included Judith Weir's Scotch Minstrelsy and Lutoslawski's Chain 2.

Area of Study A: The Western Tradition

Q.11 This question was much better answered this year than in previous years, in all three parts.

- (a) The pitch mistake was commonly mis-identified as being two Bs at the start of bar 3 rather than two As, and some candidates got into a bit of a tangle with the rhythmic error, correcting it to two quavers instead of two semiquavers in line with the time signature.
- (b) Many correctly identified the progression as an imperfect cadence, and a few accurately spotted it was a cadential 6/4.
- (c) Whilst some candidates were less secure on the first bar of the rhythmic dictation (despite it appearing in the skeleton score two bars earlier), it was mostly accurately notated with the exception of the last note which was not always put as a quaver.

The pitch was less secure, which is usually the case, with the minor 7th leap defeating some, but many spotted the C natural, and overall, there were valiant responses here.

Q.12 By far, most candidates chose to answer on the Haydn set work rather than the Mendelssohn, and overall, questions were generally well answered, though sadly, in a few cases, there was evidence that knowledge of the set work was inadequate.

- (a) Most answers were correct, though a few did not precisely identify it as Subject 2b, only as Subject 2, and could not get the mark.

- (b) In many cases this was well answered, candidates gaining full marks. Unfortunately, some responses failed to gain marks as they did not compare the sections, instead just describing each. Whilst the content may have been accurate, it did not attract the full range of marks if comparisons were not made. There is some exam technique work to be done here. Candidates are reminded to mention the obvious aspects such as theme and key.
- (c) Many correctly stated the key as B minor, though there were also some D majors.
- (d) Unfortunately, candidates lost marks unnecessarily here by failing to include both the starting and finishing bar/beat references for examples.
- (e) There were many confident answers here with a wealth of textural detail identified. The better answers homed in on specific examples of different textures, providing accurate bar, beat and instrument details. Weaker responses sometimes failed to give specific locations or diluted answers with unnecessary description of instrumental playing techniques, dynamics or articulation.

Q.13 Very few candidates answered on the Mendelssohn set work. Those that did, generally scored quite well.

- (a) Quite a few accurately identified the Second Subject and E minor key.
- (b) In some cases, this was well answered, candidates gaining full marks.

Unfortunately, some responses failed to gain marks as they did not compare the sections, instead just describing each. Whilst the content may have been accurate, it did not attract the full range of marks if comparisons were not made. There is some exam technique work to be done here. Candidates are reminded to mention the obvious aspects such as theme and key.
- (c) Unfortunately, candidates lost marks unnecessarily here by failing to include both the bar and beat in their references.
- (d) There were some confident answers here with a wealth of textural detail identified. The better answers homed in on specific examples of different textures, providing accurate bar, beat and instrument details. Weaker responses sometimes failed to give specific locations or diluted answers with unnecessary description of instrumental playing techniques, dynamics or articulation.

Q.14 NB – see advice in General Comments above.
The essay responses varied considerably. There were some excellent answers which revealed a wealth of detailed knowledge of a variety of symphonic music spanning the whole of the set time period, but sadly, there were quite a lot of answers that were very generalised, not really focusing on what the question was asking, instead giving a general (seemingly pre-learned) description of some symphonies which did not really answer the question posed.

Successful essay responses on this question showed specific knowledge of the changing use of strings and percussion seen by:

- noting precise and accurate changes in the instruments themselves over the time frame
- citing precise examples of the use of violins, violas, cellos, double basses, harps in a range of symphonic music
- citing precise examples of the use of a range of percussion instruments (not just timpani) through the whole period

Weaker responses were characterised by:

- generalised descriptions that told the story of the development of the orchestra
- mentioned works in passing but with no specific detail
- referred to strings rather than individual stringed instruments, and percussion rather than individual percussion instruments, or just mentioned timpani

Many essays spent too much time describing works by Stamitz and CPE Bach, mentioning some works by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven in passing, and finishing with a general description of the story of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, leaving 1830 to 1900 virtually unmentioned. Others devoted too much time to the Haydn and Mendelssohn set works (the question asks for 'brief references'). Some answers referred to works outside the time frame or other set works which were not relevant.

However, there were also excellent responses which confirmed that a wide range of relevant symphonic music had been listened to and studied, with depth and detail, pertinent references made in support of the changing use of string and percussion instruments.

Summary of key points

- Support points made with bar, beat, line, instrument references particularly where asked to do so in the question. Potentially accurate answers are often voided by the lack of specific substantiation
- In answers to questions 2, 4 and 6 in AOSs B, C and D respectively, candidates are asked to compare the second extract to the first, not the other way around. They are not asked to describe each extract in isolation either. Fine-tuning of exam technique here will improve candidates' responses and performance, as some are unnecessarily losing marks here as a consequence of not comparing extract 2 to extract 1. Candidates often neglect to state the obvious – i.e., the material is basically the same, same key, same time signature etc. even when they clearly understand this. A suggestion might be to lay out responses along the lines of those in the Mark Scheme for this question.
- Questions on harmony and tonality are still less well answered than on other areas. Whilst these aspects are challenging, further targeted practice is needed.
- Further familiarity with dates is needed for AOSs B, C and D, the questions asking for a date of composition/recording often revealing a lack of contextual knowledge in terms of relating style to time.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk