



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**MUSIC
A LEVEL**

SUMMER 2019

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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.

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MUSIC

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1 PERFORMING

General Comments

A warm welcome 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.

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.

Comments on individual questions/sections

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.

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 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.

There were many excellent performances 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. Candidates also need to be aware of the technical challenge afforded by their own compositions if they intend to use these for performance. 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.

Please note that candidates are not required to give spoken introductions to their programmes and Musical Theatre songs should not be semi-staged. 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 Aircraft Mode) and centres (including teachers, candidates and audience members) are forbidden from making any audio or video recordings of the examination.

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 introductions (e.g.) orchestral expositions in concerti, 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

- Check the timing of all performances pieces to avoid penalties. Full details of the requirements and penalties are in the specification.
- Check that all forms are completed, including area of study links, and music is photocopied legibly.
- Check the sound levels and balance before the performance.
- Assist candidates in selecting the most appropriate repertoire to demonstrate their strengths

MUSIC
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2019
COMPONENT 2 COMPOSING

General Comments

Administration

The administration this year was well handled by centres. Inevitably there were some issues with missing work, signatures and incorrect or faulty uploads, but these were soon rectified.

Uploading work /Labelling

All examiners in the team were of the firm opinion that clearer labelling of work would benefit the examining process; it often made for an arduous task ascertaining which audio tracks corresponded with which scores. Some centres uploaded their submissions as ZIP files – a few (but not all) examiners felt that this slowed the marking process down and on occasion, noted issues with playback.

Please take heed of the board's recommendation for 'how to label the candidate's work' as detailed in last year's Principal Examiner's report. To adhere to a set protocol would be a tremendous help when processing so many submissions in such a short space of time.

Candidate Logs

On the whole, these were completed to a fairly good standard. The best examples presented explanatory detail displaying an in-depth understanding of the devices and techniques being employed. Many candidates added information about composers and pieces that had inspired them (both in the WCT and free compositions). Unfortunately, there were still some who did not supply the information required by the log, simply listing devices employed instead of capturing the process. The weakest examples were too vague and lacked detail. Some centres still used the old log forms, which were acceptable for the last time this year, though most centres submitted the new, shorter, more condensed format which allowed the description of the piece to be seen in one discreet statement. The updated form is available on the website.

Acknowledged best practice here is when the log has been completed in Word and uploaded as pdf document; handwritten logs were less clear. The only additional documents that need to be uploaded are lead sheets when the notated score is not available.

Scores and recordings

Most **scores** were produced on Sibelius, Musescore or Noteflight and were excellent in terms of musical presentation. Scores created from a sequencer (e.g. Logic) were less successful because the outcome was not always legible and lacked some necessary musical details. This was noted by some examiners particularly with reference to the WCT piece: while the score is not assessed per se and is only an access point to the composition, the score is not helpful when there are no instrument names on the left hand side of the score, the conventional 'top-to-bottom' arrangement of instruments is not adhered to and there are staves disappearing (because there is no region within the arrange window) and zero performance instructions/dynamics/articulation etc. Included.

When a notated score is not available, candidates must be encouraged to use the elements of music in both leadsheet and supporting annotations to provide enough detail; some folios submitted screenshots without any such musical detail – this is regarded as insufficient. Conversely, some scores were over-annotated and contained so much written information that it was apparently difficult to read the notes on the actual score. Finally, candidates should be aware that there is no requirement to include drafts of scores; one centre in particular submitted all of the drafts in the various stages of development and it was time-consuming to find the correct one.

Most **recordings** were taken directly from the computer program. These were mostly of excellent quality as the audio outputs from these software packages are more than adequate to be able to access and understand the intentions of the piece aurally. When live recordings were submitted these were usually extremely well done. One examiner reported that the live performances of some of the compositions received in their allocation -both WCT and contemporary in style- were just incredible (humbling, in some cases), particularly in some of the vocal pieces.

A few recordings of live performances were did not portray the pieces well as the outcomes were unbalanced, perhaps unrehearsed due to time constraints, or utilised instruments where the tuning had not been finely checked.

Examiners reported a number of instances where audio recordings stopped midway, or the audio tracks were defective. When exporting audio files it is imperative to check that all instruments can be heard (one centre submitted a score in which only one line could be heard). The team respectfully request that centres check the audio tracks before uploading for moderation.

Some centres had recorded a live output from the computer (via a desk/speaker set-up) to be able to add in a voice label for the candidate's work. This incurred additional and unwanted background noise; please note that there is no need for a vocal introduction to the candidate and their work, so a direct line recording is by far the best method.

Timings

Some candidates seemed to have spent more time on one of their compositions than the other; this impeded their overall mark as compositions are assessed equally. Whilst most folios were within the time stipulation, some individual compositions were far too long and lost focus. Shorter pieces often did not develop thematic material sufficiently.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Most candidates selected Option A.

Western Classical Tradition

Some superb responses here reflected accomplished working and impressive musical understanding of the style and typical WCT conventions. There was a competent use, by many, of harmony - modulations, cadences, circles of 5ths - and many compositional devices (such as imitation and sequence, particularly in the Baroque inspired works). Less successful responses were limited, a little monotonous and unconvincing in the use of many elements with some candidates lacking sufficient skills to be able to emulate a WCT style. The main weaknesses seemed to be basic repetition and a lack of thoughtful development, weird harmonic sequences and much parallel motion, lacklustre melodic sense, and over-busy writing.

Some writing for instruments was awkward and unstylistic (noted particularly in regard to writing for piano). Candidates who wrote for their own instrument(s) tended to have more successful outcomes as they were able to compose more idiomatically.

Once again this year there were candidates that referenced totally unsuitable influences for their WCT composition, including modern composers... even C Beebies and an Icelandic rock band. Suffice to say, such influences manifested themselves in the work and such candidates found it a challenge to achieve a creditable Western Classical style - their work ultimately did not satisfactorily fulfil the brief in column one. Much of the piano writing was unstylistic, with r.h. (or l.h.) just stopping for no apparent musical reason, and little consideration sometimes given to voicings of triads – at times low in the register and in root position. Many fell into long passages of Alberti-style left hand piano writing.

AL Brief 1: Compose a vocal duet to be performed as part of a summer concert organised by Music for Youth.

This was reported as being the weakest option. Although there were one or two amazing examples showing a mature understanding of writing for voices and word-setting, less effective examples strayed a little into non - WCT rhythms and harmonies, at times taking more of an influence from contemporary 'worship songs' and other modern pieces (e.g. some harmonic progressions sounded like pop songs). There were the usual struggles with text setting and structure as some candidates wrote a verse of solo for one singer, a verse of solo for the other singer then a verse together; it was felt that this met the brief less satisfactorily than those who had written for two voices throughout. In such cases, there were insufficient moments of duet. Other compositions were very 'question and answer' based. Overall the textural setting was homophonic, and the working of the initial material often repetitive.

AL Brief 2: Compose a piece of music for a showcase performance in a local music college. It must make use of diminution and counterpoint.

Few candidates chose this brief, with the outcomes being variable in standard. The best were extremely strong, presenting successful and highly effective fugues where the devices had been handled competently and the musical ideas had been developed in a number of ways. Other pieces lacked the basic principles of counterpoint, with some work focussing on rhythmic diminution; however, diminution slipped the net in many works. There was a lack of overall structure/form and it appeared that the devices had almost been slotted in as an afterthought, not treated as an integral feature. Some of the examples were rather simplistic.

AL Brief 3: Compose a piece of programme music which is based on the poem 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' by Goethe.

There were thoughtful and 'colourful' responses to this brief. Many candidates chose to write for large scale orchestra, mentioning Grieg, Berlioz and Mendelssohn as influences (i.e. orchestral, Romantic 'tone poem' type composers). There were also string quartets and smaller ensembles, with some examiners commenting that smaller ensemble choices would have suited certain candidates better than the extended orchestral ensembles they actually chose – some students were not successful at working with such large forces. At times, pieces were much too long (one piece lasting 14 minutes) and lost a sense of focus. Some lacked a clear sense of structure (almost 'through composed'), with a few candidates writing and developing leitmotifs/themes using a sort of Liszt 'thematic transformation' approach. It was recognised that some weaker candidates managed this brief fairly well, as it allowed for greater structural freedom. Many 'dabbled' in a bit of chromatic harmony (more so in this than any other brief) and it was usually well controlled, but not always.

Unsurprisingly, some compositions were a bit too Dukas- influenced (with lots of bassoons and triplets) but most candidates were able to convey some sense of the story. Unfortunately, a number of candidates relied on 20th century works for inspiration, and this was reflected in their pieces, which affected marks. Others seemed to avoid the fact that this was meant to be a descriptive and programmatic work.

AL Brief 4: Compose a piece of music in sonata form, for piano or solo instrument with accompaniment, to be performed in a chamber concert.

This was by far the most popular brief and often the choice of the more highly skilled candidates. Examiners generally agreed that the outcome was variable. Most candidates wrote in a classical style, although there were 'Romantic' influenced examples. The vast majority showed a good understanding of sonata form; much impressive work was noted, with highly effective and sophisticated sonatas presenting clear structures, appropriate and well contrasted subjects displaying adventurous and skilfully handled modulations. Even when initial melodic ideas were a little simplistic or insubstantial, the work was well structured. On the whole, exposition and recapitulation sections were convincing; development sections proved tricky for many as candidates struggled to develop the subjects with any real flair or invention.

Less effective work struggled with this structure. This was apparent in less convincing transitions between the 1st and 2nd subjects, ending the recapitulation in the home key, and basic 'copying and pasting' of the exposition. Most candidates were able to write a distinctive 1st subject but struggled with their 2nd subjects, which lacked conviction. Some work displayed only very simple ideas (limited, even) but used a range of techniques to develop them, with an element of success. A number of examiners commented on the basic and triadic nature of the thematic content with melody lines lacking in shape and distinctive character. Some of these compositions were rather short in length, failing to show development of ideas and appropriate modulations.

Many candidates wrote for piano but the writing was not always idiomatic – a few wrote for string quartets which was not what was required. Some candidates had clearly been influenced by original pieces – however, these were not always acknowledged in their logs.

Free Compositions

As ever, these pieces were a real mix of all kinds of compositions and influences. The standard overall covered the full range, although the work at the top end was truly outstanding.

Instrumentation included string quartets, wind ensembles, duets for two pianos, brass groups, and pop/ rock music. The occasions noted included lunchtime concerts, musical theatre, film music, sci-fi, fusion music and music associated with space. Influences were extremely diverse, as was expected, though again some candidates chose to submit a second WCT piece – this is perfectly acceptable. Jazz was a very popular choice, with competent use of quite complex harmonic language in some cases. There was an amazing example of a 'Jamie Cullum' style song with a fantastic lead sheet; also a piece written in memorial for the Manchester Bombings (there were other imaginative pieces drawing from real life events). Some candidates used last year's briefs and there was also some imaginative film music (the new 'Avengers' film had inspired a number of candidates).

The better candidates produced some really interesting compositions, full of musicality and coherence, with an excellent sense of harmonic expression and tuneful, well-constructed melodies. Most of these compositions were crafted well, with a sense of purpose and an imaginative response to the chosen brief. The more successful compositions showed a good understanding for their chosen instruments and genre, fluency and direction in their melodies and effective development of both thematic and textural ideas.

The weaker efforts were inconsistent in many cases, with simplistic and limited use of musical elements. There was no sense of organisation, and little understanding of harmony, structure and musical content. Occasionally the choices of instrumentation were a little incongruous. However, the weaker or mid-range compositions tended to be either too simplistic or lacking in phrase structure and sensible harmony, aiming instead for rambling melodies, with very little development. The same compositional errors occurred again this year – 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.

As expected, there were a good number of rock and pop compositions, some limited to basic harmonic progressions (or even stating that they had ‘used famous progressions from a song’). Harmony here was not always well controlled.

Neoclassical comps were popular, and some were successful. The feeling here was that writing ‘not very good WCT compositions’ would be able to fall under the canopy of Neoclassicism as if, for example, a few strange, unprepared modulations, chords with incorrect notes in them, phrases that were irregular (unintentionally) and so forth, would suddenly be acceptable.

Serialism was also present, with examiners commenting on some excellent work, with the content including detail and variety of textures, portraying a clear sense of being able to handle the level and complexity of dissonance. Some pieces still seem to lack a sense of structure/destination/climax within the complexities of the free atonality. The most successful of these exploited a wide range of timbres and effects to achieve a programmatic effect. Impressionistic pieces were, generally, far less successful: an octatonic scale and a pentatonic scale within the structure of 5 rotations does not guarantee a good piece... no matter how convincing the argument made by some candidates in their logs. Some Ragtime pieces were very good, particularly when the music broke free of repetitive styling and focussed on developing the initial content.

Summary of key points

- All files uploaded must be clearly labeled as according to guidelines issued by WJEC / Eduqas.
- There is no requirement for candidates to include an analysis of their music in the candidate log. If the score is not included, an additional lead sheet giving a structural outline and all musical details is what is required (please refer to guidelines)
- All sections of the candidate log must be fully completed, especially in the case of live performances. Guide tracks should be included when there is no score for performers.
- Candidates submitting rock / pop songs without a score must present lyrics and chords in addition to the leadsheet.

- Both compositions are of equal weighting and sufficient time should be given to both compositions.
- Candidates should not be too ambitious in terms of scoring – challenge is always something to be supported but decide on what is manageable and appropriate for each candidate’s musical understanding.
- No marks are awarded for existing musical ideas – credit is only given for original work.
- Please avoid using repeat marks to extend ideas. Within an accepted structure (i.e. binary) they may be appropriately placed in the score to evidence understanding of the form, but may be omitted from the recording; however they are often randomly positioned in the work. Using repeat marks in this way simply limits the candidates from developing ideas.
- Ensure that all briefs for the free composition are achievable and clearly stated in the log; part of the assessment is directly related to ‘the response to the chosen brief’.

MUSIC
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COMPONENT 3 APPRAISING

General Comments

Once again, centres are to be congratulated and thanked for the vast amount of effort and work that goes into preparing candidates for this component of the A level qualification.

All questions were answered though in a few cases, candidates answered the wrong combination of questions. Where both questions 13 and 14 were answered, the better of the two marks was taken.

AOS B, Rock and Pop, was less frequently answered than AOSs C and D – Musical Theatre and Jazz.

Very few candidates chose to answer on AOS F, Into the Twenty-First Century, and many more candidates answered on Haydn's Symphony no. 104 than Mendelssohn's Symphony no. 4.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Area of Study B: Rock and Pop

- Q.1**
- (a) This was well answered, most candidates recognising the instrument as a harmonica. A few responses gave mouth organ which was also accepted.
 - (b) Again, many correct responses here which homed in on features of the bass line.
 - (c) Many heard that the melody was repeated up an octave.
 - (d) Whilst some answers did not address melody closely enough, there were many precise comments in the melodic shape overall. However, some candidates lost marks unnecessarily by failing to locate their answers with line numbers as directed by the question.
 - (e) This was surprisingly poorly answered, many not grasping the fact that it was in a compound metre (6/8).
 - (f) The overall major tonality was mostly recognised.
 - (g) Despite a 10-year span being allowed, quite a few did not place this song correctly in terms of its recording date.
- Q.2**
- (a) Most candidates accurately described the time signature as 4/4. 2/2 was also allowed.

- (b) Sometimes answers here did not focus on the melodic line closely enough, and it was sad to see some candidates losing marks unnecessarily by not substantiating their answers with line numbers as asked.
- (c) This was fairly well answered.
- (d) Many correctly identified the song's form as strophic. Verse form was not allowed.
- (e) As with question b, some answers did not focus clearly enough on aspects of rhythm, and again, some did not back up otherwise correct points with line number references as directed.
- (f) The interval of a 6th was sometimes identified, though candidates seemed to find this challenging.
- (g) There was quite a variety of answers to this question. Some identified the style fully as folk rock. Those that just stated folk were awarded the mark, but not those that just stated rock.
- (h) It is very gratifying to report that there has been clear improvement in the way that candidates have answered this question on this year's paper. Examiners reported that more answers focused on extract 2, comparing it to extract 1 this year rather than spending time describing both. The question does guide candidates to do this, but there were still some responses that spent valuable time listing features of both extracts in isolation. Such answers, where there was little comparative writing, did not score highly.

Whilst it was perfectly possible to gain full marks by answering in prose, some candidates favoured a more tabular or list approach, pointing out both similarities and differences seen in extract 2 compared to extract 1. This worked well. Examples of comparative points that could have been made include:

- Extract 2 uses the same melodic material as extract 1
- Extract 2 is in a higher key than extract 1

Area of Study C: Musical Theatre

Q.3 Many accurately described the structure of the song as AABA or 32 bar song form.

- (a) Whilst there were some cogent observations made about the vocal line in lines 1-3, some answers were too general, not actually homing in on melodic features.
- (b) Sadly, many responses to this question only stated saxophone. At this level, candidates need to be prepared to differentiate more, stating which saxophone is used, in this case, alto saxophone.
- (c) Many correctly identified the interval as an octave.
- (d) There were quite a few well made points here, though care needs to be taken to discuss the particular lines asked for.

- (e) This was fairly well answered.
 - (f) Some correctly identified Sondheim as the composer.
- Q.4**
- (a) Quite a lot answered correctly with syncopation. Hemiola, push rhythm and anticipation were also credited.
 - (b) The melody of lines 1-2 was quite well answered, but some responses were very general, not convincingly homing in on specific melodic features.
 - (c) This was fairly well answered.
 - (d) The interval of a 3rd was often correctly stated.
 - (e) This was very well answered, candidates accurately filling in the boxes with verse and middle8/bridge.
 - (f) This was not well answered, the modal aspects of the music not being picked up on. Quite a few noted the minor reference in line 10 though, for which they gained credit.
 - (g) It is very gratifying to report that there has been clear improvement in the way that candidates have answered this question on this year's paper. Examiners reported that more answers focused on extract 2, comparing it to extract 1 this year rather than spending time describing both. The question does guide candidates to do this, but there were still some responses that spent valuable time listing features of both extracts in isolation. Such answers, where there was little comparative writing, did not score highly.

Whilst it was perfectly possible to gain full marks by answering in prose, some candidates favoured a more tabular or list approach, pointing out both similarities and differences seen in extract 2 compared to extract 1. This worked well. Examples of comparative points that could have been made include:

- Extracts 1 and 2 both contain $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature at some point
- Extract 2 has a longer introduction than extract 1

Area of Study D: Jazz

- Q.5**
- (a) Most candidates identified at least one of the two time signatures, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$. $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{8}$ were also accepted.
 - (b) This question was well answered, most identifying at least one of the two correct statements, and many both.
 - (c) This question was not as well answered as it could have been, often because candidates did not link their points to specific sections as asked in the question. Answers were also not detailed enough.
 - (d) Most correctly identified the style as cool jazz, but not that many supported their choice with two correct reasons. Most got one though.
- Q.6**
- (a) The $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature was usually correctly identified.

- (b) Not all identified the tonality as minor (or modal), mistakenly stating it was major.
- (c) Some apt answers, but also some that were too generalized, not really homing in on specific melodic features.
- (d) This question was not as well answered as it could have been, often due to the fact that candidates did not link the points they were making to specific line numbers as asked in the question. This is a pity, as it means that potential full mark answers scored 0.
- (e) This was not very well answered, not many identifying the use of triplets.
- (f) Nearly all answers were correct here, candidates clearly familiar with the scat singing style.
- (g) Many correctly identified the strings as being prominent in the accompaniment in lines 15 and 16.
- (h) It is very gratifying to report that there has been clear improvement in the way that candidates have answered this question on this year's paper. Examiners reported that more answers focused on extract 2, comparing it to extract 1 this year rather than spending time describing both. The question does guide candidates to do this, but there were still some responses that spent valuable time listing features of both extracts in isolation. Such answers, where there was little comparative writing, did not score highly.

Whilst it was perfectly possible to gain full marks by answering in prose, some candidates favoured a more tabular or list approach, pointing out both similarities and differences seen in extract 2 compared to extract 1. This worked well. Examples of comparative points that could have been made include:

- Extracts 1 and 2 have the same harmonic material
- In extract 2, the trumpet takes the melodic line as opposed to voices in extract 1.

Area of Study E: Into the Twentieth Century

Q.7 In most cases, the key was correctly identified as B minor.

- (a) There were a number of ways candidates could have answered this question. Some accurately described the relationship to the key at the start of the movement as the minor Neapolitan (just Neapolitan was accepted). Others described it as the flattened supertonic, or one semitone away. Supertonic alone did not get a mark.
- (b) This question tested candidates' knowledge of what constitutes Neoclassical style, and allowed them to refer to either "classical" or "Twentieth Century" elements. There was a variety of answers, often accurate, and involving such areas as Poulenc's treatment of harmony, tonality, phrasing or accompaniment patterns. Answers that were not relevant to this particular extract did not gain credit, however.

- (c) This was well answered, most candidates identifying the given extract as section B of an overall ternary form structure, though there were other ways of viewing it that also gained credit (e.g. as the continuation of the opening A section or as part of a tripartite form which sees each 22 bar section move a semitone higher.
- (d) Whilst there were some convincing answers here, it was clear that many candidates found answering on harmony challenging. Specific detail was needed to gain the marks, and some answers were too general to do this.
- (e) This was generally correctly answered, candidates knowing where Poulenc used the octatonic scale.
- (f) Surprisingly this was not always correctly answered despite candidates having the score.
- (g) The question asked candidates to describe the use of instruments, so answers that merely described which instruments were playing in particular bars did not score very highly. At this level, they are expected to do more than that. The best answers explained how Poulenc used his instruments to bring the music to life such as the way the oboe and bassoon move in parallel 6ths or octaves, are used in antiphony or how the piano accompanies and supplies harmonic support. Sadly, many potentially very good answers failed to gain marks because they did not support their points with bar number references.

- Q.8**
- (a) Quite a lot of candidates correctly identified the celesta.
 - (b) This was not well answered, responses being very vague and non-specific. It would have been helpful for candidates to state which instrument they were referring to in their comments.
 - (c) Again, there were many very generalised comments here which did not make specific or accurate points about the vocal writing in lines 1-4. Many answers locked onto words such as *sprechstimme* and assumed they applied (which they did not in this instance). Sadly, otherwise credible answers about conjunct or disjunct movement did not gain marks because they neglected to state which line they were referring to.
 - (d) Quite a lot of answers correctly described the texture as contrapuntal.
 - (e) There were more accurate answers about the changes in vocal writing than about the instrumental writing in lines 11-12. Most heard that the pitch content was higher for the vocalist.
 - (f) This question was well answered, with most candidates highlighting the rise of pitch to paint the words meaning “rises up”. It should be borne in mind, that in order to gain marks for examples of word painting, it is necessary to identify both the word and how the music conveys its meaning. One without the other is not sufficient.
 - (g) Many candidates got credit here for showing their understanding of the fact that there was a sense of metre, but it was difficult to determine what the metre itself was. Some answers were too vague, or incorrectly stated there was no metre.

- (h) The majority of candidates correctly identified this music as expressionist. Serialism or dodecaphonic music were also accepted.
- (i) This question was not well answered, despite the fact that it allows candidates to show their knowledge of other works they have studied during the course. Very sadly, many candidates seemed not to have read the question carefully enough, as they wrote about music that was **similar** in style to the given extract, rather than different in style as specified. They consequently scored 0 as their answer was not relevant to the question posed. Also, despite the question reminding candidates not to refer to other set works, some answers did, and again, scored 0. It was heart-breaking to read comments to the effect that no other works had been studied, and so they could not answer the question.

Of the answers that did discuss another work within the timeframe of a different style (impressionist or neo-classical), there was not always a very strong grasp of its use of harmony present. Many answers relied on generalisations which did not show specific knowledge of the work itself, unfortunately.

Area of Study F: Into the Twenty-First Century

- Q.9**
- (a) Answers about the features of harmony/tonality in between the bars specified in the question were disappointing. Despite having studied the work, candidates did not show a strong grasp of the harmonic/tonal content.
 - (b) Similarly, answers about how the harmony/tonality changed in the later bars specified were not convincing in most cases.
 - (c) Candidates fared better describing similarities between sections, though few gained full marks.
 - (d) There were some convincing comments on the way melody was used in the extract, but answers were not always specific enough, or not really focused on melody.
 - (e) This question was well answered, candidates showing strong knowledge of the characteristics of EDM (Electronic Dance Music). Sadly though, not all answers were located with bar references or identified by instrument as directed in the question. Sometimes, this did result in a lack of clarity, with marks not being gained.
 - (f) There were some good responses to this question, candidates picking out a variety of features in the use of instruments to discuss. There was a plethora of points that could have been made, and most answers found five pertinent examples. However, not all were always specifically located or precisely enough described in terms of their use.
- Q.10**
- (a) There were some accurate answers here about the violin part, candidates identifying the use of harmonics and glissandi mainly. Very few recognised the use of *sul pont* or *sul tasto*. Some noted the use of double stopping.
 - (b) In terms of the piano writing of section 1, answers were less convincing, not many describing the emphasis on single notes as opposed to chordal writing.

- (c) This question was quite well answered, candidates pointing out two differences, though not specifically enough in some cases. Aspects such as more changes of metre, rhythmically more complex, further use of double stopping, series of dissonant chords in piano etc. were appropriate features to mention.
- (d) Here, some candidates noted that the piano and violin played the same pitch class note in different octaves, or recalled some of the earlier material, creating a brief sense of tonal centre. These specific points earned the marks. More general comments did not. In the second part of the question, some candidates deduced from the features noted that the section acted as a form of coda, confirming a sense of completion or return. Others did not pick upon this though.
- (e) This question was not well answered, despite the fact that it allows candidates to draw on knowledge about a work they will have already studied. In some cases, works outside the time frame were discussed (e.g. Haydn Symphony 104 or Mendelssohn's Symphony no 4) which sadly earned no marks. Other candidates did choose relevant works, often by Judith Weir, but did not home in on aspects of harmony strongly enough, making general comments about the works instead. In a few cases though, it was clear that candidates had explored their supporting works in detail and were able to discuss aspects of harmony with some authority and clarity. Such answers were in the minority though, sadly.

Area of Study A: The Western Classical Tradition.

- Q.11**
- (a) There were some completely accurate answers to the dictation question which was a pleasure to see. However, nearly all candidates scored at least one mark here, and many scored 2 or 3 marks. With this question, candidates are assessed on pitch and rhythm equally, so it is always advisable to spend equal time on both. When practising this skill, candidates should be mindful of the overall key and time signature to avoid making careless errors.
 - (b) More candidates correctly detected the error in rhythm than in pitch. There are equal marks for both locating and correcting the errors so candidates need to remember to do both.
 - (c) More candidates correctly identified the chord this year, though many failed to gain the mark because they did not include the 7th, answering diminished only.
- Q.12**
- (a) This was a very well answered question, the majority of responses correctly identifying sonata form.
 - (b) Most candidates accurately located at least one of the three harmonic features but few got all three. When identifying a secondary dominant 7th, it is necessary to check the contextual tonality carefully. Many answers cited dominant 7ths rather than secondary dominant 7ths.
 - (c) Most candidates correctly identified the section as the second subject, second theme.

- (d) There were some successful answers here, though candidates need to be vigilant about locating their points precisely with bar and beat numbers as advised in the question. Also, it is worth remembering that both similarities and differences need to be mentioned; candidates cannot access the full range of marks by doing just one or the other only. At this level, candidates are also expected to make comments on more than the very obvious features such as time signature.
- (e) This was a well answered question overall, candidates displaying a sound grasp of thematic material and how it was used by Haydn in the development section. However, in some cases, candidates did not state what themes were being used as asked in the question, or did not verify their comments with bar and beat references as directed.
- Q.13** (a) Most candidates answered correctly here, identifying the form as sonata form.
- (b) When locating harmonic features, most candidates correctly identified at least one of the three, often the rising melodic minor scale. Some answers were not precise enough in their bar and beat locations.
- (c) Many correctly identified the section as the False Recapitulation.
- (d) There were many successful answers here, candidates correctly identifying similarities and differences between the two sections. However, some points to bear in mind are that it is not possible to access the full range of marks by giving five similarities or five differences only. There needs to be at least two of each cited. Also, at this level, candidates are expected to describe more than the very obvious features such as the same time signature. Some potentially correct answers did not gain the marks because they failed to substantiate with precise bar and beat numbers as directed by the question.
- (e) This question was well answered overall, candidates showing a secure understanding of how Mendelssohn uses his thematic material in this development section. However, some responses were diluted by not being precise enough in explaining what themes were being used or supporting points made with bar and beat numbers as directed in the question.
- Q.14** This question allowed candidates to discuss both the overall structural changes that occurred in symphonic works between 1750 and 1900, and also internal structural changes. Many candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of the former, but not so many showed more detailed knowledge of the latter.

Whilst there were many fairly competent responses that showed an awareness of how symphonies changed over time in the number of movements they displayed, sometimes backing this up with reasons, few responses really tackled the nitty-gritty aspects of different structures other than sonata form e.g., sonata rondo, variations, etc. And fewer still were able to discuss the finer details of phrase structure etc. At this level, in order to access the higher mark bands for the essay question, examiners are looking for evidence that candidates have studied some examples of the symphonic literature in depth, and can cite specific features about the music under discussion.

Other pitfalls, which precluded answers reaching higher marks, were the over-emphasis on the Haydn and Mendelssohn set works (the question does state “brief references” to these), not covering the full range of the time period (often the latter years being sparsely mentioned) or the inclusion of irrelevant comments that veered away from the discussion of structure.

Saying that, there were also essays which displayed excellent knowledge and were clearly the result of much research and learning. These were justly rewarded with the high marks they deserved.

Summary of key points

Moving forward for next year, the following points should be borne in mind in order to build on achievements in this component:

- Targeting answers on harmony and tonality. Examiners still report that these areas are not as strongly answered
- Reminding candidates to substantiate points made with specific line/bar/beat references as directed in questions. Marks are lost unnecessarily by not doing this
- Making sure answers do home in on the specific features asked for – e.g. discuss melodic features if this is what the question directs
- Focus on extract 2 in the comparison questions of AOSs B, C and D, comparing it to extract 1 and not merely describing both extracts
- Make sure relevant supporting works are discussed in questions 8 and 10 of AOSs E and F respectively
- Aim for more specific musical detail in essay in symphonic repertoire



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