



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**MUSIC
GCSE**

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.

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MUSIC

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1 PERFORMING

General Comments

After a long hiatus, it was very encouraging to see the hard work that has been going on in centres to prepare for this element of GCSE Music. Moderators welcomed the return to the moderation process and commented on the pleasure they received on moderating such diverse and entertaining performances.

Centre Administration

There were many successful submissions where centres were well organised and consequently the moderation process ran smoothly. The uploads were carefully labelled as per the adapted 2022 exam board instructions and mark sheets were completed accurately with teacher and candidate signatures.

However, a significant number of centres had to be contacted for various reasons:

- Composition folios uploaded instead of Performing folios.
- Incomplete submissions.
- Many had forgotten to upload the Performance Timings sheet. Some centres included it with the first candidate alphabetically while others included it with the highest scoring or lowest scoring candidate. There were several instances where centres had not included a timing sheet at all; these had to be contacted and most were able to provide these promptly following a first request.
- Many mark sheets were missing authentication from teacher/candidate. Please note that signatures may be typed. This is an essential requirement before moderation can take place and centres are urged to check all mark sheets very carefully before uploading.

These omissions resulted in the need to contact centres for the correct work to be uploaded. Thank you to Exams' Officers and music departments for uploading the extra requirements promptly in most cases.

Clerical errors were frequently in evidence, some of which were substantial e.g. if one piece was performed, the single mark was not doubled. Other clerical errors included:

- Marks not added/subtracted for awarded difficulty levels.
- Timing penalties not applied correctly according to the adapted 2022 instructions. (especially where there was also a difficulty scaling to include).
- Mark sheet totals incorrectly transferred to lamis

Marks were rectified by moderators.

Please note that zip files are not accepted for any Music submissions. If these are uploaded then schools will be contacted via the exams officer or head of centre to upload correctly as laid out in the subject specific requirements document on the website. It is also preferable for scores, mark sheets and Programme Notes to be uploaded as PDFs rather than Word documents if possible, with scores and Programme Notes separate to marksheets.

Please check for communications from WJEC for future instructions for uploading work correctly.

Moderators also reported that in several cases, if there were issues with submissions or teacher marking, centres had not acted upon the advice given in previous moderator reports.

Timings

The vast majority of candidates met the minimum timing requirements with several candidates performing well above the required timing, often performing more than one piece where the one would have sufficed. Where the centre timings sheet was included, it was clear to see which candidates, if any, performed under the adapted time limit.

Unfortunately, there were instances of incorrect timings noted by centres – mainly being too generous, especially if they were close to the minimum time of 1 minute 30 seconds. For future reference, please insert a repeat which makes musical sense. I emphasise 'musical', in that some candidates repeated sections or even whole pieces several times in order to achieve the minimum timing. This is not satisfactory practice and I would urge centres to explore further repertoire for such candidates.

It was sad to see some talented candidates being penalised for not reaching the required timing. Short introductions and links are acceptable but there were several examples of lengthy introductions and links included in centre timings. Some centres are still timing from the start of the teacher announcement (not required) or quoting the length of the MP3, rather than from the start of the candidate's performance. There were instances also where centres had not timed any of the candidates' performances.

Recordings

The vast majority of recordings were of very good quality indeed. Moderators reported a few instances where balance was an issue in recordings with the candidate's part being overpowered by the accompanist; but on the whole, centres had carefully checked the quality and placing of microphones.

Drum kit recordings caused a few issues this year, as it was either evident that some candidates were unable to hear their own backing track, so did not play in time, thus affecting marks, or the backing track was played too loudly which overpowered the candidate, making moderation of Accuracy marks difficult. Distortion was also reported on several drum kit recordings. A contentious issue is the use of click tracks. I am pleased to report that most centres are now taking the exam board advice that this is a performance assessment, and if the click track is loudly audible, offering the candidate the same support as a piano accompaniment playing the melody to support a singer, then the difficulty level could be affected.

There were increasing numbers of vocal candidates who sang with mobile phone backing tracks. These mostly did not provide adequate support nor appropriate balance between the singer and the track.

A few centres edited the raw audio recording by adding effects to enhance the candidate's performance. As technology in schools is constantly advancing, it is important to remember that, as stated in the specification, recordings should be 'unedited'.

Many teachers still announce the candidate name and number, as well as the instrument played and the name of the piece. This is unnecessary and as stated above, should not be included in the timing of the submission.

Scores/Lead Sheets

Scores were generally well-presented and carefully annotated by most centres. The annotation of vocal scores in particular is a time-consuming process and centres who fulfilled this requirement well are to be commended. Repeat marks were clear, and rhythmic and melodic variants were clearly marked in the relevant places on the score. Performance directions were added to the simplest of pieces. This really helped with the moderation process.

There are still centres where unannotated scores (or no scores at all) were presented which made the moderation of marks for accuracy to the score very difficult to justify. It is not acceptable to state 'Candidate's own interpretation' or 'Ad lib throughout' at the top of the score and then award high marks for accuracy; this was occasionally the case for complete centres' submissions! Lyric sheets must not be submitted as substitutes for vocal scores. Again, moderators reported several guitar tab scores which bore no resemblance to the actual performance. Effective tab scores contained performance directions, rhythmic detail and where necessary, a melodic outline, which aided the moderation process.

The best lead sheets contained much required detail in terms of structure, chords, melodic and rhythmic patterns with clear performance directions. It was also very pleasing to see the detailed information provided with several DJ, sequencing and rapping performances. Some of these will be uploaded to the exam board secure website as support for teachers offering these options.

Scores were mostly submitted correctly, with pages in the correct order in one PDF format. It must be observed that:

- Scores should be scanned into one file with pages not uploaded as individual files.
- Only the score for the candidate's performance should be uploaded; some centres uploaded complete workbooks.
- Scores should be checked for orientation, missing pages and incorrect order of pages.

Some centres uploaded an original recording to compare with the candidate's performance in order to moderate marks for accuracy. This is not accepted by the exam board and these centres were contacted and asked for scores or lead sheets.

Difficulty Levels

For the majority of centres, difficulty levels were correctly applied, with the abbreviations of ESL (Easier than Standard Level), SL (Standard Level), MD (More Difficult than Standard Level) or the exam board grading indicated on the mark sheet. It was also helpful for moderators if the mark sheet indicated that the difficulty level had been awarded by the exam board.

The complications arose when the music was an easier or shortened version of a graded piece e.g. different versions of Einaudi's 'I Giorni' and Beethoven's 'Für Elise'.

Centres are encouraged to contact the exam board if in doubt regarding the difficulty level of a piece, which is not obvious from the performance descriptors in the specification.

Repertoire

It is not surprising that given this year of choice, nearly all candidates that were moderated gave solo performances. Very few ensembles were submitted, although the majority of those heard were carefully chosen to best display the candidates' strengths.

Most centres chose appropriate repertoire which reflected the skills and diverse musical interests of their candidates. Centres are to be applauded for providing candidates with such a wealth of repertoire and it was obvious that the majority of candidates thoroughly enjoyed displaying their performing strengths. For the most part, centres submitted pieces found in the syllabuses of music boards including Rockschoool, ABRSM and Trinity.

The performances ranged from simple pieces to highly technical submissions. It was interesting to note that in addition to instrumental and vocal performances, there were far more sequencing, rap and DJ performances, some of which were of an extremely high standard. There were instances of inappropriate language in some rap and DJ performances which is not permitted; it is wise to check material before candidates embark on their performance preparation.

Vocal candidates have definitely moved away from the popular repertoire of three years ago e.g. songs from 'Wicked' and 'Les Misérables', in favour of more contemporary musicals such as 'Hamilton', 'The Last Five years', 'Waitress', and 'The Addams Family'.

Most candidates had chosen totally appropriate pieces for their particular performance standard, and this is to be commended. There were some really excellent and outstanding performances, all worthy of full marks. Many others ambitiously played pieces of a higher grade that were clearly beyond the candidates' current capabilities and submitting a SL or even ESL piece would have gained these candidates more marks across the three assessment columns. This was the case for some weaker candidates who, had they played simple pieces with dynamics and expression, would have fared better.

There were some very simple keyboard pieces where the candidates only attempted the right hand part. Please note that such pieces are unlikely to score higher than Band 2 for Technical Control as normal piano technique involves using two hands. Also, please ensure that performance directions are marked on the score.

In the few ensemble pieces submitted for moderation, there were one or two centres who submitted what they described as ensemble performances but should actually be classed as solo performances, since the candidates performed solo parts with other performers providing what would be described as an accompaniment or harmonic support. For future submissions this would be a concern. It is therefore important that centres confirm the requirements of an ensemble performance and check with the exam board if they are unsure.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Assessment/Overall Standard

Most centres had used the assessment criteria carefully and thoughtfully and therefore marked candidates appropriately.

Several performances were truly excellent and some centres seemed reluctant to award full marks when it was fully justified at this level.

Sometimes, centres were generous in the Accuracy column when there were several inaccuracies in relation to the score or where performance directions were not observed.

Unfortunately, there was a common trend to mark quite accurately for middle and high ability candidates, but mark quite harshly for the lowest candidates. Some centres were awarding marks for accuracy from Band 1 where the performance definitely warranted marks from a higher band, as there was evidence of fluency and accuracy in the submission. Several moderators reported evidence of 'double penalising' under Accuracy and Technical Control. If a performance generally contains intonation issues, then marks should be lowered for Technical Control. However, if there are occasional moments when notes are not on pitch, then marks for Accuracy would be compromised.

As mentioned earlier in the report, simple pieces which are performed accurately and fluently, observing performance directions, may score highly for Accuracy, but due to the limited nature of the piece which does not afford the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate a high standard of instrument specific skills, marks would be lowered for Technical Control.

It is vital that scores are annotated appropriately if centres are to award top marks for Accuracy. Vocal candidates cannot achieve top band marks for Accuracy if centres are marking from a lyric sheet.

I strongly urge centres to take note of advice given in previous moderator reports to centres as there was a tendency for the same issues of marking, administration, scores or levels of difficulty to be repeated this year.

As moderators we would like to acknowledge how difficult it may have been to prepare candidates for submission this year and we would like to pass on our genuine congratulations and thanks to all teaching and peripatetic staff who have persevered and helped all candidates to provide musical performances to be proud of.

Summary of key points

- Take note of advice given in previous moderator reports.
- All files must be uploaded and labelled as according to the guidelines issued by the WJEC.
- It is vital that scores are annotated appropriately.
- For 2023 and beyond, confirm the requirements of an ensemble performance and check with the music team if unsure.

MUSIC

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 2 COMPOSING

General Comments

This report has been collated from a large team of moderators. Their experience of the moderating process this year has been diverse in many respects, and genuine attempt has been made in this overall Principal Moderator's report to cover all observations.

Administration

Uploading

The vast majority of centres uploaded the required sample by the deadline, accurately labelled in accordance with the WJEC guidelines. This facilitated a straightforward navigation of all files in Surpass. Most centres uploaded their work with three files as recommended (Audio, Candidate Log, and Score/Leadsheet), which enabled the moderation process to run smoothly and with momentum.

A few centres had uploaded more files than necessary (e.g., scores and recordings of each individual instrumental part, or two audio files that seemed identical), which occasionally delayed the moderation process. There were, however, several issues that hopefully can be avoided in future years. These included: clerical/addition errors in IAMIS (some of which were extreme); mistakenly uploading Component 1 files by mistake; incorrect or missing items; incomplete marksheets and miscalculated marks. Most centres were very quick to respond to queries and requests for additional or correct work to be supplied, and this was much appreciated.

Please note that ZIP files are not acceptable for any Music submission. Centres who upload them will be contacted via the exams officer or head of centre and correct files will be requested. The best type of files (from the perspective of the moderator) were those uploaded as pdfs. Word documents had to be downloaded, whereas a pdf file opened in a tab in Surpass which made the process quicker and easier.

Some centres did not use the current forms – please be reminded that all up to date forms are available on the website.

Scores and Recordings

Scores ranged from excellent, containing details such as dynamic, articulation and expression markings (as produced by Sibelius or Musescore for example), to non-existent. Centres often offered a combination of traditional scores, annotated screenshots and lead sheets, many of which were detailed and thoughtfully related musical ideas to the brief. Many cases of screenshots were somewhat arbitrary and bore little resemblance to the finished product, as they lacked annotation or accompanying musical explanation. In such cases, they were of little use to the process of moderation. Some candidates attempted to annotate screenshots with basic headings like melody, but needed additional notes, as the dynamics, tempo directions, instrumental details and performance markings were not specified. A screenshot without such details is only helpful to follow the structure and contains no other musical information – nowhere close to the 'detailed written account' that is required.

Some centres decided to include powerpoint presentations as a way of providing the written commentary, and this worked well. Several centres submitted scores which did not cover all the audible parts, and some omitted to submit lyrics and chords with songs.

The quality of scores originating in DAW software was varied; some centres provided single, unannotated screenshots of the DAW's main 'Arrange' window for each composition, whilst others were fully annotated, with important melodic passages and riffs, drum beats and so on highlighted in individual additional screenshots, taken from either the 'Score' or 'Piano Roll' pages. In some cases, the candidates had then labelled all screenshots, explaining how each part fit within the context of the whole composition. These were very useful scores, compared to the more limited contribution of a single screenshot. Moderators also advised and reminded centres that if simply submitting a lyric sheet with chord names, then a fully detailed explanation of how the melody was developed and how other parts were created was also vital. There were other concerns: for example, it was felt that changing metre (with no indication in the score) does not demonstrate musical understanding. Extensive use of DAWs seemed to be affecting candidates' understanding of key - or, rather, the need to write in the appropriate key for the notes they have chosen. Pieces in A major look very complex when the DAW-generated score maintains a C major key signature – such a lack of enharmonic understanding can also cause confusion over choices of notes and chords. A number of moderators reported of incomplete scores from DAW which did not show the complete pieces, and a significant number showed just one section (one candidate submitted a screenshot of a single bar of their piece).

Most recordings were very good (usually taken straight from computer programs). It was also encouraging to hear live performances by the candidates, and there were lots of piano/voice and guitar/voice combinations as well as candidates singing live to a computer-generated backing track. A particular highlight was a recording by a full brass band of a march the candidate had composed.

Occasionally, the balance of a recording was not particularly good, with some voices/instruments being rather faint, or even missing. Several recordings included noisy click tracks, and there were also others with parts that seemed not to have been quantized correctly and so sounded out of time. Some live recordings had a lots of background noise and interference.

There were a few centres who recorded their students' compositions on a separate device from the computer. These recordings pick up everything around them and therefore clicking and typing on the computer interrupted these recordings as well as background noise from the canteen, and in one case heavy breathing and eating.

Candidate Logs

As in previous years, the quality of the logs was extremely varied. Many were excellent, completed with impressive attention to detail and giving useful insight into the candidate's thought processes and musical influences. Some continued to present a full musical analysis (unnecessary when a score has been presented), and others often duplicated information present in the annotated lead sheet/score rather than give the required account of the actual process of composition. It was helpful when candidates had detailed specific advice given by their teacher. Some centres had clearly encouraged their candidates to fully embrace the logs as an opportunity to highlight their intentions in using the musical elements as well as their employment of musical devices to refine their work and fit the chosen brief. These were a great aid to the moderation process.

Many logs were too short and lacking in detail, having seemingly been completed at the last minute. Many candidates simply listed the tracks and the order in which they composed them rather than discussing and justifying their decisions. This was of little use to the moderator. Occasionally, there were some contradictions and inaccuracies within candidates' stated briefs and musical responses and explanations, including details of different keys and instrumentation, and descriptions of chord progressions. To avoid misunderstandings, all logs should be reviewed prior to submission.

Composition logs were missing entirely in some cases and not always uploaded despite requests from moderators contacting centres. It is important to consider these as part of the authentication of candidates' work as it provides moderators with a commentary of what, why and how they have made their musical choices.

There were several reasons why many candidate logs were unhelpful. Please bring the following points to the attention of all future candidates:

1. In a free composition, candidates must select their own brief. Many candidates were specific in this section, detailing either the occasion or the audience for which the piece is being composed, plus 'all additional relevant musical details' (as per the specification). However, most candidates did not fulfil this requirement, simply stating 'free composition'. As the music is directly assessed for its effectiveness 'in response to the chosen brief' (AO2.1c) this is an important consideration and affects marks. (One candidate even wrote '*A piece of IDK*' as their brief).
2. There are still candidates who do not make clear what, and how software has been used. Many candidates using loops in their composition (and there seems to have been a massive reliance on loops/pre-set rhythms/arpeggiations in the current session) left the section about loops blank, or wrote 'none'. Some candidates mentioned the inclusion of samples in the relevant section of the composition log, but here also, the information about the original sample was limited and as a moderator it was often difficult to know and understand how the material had been edited. Many candidates had used pre-existing drum patterns this year (e.g. from Logic's "Drummer" tool or samples from DAWs) and these were rarely credited. Occasionally, samples were mentioned in the composing and refining process but not in the section about borrowed resources.
3. Many candidates are not correctly completing the section of the log where they are meant to explain how other people have learned their music in the absence of a score. The necessary sections were often left empty, or completed with inaccurate information (e.g., ticking that the work was all computer generated, only for the moderator to listen to someone singing, with no details to explain the situation). Many candidates played/recorded all the parts themselves, which was impressive. Some students wrote "my teacher did/said..." throughout the log, and often it was not clear where and when candidates were entirely responsible for elements of their work. In one centre the teacher had performed all the piano/vocal ballads and the student only submitted a lyric and chord sheet - with very little written about how the teacher knew the melody/harmony and piano rhythms and musical patterns. This is unsatisfactory.

Please remind candidates of the necessary requirement to fully complete the section of the log which asks how the 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. We can only assess and appreciate what work is clearly the work of the candidate.

In a few cases it appeared that the log had been written by someone other than the candidate: in one instance, the notes written by the teacher were in the same handwriting as the log, but there was nothing to explain why the log had not been written by the candidate. Please be respectfully reminded that - unless there are exceptional and explained circumstances - the candidate log is for the candidate to complete.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Requirements for 2022: *Candidates were required to submit ONE composition of 2-4 minutes, either in response to one of the four set briefs set by the Board, or a free composition for which they set their own brief.*

Tasks/Briefs

There was an eclectic range of submissions again this year. Some candidates took the option to follow one of the set briefs. There were examples of the 'soldier returning from war' brief; many of these were extremely good and really captured the imagination of many of the composers, many of whom had invented imaginative back-stories to their film scene music. Many employed snare drums (in a military manner) and fanfares, and some candidates quoted or used the 'Last Post' in some way, which worked well in this context. Other moderators reported of less successful outcomes for this option, with candidates choosing rather odd combinations of instruments and placing a heavy reliance on chords and simple slow melodies which were rather discordant and less successful at communicating a sense of sadness.

The 'free choice' option was very popular and allowed candidates to work to their strengths with a wide variety of responses, as teachers encouraged candidates to compose within their interests. Some centres decided on a 'class' set brief but ensured that they were open enough for candidates to explore different styles, encouraging candidates to develop their compositions fully in an individual way. It was evident in their logs how candidates had explored the genre/style and this was reflected in well written compositions.

Some briefs were so vague that they were not considered suitable by moderators. Such examples include: 'my free composition' (with no explanation); 'film music' (with no description or context); 'blues' (totally formulaic and lacking individuality); 'piece for drum and bass' (with no drum part); 'pop song' or 'piano piece' (with no explanation); 'music that represented chaos (apparently it did!) – and many others that were not specific enough, or indeed were so detailed, they didn't make sense. As implied in some examples above, many candidates stated a generic style instead of stipulating a brief.

At several centres, numerous - if not all - candidates had written for identical musical ensembles. It is hard to imagine that this plays to the strengths of all students, and moderators agreed that a more individualised approach should be recommended. In some centres, candidates had been encouraged to model their work on existing classical pieces, and it was felt that this practice also hampered individual thought and creativity. It was felt that when set tasks for all candidates within a centre had been adopted, the outcomes were not always successful; for example, one centre seemed to have provided all their candidates with a "bank" of accompaniment patterns, leading to a set of very similar responses.

In another centre, candidates employed theme and variations compositions, but the initial theme was barely strong enough to be subjected to sustained development. Several candidates had written for extremely large ensembles (e.g., full orchestra) and the demands of such a large group of instruments were not always well-handled. One centre had tasked the candidates with responding to a painting/picture (of the candidate's choice), which was an interesting approach and yielded some creative responses.

Some styles (including rap and EDM), require extra care to ensure appropriate requirements such as harmonic and melodic development are included. There were a number of compositions in the style of 12-bar blues and minimalism, which limited the credit candidates could be awarded for the individual creation and development of musical ideas. Similarly, some grime submissions consisted of only the vocal line and the beat, which did not allow the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of harmony.

'Trap' was also a big influence for many candidates and the manipulation of sounds within this was where many candidates had invested a lot of time and energy, sometimes allowing good marks for the skilful control of technological elements. Unfortunately, it was often the case within this genre also, that fundamental musical elements were missed, as there was limited opportunity to demonstrate harmonic understanding and melodic development.

Several candidates presented a 'remix', where the melodic material was not original and they had just manipulated it using technology (e.g., in one case a candidate had recorded themselves singing an existing song by a known artist, then sped it up and composed a 'backing track'). Such pieces had been awarded high marks by centres; at the risk of repeating advice already emphasized earlier in this report, teachers and moderators must only consider original work. In such instances, moderators considered that the amount of individual composition was seriously questionable. Whilst technological effects can be effective for the outcome and response to the brief, candidates cannot be credited for them as a musical tool for development.

Standards

Compositions that fell within the top marking bracket were stylistic and drew upon a wide range of elements, demonstrating excellent understanding of the music rudiments. Some centres had obviously allowed for a high level of individuality amongst their candidates across the range of marks, clearly with individualised learning, often led by the student's creativity, and this brought pleasing results. Higher banded compositions immediately displayed a high level of compositional skill even within a limited time, as ideas were creative, and development was skilful. Successful pieces demonstrated effective melodic ideas, imaginative development, and effective and thoughtful control of musical elements (especially harmony and texture), through a good sense of musical organisation and coherence. There was advanced and impressive work in more WCT styles, with examples of sonata form, chamber music and string quartets, as well as some fantastic songs in a range of genres using complex vocal harmonies and accompaniment styles in a highly competent manner. Some candidates displayed excellent orchestration skills and made superb use of technology to realise multi-tracked and polyphonic ideas.

Best practice was identified when the initial ideas had clearly been drafted, refined, and re-worked before being presented; when candidates had carefully considered the harmonic plan, including cadences and modulations, when texture had been handled with care, and included delicate contrasts to maintain interest, develop ideas and add complexity, when candidates skilfully combined the musical elements to create a sense of purpose and direction, and were confident in using several strategies to develop initial ideas. Higher band candidates demonstrated an understanding of the need to fulfil each criterion: development, use of resources and elements, structure, and style.

Compositions that fell within the middle marking bracket showed a satisfactory to good degree of musical style as candidates drew upon a fairly wide range of compositional techniques to create ideas. Outcomes were not always substantial enough in content to allow the necessary development required to access higher mark bands. Some pieces ended rather abruptly - for the purposes of an examination it is advised that the ending should bring the piece to a firm musical conclusion. Some candidates admitted using existing melodies which is not recommended – there is more credit available if candidates compose their own.

Far too often at this level a number of musical elements seemed to be applied/added to compositions as an afterthought; dynamics often receive the worst of this treatment, and it would be fair to comment that compositions are frequently undermined from a listening perspective by random crescendos and diminuendos that are not always appropriate to the musical content. In terms of musical coherency, it was sometimes evident that mid-range pieces appeared disjointed with ideas not fitting overall. For example, a candidate might submit a ternary or rondo piece and the B or C section would be very different – and the change in sections lacked musical conviction. Other times candidates used unnecessary repeats, (possibly to lengthen a piece), though this contributed little – if anything - to the musical outcome.

Compositions that fell within the lower mark bracket were often brief and lacked understanding and control of the musical elements. Such pieces lacked effective ideas, focus and shape and included content that was extremely limited. Many pieces ‘meandered’ without any real sense of phrasing, shape or balance. Some candidates used a lot of sound effects and relied on this rather than developing themes. Some compositions were through composed or episodic which resulted in them being unstructured and incoherent. There were several centres that had candidates who had submitted gaming music. Some of this was odd, as there was different music for different levels. These pieces lacked structure and development of motifs.

In this range, more could be gained by candidates refining and developing their ideas, (not to be confused with extending the music beyond its natural limit). Some lower scoring candidates relied upon texture it as a tool for development, where their focus may have been better placed on harmony and melodic shape. Lower-scoring pieces in pop style were often overly repetitive and often did not demonstrate enough distinction between the verse and the chorus to show either effective contrasts of colour or mood, nor a high degree of organisation.

Many lower ranking candidates' ideas were just too basic, despite various attempts at development. Candidates often wrote piano accompaniments with limited ideas and where the right-hand was constantly in root position, or where the piano only presented the right-hand part. A number of Sibelius melodies lacked melodic flow and often, candidates' use of melody and harmony were not entirely successful as the melody did not sit comfortably above the suggested accompaniment. Dissonance could be handled more appropriately through a choice of different chords or adapting the melody line.

Assessment

In quite a few cases, the lasting effects of the pandemic (e.g., missed school, lack of classroom learning etc.) could be felt in the candidates' work, with many very short and underdeveloped submissions, which were self-penalising.

In the first instance, too much credit was regularly given to candidates for limited ideas, inconsistent style, and misjudged dissonance between parts. Often pop songs had been awarded more highly than they deserved due to their use of music technology when the

actual musical ideas were simple and repetitive. Marks were often too generously awarded in the first column (AO2.1a) when melodic ideas, phrasing and development were not always as focused on as other areas. Marks were also lost by candidates in AO2.1c when pieces had faded out or had just suddenly ended. Some of these compositions sounded unfinished. Also, a poor response to a brief (which may or may not have been clear) was assessed here.

There were several centres where the marking been generous right across all three criteria where too much credit had been given to repetitive, inconsistent work which lacked individual creativity, refinement and development, and stylistic conviction and coherence – where the melody was at odds with the accompaniment and the outcome lacked musical conviction. At other times the content was just too basic for the marks awarded. At the other extreme, there were some truly exceptional compositions and from centres where the cohort was very strong, these were sometimes very critically marked for GCSE level. Candidates at this top end were handling numerous modulations effectively, developing melodies and combining new material, using well considered articulation as well as tempo and dynamic markings to enhance and colour the piece. Their work deserved full credit.

Some centres gave Band 4 marks to some very simple pieces; in some cases even the candidates had described them in the log as ‘simple melodies’ or ‘just using primary chords’. There were also some incoherent pieces given Band 4 marks, where the music was (for want of a much better musical term) ‘random’. Another example given a very high mark was a piece of ‘Minimalism’ where the whole piece was based on one bar with very little change and development.

Summary of key points

- All files must be uploaded and labelled as according to the guidelines issued by the WJEC.
- Ensure that all compositions without a score are accompanied by leadsheets and explanatory information, or fully annotated screenshots. Please refer to the GCSE Guidance for Teachers.
- Carefully all recordings for balance/missing tracks/interference/background noise.
- Candidate logs must state the software use and explain how loops or pre-existing ideas have been utilised. Furthermore, guide tracks for any part in a live performance not performed by the candidate must be included.
- Candidates must be encouraged to compose according to their abilities.
- Remind candidates that inappropriate language is not acceptable within lyrics, regardless of the genre/style.
- Please be reminded that no credit is given for any idea (or interpretation of an idea) that is not the candidate’s own work.
- Encourage individual working and avoid directed ‘class tasks’.
- Access the available exemplars to provide a guide for assessment and interpretation of the assessment criteria.
- Keep the requirements of the GCSE assessment criteria at the forefront of all choices and thinking.

MUSIC

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3 APPRAISING

General Comments

As a result of COVID-19, candidates were not required to undertake the appraising examination during the summers of 2020 and 2021 and were instead provided with an estimated grade for the entire GCSE Music qualification by their teachers. The exam papers for these years were therefore only made available during the autumn series as a resit for any candidate who was dissatisfied with the outcome of their qualification. It was not anticipated that a significant number of students would wish to attempt the appraising examination and this ultimately turned out to be the case on both occasions.

The summer of 2022 however saw a return to form and approximately nine and a half thousand candidates undertook the appraising examination. This produced consistencies with both the 2018 and 2019 appraising papers which are worthy of comment.

Once again, candidates appeared to be comfortable with the general format of the appraising examination, however some of the more problematic issues were as follows:

- Questions on the new set works (*Badinerie* and *Africa*) were delivered for the first time and were, on the whole, generally well answered by the majority of candidates. However, the identification of cadences continues to cause problems for all but the most able.
- Describing musical elements – specifically melody and/or harmony – continued to cause problems for many candidates.
- Two questions required candidates to provide locations for their answers (questions 2h and 5e), which many failed to do.
- For the dictation question, many candidates found it difficult to complete the pitch of the melody and this skill needs to be developed generally.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q1 SET WORK – Section B from *Badinerie* (Musical Forms and Devices)

- (a) Very hit and miss. Many candidates said B minor or D major. Equally, many said F major or F# major.
- (b) Mostly correct.
- (c) Approximately half of all candidates were correct.
- (d) (i) Almost entirely incorrect. Many candidates gave only one bar and beat number, despite the prompt in the question to give two.
(ii) Greater success was achieved here than for di, although only very slightly.
- (e) Good responses generally, although the chord of C major proved more difficult to identify.
- (f) Most achieved one or two marks here with the most common correct answers being disjunct, sequence, staccato and continuo. As no specific number of answers was requested, examiners picked out the correct answers from the candidates text.
- (g) Good responses.

Q2 *Danse Macabre* (Musical Forms and Devices)

- (a) Very hit and miss.
- (b) Mostly correct.
- (c) Mostly correct.
This question was the first that required candidates to place a tick in a box, choosing in this case from a choice of three possible answers. Other similar questions required candidates to tick two boxes from a choice of five or three boxes from a choice of six. If the candidate ticked more boxes than the number stated in the question then they received zero marks.
- (d) Candidates found this problematic. Many failed to describe the melody and instead focussed on other musical elements. Again, as no specific number of answers was requested, examiners picked out the correct answers from the candidates text.
- (e) Mostly correct.
- (f) Fairly well identified.
- (g) Mostly correct.
- (h) Whilst there were a significant number of excellent answers, many candidates failed to provide locations to justify their musical observations.
- (i) Rather hit and miss.

Q3 *Buona Sera* (Music for Ensemble)

- (a) Mostly correct.
- (b) Mostly correct.
- (c) Almost entirely correct.
- (d) Mostly correct.
- (e) The majority of candidates achieved at least one mark here with the most common correct answers being pizzicato and walking bass.
For questions 3e and 3f – and for other similar questions on the exam paper which have clearly designated lines for each answer – a common error by the candidates was to write more than one answer on a single line. As only the first answer on a line can be credited, and therefore everything else on the same line is ignored, it means that candidates are potentially missing out on numerous marks.
- (f) Most achieved one or two correct marks here with the most common correct answers being syncopated, repetition and discussion of the use of vocalisations.
- (g) Mostly incorrect. As with questions 1di and 1dii, cadences appear to be a foreign language for the majority of candidates.
- (h) Mostly correct.
- (i) Mostly correct, although a large number of candidates are continuing to refer to the drum kit as ‘drums’.

Q4 *Theme from Kinderszenen* (Music for Ensemble)

- (a)
 - (i) Mostly correct.
 - (ii) Fairly well answered.
 - (iii) Mostly incorrect. The identification of chords is problematic for all but the most able candidates.
 - (iv) This was mostly either entirely correct or entirely incorrect. Many answers were illegible as candidates had scribbled out their answer or amended their score so that it was difficult to identify where exactly the pitches had been placed.

- (b) (i) Very hit and miss. Whilst many candidates identified the correct time signature they frequently failed to write it in the correct place on the score.
- (ii) A large proportion were correct.
- (iii) Fairly well answered.

Q5 *Live and Let Die* (Film Music)

- (a) Mostly correct.
- (b) Most achieved two out of three correct answers.
- (c) Most achieved two out of three correct answers.
- (d) Most achieved two out of three correct answers.
- (e) Whilst there were very many accurate identifications given, many candidates failed to describe the sudden changes and mistakenly used the words crescendo and/or accelerando to describe the music. Once again, many failed to provide locations to justify their musical observations.

Q6 *The Goonies* (Film Music)

- (a) There was quite a lot of confusion here and whilst most candidates restricted their answers to instruments from the percussion section of the orchestra, many failed to identify tuned and untuned instruments correctly.
- (b) On the whole this was answered extremely well and secured very high or full marks for a significant number of candidates. The most successful answers identified numerous contrasting musical elements contained within the extract and explained how they linked with the purpose and intention of the music. Unfortunately some candidates simply gave a list of musical features without any links which didn't score very highly. Similarly, some candidates kept repeating the word 'exciting' as the link at the end of each statement which, once again, didn't score very well. The best answers, however, discussed the use of structural devices, instrumental techniques, textural devices, dynamic effects, the use of tonality and harmony, melodic features, rhythmic features and compositional devices and linked them to the action and excitement of the chase scene in a number of interesting and creative ways.

Q7 SET WORK – *Africa* (Popular Music)

- (a) Very good responses.
- (b) Most achieved one or two marks here with the most common correct answers being conjunct, syncopated and syllabic.
- (c) Candidates had been very well prepared for this question and most scored highly.
- (d) Mostly correct.
- (e) A significant number were correct.
- (f) Mostly correct.
- (g) A significant number were correct.

Q8 *This Will Be* (Popular Music)

- (a) Mostly correct.
- (b) Mostly correct.
- (c) Mostly correct.

- (d) Most achieved one or two marks here with the most common correct answers being loud, syncopated, repetition, conjunct and improvised.
- (e) Almost entirely correct.
- (f) Very hit and miss. Again, questions relating to harmony are frequently problematic for the majority of candidates.
- (g) Most achieved one or two marks here with the most common correct answers being syncopated, sustained notes, conjunct and between the lyrics.
- (h) Mostly correct.

Summary of key points

- Where no specific number of answers are requested, candidates are invited to describe as many musical features as possible and examiners will credit all correct observations.
- Where a specific number of answers are required – for example, two – only the first two answers will be considered.
- Candidates must not write more than one answer on a single line as only the first answer on the line will be credited.
- Negative answers will not be credited, for example a candidate who describes what is not present in the music will not receive any marks. This is particularly pertinent when candidates are asked to compare musical extracts.
- Tick box answers should not exceed the number of ticks stated in the question. If so, then zero marks will be awarded.
- With regards to the longer answer question, candidates are advised to discuss the use of structural devices, instrumental techniques, textural devices, dynamic effects, tonality and harmony, melodic features, rhythmic features and compositional devices ensuring that they are linked to the purpose and intention of the music.
- For the completion of the dictation question, candidates are advised to write in pencil so that any amendments to the score can be made as easily and as clearly as possible.



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