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| <p>Paper 9483/11 Listening</p> |
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Key messages

Candidates should be familiar with technical musical terms and the names of compositional techniques as listed in the syllabus. This is especially important in **Section A**, where the knowledge of these terms and techniques encountered in the Set Works is transferred to identifying their use in the unprepared extract.

Candidates should consider the marks available for each part question as well as the space provided for their responses. These will give a clear idea of the length of response and the level of detail required. Many responses were either too short, restricting access to the full marks available, or unnecessarily lengthy.

When writing essays in **Section B**, candidates should be prepared to set out their observations and illustrations in a structured response. Candidates should clearly identify where in the music an illustration is referencing. This may be by giving a reference to a rehearsal number in the score, for instance, or to an obvious location in the music, such as “when the trumpets first play”. Answers should not refer to track timings, as these will vary, perhaps considerably, between recordings.

General comments

In **Section A**, many candidates were unfamiliar with the compositional techniques and practices found in the Set Works. Although the questions on the one Set Work chosen for this paper carry relatively few marks, the knowledge and understanding gained from the detailed study of both works is essential for approaching the unprepared extract. Candidates need to listen to several different interpretations of the Set Works in order to experience a range of performance practices of Baroque repertoire. This wider listening will better prepare them for the question requiring a comparison of two contrasting performances of an unprepared extract.

In **Section B**, there were some responses which showed a good familiarity with the work(s) in the questions. Background knowledge was strong, and this allowed candidates to explain how the composer(s) and the music were responding to the theme of Time and Place. Other candidates were not able to show a good knowledge of the music, relying sometimes on what they were able to explain from listening to the music in the exam. Candidates should be aware that an essay set on a single Set Work requires a wider range of features to be addressed, and with more detailed illustrations and references, than is the case for each work in an essay focusing on two Set Works.

The importance of working with the Teachers’ Guide to Set Works, which is available online, is vital. This guide introduces candidates to the relevant compositional techniques found in extended passages from all of the music set for **Section A** and **Section B**. The understanding gained from this study will enable candidates to discover for themselves further passages, where these techniques are used.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The majority correctly identified this as the Air or the second movement.
- (b) Few candidates showed an understanding of the term ‘texture’, often describing the music as ‘smooth’ or ‘flowing’, or making reference to dynamics. Stronger candidates were able to correctly

identify the homophony in bars 1 and 2, or the counterpoint between the violins in the following bars.

- (c) Most candidates were able to explain the use of strings only in this movement, and many were able to give at least one instrument missing from this movement. A small number of answers addressed features other than instrumentation.

Question 2

- (a) Only stronger candidates identified this common technique found in the Set Works and in Baroque music generally. A few candidates were able to correctly explain what they heard and read in the insert, rather than giving the name “descending sequence” as required, and these lengthy explanations gained some credit.
- (b) Many candidates correctly identified the key as F major and the relationship as the dominant. Others did not hear or see the E naturals, and gave the key as B flat major.
- (c) Very few candidates were able to identify this as a suspension. A common incorrect answer was “tied”.
- (d) This was well answered by many candidates, who gained all three marks. As it relied on observation rather than prepared knowledge, all candidates were able to gain some credit. The addition of the oboes, the move away from unison writing and the antiphonal exchange in bar 53 were all popular observations.
- (e) This was not as well answered as (d). Most candidates observed that the violin and oboes were used for the solo melody. Many referred to the passages of imitation and the passing of the melodic line from oboes to violin rather loosely as “call and response”. The frequent writing in thirds for the two oboes was described by only a few candidates.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates wrote about features other than articulation, and made comparisons which were relevant to (b). More focused answers often only said that Performance A was more staccato than Performance B. Those candidates who went into more detail, particularly of the more varied and nuanced articulation in Performance B, were able to gain most or all of the 6 marks.
- (b) All candidates gained some credit here, with very many achieving 4 or 5 marks. In order to do better, and get into the top band of marks it was necessary to explain the observations on tempi, dynamics, pitch etc. in terms of relevant contextual information. For instance, a few candidates were able to explain the difference in pitch as an issue of Baroque tuning, but many were perhaps unaware of this issue and observed that the performances were in different keys.

Section B

Question 4

This was only answered well by stronger candidates. Many did not focus their attention on rhythm as required, discussing instead other features such as instrumentation, and playing techniques. For the Sculthorpe, stronger candidates discussed features such as cross rhythms, syncopation, the bar-less opening to the second movement as well as aleatoric passages. These candidates were also able to make convincing connections with Time and Place.

Weaker answers for the Barber relied too heavily on discussions of the text, rather than how it found expression in the music. The ‘simple rhythms’ of the opening, including references to the 12/8 rocking chair rhythm, were correctly observed by many, as was the change to more chaotic rhythms in the section on urban life. However, very few candidates made the fundamental point that the rhythms and frequent metre changes resulted from Barber’s setting of the natural speech rhythms found in Agee’s text.

Question 5

Many good essays here showed familiarity with Tchaikovsky’s score. These candidates were able to structure their response with a chronological description of the work, giving references to, and naming, the

appearances of the several Russian melodies and the La Marseillaise, as well as giving details of instrumentation. It was usually clear where in the score they were referencing. Weaker answers did not give these detailed references, and the rather vague descriptions of the continual ebb and flow of tension and texture made it difficult to understand what or where was being described.

Section C

Question 6

There were many very good responses to this question. Popular features raised were genres and traditions using improvisation and unaccompanied solos/cadenzas. The use of rubato in Romantic repertoire was often mentioned, as well as examples from pop culture where solos varied dramatically in length and content between different performances by the same artist(s). More perceptive answers discussed a wider range of genres and periods, pointing out that even in music from the Classical period the scope for individual choices of tempo, articulation, dynamics, tone etc. encouraged creativity in every performance. Baroque ornamentation was also mentioned by some candidates.

Question 7

Again, there were many successful answers to this question, and relatively few weak ones. Most candidates stated that live performances were their preference and mentioned some of the same features found in answers to **Question 6**. The freshness of each performance due to different approaches to performance features, often the product of the moment, were explained as the appeal of live performances. Candidates often referred to the atmosphere of the occasion, and a feeling of connection with the performers. Some answers made the valid point that this connection works both ways, and that the presence of a live audience can inspire performers to new and different interpretations.

Question 8

There were very few responses to this question, and it is difficult to draw any general conclusions. The influence of Afro-American folk music was traced by some through early jazz and ragtime to modern 'art' jazz and the pop genres of blues and rock. The influence of aural traditions from the Arab world, the Far East and the Indian subcontinent was explained in its present-day manifestations in pop cultures.

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| <p>Paper 9483/12 Listening</p> |
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Key messages

Candidates should be familiar with technical musical terms and the names of compositional techniques as listed in the syllabus. This is especially important in **Section A**, where the knowledge of these terms and techniques encountered in the Set Works is transferred to identifying their use in the unprepared extract.

Candidates should consider the marks available for each part question as well as the space provided for their responses. These will give a clear idea of the length of response and the level of detail required. Many responses were either too short, restricting access to the full marks available, or unnecessarily lengthy.

When writing essays in **Section B**, candidates should be prepared to set out their observations and illustrations in a structured response. Candidates should clearly identify where in the music an illustration is referencing. This may be by giving a reference to a rehearsal number in the score, for instance, or to an obvious location in the music, such as “when the trumpets first play”. Answers should not refer to track timings, as these will vary, perhaps considerably, between recordings.

General comments

In **Section A**, some candidates were unfamiliar with the compositional techniques and practices found in the Set Works. Although the questions on the one Set Work chosen for this paper carry relatively few marks, the knowledge and understanding gained from the detailed study of both works is essential for approaching the unprepared extract. Candidates need to listen to several different interpretations of the Set Works in order to experience a range of performance practices of Baroque repertoire. This wider listening will better prepare them for the question requiring a comparison of two contrasting performances of an unprepared extract. Candidates should remember that in this comparison, points of similarity as well as of difference are appropriate. Candidates should be aware that this Section carries the same number of marks as the essay in **Section B**, and requires the same level of detailed and rigorous preparation.

In **Section B**, there were some responses which showed a real familiarity with the work(s) in question. Background knowledge was strong, and this allowed candidates to explain how the composer(s) and the music were responding to the theme of Time and Place. Other candidates were not able to show a good knowledge of the music, relying sometimes on what they were able to explain from listening to the music in the exam. Candidates should be aware that an essay set on a single Set Work is going to require a wider range of features to be addressed, and with more detailed illustrations and references, than is the case for each work in an essay focusing on two set works.

The importance of working with the Teachers’ Guide to Set Works, which is available online is vital. This guide introduces candidates to the salient compositional techniques found in extended passages from all of the music set for **Section A** and **Section B**. The understanding gained from this study will enable candidates to discover for themselves further passages, where these techniques are used.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This was correctly identified by most candidates as the first or slow section.

- (b) Many candidates correctly gave “vivace” as the answer.
- (c) (i) Almost all candidates identified this as an extract from a French Overture.
 - (ii) Many candidates gained both marks, with “dotted rhythms” and “slow tempo” the most popular answers. Otherwise, nearly all others gained 1 mark for “dotted rhythms”.

Question 2

- (a) All candidates gained some credit here, with most receiving 2 or 3 marks. Popular responses observed the use of the same melody but at a higher pitch (though opinions differed as to the interval of displacement), and the new descending semiquaver motif alternating in the violas and continuo.
- (b) Only stronger candidates were able to identify the device as a circle of fifths. Some gave lengthy descriptions indicating that they had heard some sort of progression in the music, but these were too vague to receive credit.
- (c) G major was identified by nearly all candidates, with very many also correctly identifying the relationship with the tonic. Just a few believed that the G major was the tonic of the extract.
- (d) Many candidates gained both marks here. Despite the number of marks available, some gave just “sequence”.
- (e) This was very well answered by a large number of candidates, with many achieving full marks. In some cases, those achieving 3 or 4 marks could have gained more if bar references had been given to identify their observations.

Question 3

- (a) All answers focused correctly on comments on tempo, with all identifying Performance B as the faster. Stronger answers described the relatively stable pulse in Performance A and the fluctuations in tempo in Performance B. The inclusion of bar numbers to reference comments led to full, or nearly full marks for many candidates. Many candidates were able to comment on the two interpretations of *Allegro*, giving a view on which they considered more appropriate.
- (b) There was much to say here, both in terms of similarities and differences in interpretation and performance practices. Many answers referred to the use of the same pitch, the use of harpsichord in the continuo for both, and the similarly little use of ornamentation in both performances. Features of difference included the wider dynamic range in Performance B and the louder continuo in Performance A. Only a few candidates commented on the use in both performances of a flauto dolce/wooden flute/recorder. Most answers gained 3 – 5 marks here. In order to do better, and get into the highest band of marks, it was necessary to explain the observations in terms of pertinent contextual information. For instance, in this case the use of a flauto dolce and the lack of vibrato could lead to a conclusion that both performances were historically informed. There was a trend for some answers to be very long. This led to some answers taking up all of the space available with just 3 or 4 observations made.

Section B

Question 4

There were many good responses to this question. Weaker candidates were able to identify some of the sounds and sights of the natural world which are portrayed in Sculthorpe’s music. Most of these observations were illustrated by compositional techniques, usually the use of instrumentation. Stronger answers gave more detailed accounts of a wider range of musical features including performance techniques such as *col legno*, rhythmical devices such as *liberamente*, the bar-less opening of the second movement and moments of aleatoric note clusters. A few really thorough responses were able to show knowledge of the spiritual aspect of this work.

Question 5

Of the two works in the question, the Tchaikovsky was generally better known and understood. Here, stronger answers were able to name the Russian and French melodies used in the Overture, and explain their use in terms of instrumentation, texture and dynamics. The significance of these themes in the narrative of the battle was explained, and candidates were usually able to give convincing references to moments in the score.

Most answers to the Barber work made distinctions between the opening and closing rural sections and the contrasting urban section. These candidates were able to make reference to instrumentation, rhythm and texture to explain this distinction. Very few candidates made reference to the importance of Barber's use of the natural speech rhythms found in Agee's text.

Section C

Question 6

There were a number of thoughtful responses here which were well supported by appropriate references to named works in other art forms. The most popular of these were drama, on stage or screen, and the setting of poetry in songs. Candidates were able to explain how music can establish mood, tension, atmosphere and suspense in a way perhaps more explicit than in the original drama or verse. Some candidates named art forms such as ballet or music theatre where music is an integral feature rather than something which enhances a discrete form of expression. However, some candidates did not reference named works or compositional techniques to support their argument.

Question 7

There were very few responses to this option, and so it is not possible to draw any general conclusions on candidates' performance. Answers tended to focus on the attraction of the challenge candidates found as performers when hearing music new to them, particular in their own preferred genre. Against this, the view was stated by some that much new pop music was formulaic and so lacking in interest or challenge to the listener.

Question 8

There were some wide-ranging essays in answer to this question in their scope and detail. Popular areas for focus were instruments associated with particular world regions and musical traditions, and those associated with particular Western genres or musical periods.

Instruments from the Middle East and Asia, as well as from Africa were cited, and the music associated with them was described. In some cases answers went on to explain how some of these are now used in fusion genres, lending their individual heritage to a more global style.

Some instruments such as the harpsichord or fortepiano were mentioned in relation to a Western style such as the music of the Baroque or Classical periods, while others such as the saxophone or electric guitar were given as identifying jazz or rock genres. In nearly all cases these quite detailed responses were supported by relevant examples of music.

MUSIC

Paper 9483/13
Listening

Key messages

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When writing essays in **Section B**, candidates should be prepared to set out their observations and illustrations in a structured response. Candidates should clearly identify where in the music an illustration is referencing. This may be by giving a reference to a rehearsal number in the score, for instance, or to an obvious location in the music, such as “when the trumpets first play”. Answers should not refer to track timings, as these will vary, perhaps considerably, between recordings.

General comments

In **Section A**, some candidates were unfamiliar with the compositional techniques and practices found in the Set Works. Although the questions on the one Set Work chosen for this paper carry relatively few marks, the knowledge and understanding gained from the detailed study of both works is essential for approaching the unprepared extract. Candidates need to listen to several different interpretations of the Set Works in order to experience a range of performance practices of Baroque repertoire. This wider listening will better prepare them for the question requiring a comparison of two contrasting performances of an unprepared extract. Candidates should remember that in this comparison points of similarity as well as of difference are appropriate.

In **Section B**, there were some responses which showed a good familiarity with the work(s) in the questions. Background knowledge was strong, and this allowed candidates to explain how the composer(s) and the music were responding to the theme of Time and Place. Other candidates were not able to show a good knowledge of the music, relying sometimes on what they were able to explain from listening to the music in the exam. Candidates should be aware that an essay set on a single Set Work requires a wider range of features to be addressed, and with more detailed illustrations and references, than is the case for each work in an essay focusing on two Set Works.

The importance of working with the Teachers’ Guide to Set Works, which is available online, is vital. This guide introduces candidates to the relevant compositional techniques found in extended passages from all of the music set for **Section A** and **Section B**. The understanding gained from this study will enable candidates to discover for themselves further passages, where these techniques are used.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates knew that the extract was taken from the Pastorale. A mark was also awarded if the answer given was the last movement, largo or fifth or sixth movement (due to the different ways the movements can be counted).

- (b) Many candidates gained one of the two marks available for this question, with only a small number gaining both marks. Answers which simply defined what the concertino and ripieno are did not receive credit. Answers needed to relate specifically to the extract and the fact that at the start and end the ripieno and concertino have the same music.
- (c) Most candidates gained at least one of the two marks available for this question. Answers most frequently given included the slow/largo tempo, legato articulation and the pedal note. Few candidates noted the slow pace of harmonic change or the simple functional harmonies.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates gained one or both marks available here, mostly by stating that the continuo music is almost the same or imitates the 1st violin part. Stronger candidates then went on to describe the change in pitch of the starting note or the change in pitch of the statement overall. Very few candidates made reference to the fact that it is a tonal answer with the intervals changed to remain in the tonic.
- (b) (i) A significant number of candidates named the cadence, but made no reference to the key, thereby limiting themselves to a maximum of one mark for this question.
- (ii) Candidates were generally more successful in this question, with the majority correctly stating that the key at the cadence is the dominant of the tonic key of the extract.
- (c) Only stronger candidates gained the mark for suspension, with many others suggesting sequence instead.
- (d) Most candidates gained at least one of the marks available, with many gaining both marks for “descending sequence”. No mark was awarded if descending was stated but not in relation to sequence.
- (e) A large number of candidates gained all six marks here, for noting appearances of the main theme and giving bar numbers. A small number of candidates wrote about other themes heard, but this was not given credit as the question specifically asked about the main theme introduced in bar 1.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates gained one or more marks for this question, most often for mentioning that Performance B is faster and generally lighter/more detached. However, few candidates went on to give any more detail. Candidates who gained the most marks usually wrote about the differences in the Adagio, including how the pause was performed.
- (b) Weaker answers to this question were often very short and/or continued to refer to tempo and articulation, both of which had already been covered in (a). Stronger candidates discussed a wide range of features, comparing the two performances throughout the answer and using the information to judge how historically informed a performance was, including use of instruments and pitch. Without this judgement, candidates were not able to access the higher mark bands.

Section B

Question 4

Candidates had many examples of word painting to choose from in Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, but few candidates chose to answer this question. The strongest candidates carefully selected a wide range of examples, referring to how many musical elements helped to reflect the meaning of the words being sung and thereby successfully describing scenes and events. Weaker answers referred to only a very small number of examples, or moved through the work chronologically, commenting superficially on examples.

Question 5

The majority of candidates chose to answer this question, writing about how different instruments suggest images in Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture and Sculthorpe's Third Sonata for Strings *Jabiru Dreaming*. A few essays referred to only one work (and therefore received a limited number of marks) and many essays were

unbalanced, with much more space given to the Tchaikovsky than the Sculthorpe. Many candidates pointed to the fact that it was the instruments themselves that suggested images in the Tchaikovsky, whereas in the Sculthorpe it was how the instruments were played and the techniques employed (especially as there were only five different instruments in the work). Again, the strongest candidates used carefully chosen examples and described them in detail, while weaker answers took a superficial chronological approach.

Section C

Question 6

This was the most popular question of those set for **Section C**. A range of styles and genres were discussed, with traditional Chinese Music and jazz popular options. Some candidates tried to suggest how one had influenced the other, with obvious difficulty. The most successful responses took a style of music heard today (even if it was actually composed some time in the past) and drew out the similarities to traditional music, referring to specific pieces of music and their common features. Weaker answers did not refer to specific composers or pieces or took a theoretical standpoint, discussing elements such as scales.

Question 7

A relatively small number of candidates chose to answer this question, but candidates generally made some good points, often comparing a modern pop song with longer pieces of classical music, such as a symphony. Again, the most successful answers named specific pieces of music and described them in detail, with arguments both for and against longer and shorter pieces of music.

Question 8

Many references to opera were seen in answers to this question, where singing is performed with an orchestra, but with the voice very much having the lead role and also to modern a cappella performances, where voices aim to replicate instruments. References to specific pieces of music known by candidates were needed, which they could then write about in detail. There were also some good descriptions of how voices are used in the traditional music from different parts of the world.

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| <p>Paper 9483/02 Practical Music</p> |
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Key messages

- In Element 1, candidates should play or sing music that they are confident that they can play well. Accuracy and musicality are more important than the difficulty of the repertoire.
- The Element 2 written statement must include information about relevant listening influences. This helps to inform the marks awarded, particularly in Assessment Criterion A.
- Copies of the music performed in Element 1 should be provided in hard copy in the submission.
- Teachers are encouraged to comment in the boxes provided on the working mark sheets to support the marks awarded.

Although it was clear that more Element 1 performances than usual had been recorded out of school, and candidates sometimes mentioned difficulties caused by the pandemic in their Element 2 written statements, the standard of work across the component was often good. Assessors used the 'Comments in support of marks' boxes on the Working Mark Sheets effectively to provide useful information that informed the moderation process.

Most centres submitted coursework on USB and centres should ensure that files are named and include the candidate number. Paperwork, including forms and all scores, should be sent in hard copy. Recordings and administrative material should be retained until the end of the examination period in case they are required.

Most Element 1 video recordings were carefully produced and there were some excellent performances, from a wide range of instruments and voices, and in many different genres. If candidates are recording out of school, teachers should remind them that hands, face and feet (if appropriate) should be fully visible on screen. Most candidates were relaxed in front of the camera. Clearly, many centres had built practice recordings into their Schemes of Work.

The chosen repertoire should be accompanied, if appropriate: shaping the performance in relation to an accompaniment is taken into consideration in Assessment Criterion D. This does not have to be by live musicians and this series many candidates, even those performing classical repertoire, used backing tracks very effectively. Accompaniment must be clear to the assessor as well as to the candidate.

Candidates should not perform at the absolute limit of their technical ability as marks may be compromised by repertoire that is too challenging for the performer. On the other hand, assessors should not award very high marks to candidates who are playing at beginner level. Assessors should be led by the criteria in this, particularly B (Technical Control). The syllabus states that candidates "should perform a selection of contrasting music of their choice" and this means more than one piece. Candidates must demonstrate a range of both skills and styles in 6 – 10 minutes, and most were very comfortable with this. There were guitarists who performed both classical repertoire and jazz, singers who switched from operatic arias to Ariana Grande and violinists who were equally happy with bluegrass or Bach.

Most candidates coped well with Element 2, and there were some highly original and imaginative compositions, in a very wide range of genres and styles. Many candidates took their inspiration from programmatic sources (including the pandemic). Other common starting points included Set Works, Element 1 repertoire, or a particular composer. Whatever the starting point, the accompanying (and compulsory) written statement should cite relevant listening influences and explain the context and purpose of the candidate's intentions. Provided that there is a score, a bar-by-bar analysis of the piece is not necessary. It may be helpful for candidates to keep an informal log of their creative influences during the writing process. It appeared that many candidates had not really considered these until the submissions were complete. The best written statements identified specific works, sometimes linking them to the structure of the piece through reference to specific compositional devices.

The length requirement for Element 2 compositions is quite short and therefore candidates are encouraged to work to a defined structure that enables them to control their ideas through a range of compositional techniques. If a candidate writes in a style such as minimalism, it may be difficult for them to demonstrate a range of appropriate techniques in a submission of only two minutes. Candidates must write for at least two instruments. If they do not do this, assessors should consider the impact that writing one instrument only makes on Assessment Criteria B (Working with ideas; the use of compositional techniques) and C (Use of medium and texture). However, bigger is not necessarily better and some of the most original and memorable compositions were written as duets or trios. Although the work must be entirely that of the candidate, it is acceptable for teachers to monitor progress closely and intervene if they feel it appropriate.

Most candidates included a score, but for some musical technology programs, a written account of the compositional process is more appropriate. The best of these were as easy to follow as a score, with timings, screen shots and even audio clips informing the process, and the finished products (not necessarily using expensive software) demonstrated high production values. Information about the program used and its capabilities was useful in the moderation process. There were numerous examples of live recordings, but many candidates recorded using a score-writing program. This is not necessarily an easy option and the finished product will only be as expressive as the detail included on the score. It is nearly always possible to mix down the final product so that the status of the parts is clear, and time should be devoted to this significant part of the creative process.

When assessing submissions, the guidance on using a levels-based mark scheme and the bullet points which inform each assessment criterion are particularly helpful (they can be found on page 26 of the syllabus). Assessing fluency and accuracy should be undertaken with copies of the music. The most common reason for marks adjustments was that the work had been placed in the correct band for each criterion, but not at the appropriate level within it. If centres have enough candidates to send a sample of six candidates' work, they should include the candidates at the top and bottom of the range and try and spread the other four as evenly across the mark distribution as possible. If the lowest-marked folio is incomplete, then it may be appropriate to send the work of an additional candidate in the range as well.

General Points

- There is a checklist for submissions on page 24 of the syllabus.
- Candidates should announce their name and candidate number at the beginning of the Element 1 Performance. Any other introduction should be brief.
- A sound check before recording Element 1 will ensure an appropriate balance between candidate and accompaniment.
- Check that composition print-outs are complete, with the written statement included and the pages in the correct order.
- Check the addition of marks on the WMS and their transfer to the CASF and the MS1 mark sheet. There were several transcription errors this year.
- Check that recordings have been burned to the DVD or CD (if used) and retain a copy of the files in case this is required.



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| <p>Paper 9483/03 Extended Performance</p> |
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Key messages

- The music chosen for performance should reflect a single well-defined focus.
- One of the pieces from the performance programme should be selected for detailed discussion in the research report.
- The performance should be presented with a sense of purpose and occasion.

General comments

There was a good overall standard of work for this component. Almost all candidates achieved at least a satisfactory level and there were some outstanding examples of both performing and written work submitted.

The submission of a research report is a requirement of this component. The process of preparation for this should aid candidates in selecting the focus and content of their performance programme and should increase their understanding of the music and its interpretation. Preparatory work should be documented as a journal and then material should be selected for inclusion in the final research report. In the report, candidates should demonstrate their thinking about the development of their Extended Performance programme and should compare two performances of one of the pieces they have selected. They should examine the music and evaluate the two interpretations in detail and should reflect on how this impacts on their own performance. Carefully selected, relevant audio extracts from the chosen recordings should be submitted to support written comments. While most candidates produced a concise, coherent and reflective report, within the 1000 to 1500 word limit, there were some issues that arose, discussion of which may help centres in their future preparation for this task:

- Some submissions seemed more like preparatory journals or drafts rather than final reports. This resulted in a lack of coherence and reflection, thus restricting the mark that could be achieved.
- A number of candidates compared two performances of all the pieces in their performance programme. Attempting to cover so much material often resulted in the report lacking the depth of investigation necessary to access the higher mark bands. Only one of the pieces should be selected.
- Some candidates presented theoretical analysis of the chosen piece without reference to the expressive musical content in the context of performing and interpretation. References should be made to the structure of the piece, but candidates should keep in mind that the emphasis of the report should be on performance and interpretation of the music, not simply on the content of the composition itself.
- Some performances selected for comparison were of unconvincing quality. Comparisons of such performances tended to be about the mistakes made by the performers rather than about the musical interpretation of the piece. While candidates should select contrasting performances for comparison, these should be of a quality suitable for discussion of interpretation. Careful selection of appropriate performers is an important part of the initial preparation.
- A number of candidates described the way each chosen performer interpreted the music without evaluating the performance or reflecting on how this might impact on their own performance. Personal reflection and independent thinking should be an integral part of the report.
- Some candidates wrote at length about the technical difficulties that they encountered in learning their chosen repertoire and about how they practised to overcome these difficulties. Others recounted the whole learning process. Such discussion is not required, nor assessed, in this task.

The emphasis should be on the musical interpretations of the performers they have listened to and how these interpretations have impacted on their own performance.

- A number of candidates included audio extracts from their chosen performances, but did not link these to the text of their report. Other candidates submitted complete audio performances or merely provided website links. Inclusion of audio extracts is a requirement. These should be chosen to support specific written comments and should be clearly referenced. They should be submitted on USB or CD and tracks should be carefully labelled in a way that ensures that they can be correctly matched to the sequence of references in the report.
- Some reports lacked a bibliography and discography. This documentation is a requirement and its content is taken into account when assessing the report.

This component requires candidates to demonstrate skills and understanding in performing focused repertoire related by a common theme, style or purpose. Consideration of a clearly defined focus should form an important part of the initial preparation. A number of candidates did not give sufficient attention to this aspect and merely selected a range of unconnected repertoire which they presented as, for example, “development of music for my instrument” or “vocal techniques”. Some candidates made no reference to any chosen focus. Centres are reminded that the music chosen should have a specific, rather than wide-ranging, focus. Examples of appropriate choices this session included Sondheim’s vocal music, dances for guitar, French flute sonatas and preludes for piano.

Many candidates performed on piano or voice, but a range of orchestral and jazz/popular instruments was also presented as well as instruments from the Chinese tradition. There were outstanding recitals on flute, guzheng, piano, violin and voice.

The repertoire chosen for performance was usually well suited to candidates’ technical ability and enabled them to demonstrate the full range of musical skills required by the assessment criteria. Candidates who performed music which was too technically demanding often struggled merely to play/sing the correct notes and rhythms and were unable to fully demonstrate the wider musical aspects of performance as considered in Assessment Criteria D (Realisation of performance markings and/or performance conventions) and E (Interpretation and aural awareness). Candidates are advised to choose repertoire that is well within their current level of proficiency so that they are able to give a rounded musical performance.

Most performances were well presented in suitable venues with microphones/cameras appropriately placed. However, some candidates did not play/sing with the necessary engagement and communication required to gain high marks. This Extended Performance component is about much more than just playing/singing the notes, so planning for the actual performance occasion should form an important part of the preparation. Candidates should present their recital with a sense of purpose and occasion, as if to an audience, even if that audience is initially only the recording device. Centres are reminded that the entire 15 – 20 minute recital should be recorded on a single occasion.

At the start of their performance, candidates may wish to introduce themselves and announce their programme, but a detailed spoken introduction is not required.

Most centres organised their submissions in a manner which was easy to manage and included all necessary items. Centres should ensure that DVDs, CDs and USBs are complete and that they function correctly.

It is a requirement that a cover sheet, completed by the candidate and the teacher, should be included for every candidate.

Centres are reminded that submissions for each component (03 – Extended Performance, 04 – Extended Composition and 05 – Investigating Music) should be packaged separately as they are required by different examiners.



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| <p>Paper 9483/04 Extended Composition</p> |
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Key messages

- Video/audio recordings and scores should **not** be mixed together in submissions of work for components 03, 04 and 05.
- Group compositions are not permitted. Composers cannot gain credit for unexplained parts of their compositions that are musical improvisations performed by others.

General comments

This component is intended for those candidates who are greatly motivated to extend their skills and abilities in composing and for whom composing is potentially a strength amongst the options to be considered. Whilst some candidates presented work of a high standard, some candidates had insufficient technical and creative skills to undertake successful work at this level.

Centres are reminded that a cover sheet signed by teacher and candidate must be included with each candidate's submission, and that a word count for the research report is required.

Centres are asked to ensure that all details such as the naming of instruments, lyrics or web site details, for example, are provided in English, with a translation for texts in song settings that may use other languages.

Detailed comments

A Research report

Centres are encouraged to read the syllabus explanation outlining the purpose of the research report as well as the related assessment criteria. The research report is a commentary that explains the listening influences the composer has investigated in support of their creative work and should demonstrate the ability to think analytically and reflectively.

The document should be self-contained. Any audio references must be supplied as edited audio tracks. These are essential to provide a clear perspective of how listening and analysis have informed the candidate's work. Sometimes candidates also helpfully supplied annotated manuscript examples to support their account.

Candidates are required to document their work across the course in a journal. Although the journal itself was not submitted, it was clear that the level of organisation required by the journaling process was a significant help to candidates when they came to write their report. The journal provided an overview of the changing thought processes and decisions across the course.

Research reports could be improved in some ways. If a report contains manuscript examples, they should be presented with appropriate clefs, time and key signatures. In the same way, candidates should include a track list giving full details of the music referenced and its source. Many references only gave partial details of pieces such as titles and access date. Details of composer, performers and/or conductors should be given for YouTube and other audio references. Some candidates gave references to websites rather than providing the audio directly. This is not in compliance with the syllabus requirements. Candidates should be reminded that not all platforms are globally accessible. YouTube, Bilibili or Spotify references, for example, could not always be accessed, justifying the requirement to provide hard copies of relevant edited extracts.

Appendix material of complete scores, often amounting to hundreds of pages, is not required.

Overall, the report should coherently explain the ways in which a candidate has learned and grown as a composer through the process of their research and composing.

B Shaping of ideas; structure

Many candidates structured their work around a narrative idea, e.g. a mythological or classic story within a specific culture, music associated with film or gaming. Other overall concepts centred around chosen sound sources whether acoustic or electronic. Candidates working with notation software often did not take control of their own choices from the outset and defaulted to C major, 4/4 time and a tempo of crotchet = 100.

The length of the composition is given as 6 – 8 minutes and there is necessary flexibility here to take account of the content and quality of the materials rather than prioritising quantity or length. Composition length ranged from 1'20" – 9'48" but at both these extremes candidates were not able to find ways to work with their ideas to convincingly sustain momentum.

The syllabus refers to a single composition, which may comprise of parts. This is a reference to the sectioning of a single piece into movements or the presentation of a song cycle of clearly related musical material, for example. It is not intended to suggest that candidates should include individual instrumental parts for performance purposes in addition to the full score.

C Working with ideas; the use of compositional techniques

The range of useful techniques that candidates may utilise varied with the chosen style of composing. However, many candidates chose to compose using tonal harmony but did not have sufficient understanding of harmonic processes to produce convincing outcomes. To make a study of the principles of tonal harmony (or any other selected harmonic language) as part of the research aspect of the component is an entirely valid approach.

Compositions were sometimes too long for the materials. A composition of 8 minutes continuously in the key of E minor, for example, would need the creative use of other techniques to balance the repetitive tonal sound if moving to contrasting keys was not desirable.

Word-setting is a compositional technique. If candidates choose to compose vocal music, the technical quality of the setting (stresses, use of syllabic/melismatic possibilities, underlay) is assessed here. Texts must be in English or a translation of the text must be included as part of the report. This allows for the relationship between words and music, in the use of word-painting, for example, to be credited.

D Use of medium and texture

Candidates often demonstrated curiosity and engagement with a range of acoustic, digital and ethnic instrumental sounds. Some compositions overused the techniques of unison textures and prolonged use of harmonic pedal, to the exclusion of other ways of combining parts and creating more complex or contrasting textures. Some candidates missed the opportunity to refer to the thinking behind their choice of medium in the research report.

In the use of traditional resources such as orchestral forces in acoustic or digital formats, candidates were drawn to the possibilities of creating an 'epic sweep' for their film scores. However, basic skills of orchestration were often lacking. For example, flute parts written low in the register against full orchestral sound, multiple doubling of the leading note in the harmonic distribution of notes or lack of clarity in the voicing of parts.

Candidates should be encouraged to apply what they have learned from the study of the use of instruments as part of their Listening component. By making a further study of other specifically related scores or music in the research aspect of this component, they can make a valuable contribution to their understanding of how to use the chosen medium effectively in composing.

E Communication

Candidates performed well in this aspect of the assessment where they produced detailed, well edited scores or gave comprehensive descriptions of the processes, hardware, sound sources and manipulations etc. in a commentary submitted in place of a score, such as might be expected in an electro-acoustic piece. The syllabus makes it clear that notation should be appropriate to the chosen style/tradition.

Some scores lacked precision in the areas of rhythmic and pitch notation where notation had been generated from audio input with no further editing. As a consequence, they were able to receive only very little credit.

Candidates should be aware that the marks under this heading are divided equally between the score and recording. Showing accurate intentions via the score (articulation, tempi markings, dynamics etc.) and care in the production of a recording that accurately conveys the composer's full intentions are both important.

Acquiring skills in the use of notation and recording technology may form a necessary and legitimate part of the research process.

Some key points for candidates to note in relation to commentaries submitted in place of a score are:

- name the software/hardware devices etc. particularly for electronic or electro-acoustic compositions;
- commentaries might usefully include screen shots of sequenced portions of the composition if this is relevant;
- use timings to refer to specific locations you wish to reference;
- for songs, candidates might write out sections of main melodies, rhythms or riffs, for example;
- if using musique concrète/'found-sound' techniques, it is important to fully document all the processes used to manipulate raw materials.

For improvised elements within a composition:

- awarding composing credit for non-notated improvisation can be problematic if the candidate does not identify the performer (themselves? a friend? a teacher? a peer?);
- candidates must explain the extent to which the composer has communicated to the performer the shape and substance of the improvisation required in the piece;
- candidates must name all the instruments/sound sources and state who performs each part and who has composed/vamped/interpreted each part.

MUSIC

Paper 9483/05
Investigating Music

Key messages

- Work should be clearly presented with numbered pages pinned together, and should include a completed cover sheet.
- Candidates should be reminded to include a word count for the main essay (guidance: 2500 – 3000 words) and the reflective statement (guidance: up to 500 words).
- The Investigation must be complete within itself with no requirement for the reader to access any audio or other materials independently.

General comments

A wide range of subject areas were investigated by candidates, often featuring their particular enthusiasms ranging from music of the Western canon to a variety of world musics, extending to popular music, Animé, film and video-game music, Cantopop and beyond.

The most successful investigations were those where the enthusiasm came genuinely from listening to and enjoying the music, often prior to selecting the study topic, prompting candidates to investigate further.

Some weaker candidates selected a potentially interesting topic but were not able to carry out in-depth investigation to produce further analysis.

Occasionally, fascinating topics involving music and neuroscience, the sociology of music or music as a tool in mindfulness, for example, led candidates away from a strong enough focus on music, and evidence of music analysis and understanding which is important to this component was lacking.

Similarly, those candidates who generated data lists of albums, awards, festival appearances, analysis of lyrics of their favourite band with no mention of musical features could not fulfil the in-depth investigative requirements of the music in this component.

(a) Reflective statement

Candidates should be reminded that there are 20 marks allocated under this assessment heading. Some statements approached the full range of marks available, and showed evidence of being produced from a detailed, carefully compiled log or journal. However, others were a summary of the essay and simply duplicated the bibliographic/discography references rather than taking a genuinely reflective approach of the work in its entirety.

Many candidates described part of their process of thought, selection and rejection. The strongest reflections included independent thinking. Most candidates correctly submitted the reflective statement as an independent document. A small number of candidates did not recognise that the concluding comments part of the essay could not function as a replacement for the reflective statement.

(b) Listening

The strongest submissions showed strong aural skills with a precise selection of themes or points of illustration. Weaker submissions included complete performances of an entire work. Some candidates who approached a complex or new topic area, received good support from teachers advising how to broaden the range of useful listening.

Track Lists should contain performance details in addition to titles and composer detail.

An investigation with no accompanying aural extracts cannot score well here.

(c) Contextual Understanding

Most candidates showed a range of good quality reading in their bibliographies and demonstrated a good ability to extract information from the texts of others and quoted carefully with appropriate acknowledgement. Some candidates did not always make suitable connections from reading and listening. These candidates did not select the important content, leading to meaningless statements at times. Most candidates accurately judged the balance of context and music investigation required in their research and writing.

(d) Analytic/investigative techniques and technical vocabulary

The most successful investigations showed an ability to search and explore the musical processes at work in the chosen music. Guidance from teachers is important here so that candidates have opportunities to analyse in depth and to demonstrate that they understand the necessary technical vocabulary when their findings are documented. For some candidates their chosen topic areas meant their efforts were spread across a large body of music and they found it difficult to focus on a representative amount of carefully selected examples.

(e) Communication and substantiation of judgements

The standard of communication was often very high, with just a few exceptions where the intentions relied on partly understood or quoted texts. Some submissions depended heavily on a combination of the views of other writers and these candidates often did not present an independent view following their investigations.

Concluding remarks

Understandably many candidates relied on the internet for resources this year, rather than a wider range of books and periodicals. However, it was possible to access a variety of possibilities online and many candidates were resourceful in doing this.

Successful candidates engaged critically with texts and music performances and were able to make sophisticated judgements reflecting the level of demand in this qualification.