

MUSIC

Paper 9483/11
Listening

Key messages

The overwhelming majority of candidates had clearly engaged with the prescribed music with interest and some enthusiasm.

In **Section B**, candidates were able to write with knowledge which was often very specific and were able to show an understanding and appreciation of how the music responded to its subject. Answers in **Section C** often displayed wide-ranging knowledge, as candidates drew on their wider experience as musicians.

However, a significant number of candidates were less familiar with the set works in **Section A**. Although the number of marks available for questions directly on this music is lower, the knowledge and understanding of the compositional techniques which they reveal is key to answering the questions on unfamiliar music from the same period which follow. It is these questions on unfamiliar music which test the ‘thinking musician’, and which carry most of the marks in this section.

General comments

In **Section A**, candidates should take note of the number of marks available for each part question when considering the length, content and degree of detail of each answer. There were some unnecessarily lengthy answers for single-mark questions, as well as some short answers giving just one or two observations, when the six or ten marks available indicated the need for fuller, more detailed responses.

The longer, extended paragraph answers in **Section A** need not be written in continuous prose. Bulleted points are acceptable. In some cases, such as in **Question 3(b)**, this format would have helped candidates to concentrate on a focused comparison.

Candidates should be reminded to write in continuous prose in **Sections B** and **C**. The need for well-planned and structured responses should also be encouraged.

In **Section B** the strongest candidates chose different ways to structure their discussions, but always made it clear which work or compositional feature was being considered, and identified clearly where in the score illustrations were to be found. Detailed knowledge and understanding was shown to explain why the music was doing what it did in relation to the subject matter.

Less successful essays did not always give this clarity, and often began by giving an explanation, sometimes quite lengthy, of what candidates considered the music was about. General comments on features such as dynamics, melodic shapes, instrumentation or harmonic features followed, but did not always explain exactly where in the music was being referenced. Their significance in responding to the subject or text was not always made clear.

Candidates should note that when a question requires reference to a single work, essays should consider the features of more than one movement or section of the work. These essays should reasonably address a wider range of references to the score than those for questions which focus on two of the set works, and they should include detailed illustrations.

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- (c) Nearly all answers gave oboe, but quite a few gave flute rather than bassoon as the second instrument. References to clarinet revealed particular weakness of knowledge of the Baroque.

Question 2

- (a) There was evidence of a lack of preparation of the set music for this period in this question. Some candidates correctly gave suspension, others clearly did not know the term, or did not understand the effect of the harmonic device when they heard it and saw it in the score.
- (b) Imitation was correctly observed by most candidates, but some showed a lack of understanding by giving canon or fugue.
- (c) Nearly all candidates gained some credit here, and many achieved both marks. The dotted rhythm and compound time were popular answers, with only a few referring to the drone effect.
- (d) (i) Again, many candidates were not able to show that they understood the harmonic function of the viola in these bars, or that they were familiar with its effect when they heard and saw it. The question asked for a description, rather than for the name of the device, and so those who gave lengthy correct descriptions gained credit. Pedal was all that was needed for the mark.
(ii) Nearly all candidates received a mark here. There were several possible answers, and some candidates spent an unnecessary amount of time mentioning many of them to ensure that they achieved the single mark available.
- (e) This was well answered by nearly all who gave a response. However, there were a few candidates who were not able to respond and identify which cadence they could hear and see.
- (f) There was a wide range of achievement here. Many candidates were able to give full, or nearly full accounts of the many changes of key in the extract, explaining the relationship of the keys visited, and observing sequential progressions of modulations. Those gaining three of four marks were not quite so detailed, with many confusing the major or minor modes. The study of the set works for this section needed to involve learning about the structural use of tonality, but some candidates gave descriptive accounts of the extract which failed to make any mention of key or modulation.

Question 3

- (a) All candidates correctly observed the relative tempi of the two performances, and were able to explain the effect of these different speeds on the character of the music. Many also described the different approaches to the change from grave to vivace, and the closing adagio. Only a very few candidates observed that neither performance adopted speeds usually associated with the terms grave and vivace, or that the change from one to the other was not as marked in either performance as might have been expected.
- (b) Generally, this was answered well, and most candidates achieved at least four or five marks, with many gaining almost full marks. Answers focused on different interpretations of articulation and ornamentation, as well as dynamics and overall balance of sound. Most candidates observed the use of harpsichord in the continuo in Performance B, but very few identified the continuo organ in Performance A. The fact that both performances were at the same pitch was observed by most candidates.

Section B

Question 4

Candidates had clearly engaged with both the Britten and Wagner, and were able to show an understanding of how both used compositional techniques to reflect the notion of storm. These techniques usually included instrumentation, melodic features and chromaticism or dissonance. Many candidates referred to the quieter sections which both works included before the return of the stormy music. Weaker responses tended to reiterate references to just one or two features which featured in the scores, without making clear their locations in the score or their descriptive significance. In some unstructured essays it was not always clear which work was being referred to.

Question 5

Although chosen by a smaller number of candidates, this was perhaps generally answered more successfully. The requirement for a detailed answer was observed in most answers. Candidates were quite clear about the different roles of the piano and the voices. Although some weaker candidates gave unnecessarily lengthy explanations of the story of the poem, with little reference to the music, most were able to give convincing explanations of its musical setting. The descriptions of the writing for both piano and voices showed understanding, as did explanations of the harmonic world of Boulanger's sound world.

Section C

Question 6

This question produced some of the most detailed and wide-ranging responses. Answers invariably included mention of the Western major and minor scales, as well as the Eastern pentatonic series. Many candidates were able to provide detailed descriptions of scales found in Arab music as well as music from the Indian sub-continent. There were some particularly knowledgeable answers which included references to the modal system, before explaining how this developed into the tonal system and equal temperament. Jazz provided opportunities for many candidates to explain blues scales and the use of the pentatonic, and some were able to give illustrations of the use of Dorian and Lydian modes in contemporary Western pop music.

Question 7

Answers here were also wide-ranging, with illustrations of repetition found in examples of world music as well as the structures of the Western classical tradition. The verse-chorus structure of so much pop music was cited by many candidates, as well as the repetitive nature of call and response found in traditional cultures. The recapitulation of ternary, da capo and sonata forms, and the recurring features of rondo and ritornello were popular references in many answers. Responses also included ostinato, both melodic and rhythmic, as well as the repetitive chord sequences in jazz.

Question 8

A few answers here became a little confused about the focus of the question, and became side-tracked into discussing the importance of fully-notated music. But the great majority of responses were able to cite examples of music from oral traditions and folk music. Music from the world of jazz and rock music were referenced to illustrate improvisation over harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. Other illustrations were found in scat singing, cadenzas and Baroque ornamentation.

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However, a significant number of candidates were less familiar with the set works in **Section A**. Although the number of marks available for questions directly on this music is lower, the knowledge and understanding of the compositional techniques which they reveal is key to answering the questions on unfamiliar music from the same period which follow. It is these questions on unfamiliar music which test the ‘thinking musician’, and which carry most of the marks in this section.

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MUSIC

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

- In Element 1, candidates should perform a selection of **contrasting** music that enables them to demonstrate a range of technical and expressive skills.
- In Element 2, the written statement is assessed in Criterion D (Communication) and must be included in the coursework folio.
- Each Element 2 composition should be for **two** or more instruments. Pieces written for one instrument alone cannot access the full range of assessment criteria.
- Copies of the music performed should always be provided for Element 1. This can be an annotated lead sheet if appropriate to the genre or tradition.

A range of work was seen, in many styles, across both Elements. Many assessors wrote detailed notes to justify the marks awarded which supported the moderation process. Most submissions were efficiently presented with named DVDs and well-organised folios.

There were some excellent and well-prepared performances in Element 1, often from memory, and most candidates ably demonstrated that they could perform well in a range of styles. The most successful recitals were those in which candidates did not perform to the absolute limit of their technical ability. Pieces should be selected that are musically appropriate for the performer's stage of musicianship, even if the standard is not high. It should be noted that the primary focus of this component is on developing creative, technical and interpretative skills. Many musicians performed in front of an audience, even if this was simply other sympathetic candidates and this provided a sense of occasion. A few candidates played only one piece and teachers should be aware that this may not demonstrate an adequate range of technical skills and stylistic contrast. Most submissions were of solo performances, but responsiveness to other performers/parts is also important and this includes the accompanist, if appropriate. If the music is published with an accompaniment, then it should be used. Backing tracks are acceptable and it is obvious that many candidates from pop and rock traditions are completely comfortable with this. Teachers were generally realistic and accurate in the marks that they awarded, and it was clear that the new assessment criteria were accessible and easy to use.

Composing is now mandatory in this component. There were numerous live recordings, and even some where the candidate was also one of the performers. It should be noted that the written statement is part of the assessment, and candidates need to be aware that its creation is an organic part of the composing process. Compositions **must** be for two or more instruments and should be no longer than two minutes' duration. Structure is therefore particularly important and candidates should be encouraged to plan this carefully, even in the early stages. Programmatic works were popular and several candidates had been influenced by Paper 1 Set Works – an approach which is to be encouraged. Regardless of style or influence, the most successful compositions were coherent, convincing and memorable, with a sense that the composer had produced a vivid, personal piece.

Marking was sometimes a generous, particularly in Assessment Criteria D (Communication), where the recording and the score/detailed notes are equally weighted. Most candidates used a score-writing program and this was often the medium of recording too. Candidates should be encouraged to experiment with the mixing of sound sources before burning to CD, paying attention to the status of individual instruments as the piece progresses. The Assessment Criteria (page 29 in the syllabus) have useful bullet points before each descriptor and it may be helpful to familiarise candidates with these as part of the teaching process.

General points

- There are helpful notes for using a levels-based mark scheme on page 26 of the syllabus.

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- Candidates should clearly state their name and candidate number at the beginning of the Element 1 Performance. Keep any introductions brief.
- A sound check before recording Element 1 will ensure an appropriate balance between candidate and accompaniment.
- It is helpful to time recordings in order to avoid school bells, lesson changeovers etc.
- Please include a list of pieces for each candidate's Element 1 performance.
- Check that composition printouts 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.
- Check that the recordings have been burned to the DVD or CD and retain them in case they are required.