

# MUSIC

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Paper 8663/01

Listening

## General

The general level of achievement was high. The Prescribed and Core repertoire had been studied carefully, with close attention to significant aural effects, and candidates displayed a well-developed ability to identify and describe relevant musical techniques.

In **Questions 6, 8, 9 and 10**, however, a lack of preparedness to discuss other repertoire was evident. The Syllabus explicitly indicates the need to study 'Wider repertoire' as an integral part of the **Section B** topic (page 11). All the questions in **Section C** allowed scope for answers to refer, either to music studied in relation to **Sections A and B**, or to examples from a candidate's own general musical experience. The fact that so many cited examples drawn solely from the Prescribed and Core repertoire suggests either a lack of breadth in courses of study, or that opportunities to apply skills and understanding acquired in the study of **Sections A and B** to music encountered in other contexts are not being taken up.

## **Question 1**

Most answers demonstrated a very good grasp of the movement's structure together with a broad understanding of its textural and dynamic contrasts. Knowledge of instrumentation was generally much less secure.

## **Question 2**

Most candidates recognised that the essential difference lay between the soloistic nature of the piano's music in Mozart's concerto and its ensemble role in Schubert's movement. Many answers referred to the latter as 'accompanimental:' although not the most precise description, this was an acceptable distinction when supported, as most were, by reference to appropriate examples. There was a very good level of vivid, descriptive writing that convincingly identified relationships between technique and effect

## **Question 3**

'Use of the orchestra' was rather loosely interpreted by many candidates as 'what sorts of musical material do the two symphonies consist of?' This led to many broad assertions, particularly regarding Haydn's 'conservatism' and 'elegance,' that answers were rarely able to substantiate convincingly. The best were precise about which instruments made up the two orchestras and made strong points about 'tutti' and 'solo' uses. Most candidates appreciated the striking differences in sound, which many then discussed more in terms of dynamics than texture – the best also addressed the effect of the extended pitch range in the Beethoven symphony - but few were able to explain these in terms of the techniques that produced these effects. Nearly all answers gave most space to discussion of the Beethoven symphony, tending to compare Haydn's music simply as 'not the same.'

## **Question 4**

Relatively few candidates chose this question. Those who did showed both secure knowledge of the music and a fine appreciation of how Mussorgsky was suggesting his pictures as he walked through the gallery.

## **Question 5**

This was by far the most popular question in this section. Answers were enthusiastic and demonstrated that it had been well understood. Differentiation showed in choice and range of examples and the extent to which their effects could be related to specific musical techniques, i.e. the second 'how' of the question. Most discussed *Mars* and at least one movement from a Vivaldi concerto but some took all their examples from Holst's or Vivaldi's music only. Reference was less frequently made to Mussorgsky's pieces, the most

convincing of which were observations about *Gnomus*. The few candidates who chose their examples from the Prescribed repertoire, e.g. the *Trout* movement, struggled to make them relevant.

### Question 6

A very small number of candidates answered this question but they wrote knowledgeably about music that had fully engaged their imagination and enthusiasm.

### Question 7

As 'earlier composers' most candidates cited those represented by the **Section A** Prescribed Works: in this, a notable improvement on previous sessions in the levels of knowledge and contextual understanding was evident. Some outstanding answers showed a much finer, more nuanced, grasp of detail, e.g. of Beethoven's and Haydn's working lives, than has been shown in answers on other occasions. Some were also able to relate these circumstances to examples of the composition of music other than that of the Prescribed repertoire (e.g. Haydn's *London* symphonies, Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony). Although there was generally a broad understanding of the scope of the contemporary aspect of the question, answers were usually much less specifically illustrated. Among the exceptions was one very pertinent contrast with music-making in a non-Western tradition.

### Question 8

The question's requirement for a definition was often only partially satisfied by an implied one, i.e. that the candidate actually understood the term emerged gradually in the course of discussion of different contexts. These were most frequently the moment of a cadenza in a classical concerto, and twentieth-century jazz, but few answers got close to describing any techniques in detail. The most detailed examples offered were those describing the process of 'realising' figured bass.

### Question 9

Most answers were carefully balanced, acknowledging relevant pros and cons and supporting arguments with reference to relevant examples. Many of these compared Mussorgky's original music for piano with Ravel's orchestrated version. In this respect some very keen aural perception was demonstrated.

Some familiarity with wider, often contemporary repertoire was evident, a few candidates writing knowledgeably and convincingly about modern reworkings of 'classics,' as well as 'cover' versions of popular music.

### Question 10

Surprisingly few candidates knew what the term means, although almost all were able to cite drums. Most descriptions were rather vague and knowledge of specific use in any music (apart from very general references to the two pieces by Holst that had been studied) was insecure.

# MUSIC

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<p><b>Paper 8663/06</b> <b>Investigation and Report</b></p>
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## **Key message**

Candidates must include audio examples that support judgements in the text.

## **General comments**

The overall standard of investigations was high.

Many candidates introduced their report by explaining clearly the scope of their investigation and outlined sensible objectives and a manageable methodology. In the better reports, candidates defined two or three significant, central questions to be explored, and kept these firmly in mind throughout their research.

While maintaining a perceptive and consistent focus on the music itself, reports generally showed evidence of appropriate, selective reading which had been assimilated and understood. The less convincing reports were often those that set out a great deal of background information without making it relevant to the study. Assertions about the importance of a particular composer or performer in the development of a certain type of music were sometimes very clearly second-hand judgements and there was no evidence that candidates had listened to any of the music of the composer or performer they were referring to.

Centres are reminded that the focus for investigations must be a significant body of music. The syllabus states that, 'The primary mode of investigation must be listening, to one or more pieces of music of not less than 30 minutes' duration.' Reports should explain clearly what has been heard, and candidates' understanding of the music must be demonstrated by the choice of significant moments, recorded on a CD and carefully cross-referenced in the report.