

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

GCSE Music 1426

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1426/ 1A Performance

There has been a wide range of performances on a very diverse range of instruments again this year. It was pleasing too, to hear some remarkably fine performances given by some very able and mature candidates.

In last year's report, it was noted that there was a big swing towards vocal performances. There has been no further swing this year and the percentages remain largely unchanged, although there have been small increases in the numbers performing on orchestral instruments and a similar decrease in drum kit and guitar performances. There has been no real change in use of ethnic instruments.

In recent years, the moderators have felt that they have heard fewer really outstanding performances, and while it seems that centres are encouraging pupils to play less demanding pieces, this appears to be true. A number of moderators commented on the use of pieces prepared for graded exams; it was significant that many of these performances were very average, lacking in imagination and really thorough preparation.

While many of the good performances were very accurate, they were marred by the interpretation. There were too many performances which lacked musicianship, including a good range of dynamics, articulation and phrasing. These simple aspects were often ignored, preventing the candidate from achieving the highest marks. Time spent carefully reviewing these aspects could have transformed so many average performances. As ever, there was a small number of candidates who achieved the lowest marks. It was pleasing to note that there seemed to be fewer of these this year.

The single most problematic area continued to be intonation. While the careful tuning of instruments would have helped to counter many of the minor problems, it was singers who fared worst here. A worryingly large number of vocal performances displayed very poor intonation; these were mostly from singers who sang using a karaoke-style backing track. These performances could have been transformed quite easily with a little attention to detail and some basic vocal coaching. Some time spent here would have enabled the candidates to achieve marks in the higher mark bands.

There was an improvement in the quality of some of the pianos used this year, particularly in accompaniments. It was an issue raised by moderators last year. The accompaniment is a vital part of the complete piece and will affect the final outcome for each candidate. The accompaniments were, on the whole, musical and sympathetic. Unfortunately, there were some that were clearly under prepared and this inevitably detracted from the final performance. This is a vital area, still, to ensure that candidates produce their best material. There were very few performances where the accompaniment was missing.

A few candidates submitted performances using improvisation skills. These, on the whole, continued to be somewhat mundane. There were very few total improvisations, many were only for a part of the piece, and they tended to be submitted as part of an ensemble performance. The issues here were that the stimulus was either not challenging enough or not developed sufficiently. As with

previous years, only a handful of candidates submitted the *Directing an Ensemble* option. Where they did, the work had been well prepared.

Last year's change to the ensemble criteria has still not been observed by a significant number of centres, some of which will have seriously disadvantaged their pupils. Again, there was some effective work produced, with piano duets providing a solution for many candidates. Ensemble performances overall highlighted the candidate's strengths - for example Rock Group performances demonstrated strong ensemble techniques obviously achieved through regular performance. Wind band or orchestral performances demonstrated the same maturity of ensemble technique. Instrumental duets and small group ensembles didn't expose such highly developed ensemble skills or sensitivity of rapport.

Pupils who performed pieces with a simple part added to fulfil the ensemble criteria and singers, who sang songs with only a few bars of ensemble in a solo, were greatly disadvantaged. There were some issues of second solo performances being presented as an ensemble.

The quality of marking was, on the whole excellent. Teachers are familiar with the specification and, in most cases provided helpful, pertinent comments which were fair. While the general standard of marking was good, there was a tendency to over-mark performance. Intonation, however, was quite often ignored. It may help the teacher examiner to assess the recording, rather than the live performance.

The levels of difficulty can vary. Most centres were very good at applying the criteria, but it is important that if a teacher has made a judgement, they should record the reasoning in the relevant box. This helps the moderator to gain a fuller understanding of the teacher examiner's marks. Some centres did not apply the descriptors well and a significant number of changes were made by the moderators.

The presentation of the coursework for the moderators varied greatly however. The vast majority of centres presented the material for moderation correctly; for the moderator, the marking process was quite straightforward. However, a worryingly large number of centres sent work late and incorrectly prepared.

The request by the board to meet deadlines was ignored by a large minority of centres. This created problems for moderating and can have a knock-on effect for the vast majority of centres who provided the work on time. Where centres were late, there were usually other problems as well. It is requested that centres read the relevant documents, all available on the website, to ensure that the work has been submitted correctly as follows:

- the recordings should be submitted using only one media type (CD, minidisk, tape. DVD is used only for those taking the Directing option)
- a track list is essential to ensure that the correct pupils are being listened to
- a score should be provided (this includes tab). In lieu of a score, the board accepts a commercial recording. Centres will be telephoned if there is no score. A lyric sheet is not a score
- the MUS100 forms should be photocopied into an A3 booklet so that the scores can be placed inside
- please do not staple or use plastic wallets.

The majority of the recordings were clear with a good balance. In ensembles, the role of the candidate should be made specifically clear.

1426/1B Performance using Music Technology

Each year, a significant percentage of the candidates entered for the *Performing Using Music Technology* option are the weaker candidates from a wide range of centres. This year was no exception, but the moderating team felt that there was a higher number of strong candidates who opted for this pathway in 2009 because they saw technology as a valid way of expressing their musicality.

Candidates who fell into this category often submitted both a sequence as their solo performance and a multi-track recording as their ensemble. Please note that it is not compulsory for candidates to use music technology as both solo and ensemble performances if they are to enter for this option. It is acceptable to combine a performance using music technology with a traditional performance.

The best sequenced performances invariably grew out of a strong choice of stimulus material. Good stimulus material varied from centre to centre and candidate to candidate, but the best sequences had the following in common:

- the difficulty of the chosen material reflected the candidate's abilities, stretching them a little, but still well within their capabilities to achieve
- the timbres chosen were the better sounds from the available sonic palette (or the weakest sounds were certainly avoided)
- the length of the stimulus and the number of parts reflected the requirements outlined in the *Levels of Difficulty* grid for sequencing, but did not go too far beyond the maximum requirements for *More Difficult* level (as this would give the candidates additional work for no additional reward)
- the stimulus avoided instruments that are notoriously difficult to sequence (such as strummed acoustic guitar)
- any vocal parts in the stimulus were straightforward to represent and input using MIDI instruments and editing techniques.

The choice of software is less important for success than the choice of stimulus, but certain packages do some tasks better than others, so it is important that candidates recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their centre's resources.

For example, Sibelius is useful for entering data accurately because candidates can compare their work with the original score, but it is often necessary to export the file into another package such as Cubase, Sonar or Logic, in order to undertake more detailed editing of dynamics and articulation. Any package may be used that allows the editing of individual notes for pitch, velocity (volume), duration and start time and also allows the selection of individual timbres on different tracks and their placement within the stereo image.

Onboard 'sequencers' on most keyboards generally do **not** allow all these things, so they are unsuitable as a resource on which to attempt this option. Candidates would be better advised to present a traditional keyboard performance.

Sequences are considered to be **solo** performances. If two sequences are submitted (thus two solo performances), only the best mark will be credited to the candidate and the other performance will be given a mark of zero as a penalty for specification infringement. Regrettably, this occurred across several centres this year.

It is not acceptable to use audio loops or recorded audio tracks in sequenced performances. Candidates must input and edit all the sequenced parts themselves, but it is acceptable for the teacher to prepare suitable stimulus material (in the form of a score). All submissions must be accompanied by a suitable score (or a recording of the original stimulus) so that accuracy can be assessed. If no stimulus is provided then the work cannot be moderated. Several centres submitted unsuitable scores or no stimulus material at all, and had to be contacted in order to provide suitable material. Candidates may sequence their own compositions, but in these cases the accuracy criterion is replaced by *Articulation and Phrasing*.

There seemed to be many more examples of good quality multi-track recordings this year than in any previous year. There were far fewer examples of poor quality 'ambient' recordings, where candidates set up a microphone or pair of microphones and point them at the gathered ensemble. This task is intended to involve several tracks, each captured by a separate microphone. It is possible for the ensemble to be captured live ie all participants play at the same time, but they should be captured on separate tracks of a multi-track recorder with a high enough degree of separation so that a candidate can apply any effects or processors they desire to an individual part after the capture of the performance, without adversely effecting the sound of other parts. The multi-track recorder may be a standalone device or a computer package. The candidate does not have to play any of the live tracks themselves - they may act solely as the recording engineer.

Multi-track recordings must include an element of audio. This must involve the capture of a live performance using microphones (and DI techniques where appropriate). It is not acceptable to create a collage of samples and present this as a multi-track recording because the original sound source has not been captured by the candidate.

Centre administration ranged from poor to excellent. Well-packaged submissions included:

- all the necessary MUS100 forms
- MUS100 forms arranged in candidate number order
- the stimulus material was inside the folded A3 sheet
- the work of the highest and lowest candidates was indicated on the OPTEMS or EDI printout
- the work of the highest and lowest candidates in the sample
- recordings which were of good quality
- recordings also in candidate number order
- clearly-labelled recordings.

There were very few submissions on cassette tape or MiniDisc this year, the vast majority being CD submissions.

Moderators reported that teacher examiner marking was more accurate than previous years, with fewer instances of recommending adjustments to centre marks.

1426 02 Composing

General Comments on the individual topics within the four Areas of Study

The range of compositions presented in 2009 was somewhat similar to that of previous years. All four of the topics from Area of Study 1 (Ground Bass, Variations, Ternary and Rondo) were well represented, although the popular choices were noted to be Variations and Ternary pieces. Those candidates who produced ground bass pieces submitted fairly mediocre work in the main this year, with far too many again copying the Pachelbel model. Although Rondos were fewer in total, those submitted were often quite characterful and effective.

In Area of Study 2, Minimalism and Serialism were the popular choices. Only a few candidates offered Electronic and Experimental pieces, however those that were heard, were imaginative and creative, often from centres specialising in these genres. The minimalist pieces fell into two types:

- those that displayed several minimalist features such as phasing, note addition, subtraction, rhythmic development etc
- those that simply relied on building up and reducing layers amid constant repetition of a melodic motif.

The serialist pieces, however, continue to progress in terms of quality of outcome. The very best of these had some sort of underlying programmatic element, such as *the ghost house, earth, air, fire and water, the battle*, and so on. This enabled the candidate to explore effective textures and sounds, creating a structured composition. The abstract serial pieces tended to drift and lack any sense of unity. However, there were many that adopted a structure to provide cohesion to the work. The most common of these was ternary form, although there were several excellent examples of a serial ground bass piece.

In Area of Study 3, all three topics of *Dance Music, Britpop Songs* and *Songs from Musicals* were represented although Britpop Songs seems to have increased dramatically in number and quality this year and has proved a popular topic. The range of different dance pieces has also increased and there have been many effective submissions, although sometimes these have been over-long, which has spoilt the overall effect of the composition.

It is pleasing to note that candidates are now producing clearly annotated screen shots to show how samples have been manipulated and used in the music, and commentaries have been largely thorough and well written.

As has been reported for the last few years, *Songs from Musicals* remains a popular choice for many. Whilst moderators have heard thousands of songs, several recurring points have been made. The main criticism has been the lack of care in correct word-setting, with many poor attempts at scansion of the text. This is unfortunate and can easily have a detrimental effect on the overall quality of the song. It has also been noted that many songs lack a singer and instead are replaced with the 'Sibelius oohs.' Again, this is allowable in terms of the Specification, but nevertheless, it is far more effective to hear a real voice singing the words, in order to achieve the full impact of the word setting, emotions and drama of the lyrics.

In Area of Study 4, there was a significant reduction in the number of Indian Raga pieces again, to such a point that these are now rare. Fusion pieces were similarly

few, but where they occurred they were often of a high calibre and effective. By far the most popular topic in this Area of Study was *African Drumming*, with compositions frequently generated through software programmes like Sibelius. Despite this world music topic now having been broadened to *African Music*, there were only a few choral pieces. Where these occurred, they were excellent.

It is pleasing to report this year for the first time, that no candidates were penalised for submitting two pieces taken from the same Area of Study. The request from last year for teachers to check that each composition *clearly* comes from a different topic and a different Area of Study seems to have been noted. The other persistent problem was that teachers often ignored the topics altogether and give loose briefs such as, *compose a piece in a popular style* or *write a programmatic piece* etc. The resulting compositions tended to be bland and mediocre, lacking focus, and as a result scored relatively low marks.

There was also much evidence again of the continued practice of 'composing by numbers' or 'template compositions', where the teacher has dictated how each part of the composition is to be organised. This practice stifles creativity and potential, and results in a series of unimaginative 'cloned' compositions. The most common example of this is the overuse of the Pachelbel Canon mentioned above in the report. At the very least, candidates should write their own eight bass notes and not use the original.

There was a large range of marks in this component, which is typical of previous years, although there appeared to be fewer pieces achieving full marks. There also appeared to be less really weak submissions, which was pleasing. Most of the candidature seemed to fall in the middle and upper middle of the mark range (36-44). The impression overall was that the general standard was similar to last year.

The Brief Proforma

The writing on the brief continued to improve in quality. The best examples were replete with musical vocabulary and included personal judgements about the music. The candidates seemed to be more effective at being critical about their own pieces, which was encouraging. Writing in the first person and using expressions such as *I felt that...* and *I decided* etc helped to produce evaluative judgements and thus to qualify for the top 4-5 mark band. There were few *see attached commentary* opt-outs this year. It is worth restating, as in last year's report, that the coursework requirement is that the commentary and brief should *both* be submitted. This is made quite clear in the specification as described in the box diagram on page 15. The precise aim of this piece of writing is also clearly stated on this page of the specification, ie *to appraise the brief and evaluate their composition, its performance (where appropriate) and the Area of Study.*

Teacher set briefs

The best examples were tailored to the abilities and interests of the individual candidate and the weakest briefs were again of the open-ended type, such as *write a piece from Area of Study 1* or even the common example, which was *write a ternary form piece*. Many submissions failed to include a brief at all. A simple title of *Comp 1* and *Comp 2* even appeared. For guidance about the brief and its purpose, teachers

are referred to the specification which gives the following overall aim of the brief , which is to:

describe the stimulus for the composition and provide a clear indication of the candidate's intentions. It should include reference to some or all of the following: purpose, resources, effect, time and place.

Teacher examiner Assessments

The moderators reported that in general they found the teacher examiner assessments to be far more accurate this year. Again, the use and application of the words from the descriptors from the specification to justify marks awarded was seen to be a useful method to aid and support the overall accuracy of the assessment. Where the assessment proved to be wayward it was to the generous side, although this was less noticeable this year. In terms of the individual criteria, the following general comments can be made.

Compulsory Criteria (A-D)

A Use and Development of Ideas

Most candidates managed to achieve at least *adequate use of standard conventions* although they had difficulty in achieving a *good use* of ideas, for a mark of four. Even fewer, however, demonstrated real imagination in the process of developing ideas as this required a real understanding of form and structure and a maturity of musical thought. Others found it difficult to develop their musical ideas - or often they had too many ideas - and fell into the lower two bands showing an *attempt to develop ideas* and only a few to have shown a *minimal attempt*. Moderators commented that performance in this criterion was mediocre across the ability range and more thought needed to be given to the development of initial ideas in a composition. Those centres adopting templates for composition tended to stifle inventiveness of musical ideas

B Exploitation of the Medium

Idiomatic writing for instruments and/or voices seemed to be improving. There was an increase in those achieving a mark of 4 (and 5) this year. As mentioned last year, some pieces were not effective either in terms of meeting the brief or in realising the potential of the selected resources, and as a result of this, quite a few were deemed to be only *functional* in their exploitation of the medium.

C Structure

The majority seemed to fall into the *clear and simple* criterion for a mark of 3 out of 5. If they exhibited a sense of *proportion and development* through variations of standard conventions, or by the addition of introductions, linking passages, cadenzas etc, they were awarded 4 out of 5. Others, however, had confused and vague structures and were deemed to have only *attempted to control* structural devices and again a mere handful were awarded the lowest mark of a *limited attempt* to control structural devices where the music appeared meandering and aimless.

D Understanding the Brief

There was a reasonable standard in the quality of writing again this year. More candidates produced responses which included justifications as well as an extensive use of apposite musical vocabulary. Teachers now have a clearer idea of what is required in this part of the assessment. However, there was the misconception, that as soon as one example of a critical judgment or evaluation had been made in the brief, automatically this warranted a mark of four. An isolated example will not suffice and there must be several examples found within the complete text to justify this mark. Of course, some weak briefs were clearly done at the last minute and lacked any musical vocabulary or detail about the compositional process. Pupils should be encouraged to keep a log of the composition as it evolves from conception to the final product. This will greatly assist their subsequent writing.

Optional Criteria (E-J)

Teacher examiner assessments in the optional criteria tended to be a little on the generous side in the main, and were less accurately marked than for the compulsory criteria. The most popular were as last year, E *Melody*, G *Texture*, H *Rhythm* and F *Harmony/Accompaniment Style*.

E Melody

This was a very popular choice, and in the main was accurately assessed. The top mark of five must be reserved for melody lines that have real character and style. For example, if a strong melodic line is written in a Britpop Song and is convincing in that particular style, then this deserves top marks. The same applies to a pastiche classical ternary piano piece. If the candidate writes a well-crafted melodic line in balanced phrases with a clear sense of key and cadence, then again this warrants top marks.

F Harmony/ Accompaniment Style

A simple use of three chords will score a mark of three out of five. However, a range of different accompaniments in a set of piano variations will deserve a mark of four. An expanded repertoire of chords eg, dominant 7ths, diminished 7ths etc will be worthy of a mark of four or five, depending on the range of chords employed. Modulations relate to harmony and also warrant credit, so for example a piece using three chords only but with a successful modulation, will achieve a mark of four.

G Texture

This is one of the most common choices irrespective of the genre of the composition. Any piece that displays a variety of textural contrasts will achieve at least a mark of four out of five. If musical textures are sensitive and create effective and balanced resultant sounds, then a mark of five is appropriate.

H Rhythm

Another popular choice, particularly in drumming compositions. To achieve a top mark here, there needed to be evidence of imaginative rhythmic patterns. These could include cross-rhythms or displaced rhythms (as in minimalist pieces), or even interesting combinations of patterns in a polyrhythmic texture.

Again, only where there appeared little credit in other areas did teachers then select I *Dynamics* and J *Technology*.

I Dynamics

The process of simply 'littering' the scores with dynamic markings is fruitless, if little or no heed is given to the musical effect created by such actions. Dynamics must *enhance* the music and if sensitively applied then can bring a piece to life. Such positive effects of dynamic contrast were heard in many of the drumming, serialist and minimalist pieces this year. Where dynamics worked well, a top mark of four or five was deemed appropriate. Teachers are reminded to check that dynamics match on *both the score and the recording*, as this has not always been the case.

J Use of Technology

Technology was wisely and effectively used in some of the topics such as electronic music, dance music etc. It should be pointed out that the use of Sibelius alone is not a good reason for choosing this option.

Teacher examiner Comments on MUS Forms

There was a noted marked improvement in the general quality of the comments this year, though many still were still brief statements lacking detail, rather than supportive descriptors using criteria wording to substantiate initial assessments. Many teacher examiners still failed clearly to identify the Area of Study which was being represented by each composition, causing extra work for the moderator.

A note on arrangements

These were very rare again this year and tended to be either very good or quite poor. As stated last year, the best candidates created new pieces from their original source material. The music was often re-scored for new instrumentation with different harmonies and often included some original melodic parts, counter melodies etc.

The weak candidates simply transcribed the original for another group of instruments preserving the melody, rhythm and harmony parts from the original version. These were only awarded low marks.

Administrative Matters

The coursework content of this component of the GCSE is now very much more 'settled' which has been evidenced from fewer associated administrative problems. This has greatly assisted the work of the moderators although again there were cases of missing or incomplete submissions, as well as late work.

The list of common problems remained virtually the same, but it is still worth highlighting the common causes for concern:

- late work - sometimes up to a month after the closing date
- incomplete submissions - missing recordings, commentaries, scores etc.
- arithmetical errors on MUS Forms and transfer errors to OPTEMS
- highest and lowest candidates missing from the selected sample
- lack of track order on CD (or MD).
- missing signatures -teacher examiner and candidate
- missing teacher examiner comments on MUS Forms
- performance work sent to composition moderator
- poor quality (sometimes inaudible) recordings.

As always, many Edexcel centres managed to present the coursework and recordings in a clear and concise format year on year. By far the most popular and common format now seems to be CD, due mainly to the ease of producing recordings in this way and the availability of portable CD recorders now on the market. Those centres that presented all of the centre's work on a single CD with a clear track order and announcements, are to be particularly commended. This is often the most efficient way to present candidates' work to the best advantage.

Edexcel realises that all this requires a considerable amount of work at a busy time in the centre year. However, the care taken by many centres is greatly appreciated by the hardworking team of composition moderators.

1426/ 03 Listening and Appraising

The overall candidate responses were much more successful this year. As in the past few years, there were more specific questions directed by key words, to assist the candidates to focus on the knowledge required. There was an improvement in these types of questions but there are still problems in the open-ended questions where a specific number of points need to be mentioned. It is also important to emphasize to the candidates that they should only write the correct number of answers as requested by the question, not more than this. Quite a few gave many additional responses this year. These frequently negated an accurate response - eg answering major/minor for tonality. A large proportion of the Specification really requires memory of the details of the topic bases within the Areas of Study. Candidates need to develop a knowledge base for the topic contents and to be aware of matching the characteristics with the sound of the extract that they hear.

Area of Study 1 Structure in Western Classical Music 1600-1899

Question 1

There were many parts to this question, with a view to helping the candidates as mentioned above. As last year, this appeared generally to allow for a better level of response than in the past. In some cases, the key words did lead the candidates to respond in the correct area.

Many recognised the timpani or kettle drums for (a) and also either the trumpet or the horn for (c)(i). The interval of an octave proved to be more challenging, with quite a few writing a third. The musical device questions should have focused on the three main devices that come under this heading - namely sequence, pedal and imitation. As a whole, both of these questions were poorly answered with many things being written but nothing to do with musical devices at all. The pedal in (c)(ii) was the most commonly correct of the remaining responses and the sequence for (d) less so.

Most recognised the major tonality and also the triple time signature. There were some 6/8s marked as the most common inaccurate choice. The moderate tempo was frequently correct as was the perfect cadence and ternary form. Many candidates identified the period as romantic rather than classical and the reasons, as a whole, were most disappointing. Some did hear the balanced phrases, formal cadences, scalar melody and the melody being mostly in the violin, which were amongst the choice of correct responses listed in the mark scheme. Quite a few recognised the composer as being Mozart, but there were quite a few Tchaikovsky or Purcell responses.

Question 2

This was quite a challenging question as a whole, but nevertheless many candidates managed to obtain good marks. Most recognised the string family and also the pizzicato playing. The inserting of the dynamics was often well-answered but some candidates were uncertain what to put in the boxes and wrote words or symbols that were nothing to do with dynamics. Most could hear that the first part was louder than the second and therefore reflected this in their responses. The mark scheme encompassed a range of possible dynamics as the levels could vary according to where they actually wrote their examination and the type of equipment used. The legato articulation was often correct, as was the minor/modal tonality.

The open-ended questions such as (e) and (f) were often a source of concern to the candidates. In (e), the most common correct responses were *a faster tempo*, *louder dynamic*, *a different time signature* and *polyphonic texture*. There were many other possible answers and these can all be found in the mark scheme. In (f), the main correct differences were the *change of key to major*, *wider range of dynamics* and the *lack of pizzicato*. The most common similarities were *the instrumentation*, *the tempo* and *the time signature*.

Area of Study 2 Changing directions in Western Classical Music from 1900.

Question 3

Many more candidates recognised the minimalist piece this year- however some still opted for expressionist. The percussion family was frequently correct but the identification of the glockenspiel or metallophone was often called a xylophone. The response to the description of the vocal parts was poor but some did hear that there were no words, or that it was hummed and that there were female voices. There was a range of correct responses in the mark scheme.

The naming of four features of this style was improved, with many writing rhythmic/melodic transformation, phase shifting, ostinato/repetition and interlocking phrases/rhythms. The club-dance music influence was in the repetition or looping, as well as the trance-like atmosphere. Many candidates managed to answer this successfully. The harmony description for (f) was poorly answered, although some managed to write tonal or diatonic. There were other possible correct responses as well. Most heard the Gamelan or African influences and could name a relevant composer - the most commonly correct being Reich, Glass and Adams.

Question 4

Many candidates correctly identified the style as experimental, which was pleasing. The features of the rhythm/metre proved more of a problem but some candidates did write syncopation, cross-rhythms, polyrhythm, irregular or complex. The description of the dynamics was better, with many hearing a soft start and ending, as well as the sudden surges and references to the extreme dynamic range. Many recognized the sparse texture and the true/false questions were generally well answered. Some knew Varèse but many responded with Berg and there was a very good range of reasons for the like/dislike of the extract.

Area of Study 3 Popular Song in Context.

Question 5

Two choices were meant to be made in (a) but many candidates responded by only choosing one. The most commonly correct response was *rising then falling* and then *by step*. The most common inaccurate one was *by leap*. The quadruple time signature was mostly correct but the length or bars and phrases proved difficult. Some did hear the eight bars which divided into two phrases but there were many inaccurate answers with very large numbers written on the script.

The opening vocal line attracted a variety of responses, the most commonly correct being the *slow tempo*, the *minor key* and the *low pitched accompaniment*. The words *melodic shape* are part of the key vocabulary that candidates should remember as a broken chord or arpeggio. Few remembered this, which was disappointing and the second mark was for direction which was ascending/rising. Some at least obtained this mark and quite a few had written the shape as a scale.

The playing technique was often correctly identified as a tremolo/tremolando or trill. The elements of jazz proved to have mixed responses but some heard the swing rhythm or the blues notes amongst other correct possibilities. The structure also attracted a variety of responses. This was meant to be a straightforward introduction, verse and chorus. Many wrote this but others wrote about dynamics etc and went in a completely wrong direction.

Question 6

Overall, this question was well-answered but the responses were quite varied throughout. The mood created by the drummer was often described as lively/upbeat or aggressive, all of which were correct, along with many other possible descriptions listed in the mark scheme. Those who knew about the guitar sound answered this well but quite a few did not know what to write here. Most commonly correct responses were acoustic - electric, clean - distorted and light - heavy.

Part (c) asked about instrumental changes and many candidates did not perceive this. Those who did noted the addition of more guitars, the addition of the bass, extra cymbals or the use of distortion in the guitars. The table was often very well answered. The 'who-hoo' choruses and the assorted verses were almost always correct and the two blank sections which represented the link/instrumental/bridge/break in the first one to the outro/instrumental/coda of the second less so. Many named the riff for (e) and the 128bpm for (f).

Area of Study 4 Indian Raga, African Music and Fusions

Question 7

This question, as a whole, was answered fairly well. Many named the mbira and the balaphone correctly. Quite a few wrote shakers, which were not there. The type of instrument was an idiophone and it was pleasing that many candidates managed to answer this correctly.

Texture is always a problem but many managed to describe the opening as monophonic/sparse and then had the polyphonic as well. The order of events heard in the music was correctly answered by most of the candidates and many also noted that the pulse remained constant.

Part (f) often had *by oral/aural tradition* or *copying* or *repeating*. The final part (g) was not always well-answered. The most commonly correct responses were syncopation, cross-rhythm and polyrhythm. *Call and response* is not a rhythmic feature.

Question 8

Many of the candidates knew the names of the instruments but were not always clear on the culture/tradition. As stated in the past, one of the cultures is always Western and the other either African or Indian. This year it was Indian. Candidates did not need to qualify these any further because in so doing they often made a mistake. The Indian instruments were sitar, tabla, tempura/tambura and these were often all correct. The Western instruments were the piano, bass, drum kit, flute, saxophone, trumpet and harpsichord.

Part (b) asked about the use of the instruments. Many candidates did not answer with this in mind. Those who did wrote about the tempura/tambura playing a drone, the sitar playing a melody, the double bass playing a walking bass or riff and the piano playing chords. There were many more possibilities listed in the mark scheme.

The features of the melody had mixed responses, the most commonly correct being reference to an aspect of the scale, the raga and the use of repetition. The movement between instruments was also identified. In part (d) points candidates had not mentioned in (b) and (c) were possible, along with additional ones such as the jazz style, syncopation and ostinato/repetition.

General

It is important to re-emphasize the information stated in the report last year. This talked about the teaching of tactics to handle this paper. Candidates should plan the order in which they will respond to the parts within the question. Questions about form/structure require a playing all to themselves. Candidates should make use of the bottom of the question paper to make notes and should not answer on the main body of the script until a desired response becomes clear in their mind.

To help candidates understand the nature of the questions and points expected, it is very worthwhile going over previous papers with the relevant mark scheme, showing them how to seek out a correct response. Most of the mark schemes are in bullet points and it is perfectly acceptable to respond in this manner, rather than in sentences.

However many points are required, please ask candidates only to write that number down on the examination paper and not any additional ones. If a single response is required, please ensure that they understand that to write two options negates their mark. Candidates should check the number of marks for each question part and that will tell them the number of responses that are required. Lastly, please remind them that the listening paper works through the four Areas of Study and they should be aware of the specialist knowledge/vocabulary that belongs in each of these areas. When the Area appears, candidates must train themselves to seek out the relevant information belonging to those topic sections.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Lower Limit	100	86	77	67	58	49	41	33	25	0

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