

# MUSIC

---

**Paper 9483/11**  
**Listening**

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

# MUSIC

---

<p><b>Paper 9483/12</b> <b>Listening</b></p>
--

## Key messages

Candidates should be prepared through the study of, and familiarisation with, the Set Works to answer questions in **Sections A** and **B**.

In **Section A** candidates were required to give short answers and extended paragraph responses to questions on the Set Works from the Baroque. Detailed knowledge and understanding of this music can then be applied to music and its performance practices found in the recordings of an unprepared extract.

In **Section B** candidates write an essay on one or two of the three Set Works related to a common theme. The ability to show understanding of and close familiarity with a range of examples from these works will allow candidates to explain and illustrate the specific aspects of questions.

In **Section C: Connecting Music**, candidates draw on their knowledge and experiences as performers, composers and listeners in an essay focusing on an aspect of commonality between musical genres and traditions.

## General comments

There was clear evidence of confidence in candidates' ability to apply their prepared knowledge and understanding to the contents of this question paper.

In the more extended answers required in **Section A** many candidates were able to show a secure understanding of the knowledge and issues relating to the music of the Baroque repertoire, and the performance choices made in the unprepared performances which were set.

Candidates who were sometimes unable to correctly answer the opening short questions on the identity of the recorded extract, were very often able to go on to achieve significant credit in the more extended answers on the unprepared extract. Here they were able to draw on their ability to read the score and apply their aural perception skills to the two contrasting performances.

In **Section B**, there was a fairly good level shown in candidates' ability to structure their essays. They were able to give answers which convincingly explained where in the music they were referencing. Most candidates were able to select and identify some of the significant features of the work(s), and explain the compositional techniques used. More successful answers gave a wider range of references, giving more comprehensive and consistently specific responses. In the most successful essays, an impressive and comprehensive understanding of facts was shown, as well as impressive musical insight.

**Section C** offers candidates the opportunity to address music from a range of cultures and traditions, explaining the areas which connect its creation and performance in the wider social setting. Here again there was a range of answers shown, and a large number of candidates were able to show a good or very good appreciation of the musical feature in focus.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) The majority of answers here were correct.

- (b) All candidates gained one mark here, with many gaining a further mark for connecting the use of brass with a royal occasion. Relatively few observed the more significant reason that the music was written for outdoor performance.
- (c) This was correctly answered by many, but some candidates did not hear the imperfect cadence at the end of the extract, and gave 'Bourree' as their answer for what would be heard next.

### Question 2

- (a) (b) (c) These were all answered correctly by many candidates.
- (d) Different descriptions of this chord were accepted. Answers needed to identify it as diminished.
- (e) This was correctly answered by most candidates.
- (f) This produced a range of answers. Most candidates gained some credit, with the majority gaining 3 or 4 of the 6 available marks. The strongest responses identified the structure as from a concerto grosso, correctly naming the two groups of performers and the two sections with their different tempi. Those going on to achieve full marks were able to describe the use of the ripieno, or to detail the appearances of the theme in the fugue.

### Question 3

- (a) All candidates correctly observed that Performance A was faster in both sections than Performance B. In order to gain more credit it was necessary to observe the different interpretations of the *rallentando* leading to the end of the *adagio*, and the differing lengths of the pause. The occasional feeling of *rubato* in Performance B's *allegro* was noted by some candidates but few went on to comment on how appropriate they considered Performance A's interpretation of *adagio*.
- (b) Many candidates gave quite lengthy answers here, covering a good range of features. Popular observations included the similar pitch of the two performances, and their quite different approaches to articulation and ornamentation. Most candidates observed that Performance B did not use a harpsichord in the continuo. A smaller number of candidates identified the continuo organ instead, with some expressing some surprise at its use. The general 'duller' sound of Performance B was observed by most candidates and many identified its occasional use of first violin vibrato.

### Section B

#### Question 4

All candidates who chose to answer this question were able to show some understanding of how the two composers had used harmony in their expressive accounts of stories set against the background of the sea. Many strong candidates were able to explain how darker, more dissonant harmonies were used to convey the unease and foreboding in the two stories. Most candidates chose to refer in at least some detail to all four movements of the Britten, and consequently essays sometimes showed an imbalance in favour of these over the shorter Boulanger work. This was accepted provided that the sections on *Les Sirènes* covered a representative range of references. The text of the Boulanger gave candidates a convenient way of identifying where in the work they were referring to, but not all candidates did this and it was sometimes difficult to identify the passage in question. Less successful responses to the Britten essay made repeated assertions about 'dissonance' and 'bitonality' without fully explaining any particular instance. Again, in these examples it was sometimes difficult to locate the reference. It required just an explanation of instrumentation, or a performance direction to indicate where in the movement the use of harmony in question occurred. Some candidates spent too much time giving an account of the story or scene at the start of their essay. The most successful answers showed an understanding of the use of shifting chromatic harmony and added note chords in Boulanger's impressionistic music. In the Britten they gave much detail on specific moments such as the overlapping horn tetrachords in *Sunday Morning*, the *acciaccaturas* in *Dawn* or the moments of dissonance in *Storm*.

#### Question 5

This essay was generally answered well, at least in respect of the themes associated with the Dutchman and Senta. There were answers which showed a thorough and consistent focus on the specific aspect of the

question. Many excellent essays described the opening appearance of the Dutchman in great detail, with instrumentation, dynamics, intervals, tessitura, harmony, chromaticism and ambiguity of mode all well understood. Later appearances of this theme were explained in terms of how this opening appearance had changed. The contrasts in the presentation of Senta's theme were well described, and opinions were given as to her character and her importance in the drama which follows the Overture. Many answers were not developed further than this. Although some candidates gave good descriptions of the stormy sea music, only a very few mentioned the more jaunty Sailor's theme. The most successful answers were able to show an understanding of how Wagner used and combined fragments of the main themes. Some candidates were able to offer opinions on how these fragmented and combined motifs represented the Dutchman's search for redemption and hinted at Senta's ultimate sacrifice.

### **Section C**

#### **Question 6**

This produced many good responses. Most answers focused on the use of developments in technology by performers, particularly in pop and jazz genres. All essays concentrated on recent innovations, and a few also referred to technological developments in earlier periods of music. The development of fully chromatic woodwind and brass for instance, or the developments in the construction of the piano, all presented composers and performers with new opportunities. Relatively few candidates addressed the topic in relation to the composition of music. A common misinterpretation of the question led to answers explaining how technology has influenced the ways in which music is disseminated and accessed by the listener.

#### **Question 7**

The strongest responses to this question were excellent, and covered a range of different textures used by genres and cultures from around the world. Most candidates were able to give many and detailed references to styles and individual pieces. Some candidates used the term polyphony to describe any texture which was not homophonic. A few essays included very detailed explanations of how texture changed and varied within a particular piece.

#### **Question 8**

Answers here tended to concentrate on the use of music in social commentary, with only a few considering its use for political purposes. Candidates were able to give detailed illustrations of popular music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, referring to numbers which commented on social issues including race and LGBTQ+. Among essays addressing the use for political purposes, references to music used to promote political rallies were popular.

# MUSIC

---

<p><b>Paper 9483/13</b> <b>Listening</b></p>
--

## Key messages

Candidates should be prepared through the study of, and familiarisation with, the Set Works to answer questions in **Sections A** and **B**.

In **Section A** candidates were required to give short answers and extended paragraph responses to questions on the Set Works from the Baroque. Detailed knowledge and understanding of this music can then be applied to music and its performance practices found in the recordings of an unprepared extract.

In **Section B** candidates write an essay on one or two of the three Set Works related to a common theme. The ability to show understanding of and close familiarity with a range of examples from these works will allow candidates to explain and illustrate the specific aspects of questions.

In **Section C: Connecting Music**, candidates draw on their knowledge and experiences as performers, composers and listeners in an essay focusing on an aspect of commonality between musical genres and traditions.

## General comments

There was clear evidence of confidence in candidates' ability to apply their prepared knowledge and understanding to the contents of this question paper.

In the more extended answers required in **Section A** many candidates were able to show a secure understanding of the knowledge and issues relating to the music of the Baroque repertoire, and the performance choices made in the unprepared performances which were set.

Candidates who were sometimes unable to correctly answer the opening short questions on the identity of the recorded extract, were very often able to go on to achieve significant credit in the more extended answers on the unprepared extract. Here they were able to draw on their ability to read the score and apply their aural perception skills to the two contrasting performances.

In **Section B**, there was a fairly good level shown in candidates' ability to structure their essays. They were able to give answers which convincingly explained where in the music they were referencing. Most candidates were able to select and identify some of the significant features of the work(s), and explain the compositional techniques used. More successful answers gave a wider range of references, giving more comprehensive and consistently specific responses. In the most successful essays, an impressive and comprehensive understanding of facts was shown, as well as impressive musical insight.

**Section C** offers candidates the opportunity to address music from a range of cultures and traditions, explaining the areas which connect its creation and performance in the wider social setting. Here again there was a range of answers shown, and a large number of candidates were able to show a good or very good appreciation of the musical feature in focus.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) The majority of answers here were correct.

- (b) All candidates gained one mark here, with many gaining a further mark for connecting the use of brass with a royal occasion. Relatively few observed the more significant reason that the music was written for outdoor performance.
- (c) This was correctly answered by many, but some candidates did not hear the imperfect cadence at the end of the extract, and gave 'Bourree' as their answer for what would be heard next.

### Question 2

- (a) (b) (c) These were all answered correctly by many candidates.
- (d) Different descriptions of this chord were accepted. Answers needed to identify it as diminished.
- (e) This was correctly answered by most candidates.
- (f) This produced a range of answers. Most candidates gained some credit, with the majority gaining 3 or 4 of the 6 available marks. The strongest responses identified the structure as from a concerto grosso, correctly naming the two groups of performers and the two sections with their different tempi. Those going on to achieve full marks were able to describe the use of the ripieno, or to detail the appearances of the theme in the fugue.

### Question 3

- (a) All candidates correctly observed that Performance A was faster in both sections than Performance B. In order to gain more credit it was necessary to observe the different interpretations of the *rallentando* leading to the end of the *adagio*, and the differing lengths of the pause. The occasional feeling of *rubato* in Performance B's *allegro* was noted by some candidates but few went on to comment on how appropriate they considered Performance A's interpretation of *adagio*.
- (b) Many candidates gave quite lengthy answers here, covering a good range of features. Popular observations included the similar pitch of the two performances, and their quite different approaches to articulation and ornamentation. Most candidates observed that Performance B did not use a harpsichord in the continuo. A smaller number of candidates identified the continuo organ instead, with some expressing some surprise at its use. The general 'duller' sound of Performance B was observed by most candidates and many identified its occasional use of first violin vibrato.

### Section B

#### Question 4

All candidates who chose to answer this question were able to show some understanding of how the two composers had used harmony in their expressive accounts of stories set against the background of the sea. Many strong candidates were able to explain how darker, more dissonant harmonies were used to convey the unease and foreboding in the two stories. Most candidates chose to refer in at least some detail to all four movements of the Britten, and consequently essays sometimes showed an imbalance in favour of these over the shorter Boulanger work. This was accepted provided that the sections on *Les Sirènes* covered a representative range of references. The text of the Boulanger gave candidates a convenient way of identifying where in the work they were referring to, but not all candidates did this and it was sometimes difficult to identify the passage in question. Less successful responses to the Britten essay made repeated assertions about 'dissonance' and 'bitonality' without fully explaining any particular instance. Again, in these examples it was sometimes difficult to locate the reference. It required just an explanation of instrumentation, or a performance direction to indicate where in the movement the use of harmony in question occurred. Some candidates spent too much time giving an account of the story or scene at the start of their essay. The most successful answers showed an understanding of the use of shifting chromatic harmony and added note chords in Boulanger's impressionistic music. In the Britten they gave much detail on specific moments such as the overlapping horn tetrachords in *Sunday Morning*, the *acciaccaturas* in *Dawn* or the moments of dissonance in *Storm*.

#### Question 5

This essay was generally answered well, at least in respect of the themes associated with the Dutchman and Senta. There were answers which showed a thorough and consistent focus on the specific aspect of the

question. Many excellent essays described the opening appearance of the Dutchman in great detail, with instrumentation, dynamics, intervals, tessitura, harmony, chromaticism and ambiguity of mode all well understood. Later appearances of this theme were explained in terms of how this opening appearance had changed. The contrasts in the presentation of Senta's theme were well described, and opinions were given as to her character and her importance in the drama which follows the Overture. Many answers were not developed further than this. Although some candidates gave good descriptions of the stormy sea music, only a very few mentioned the more jaunty Sailor's theme. The most successful answers were able to show an understanding of how Wagner used and combined fragments of the main themes. Some candidates were able to offer opinions on how these fragmented and combined motifs represented the Dutchman's search for redemption and hinted at Senta's ultimate sacrifice.

### **Section C**

#### **Question 6**

This produced many good responses. Most answers focused on the use of developments in technology by performers, particularly in pop and jazz genres. All essays concentrated on recent innovations, and a few also referred to technological developments in earlier periods of music. The development of fully chromatic woodwind and brass for instance, or the developments in the construction of the piano, all presented composers and performers with new opportunities. Relatively few candidates addressed the topic in relation to the composition of music. A common misinterpretation of the question led to answers explaining how technology has influenced the ways in which music is disseminated and accessed by the listener.

#### **Question 7**

The strongest responses to this question were excellent, and covered a range of different textures used by genres and cultures from around the world. Most candidates were able to give many and detailed references to styles and individual pieces. Some candidates used the term polyphony to describe any texture which was not homophonic. A few essays included very detailed explanations of how texture changed and varied within a particular piece.

#### **Question 8**

Answers here tended to concentrate on the use of music in social commentary, with only a few considering its use for political purposes. Candidates were able to give detailed illustrations of popular music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, referring to numbers which commented on social issues including race and LGBTQ+. Among essays addressing the use for political purposes, references to music used to promote political rallies were popular.

# MUSIC

---

**Paper 9483/02**  
**Practical Music**

## **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.
- Element 2 compositions should be for two or more instruments. The accompanying written statement is a compulsory requirement and should be included in the submission.
- Centres should use the assessment criteria bullet points (pages 26 – 31 in the syllabus) when deciding on marks to be awarded
- Announcements on the video recording should be limited to name, centre and candidate numbers and names of the pieces to be played or sung. It is no longer a requirement to discuss the repertoire on camera.

The standard of work across the component was good. Assessors gave useful comments to explain the marks awarded which supported the moderation process well.

Many centres submitted coursework on USB and centres should ensure that files are correctly named, and include the candidate number. It is important that the camera focuses on the candidate showing hands, face and feet (if appropriate). Most centres recorded the entire Element 1 performance at once (sometimes with a small audience), but on occasion it may be appropriate to film some items separately, perhaps to accommodate an off-site event, or specific performers. This is acceptable, but assessors should ensure that the submission is assessed as a complete entity.

Element 1 video recordings were mostly very carefully produced and there were some excellent performances, expertly accompanied, from a wide range of instruments and voices, and in many different genres. The majority of candidates were relaxed in front of the camera and it was evident that many centres are building practice recordings into their Schemes of Work. There were several examples of World Music in submissions and assessors are reminded that it is possible to modify the Assessment Criteria if appropriate to suit this.

It is always better if candidates do not perform at the absolute limit of their technical ability, and there were relatively few examples where the marks awarded were compromised by repertoire that was too challenging for the performer. Most candidates could demonstrate a wide range of skills in 6 – 10 minutes, and many were comfortable in a range of musical styles.

Candidates coped well with the demands of Element 2, and there were some highly original and imaginative compositions, in a very wide range of genres from World Music to Baroque pastiche. Many candidates took their inspiration from programmatic sources. Other common starting points included the Set Works, Element 1 repertoire, or the music of a particular composer. Whatever the starting point, the accompanying compulsory written statement should explain the context and purpose of the candidate's intention, giving relevant musical influences. Many candidates identified specific works, sometimes linking them to the structure of their own music through reference to specific compositional devices. The syllabus requires that candidates write for at least two instruments and if candidates do not do this, assessors should consider the impact that writing for one instrument only makes by referring closely to Assessment Criteria B (Working with ideas; the use of compositional techniques) and C (Use of medium and texture). It is not necessary for candidates to write for a large number of instruments however, and some of the most original and memorable compositions were written for only 2 instruments.

Most candidates include a score, but for some musical technology programs, a written account of the compositional process was more appropriate. The strongest 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 were 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 some candidates perhaps need to be reminded that the finished product will only be as expressive as the detail included on the score.

When assessing submissions, teachers should read the guidance on using a levels-based mark scheme on page 26 of the syllabus and they should also note the bullet points which inform each assessment criterion. Assessing fluency and accuracy should normally be undertaken with copies of the music which are also required for the moderation process. The most common reason for an adjustment in marks was that despite the work being placed in the correct descriptor for each criterion, it was not at the appropriate mark placement within that band. Centres are reminded that if they have enough candidates to send a sample of six, they should include the candidates at the top and bottom of the range, and should spread the other four as evenly as possible across the mark distribution.

### General Points

- There is a checklist of items which need to be submitted for each element on page 24 of the syllabus.
- Candidates should announce their name and candidate number at the beginning of the Element 1 Performance. Any other introductions should be brief.
- A sound check before recording Element 1 will ensure an appropriate balance between candidate and accompaniment.
- It may be helpful to candidates if recordings are timed to avoid bells, lesson changeovers etc.
- Please include a list of pieces for each candidate's Element 1 performance.
- 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 some transcription errors this series.
- Check that recordings have copied to the DVD or CD (if used) and retain them in case there are any issues.

# MUSIC

---

<p><b>Paper 9483/03</b> <b>Extended Performance</b></p>
---

## 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 inclusion in the Research Report.
- The performance should be presented with a sense of purpose and occasion.

## General comments

A good standard of work was seen with all candidates achieving at least a satisfactory level. Most centres and candidates recognised the requirements of the new syllabus and there were some creative approaches to both the written and the performing tasks.

The submission of a Research Report is a requirement of this component. The process of preparation for this should aid candidates in selecting their performance programme and 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 consideration of 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, the following issues were sometimes seen:

- 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. Similarly, where a candidate's performance programme consists of one extended work, such as a sonata in several movements, it is wholly appropriate for two performances of just one of the movements to be compared.
- Some candidates presented theoretical, bar by bar analysis of the chosen piece without reference to the expressive musical content in the context of performing and interpretation. References should, of course, 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 will obviously wish to 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 rather than a brief afterthought.
- Some candidates wrote at length about the technical difficulties that they encountered with their chosen repertoire and about how they practised to overcome these. 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.

- Some submissions consisted largely of accounts of what happened during the examination performance, somewhat in the manner of a concert review. The Research Report should reflect detailed pre-performance investigation which informs and influences the performance, rather than be a post-performance review.
- 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. Audio extracts should be chosen to support specific written comments and should be clearly referenced. They should be submitted on USB or CD for moderation and tracks should be carefully labelled.
- Some reports lacked a bibliography and discography. This is required documentation and its content is taken into account when assessing the report.

Performances on the full range of orchestral and jazz/popular instruments were presented as well as piano and voice, though the proportion of the last two was smaller than is often the case. There were outstanding recitals on bass clarinet, clarinet, electric guitar, flute, 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. Some candidates did not score as well as they might have done had they selected slightly less demanding repertoire which would have given them an opportunity to show greater understanding and a real sense of performance.

The music selected for this component should have a clearly identified focus and consideration of this should form an important part of candidates' initial preparation. A number of candidates did not give due attention to this aspect and merely selected a range of unconnected repertoire which they presented as 'music through the ages' or 'instrumental techniques'. Some candidates made no reference to any chosen focus. Centres are reminded that the music chosen for performance should be related by a common theme, style or purpose which should be specific rather than wide-ranging. Examples of appropriate choices this series included nocturnes for piano, songs from Sondheim musicals, classical rondos for violin, the flute music of Fauré and the use of the bass guitar in the music of Red Hot Chili Peppers.

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 performances were within the 15 to 20 minute time frame indicated in the syllabus, but some were rather short, thus giving candidates insufficient opportunity to demonstrate the range of technical skill and understanding required to access the higher mark bands of the assessment criteria. Similarly, some candidates did not play/sing with the attention to detail and real sense of performance 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 candidates' preparation. Most centres provided suitable venues for the performances and enabled candidates to present their programme with a real sense of purpose and occasion.

Most centres organised their submission in a manner which was easy to manage and included all necessary elements. It is a requirement that a cover sheet, completed by the candidate and the teacher, should be included for every candidate. Centres should also ensure that DVDs, CDs and USBs are complete and that they function correctly.

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.

# MUSIC

---

<p><b>Paper 9483/04</b> <b>Extended Composition</b></p>
---

## Key messages

- Please send the work for each 9483 component separately; it is particularly important not to mix video/audio recordings for components 03, 04 and 05.
- Please include accurate track lists for audio examples and ensure that in-text references correspond accurately to the intended audio example.
- Group compositions are not permitted. The unattributed, unexplained improvisation of performers cannot be credited to the composer.

## General comments

In this first series of examined coursework for the new syllabus, many candidates successfully followed the requirement to document and explain, in the research report, listening that has been relevant to the composing work. Successful composers have always had a strong sense of their own context, being mindful not only of a historical composing legacy but also the contemporaneous work of composers.

Candidates are reminded that they should not duplicate any information that has been part of any other component in their A level music studies. Whilst it is acknowledged that candidates might be inspired to take the study of the set works in the Listening Paper as an initial point of departure, they must ensure that they proceed to look at an additional body of music and expand their research so as to demonstrate an independent trajectory to the taught course.

## Detailed Comments

### **A Research report**

A research report of 1000 – 1500 words is required. The syllabus explains that this is a summary document, drawing on the candidate's composing journal documenting the research and preparatory listening that has taken place during the course. This part of the overall task contributes 20 percent of the marks available for the component. A very small number of candidates submitted insufficient material, limited to a statement of just a very few lines.

Where the preparatory work was done well, it appeared to produce an impressive sense of confidence, purpose and efficacy in candidates' composing work.

Most candidates understood the need to avoid direct overlap with the content of other components. This was an important point of difference from the previous syllabus, where a connection needed to be demonstrated. Only in a very few instances did candidates rely too heavily on the current set works for the Listening Paper in their composing report. Interest and curiosity may indeed be generated through an in-depth study of set works but this should be a stepping off point to investigate further repertoire of a specific composer, for example, or other works in related styles or genres. The report, edited audio extracts and the bibliography/discography should provide evidence of a wider research response.

Whilst many candidates accurately and succinctly explained aspects of listening, analysis, purpose and context, they were sometimes unable to reflect on their work. Some were able to make comments on challenges and issues of honest self-appraisal but reflection might also include attaching personal *significance* to challenges, choices, decisions, and opportunities taken or rejected.

Candidates writing concise reports understood that it was not necessary to give a bar-by-bar description of what was evident in the music.

Some candidates provided links that could not be accessed with no reference to titles, performers or composers. Candidates should not reference any material that cannot be verified or accessed by the reader. This is particularly important for audio tracks where all details including piece title/composer/performer(s)/conductor/producer/date, must be given.

There were many instances of candidates making excellent reference to the full range of relevant sources, with academic rigour and integrity.

## **B Shaping of Ideas; structure**

Whilst the importance of compositional understanding gained from analytical preparatory listening cannot be over-emphasised, candidates should nevertheless avoid modelling their own ideas too closely on the ideas of others.

The quality of candidates' own initial ideas was impressive and successful candidates understood the need to frame their work in a carefully thought-through structure.

Candidates who wanted to work within a specific harmonic language were more successful when they had invested time in sufficient analytical investigation. Study of the workings of romantic, chromatic or jazz harmonies, for example, led to fruitful out-working in the composing work.

Sometimes compositions were a little long or seemed determined to be close to 8 minutes in length whatever the composition dictated. It is important to stress that 6 – 8 mins is a guideline that allows candidates flexibility but it is part of the discipline of composing that candidates should be able to work within a specified timeframe. The principle that **quality** is always preferable to **quantity** should be kept in mind.

Inherent in the way structure is worked out, may be the idea of contrast or continuity. Some compositions had a tendency to repetition without variation and to lack appropriate pacing in the unfolding of ideas.

## **C Working with ideas; the use of compositional techniques**

The range of techniques candidates may employ depend very much on their choice of compositional style or genre. Successful candidates were able to demonstrate how their research had helped them to absorb the range of ways other composers 'grow' their ideas and apply a variety of compositional techniques.

## **D Use of medium and texture**

Candidates often used their knowledge and expertise on their own instrument in their composing work. Those who drew upon the performing abilities of their peers/teachers/friends, found this extremely helpful in their composing work.

Some candidates who were interested in the creative use of technology, experimented with a whole range of possible sound sources and many were extremely detailed in the way they explained their work, with full details of processes and hardware/software used.

## **E Communication**

### **Recordings**

Candidates who submitted live recordings often benefitted from the experience of trying out their ideas in the 'live' performing situation. Subsequent revisions to notation or adjustments to certain passages were spoken of in the report.

It is fully recognised that it is not always possible to access the resources needed for a live performance. Candidates who carefully edited a sequenced performance, or 'performance' via a notation package, were able to convey a good representation of their expressive composing intentions. In this way they were able to access the full range of marks in this assessment category.

### **Scores**

Most candidates added an appropriate level of meaningful performance detail to their scores in terms of phrasing, tempi, articulation and dynamic markings. Candidates might consider whether a metronome marking alone gives sufficient guidance to performers at the start of a composition.

Most candidates understand that in the absence of a score, the commentary that replaces the score is assessed and should provide as much detail as possible to explain how the work is to be performed. Although there may be some crossover with the research report, the commentary must be a separate document that addresses the function that a score would have, that is, explaining how the essence and detail of the work can be communicated to others.

Some key points here 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

---

<p><b>Paper 9483/05</b> <b>Investigating Music</b></p>
--

## **Key messages**

- Candidates should ensure that the Investigation essay has a title or research question and the word count is shown for the main text of the essay.
- Candidates must check their final submissions thoroughly to ensure all items are included, including the requirement to provide a reflective statement worth 20% of the total marks available
- The role of teachers in an advisory capacity is essential in this component.

## **General comments**

In this first assessment series of the new syllabus, there was a wide variety of imaginative and engaging submissions.

## **Administrative matters**

Each candidate submits a unique set of documents that are relevant to the presentation of their own research in this component. Candidates need to take responsibility for ensuring the submission is complete in all respects. There was some evidence of missing items: the reflective report, pages 'missing' from a bibliography or supporting scores printed on alternate pages only, for example.

## **Outline Proposal Forms**

A majority of candidates completed an Outline Proposal Form, submitted in advance, enabling them to receive feedback and guidance on their proposal. Candidates can continue to use the OPF facility up to the November 2021 series.

A syllabus update has been published for centres saying the following:

'Outline proposal forms are no longer in use for this syllabus for entries from 2022 series onwards. As part of teaching, you should give guidance and feedback to candidates on whether their coursework, essay or project title is suitable.'

Some of the main points of guidance issued to candidates this series included the following:

- A reminder for the need to avoid duplication between this component and other assessed work where there was a potential for overlap as specified in the syllabus.
- Candidates were advised to use the assessment criteria, together with the syllabus instructions, to ensure a suitably balanced approach was taken to the Investigation. Most importantly, candidates were advised to place the music at the heart of their work.
- Some candidates showed a keen interest in the ways music intersects with topics such as health and well-being, philosophy, sociology and politics, for example, but it was clear that in their enthusiasm candidates were in danger of producing work that lacked a sufficiently music-based focus. Advice was given to reconsider their approach in conjunction with guidance from teachers.
- Candidates demonstrated the need for support in learning how to access and evaluate reliable sources of information in their research. They were encouraged to use their teachers as a valuable resource in this regard.

## **Detailed comments on the submissions**

### **A: Reflective statement**

For those candidates who had diligently kept a journal of the overall process of their research, listening, and gathering of resources, writing a reflective summary statement was relatively straightforward. This was an opportunity to reflect independently on their work and to summarise how judgements had been made during the course of their work. They often mentioned listening or avenues of investigation that were left out of the final essay, explaining the reason for those decisions.

Some reflective statements consisted of only a few sentences. The assessment criteria indicate that 20 marks are available under this heading so it is important that candidates provide a coherent statement of up to 500 words for this element of the submission.

### **B: Listening**

Under this heading, examiners are looking for evidence of listening that demonstrates the candidate understands what is significant and can incorporate this evidence effectively into their essay. In the most successful work, in-text references were clear and comprehensive track lists ensured that all the information was accurately connected.

Most candidates supplied short extracts of relevant musical examples and avoided the inclusion of whole tracks unless this was necessary. Occasionally, candidates referred to timings on audio or video examples to be found on websites such as YouTube or Spotify. This type of referencing is unsuitable. The submission must be self-contained so that the reader can access all the information required within the documents/ recordings provided.

Candidates did not always include extracts of sufficient quality to support the point they were trying to make.

### **C: Contextual understanding**

Many candidates were fascinated by the life and times of artists or composers whose music they were investigating. Contextual understanding can take different forms depending on the subject matter of the investigation but it is important to maintain a balance between this and other elements of the investigation. Candidates are encouraged to gain a clear understanding of how to differentiate between authentic resources, particularly online, and those where opinions expressed are difficult to verify.

### **D: Analytic/Investigative techniques and technical vocabulary**

To optimise the effectiveness of work in this section of the requirement, candidates should not only describe and analyse what they discover about the music but also explain the significance of their discoveries. Technical vocabulary differed depending on the topic but in general, candidates found it more difficult to talk about harmonic organisation than other elements such as orchestration, timbre, melodic and rhythmic shape or interpretive issues.

### **E: Communication and substantiation of judgements**

Candidates are rewarded for the coherence of their submission. Strong writing was characterised by a sense of logic and consistency, and of a unified whole overall.

Presentation of material came in many different formats. What worked well for one topic would not have been appropriate for another. Centres may find it helpful to note the following points:

#### **Text**

- Candidates are advised to use text no smaller than font size 11 and a spacing of 1.15–1.5.
- Numbering pages will help candidates to ensure that pages are not missed out in error.

#### **Scores**

- Some candidates made effective use of manuscript quotations within the text as screen shots, but candidates must ensure the clefs and any key signature are included in these. This may require the re-notation of some passages.
- Candidates should not refer to bar numbers if the reference score is not included. The essay and supporting documents must stand alone in providing all that the reader needs.
- Some candidates included such tiny screen shots that the relevance of them was not visible.
- Some resourcefulness was shown in accessing portions of contemporary scores via YouTube.



### Organisation, range of sources and referencing

- Candidates often spoke of being overwhelmed by the amount of in-depth preliminary reading across a wide range of material. The journal can be useful here to log sources and mention the outline substance of the material it contains. As the choice of topic becomes clearer, resources with relevant potential can be revisited.
- Confident writing was convincing in conveying good understanding of the texts used.
- Candidates found that the respected blogs of journalists and music critics, for example, could provide valid perspectives but candidates should be wary of overusing popular websites where the accuracy of content may be difficult to verify.
- Candidates should avoid overreliance on the texts of the research work of others or on articles to be found on Wikipedia, for example. However, it could be useful for candidates to note the reference sources in these documents as potentially pointing to primary research that the candidate might utilise.
- The assessment criteria clearly show that candidates receive considerable credit for referencing the views of others but to access the top mark band candidates must additionally express independent judgements.
- Many candidates were diligent in quotation, understanding the need to use quotation marks for verbatim quotes.
- Candidates should list their sources in the bibliography alphabetically by author and it should match the in-text reference.
- No particular reference system is stipulated by the syllabus but many candidates demonstrated a thoroughly academic and professional approach to citing written resources. The same was not true of listening references, and detail of orchestras, soloists, conductors, venues, dates etc. were frequently missing.

### Choosing an area for investigation and the role of teachers

The role of teachers is vital in this component. They should use their experience to support and guide candidates in the following ways:

- Time management – ensuring oversight in the gathering of materials, the sifting of important information and pacing the writing of the essay carefully, allowing time for revision, reflection and amendments.
- Evaluation of resources – guiding and training candidates to improve their skills in searching and evaluation across a range of resources.
- Dialogue – maintaining an atmosphere of questioning, curiosity and peer-group discussion in the exploration of ideas and cognitive engagement. This should be on-going through all stages of the Investigation from initial planning to final submission.
- Referencing the assessment criteria – encouraging candidates to evaluate the content and balance of their work against the expectations of the assessment criteria.