

MUSIC

<p>Paper 0978/12 Listening</p>
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Key messages

Candidates are becoming much more aware of the type of answers expected for particular questions.

General comments

There was a very wide range of marks. Some candidates appeared to have studied their chosen set work in great detail, while others appeared to have very little familiarity with it.

Candidates need to learn to be able to differentiate between music which has a fast tempo and music which uses short-value notes.

More candidates had studied the Mozart set work than had studied the Mendelssohn.

It was often the case for set work questions which asked which part of the movement the extract was taken from that candidates answered giving the movement rather than the section.

Comments on specific questions

A1

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates gave the correct answer of tenor, though other voice types were also suggested. No credit was given for male voice.
- (b) A small number of candidates selected the correct answer of 'descending steps then an ascending leap of a fifth'.

Question 2

Many candidates were awarded a mark for this question, for the correct answer of 3.

Question 3

Candidates often recognised the presence of a chorus/choir, for one mark. Less frequently a second mark was awarded for full orchestra (more instruments was given credit). Very few candidates mentioned that the voices now sing in harmony. No credit was awarded for louder.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates correctly identified that the music was written in the Baroque period (or gave a date within that period).
- (b) Marks were most often awarded for the presence of the harpsichord or (basso) continuo. Some candidates also referred to the ornamentation or terraced dynamics.

A2

Question 5

For the second time the melody was heard candidates most frequently mentioned that the trumpets/brass played the melody and that the strings were *pizzicato*. For the fourth time the melody was heard candidates often gained one or two marks for noting that it was played by the full orchestra/*tutti*, and/or that it was loud. The (snare) drum playing the same rhythm as the melody was occasionally noted.

Question 6

- (a) Nearly half the candidates correctly identified that the music was written in the nineteenth century/Romantic period or gave an appropriate date or dates. Both Classical and Twentieth Century were common incorrect answers.
- (b) A reasonable number of candidates referred to the large orchestra and/or the brass used melodically. The wide range of dynamics and/or pitch was also sometimes mentioned, less often the use of the piccolo or the full percussion section.
- (c) Just under half the candidates selected the correct answer of Tchaikovsky. Debussy and Mozart were the most commonly selected incorrect answers, with Bach rarely chosen.

B1

Question 7

A small number of candidates correctly identified the instrument as the shakuhachi. No credit was awarded for flute, Japanese flute, or flutes from other cultures.

Question 8

Many candidates referred to the additional instruments for a mark and some noted the change in texture (that the melody was doubled in unison/the texture became melody and accompaniment). Fewer candidates gained the other two marks available, for the fact that the melody seems composed rather than improvised, the repetitive accompaniment of the koto, the music is metrical with four beats per bar and the shakuhachis play higher with less ornamentation/vibrato.

Question 9

About half the candidates correctly identified the music as coming from Japan.

B2

Question 10

This question was very well answered, with many candidates gaining all three marks available. Reference was often made to the solo/male voice answered by a choir/group of voices and the call and response. Some candidates also referred to the voices singing in harmony and the vocal percussion effect.

Question 11

- (a) About half the candidates knew that the instruments were all percussion/drums/shakers. Credit was awarded for relevant instruments from the correct part of the world (e.g. djembes).
- (b) A few candidates correctly identified that the percussion instruments play an ostinato/repeated rhythms.

Question 12

Nearly all candidates recognised that the music was from Africa.

B3

Question 13

A reasonable number of candidates correctly identified the scale as pentatonic.

Question 14

The role of the percussion in setting the beat/keeping the tempo was identified by a reasonable number of candidates.

Question 15

The instruments dizi and erhu were correctly identified by more than half the candidates. Pipa and ruan were also given credit, as an alternative to the erhu.

Question 16

Candidates who simply stated that the tempo of the music increased were awarded one mark for this question. Three marks were available only to candidates who correctly described the change in tempo and identified the quadruple metre.

Question 17

Candidates who simply said that the instruments were made of silk and/or bamboo were awarded one mark. For a more precise answer, linking silk to string instruments, bamboo to wind instruments and/or mentioning that the ensembles always contain a mix of both types, two marks were available.

Question 18

The correct answer of Shanghai was chosen by less than half the candidates. Guangzhou was a common incorrect answer.

C1

Question 19

The correct answer of tonic pedal was chosen by less than half the candidates.

Question 20

Some candidates gained a mark for sixth, with fewer gaining both marks for minor sixth. Some kind of fifth was a common incorrect answer.

Question 21

- (a) Just under half the candidates stated that the music was in A major.
- (b) A similar number of candidates gained a mark for dominant as gained a mark in part (a) of this question. No credit was awarded for fifth.

Question 22

Candidates often gained at least one mark, for notating part of the melody correctly. Few candidates gained all three marks available for this question.

Question 23

Just under half the candidates knew that the ornament was a trill. Marks were only awarded for answers in English.

Question 24

Candidates often gained a mark for noting that the music was repeated, with some candidates gaining a second mark for describing the two repeated quavers or that it is repeated loudly the final time. The addition of the oboes or that it was legato were rarely seen.

Question 25

- (a) Less than half the candidates selected the correct answer of symphony. A common incorrect answer was string quartet.
- (b) Candidates who had incorrectly selected string quartet for part (a) often said that there were only strings and were not awarded a mark. Most candidates who gained a mark for this question referred to the fact that it was played by an orchestra,

Question 26

- (a) Nearly three quarters of the candidates correctly identified the music as being written in the Classical period (or gave an appropriate date or dates).
- (b) Many candidates chose the correct answer of Haydn as the composer.

D1

Question 27

- (a) Significantly fewer than half the candidates were able to correctly notate the clarinet part at sounding pitch.
- (b) Fewer than half the candidates knew that *leggiero* means lightly.

Question 28

- (a) This question was an example of when candidates wrote which movement the extract was taken from, rather than (as the question asked) the section of the movement. About a third of candidates knew that this was from the Development section.
- (b) The correct answer of 1st subject was given by a small number of candidates.

Question 29

- (a) Fewer than half the candidates knew that the folk dance being referred to was the tarantella (saltarello was also awarded a mark).
- (b) A very small number of candidates correctly identified the key as G minor.

Question 30

About a quarter of candidates explained that it was unusual to end a major key symphony in a minor key and were awarded a mark. Credit was also awarded for saying that it was not the tonic key.

D2

Question 31

- (a) A reasonable number of candidates knew that this was the Coda of the movement. However, there were some who wrote that this was the second movement rather than identifying the section.
- (b) Candidates sometimes gained a mark for noting the use of the opening recitation. However, very few candidates were able to gain more than one mark for this question.

Question 32

A small number of candidates gained a mark or marks for this question, with very few gaining all three available.

Question 33

About a third of candidates were awarded credit for *Andante con moto* (no credit was given for *Andante*).

D3

Question 34

A small number of candidates gained the marks for correctly notating the clarinet part at sounding pitch. A few candidates gained one of the marks (usually for the first note) but not both.

Question 35

The correct answer of chalumeau was chosen by just under half the candidates. *Altissimo* was a commonly selected incorrect answer.

Question 36

A small number of candidates gained a mark or marks for the key and/or cadence.

Question 37

- (a) A very small number of candidates correctly said that the music was the Transition (bridge was also accepted).
- (b) A very small number of candidates were able to explain that the function of the transition is to modulate (between the first and second subjects).

Question 38

The correct year 1791 was selected by about a third of the candidates.

D4

Question 39

About a third of the candidates knew that the tempo marking of the movement is *Allegro*. (*Allegro vivace* was also accepted).

Question 40

- (a) Very few candidates gained any marks for this question as they did not say that the music is now in E major/the dominant and/or the order of the entries has changed/the clarinet now enters third.
- (b) A large number of candidates selected the correct answer of imitation.

Question 41

A small number of candidates noted that the clarinet plays an Alberti bass/broken chords in bars 7–10.

Question 42

Some answers to this question were very detailed, making more points than was required for the three marks available. Most candidates gained at least one mark for this question.

MUSIC

Paper 0978/02
Performing

Key messages

Presentation of coursework and marking is improving every year.

General comments

Most candidates submitted carefully chosen and rehearsed solo and ensemble performances, which were recorded clearly and marked accurately by teachers. However, a few problems with administration, performances (particularly ensembles) and marking persist.

Comments on specific aspects

Solos

Candidates presented a wide range of solos on a variety of instruments. As always, the performances which were most successful were where the piece was well within the capabilities of the performer. This allowed them to perform accurately and with sensitivity to phrasing and expression. Candidates who perform pieces which are too difficult for them often do not even receive the mark for range of technical and musical skills, as they are not able to adequately demonstrate that they are able to perform pieces at that level. There is also usually a negative impact on the accuracy of notes and rhythm and the control of tempo.

In pieces for which there is an accompaniment, candidates nearly always benefit from the accompaniment being played, rather than performing an unaccompanied solo. This allows them to count rests accurately and to make sense of the music.

Moderators encountered a number of performances where the overall performing time did not meet the minimum of four minutes. If candidates cannot perform for this minimum time, then they are not able to demonstrate technical and musical skills at the relevant level. In these situations, performing more than one solo or ensemble piece is perfectly acceptable.

Very occasionally performances lasted over ten minutes. This also sometimes disadvantages the candidate as they are often unable to maintain a high level of performance for this period of time.

Ensembles

It is this part of the performing coursework which seems to cause most problems. This usually involves a candidate performing a piece which could easily be presented as a solo performance. This obviously means that it is not suitable as an ensemble performance. The number of players present in an ensemble performance really does not matter. It is the role of the performers which dictates whether or not a performance is an ensemble.

Examples of unsuitable ensemble performances encountered this session included accompanied solos (e.g. extra instruments added to an accompanying part, but not changing the role of the candidate as soloist) and performances for two voices and piano, where the voice parts did not sing together or there was very little ensemble singing.

Some centres had not noticed the statement on page 11 of the Syllabus: 'Backing tracks and/or multi-tracking must not be used in any part of the ensemble performance'. In an ensemble performance the candidate must demonstrate ensemble skills with other performers.

Very occasionally Moderators found candidates performing ensemble pieces where the candidate's part was entirely or frequently doubled by another performer. This is not acceptable for an ensemble performance, whether or not the other performer is playing the same instrument as the candidate.

Many candidates presented ensemble performances on a different instrument from their solo performances, or at a level which differed significantly from the solo. As with a solo performance, an ensemble piece should be carefully chosen to match the skills of the individual. There is no requirement for all candidates from a centre to play in an ensemble together; indeed, a candidate may perform entirely with people who are not candidates for the examination.

Administration

A few centres sent both the Performing and Composing coursework in the same envelope. The two components are moderated by different people, so should be sent in separate envelopes. The MS1 form should be enclosed with the coursework.

Sheet music should be included for all performances, with a clear indication of the part being performed by the candidate. This is particularly important in the case of ensemble performances. Some centres sent only the lyrics with guitar chords when a song was being sung by the candidate. Even if a candidate has learned a piece aurally or made intentional deviations from the score, then the sheet music should be included, with a note or notes indicating the changes made. All scores should be labelled clearly with the candidate number. Many centres take great care to present scores in candidate number order, which is very helpful, but Moderators also need to extract scores when moderating and should be able to easily keep track of which score is for which candidate.

Recordings should be audio only. Centres should also check that it is possible to hear the candidate's contribution to an ensemble performance.

There were several examples of arithmetical errors this session and also errors in the transfer of marks. Centres should also take care to ensure that a mark is given for every category for each performance.

Marking

The level of marks awarded by centres is becoming much more in line with what is expected. However, some centres still award high marks to candidates who perform very simple pieces. Conversely, some centres will note that a candidate is performing a Grade 5 piece, which they play at an acceptable or good level. However, then the centre awards less than full marks for range of technical and musical skills demonstrated, when the candidate has clearly met the criteria listed in the syllabus.

MUSIC

Paper 0978/03
Composing

Key messages

- To gain marks in the highest bands, candidates should submit two contrasting compositions where the musical ideas should be the candidate's own (if a piece includes material borrowed from a pre-existing source, this should be acknowledged and kept to an absolute minimum).
- Composition 1 must be notated using Western staff notation.
- The compositions should be carefully structured and must demonstrate a developing command of appropriate compositional techniques.
- Live recordings should accurately reflect the score.
- Work submitted on files must be able to be accessed by the moderator and not rely on any specialist software programme.
- CDs should be checked to ensure that the complete recording is present on the CD and that every page of the score has been printed out.

General comments

Most candidates sent in two contrasting pieces which reflected their own personal musical tastes. The majority of candidates appear to be given a free hand to follow their own personal creative instincts successfully.

There was a large variety of compositions across the range; standards ranged from rudimentary to mature, satisfying and musically imaginative work. Some centres had clearly encouraged candidates to pay attention to the concept of creative manipulation of the elements and the development of material, which reflected a realistic grasp of the application of the criteria. In other centres, there was a lack of development of the initial ideas and of the correct use of cadences and a variety of chords (with inversions), including true changes of key.

Overall, many candidates had a good basic grasp of harmony and were able to construct basic chord patterns and find suitable chords to fit with their melody. At the higher end, there was evidence of sophisticated working; cadences were competently handled, there were suspensions and prepared modulations. Many of the rock, pop and jazz type pieces used added chords quite successfully and there were some colourful chord progressions. Other candidates mostly used the primary triads in root position, which gained less credit. Constant changes of style, key, instruments and instrumentation, amongst other features, meant that some compositions sounded like a number of very short pieces played in succession rather than one coherent whole.

Assessment

Many centres adopted excellent practice in the presentation of the material, including all of the necessary documentation in their submission. Unfortunately, there were a few examples of inaudible tracks, unclear labelling on CDs and missing or inaccurate track lists – all of which delayed the moderation process.

Acknowledgement of excellent work is straightforward enough. Occasionally, marks for lower range pieces tended to be a little harsh and did not always give credit for the positive musical features seen in a composition (even if the overall stylistic effect was unconvincing or lacking in substance). The difficulty arises when mid- and lower-range pieces have been awarded higher marks than they deserve; in these cases, the outcomes lack the refinement and sophisticated musical understanding commensurate with higher bands of assessment.

The comments given by teachers in support of their assessments are valued by moderators and are most useful when they reference the marking criteria.

Compositions

Top-range candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of an array of music rudiments and were able to develop themes in a very creative and mature manner. These compositions showed good awareness of a range of musical structures and genres with ICT having been used in a variety of imaginative ways.

Mid- and lower-range pieces which began with impressive catchy ideas often used simple repetition as their way forward. Potential was not realised due to a lack of creative and mature development. Much of the work was simplistic, repetitive or under-developed. Some mid-range pieces would benefit from further research into the styles and genres that candidates attempted to emulate. Compositions achieving low marks lacked sufficient direction. Often they contained too many initial ideas put together with no real sense of unity. Perhaps it would be beneficial for candidates to begin by writing and identifying fewer melodic ideas which could be developed in a more meaningful manner. The sense of unity in compositions appeared to be overlooked by some candidates adding diverse and unrelated melodic/harmonic ideas into their pieces; the compositions became disjointed and lacked a sense of unity.

The suitability of tasks set was on the whole appropriate, although again there were some examples that would have been best avoided, e.g. pieces for solo drum kit. It was evident when candidates had been encouraged to compose in specific styles or for instruments they understood and enjoyed but the task must allow candidates access to the full range of assessment criteria.

Class tasks were noted in styles such as Minimalism, the Blues and Serial compositions. Care should be taken where all compositions follow a similar pattern in that the choice of ensemble, structure, texture and length can all be dictated through the task; this can result in very similar outcomes and stifle any attempt at originality.

Score Presentation and Notation

Most notated scores were very well presented and some centres had clearly supported candidates in the preparation. Unfortunately, there were still examples which only presented screenshots or songs with only chord symbols. Lyrics with a few chord symbols are not sufficient as a notation of a song for the purposes of the examination. Even if the chords are wholly accurate, such scores can only be given a low mark. Some attempt must always be made to notate at least part of the vocal line.

However, there were examples of notated melodic lines, with chords included, where the melody had been scored and recorded by the candidate and where quite a sophisticated accompaniment had been created from the accompanying chord symbols/basic triads. No details were included as to whether the candidate had any input into the accompaniment – apart perhaps from working out the triads to be used. When an accompaniment has been realised and performed in this way, by perhaps someone other than the candidate, the specific details must be explained. Credit can only be awarded to ideas composed and developed by the candidate.

There were very few handwritten scores. Where scores had been handwritten, they tended to be unclear at times and a few were barely adequate. It is important that the scores accurately reflect the intentions of the candidate and closely resemble the music presented in the recording.

However, whether the score is handwritten or produced using a software programme, candidates should be discouraged from scattering dynamics on their scores without sufficient thought for whether they are appropriate. Dynamics added at random will not gain more credit but carefully planned markings will, provided they make sense. Further, care must be taken in the assessment of this descriptor, for computer generated scores can look superficially very good when they are not. Marks for such scores seem often to rely on this superficial impression, rather than on a careful check of their accuracy.

A few candidates submitted graphic scores. In the very small number of cases when this is the most appropriate method of notation, it is of course permitted for Composition 2. Graphic scores, however, need to contain a key to the meaning of the symbols used, as well as a clear indication of timings so that the effectiveness of the score can be measured against the recording.

Recorded Performance

Most recordings were of a high quality, with many having been exported as an audio file from Sibelius (or similar). Occasionally, there were some problems with the balance of parts, usually because dynamics were missing or because of poor positioning of recording equipment. A few centres seemed to rely on recording the compositions using a microphone, whilst the music was played through speakers. This sometimes resulted in a poor-quality audio file with hiss and background noise and meant that the finer details of the compositions were not audible.

In some cases, live performances were not without errors and demonstrated perhaps a rather rushed preparation for recording of the composition. The realisation of compositions through live recordings was felt to be beneficial especially in pop/rock songs.

Recordings should be assembled in candidate number order, with Composition 1 followed by Composition 2 for each candidate. A track list should also be provided on a separate piece of paper.

CDs

In Centres with several candidates, it is better to include all their work on a single CD, rather than submitting a separate CD for each candidate. Each Composition must be on a separate, individual track. This enables the moderators, when checking the marking, to easily access a selection of Compositions.

Administration

In the vast majority of cases, the administration process was straightforward and procedures were correctly adhered to. Overall, the presentation of coursework was very good, with effective use of ICT to create professional scores and recordings of each composition.

However, there were some problematic issues, and although these will have been detailed in the individual centre reports, the following were perceived to be the most common: incorrect completion of paperwork (use of the wrong assessment forms, errors when totalling marks, missing examination details/titles of compositions); late submission of the coursework; poor quality recordings (inaudible tracks, muted tracks, poor balance of parts, missing tracks, blank CDs); live recordings which did not accurately reflect the score (or at times enhance the work); bulky presentation of coursework (masses of plastic wallets, i.e. one per page, sheets not stapled together, individual CDs); no track list or an incorrect track list; and coursework submitted on files which could not be accessed by the moderator.

Final Comment

Once again it has been apparent that the majority of teachers have offered stimulation and challenge to their candidates: a group of young musicians with very different musical talents, aesthetics and experiences. Many of these candidates have found their way to develop a high level of creative skill and the level of ambition and achievement to create compositions of merit. Credit should be given for the hard work that teachers have given in preparing their candidates for this unit and for taking the time to make sure centre submissions are presented in as helpful a way as possible for the examining process.