



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
MUSIC
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2018

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
Unit 1 and Unit 4 Performing	1
Unit 2 and Unit 5 Composing	3
Unit 3 and Unit 6 Appraising	11

MUSIC
General Certificate of Education (New)
Summer 2018
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
UNIT 1 AND UNIT 4 PERFORMING

Principal Examiner's Report on WJEC AS/A level Music (Performing) 2018

A warm welcome was given to all examiners and the majority of candidates performed to their highest personal standards and seemed to enjoy the experience of performing live.

In most cases, the administration and timetabling of the examinations was excellent with many centres providing running orders. In the case of longer sessions at colleges and where there are consortium arrangements between centres, please continue to build into your timetables comfort breaks for the examiners. Allowing 12 minutes for Unit 1, 15 minutes for A level Option A and 12 minutes for A level Option B seems ideal in most cases.

Please note that A level Option A requires a minimum of THREE pieces, one of which must be a solo.

Most centres had downloaded the correct forms as required but, in some instances, these had been completed by the candidates themselves. Please double-check these for accuracy. In addition, forms need to be completed neatly and legibly. In some instances, examination numbers were missing from the forms when they were given to examiners.

Please ensure that the link with an Area of Study has also been completed. At AS level the links are Western Classical Tradition – ie. Baroque, Classical or Romantic Music (NOT 20th or 21st Century Art Music); Rock and Pop; Musical Theatre; and Jazz. At A level the links are Western Classical Tradition (Baroque, Classical or Romantic Music); 20th or 21st Century Music; Rock and Pop; Musical Theatre; and Jazz.

Examination rooms were, on the whole, fit for purpose with good quality pianos which had been recently tuned. Some centres choose to use electronic keyboards.

In cases where the standard of the repertoire is known, it would be helpful if this information was given on the form, for example Grade 7 ABRSM.

Most candidates provided copies of their music for the examiners. Please ensure these are correctly labelled with the candidate's name and number. Please ensure that the music provided accurately reflects the performance being given, especially when downloading tab from the internet. In order to achieve the top marks for accuracy, singers must ensure that the vocal melodic line has been added to lead sheets which give lyrics and chords. Please clearly mark any repeats, cuts or any other modifications on the copies. In addition, ensure that the edge of the music has not been cut off on the photocopy.

There were many excellent performers but some candidates need to give more careful consideration to their choice of programme as some are over-ambitious. Conversely, the occasional candidate performed a lower standard piece amongst more difficult repertoire which resulted in a lower overall mark, although this is understandable if the candidate would otherwise risk being under the time requirement.

In some instances, more care is needed in choosing ensemble repertoire in order to ensure that the individual parts are significant and of the required standard. These parts must not be doubled by any other performer. Candidates also need to be aware of the technical challenge afforded by their own compositions in this regard. Teachers and candidates should familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria.

Standards of accompaniment were very good on the whole. Some centres now bring in professional accompanists.

Performers need to ensure that they pay attention to the performance directions on the music. Some drummers and guitarists are not aware of the need for contrast, especially of dynamics. Some singers lack projection and communication due to over-reliance on their music. If the music or lyrics are needed, it would be preferable for them to be placed on a stand, slightly to the side of the performer.

In most instances, electronic equipment had been set up and sound-checked in advance allowing the examination to proceed without hold-ups.

More careful timing of recitals is necessary in some instances in order to ensure that candidates do not fall short of the minimum requirement as stated in the specification. It should be noted that long piano introductions e.g. orchestral expositions in concerti, will not be included when calculating the time of a recital.

On the whole, the feedback from the examining team was very positive and I am very grateful to all those involved, including the team based in the office in Cardiff.

Eric W. Phillips

MUSIC
General Certificate of Education (New)
Summer 2018
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
UNIT 2 AND UNIT 5 COMPOSING

Principal Examiner: *Jan Richards*

This overview is based on the feedback received from members of the examining team this year. Hopefully the content will be of use to all teachers responsible for guiding future music candidates in the completion of their Unit 2 and 5 coursework submission for AS and A level.

For your information, feedback on the overall administration, common points and requirements has been given jointly as they are the same for both levels.

Administration

The process has appeared straightforward for the majority of centres, with procedures correctly adhered to. Issues arose with missing signatures, files, incorrect or misleading labelling and incorrect forms. There were also reports of some candidates being entered for the wrong options at A level. In a number of instances, work needed to be requested from centres and thankfully most (though not all) responded fairly swiftly. Some work had been 'scanned', at times appearing very faint, occasionally loaded upside down and at times mis-labelled.

Best practice has been recognised by all the team as well-organised, clearly labelled, and uploaded on time! It was also felt that the timings of pieces and penalties correctly included on the marksheets were very helpful.

In an attempt to clarify, please note the following requirements which may assist teachers next year.

Labelling work

The file names must be clearly identifiable, and not too long.

In all, there are 5 items to upload – can I therefore suggest the following naming system:

1. [Candidate exam number] Log
2. [Candidate exam number] Set brief - score
3. [Candidate exam number] Set brief - mp3
4. [Candidate exam number] Free brief - score
5. [Candidate exam number] Free brief - mp3

This is just a suggestion – but such uploads were the easiest to navigate. Some centres presented zip files, others presented all the written material as one (very long) document. I am happy to leave it to the centre, but please check carefully that all the required information and coursework has been uploaded correctly, to avoid accidental omission.

Candidate logs

Most candidates took the opportunity to highlight their composing skills and display their understanding of the composing process to the examiner, presenting really useful and necessary information on influences, the composing process, intentions, reasoning and advice received. This is valued and praised by all examiners when the **information supports the musical outcome**. Conversely, other logs were sparse and considered insufficient, providing little insight into the composing process, and often omitting the necessary information (particularly required for live performances of the work). Best presentation was noted when documents had been word-processed (and checked!) Unfortunately many compositions had no titles.

Scores / Leadsheets

The use of ICT is excellent, with candidates selecting software most suitable to their needs. Scores were usually exported from Sibelius, Musescore (or similar), many demonstrating that attention had been paid to performance directions, dynamics, phrasing and the like, to create professional scores. This reflects very good practice. Many compositions were submitted using other sequencing software, with lead sheets as opposed to scores; these varied in quality, but the best were extremely detailed and provided extensive musical details which were invaluable. Thankfully, just a basic reliance on just a screenshot with a few annotations was not a frequent occurrence, but unfortunately there were some – please note: this is not sufficient. Though the midi representation can be seen, the examiner needs further details of the musical intention (melody, harmony, rhythm, structure, texture, dynamics etc). Scores in Logic were less successful and most examiners felt that insufficient explanation was offered with GarageBand compositions.

Recordings

Recordings extracted from music software were mostly well balanced and of excellent quality. Others were less thoughtfully produced, with little regard for balance - some had tracks muted (with no explanation), and a tiny minority were simply far too quiet. Lower string sounds were often lost. A number of examiners reported of tracks which had been clipped, or cut out before the end of the composition.

There seemed to be a growing number of centres submitting live performances of some work; while this is certainly commendable and a practice to be encouraged (where possible), it does throw up some issues. Some of these have been mentioned already – but other concerns include background noise, incorrect positioning of the microphone (giving unbalanced outcomes), and performances which did not accurately represent the score or included errors in performances. That said - many live performances were extremely impressive and enjoyable, and all examiners felt that live recordings were beneficial for the realization of rock / pop songs.

Timings

Most compositions fell within the required time expectations.

General

Very high practice was reported across many centres, which is most encouraging. Overall, the compositions submitted covered a broad range of styles and ability: as expected, the strongest work was imaginative, substantial, focussed, and well structured with convincing musical content - well presented and creatively developed. Weaker compositions lacked definitive structure and understanding, with basic material that was overly reliant on repetition.

Western Classical Tradition

At both levels (and both options at A level), the requirement is for a **piece of at least 1 minute duration which uses the techniques associated with the WCT, in response to a brief set by the WJEC**. Most centres have clearly spent time developing a sound understanding of the style of the WCT, including the study of harmonic and textural procedures; this has had a positive impact on candidates being able to access the higher assessment bands for composition 1. Good examples were stylistic, demonstrating melodic fluency and conviction, effectively structured above appropriate and well varied harmonic structures. There were some excellent pieces with clear processes which displayed mature, creative and musical imagination. Compositions that were awarded marks in the top band demonstrated a controlled use of elements, varying the use of texture and incorporating interesting yet appropriate rhythms, syncopations and performance directions.

The shortcomings included a lack of structural understanding and knowledge of instrumental and vocal techniques; more often than not such weaknesses occurred due to a lack of melodic conviction, phrase structure and direction. Poor word-setting was also something that let candidates down. Many appropriate and interesting WCT influences were indicated in the logs; however, while some candidates did not state any WCT influences, others referenced totally inappropriate 20thC/modern influences.

As stated above, most pieces reflecting the WCT met the minimum time stipulation, with stronger candidates making a pleasing effort to impress and go the extra distance; the majority of successful pieces were longer than one minute, giving the candidate more of an opportunity to display their composing skills. (Having said that, some pieces just over a minute also ticked the boxes very well, so it is according to the content).

Please note: examiners expressed the following concerns:

- Details of the selected brief missing from the log. Sometimes the brief was evident on reading the log – but not always. Candidates must remember that the response to the brief is directly assessed in the first column ‘Creating Musical Ideas’; it is not the job of the examiner to seek out this information when there is clearly a place for it to be indicated in the candidate log. Where this was unclear, marks were affected.
- When the style is not a convincing reflection of the WCT. In a number of cases, this tended to be when the outcome was rather too ‘film-like’. According to the musical content, some work was either considered to be a ‘limited’ response, or in the worst case scenario was awarded **0** as there was no evidence of an attempt to reflect the required style. Unfortunately there were some candidates in this position, who received no credit for their first compositions.
- Some candidates seemed to aim no further than the ‘minimum’ time requirement – linked with minimum and repeated substance, this frequently resulted in the minimum assessment outcomes.

Though the WCT style was met well in the majority of compositions, most examiners expressed concern about the quality of the melodic / thematic content in some work. This appeared to be the case when candidates had built chord progressions first, then created very angular melodies, starting with simple rhythmic values, then adding semiquavers, triplets, quintuplets and sextuplets at often rather random moments – which made the outcome far too busy and muddled. The balance of phrases was also sometimes awry. Some candidates just didn’t know when to stop, ending up with a meandering and overly-long, rambling outcome. Some examiners felt that, on occasion, WCT compositions were too similar to the pieces they had been influenced by.

Harmony was sometimes excellent, demonstrating sensible and interesting progressions and phrases, concluding with clear cadences. However, initial melodic material was often compromised by static and repetitive use of simple chords and rather relentless triadic movement.

Some advice for candidates

- Research the technical abilities and styling for the instruments/voices used in your piece, and be thoughtful when writing for these instruments (e.g. examples were noted of one trumpet playing a chord, 6 notes in one hand for the piano, a flute playing loud in its lowest register...pizzicato for brass instruments...and .writing for piano and harp was often unconsidered)
- Aim to create a 'coherent' piece (i.e. subsequent sections were often so contrasted to the opening section, the result felt like a few different compositions strung together)
- Remember that the **use of direct repeat marks** is **not** counted in the overall time allocation for a piece
- Keep strictly to the WCT musical traditions (avoid influences of musical theatre / folk /inappropriate chords *etc*)
- When writing in a minor key, remember to deal with the leading note correctly (in many cases the failure to raise the 7th resulted in much modal writing)
- Work to create balanced phrases and a fluent melody line
- Carefully work out chord progression and cadences, including inversions and modulations if possible (while use of the 4-chord trick will perhaps work as a starting point, dependence on this device does not allow for more adventurous harmonic work and severely limits the overall harmonic effect).

Reminder: Any composition **not** in the WCT for the set brief was awarded **0 marks**. (This year we received examples of film, rock, pop, jazz....) Some other compositions lost marks as they offered no more than 'a limited response'. The lack of awareness of the correct styling for the WCT inevitably had a knock-on effect for assessment in the 'Technical and Expressive Control of Musical Elements'.

Free composition

A mixture of styles and genres were presented here, including: Jazz/Rock fusion, Pop, Film music, Minimalism, Impressionism and Expressionism – and more WCT pieces - with a tremendous range of influences stated across all the different styles. Pieces had been composed for all kinds of ensembles, from unaccompanied vocal pieces to chamber music, rock groups and jazz ensembles, to full orchestral scores.

Best practice was noted when candidates had been encouraged to play to their strengths, and had undertaken research to understand their chosen styles in order to produce stylistic and highly creative pieces. Certain centres again adopted a class task approach presenting a range of abilities and marks. A whole class approach to a style such as Expressionism can be effective for the detailed teaching of such a style, and though some candidates excelled in the area, it was felt that others would certainly have benefitted from a more individual approach more tailored to their personal abilities and musical interests. There were examples of very good vocal and instrumental compositions, demonstrating sound harmonic and melodic work appropriate to the style, but limited development of ideas were noted in pop songs and minimalistic works, where ideas were overly repetitive. Many film compositions offered a www.youtube.com clip to accompany their scores which was useful. There were some very accomplished and sophisticated compositions in the Impressionist style.

In general, the setting of the brief by the candidate was not always a strong feature; as the outcomes are assessed against this requirement, future candidates would be well advised to consider their choice carefully. When the brief-setting was good, compositions were coherent and conveyed that the outcome was a successful product of effective planning.

Almost all of the free compositions were more extended, with some stretching on for over 5 minutes. Rock and pop songs were, at times, extremely impressive (though there were very occasional examples which contained inappropriate lyrics – not suitable for exam work).

The strongest compositions were creative and imaginative, with much thought having gone into the creation, planning and execution and subsequent manipulation of ideas. In weaker outcomes, lack of development, structural focus and limited melodic, rhythmic and harmonic content (and understanding) were evident.

AS level

As expected, the submissions received at this level covered a fairly wide ability range; quite a few in the top range, less candidates at the lower end, but with most falling somewhere in between. There were some well balanced and coherent compositions with excellent instrumental variety and interesting thematic material; there were also the usual weaknesses of overly busy textures, basic repetition and unpredictable and sometimes unsuitable harmonies.

Response to the Briefs

Brief 1: *[Compose a short instrumental piece intended for performance to be held Margam Orangery.]*

This was by far the most popular brief, well attempted overall with a range of marks awarded. Some excellent work was received, well planned and presented, and capturing the WCT style beautifully. The instrumentation was interesting and full of variety – not just the predictable use of string quartets (of which there were many!), but also trios and quintets, woodwind quartets, a guitar quartet (classical not rock), brass ensembles, piano pieces, flute duos and so on. Appropriate influences ranged from early Baroque to late Romantic. Rather a lot of candidates mentioned ‘wedding music’ (as the Orangery is used for that purpose), but the music remained within the realms of the WCT. Some centres opted for the set class task approach, but thankfully most encouraged individual responses.

Brief 2: *[Compose a short vocal duet intended for performance at Christmas or a Winter Music Festival]*

A less common choice. Some candidates were able to show successful word-setting with content placed in a thoughtful and appropriate context, but many candidates struggle in this respect and clearly have problems with competent and correct word-setting. Others overused singing in unison and did not maximize the potential that a duet could offer. A variety of interesting accompaniments were noted.

Brief 3: *Compose the first two sections of an instrumental piece in rondo form intended to be performed in a sixth form music concert to be held in aid of charity]*

Another very popular choice. A fairly strong sense of musical understanding of rondo form was communicated, though many candidates composed more, presenting a full piece in rondo form (This was consistent across one centre). A number of candidates included an exact repeat of their A section to justify how the B section would lead back to the return of A; as a repeat of the first section this perhaps did not deviate from the requirement of the brief – but it did feel like a complete piece in ternary form and was not considered necessary or in the circumstance, appropriate. One candidate was commended for very impressive work written in the style of Liszt.

Brief 4: *[Compose the first two verses and refrain of an accompanied song, intended for performance as part of a ‘celebration of song’ in the local music college]*

Very few attempted this brief – no feedback received.

A level

General

The folios covered a very wide range of standards, from truly sophisticated and creative to the confused and mis-directed.

In terms of the **Western Classical Tradition**, most centres have built on the knowledge learnt at AS level and it was encouraging to see candidates developing a more advanced understanding of the style of the WCT. Examiners delighted in some high quality and sophisticated compositions, conversely also commenting on work that was of a surprisingly low standard. Many successful candidates were able to show excellent control of texture, harmony and melodic direction (one examiner commented on the strength in melody writing from a few candidates, along with sophisticated control of harmony such as modulations, suspensions, etc). As with Unit 2, many appropriate and interesting WCT influences were mentioned – but also, a large number didn't mention any at all. Weaker compositions struggled with the organization of ideas, again relying heavily on repetition and lacking melodic direction and appropriate harmonic understanding. It seemed as if progression for some was difficult after the presentation of the initial ideas. At this level, such outcomes were considered inconsistent and sometimes limited.

At times, it was felt that where the musical content was incompatible with the WCT, it was often due to a lack of skill and finesse rather than a blatant disregard for WCT conventions but there were some compositions that examiners felt should be awarded 0 as they did not even attempt to capture the WCT style.

At this level, **free composition** was interesting. Examiners noted a clear attempt by many to develop ideas using a range of devices, although the harmony sometimes suffered when the devices were not carefully controlled (e.g. moving through keys using sequence). Concern was expressed with an inappropriate choice of ideas when some material was limited - often stylistic, but simplistic - lacking development, and maintaining the same patterns throughout even when the chord progression varied. Such working was not considered to be at a sufficient standard for A level, and was marked accordingly i.e. Band 2 or even 1.

Influences stated by candidates included WCT, early 20th C, Impressionism, Nationalism, Serialism, programme music, Jazz, Funk, Bossa nova, Blues, Rock, Electro-swing, Welsh folk music, Musical Theatre, John Williams / Hans Zimmer *etc*, – even Lynne Plowman made an appearance!

Finally, I must make mention of one centre which directed students to compose instrumental studies for the free composition. I agree with the examiner who felt that this limited candidates in their ability to show textural, rhythmic or melodic contrasts and variations, as the content was so full of scalar and arpeggio ideas, albeit demonstrating sound harmonic understanding. I would advise that this is not recommended suitable practice for future candidates.

For candidates following the extended composition, results varied enormously; it seems that some follow the unit through a genuine interest and ability in composing, and others because they perhaps couldn't complete an extended unit in performing.

Response to the briefs

Brief 1: *[Compose a short scherzo for four instruments, intended for performance during the interval at a dance exhibition in the Wales Millennium Centre]*

By far the most popular choice of brief. There were some excellent compositions here, written suitably in the WCT style (often presented as a string quartet, though there were a number of different instrumental combinations offered). Most were well structured and captured the required character - even if just to a degree. Examiners understood why some candidates chose to repeat the A section without any changes, though this was unnecessary and would not have contributed to the overall time allowance. Most candidates made a pleasing effort to create new ideas in the B section –but some presented a contrasting section that was completely unrelated in terms of style, key, time-signature, tempo, character....everything! This interrupted the flow of the music and was very unconvincing. Despite the assessment criteria for this 'shorter task', most candidates made at least some attempt to develop ideas which provided a natural flow and sense of growth to the content; the strongest results were really impressive as ideas moved through a range of keys, included substantial and interesting harmonic working, and explored the melodic material by using a range of devices. Most of the pieces were in triple time (3/4 or 6/8); the few attempts in 4/4 were not as good (due to a range of reasons, not because of the time signature).

Brief 2: *[Compose a short song for solo and accompaniment, to be performed at a summer concert]*

Chosen by a reasonable number of candidates, the work here was competent on the whole. There were the usual concerns about word-setting, however.

Brief 3: *[Compose the beginning of a piece of incidental music which sets the opening scene for a new drama production about the closing of the Welsh coal mines]*

Chosen by many candidates, this brief proved to be a stumbling block for many. Most candidates captured the appropriate mood (minor key, slow tempo, suitable use of instruments), using a major section to represent 'hope', with some nice chorale –type ideas and appropriate Tierce de Picardie moments. Some candidates used melodic material from Welsh folk songs or hymns which affected their mark for 'Creating Musical Ideas' – they would have been well advised to compose their own material here. One candidate mentioned Bach, Stamitz and Haydn as influences, then went on to write an atonal piece.... Some candidates tended to drift into a 'film music' style, or presented their ideas alongside a storyline which lacked conviction of the WCT; this cost them marks. Others cast their ideas in ternary rondo, even sonata form structures.

Brief 4: *[Compose the opening of a vocal duet (with accompaniment) intended for performance in a Music for Youth concert organised by the Arts council of Wales]*

Few candidates selected this option. Some used all or part of the given words, (one used 'We are the Music Makers' as a musical setting). Influences included Handel, Purcell, Schubert and Brahms; a few were influenced by composers too modern in style for this brief. Word-setting was very accomplished in a few, badly handled by others. Piano accompaniments were not always convincingly handled, although examiners noted good efforts by many to include variety and textural contrasts. Some candidates displayed clear understanding of writing for voices and the vocal ranges, though on occasion the content was extreme, reaching very high and low in the registers; it was also encouraging to see accomplished part-writing, imitation, and word-painting suggested by the lyrics.

MUSIC
General Certificate of Education (New)
Summer 2018
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
UNIT 3 AND UNIT 6 APPRIASING

Unit 3

As usual, confusion over musical terminology loomed large in this paper and was responsible for many wasted marks. “Imitation”, for instance, is still (regularly rather than occasionally) used incorrectly as meaning “plays along with” or “answers (in dialogue)/echoes” rather than being employed as referring to contrapuntal texture. These, and the technical terms for texture, all need to be used frequently and, in an appraising exam, their improper use will inevitably lead to lost marks. The increased importance of extended writing in the new exam makes it necessary for candidates to use musical terminology to a greater extent, so making its accurate use all the more essential.

Section 1

Area of Study B: Rock and Pop 1965-1990

- Q.1 (a) (i) There were many correct answers, though “saxophone” was given more often than it should have been; clarinet and trumpet were found less frequently.
- (i) Some heard the pitch-bending, more the wide range employed (or high register), though, surprisingly, few mentioned the improvisatory nature of the solo.
- (b) A good number recognised the IV-I progression, but both “perfect” (especially) and “imperfect” were quite frequently in evidence.
- (c) Disappointingly, not all candidates ticked **two** boxes. It was unusual to find no correct answers here, however, with some being able to identify both correct statements.
- (d) A small number seemed unaware what the term “interval” meant, giving answers such as *quaver*. A 3rd was occasionally found for the 6th. Most of those who attempted a full description of the interval (which was, in this instance, not required) were incorrect. (Candidates were not penalised for this if 6th was given.)
- (e) *Rhythm* caused problems throughout the three options – even for the better candidates – with answers being very disappointing overall. Responses covered virtually every musical element other than that requested. Typical among them were *uses imitation*, *male vocal* and *diatonic*! As usual, some referred to tempo rather than rhythm.

- (f) (i) Since an actual example of a dominant 7th chord was provided in the question, it was disappointing that so many candidates were not able to work out the correct notes/intervals for the B7 chord even if they were unsure of the constituent notes of that particular chord. Incorrect answers included B-D-F-Ab.
- (ii) Many more knew the correct answer here, but a small number still think the slash implies two different chords – in this instance, G7 and D. And some are still confused between G7 and G major7.
- (iii) The more discerning candidates identified E minor as the tonicised key, but answers here were rather hit-and-miss.
- (g) (i) This was usually well answered. However, answers such as *has drums throughout* or *piano imitates the vocal* were found fairly frequently, with some doing little more than listing instruments.
- (ii) 1973 was quite a popular answer, but many correctly answered 1983.

Q.2 The term “singer-songwriter” was interpreted rather liberally by some candidates. Neither was the question always answered appropriately – e.g., one candidate wrote only on the Beatles (with no individual band member being named) and merely gave general information on matters such as studio effects, structure and instruments used. One song was mentioned, but no information was given on it. (In one instance the only band member who was named by a candidate was Ringo Starr!) Some candidate accounts of singers/bands included inaccuracies – e.g., *they used usually synthesisers because at the time of 1960 synthesisers were in fashion* (this referred to The Beatles); or the artist whose oeuvre was *usually in a major key and usually uses dotted rhythms*. Naming bands without mentioning individual singers/composers was a frequent fault – especially when referring to The Beatles and Queen. Even when a suitable singer-songwriter was given, sometimes only the name of one song was given and little else. Fortunately, there were some very knowledgeable candidates who could write at length on at least two singer-songwriters, together with pertinent musical detail.

Area of Study C: Musical Theatre

- Q.3 (a) There were some good answers here, though many found it difficult to achieve all three marks. A few candidates gave two answers that amounted to the same thing, mostly those pertaining to recitative-/parlando-like vocal delivery.
- (b) Not surprisingly, (i) proved to be more difficult than (ii), though there were some bizarre answers in evidence – e.g., *semi-interval* and *mono interval*. Pleasingly, however, there were many correct answers.
- (c) The response was very pleasing here, too, overall, but the third box had some takers. A very small number ticked more than one box.
- (d) As usual with questions on cadences, all types of answers were found. Among them a good number were correct.
- (e) C major was the favourite answer, rather than F major. Disappointingly, some supplied a chord in which the melody note given (C) did not occur – e.g., E minor.

- (f) This (perhaps surprisingly) caused very few problems.
 - (g) As in the similar question in the Rock/Pop option, many had difficulty with the meaning of “rhythm”, with answers such as *syllabic* being given. As usual, some included answers on tempo rather than rhythm.
 - (h) To very many candidates “vocal writing” seemed to include anything remotely related to the voice. At least one very good candidate lost all four marks for answers that did not address the question.
- Q.4 (a) A small number misunderstood or misconstrued the meaning of the word “chorus” here, despite the question’s references to “chorus as commentator and narrator” etc., writing instead on the use of a chorus (refrain) in an individual song (i.e., as distinct from a verse). Some of the information given was sometimes rather superficial – e.g., *(the chorus) provides a strong sound which allows the audience to really hear and understand every word they sing*. There were some essays, too, which hardly mentioned choral writing, preferring instead to discuss solos or duets. There were also occasions where there seemed to be a very fine line between what constituted merely a (small) ensemble (such as the children in “The Sound of Music”) and a true chorus. At the other extreme, there were a good number of comprehensive accounts of the role of the chorus, with candidates making a real attempt to address the different elements of the question. The variety of different musicals referred to was quite impressive, though, occasionally, composer and musical did not match up correctly – e.g., both Sondheim and Lloyd Webber were credited as the composer of Schönberg’s “Les Misérables”.

Area of Study D: Jazz

- Q.5 (a) Answers were often successful here, with a good number mentioning the increase in tempo and dynamics, as well as the different methods of imitating the train whistle.
- (b) (i) Some omitted the flat sign, but there were many good answers in evidence.
 - (ii) Most candidates successfully identified the perfect cadence.
- (c) (i) A small number answered “blues” rather than “chromatic”.
- (d) The better candidates had no problem here, with most recognising at least one correct statement.
 - (e) There were a number of correct answers here, even if some notes were given in (technically incorrect, but acceptable) enharmonic equivalents. Some, however, were all at sea, again disappointingly so considering that an example had been supplied in the question.
 - (f) Answers were rather disappointing overall, with some identifying the rhythm in bar 14 as swung. Indeed, both answers were occasionally given in the wrong order.
 - (g) The vast majority of answers were correct.

- (h) This was not the case here, however. Some chose to write on instruments rather than voices, with a good number unable to say anything of real consequence on the use of voices.

Q.6 Sometimes jazz compositions that did not feature vocalists were named, with pieces from “Kind of Blue” and other Miles Davis albums most frequently found. Sometimes, even when an appropriate piece was given, individual performers were not mentioned, instead merely being referred to as “the voice” or “an alto voice”. Some candidates repeated the “information” given in the question itself, merely commenting on *pitch slides* and/or *scatting*, without offering any further specific information as to composition or performer. However, some candidates were equally knowledgeable in all jazz styles, with the best of these being able to supply pertinent and accurate information on vocal bebop. As in the two previous options, a few mismatched vocal performers and compositions were in evidence, while some gave as an example a performance that was post 1965. (Some leeway was allowed in such circumstances – not, however, extending, in the case of one candidate, to 1989.)

Section 2

Area of Study A: The Western Classical Tradition

- Q.7 (a) Answers were mostly correct.
- (b) The cadence was identified by most candidates, but the key, even when the tonic had been given correctly in (a), was often wrong.
- (c) Disappointingly, some failed to identify the first note correctly. Those who had the Bb right sometimes heard the next interval as a 2nd rather than a 3rd, consequently getting the next two notes wrong, too.
- (d) This was not well answered overall! There were many incorrect answers in (i), with some merely locating two or three quaver beats. In (ii), the diminished 7th eluded most candidates, with bar 7 being a favourite incorrect answer. (iii), too, was poorly answered, despite there being two examples in the extract. Bar 8 was often wrongly identified here. Some attempted to conjure up a tritone by assuming the interval did not have to consist of two consecutive notes. Even with this sleight of hand, however, answers were very rarely correct.

Area of study A: The Symphony

Q.8 Many of the errors in last year’s exam were in evidence again, most caused by confusion over basic musical terms. “Polyphonic” is still being used, even by very good candidates, as though describing music that is thickly textured rather than as denoting music that is contrapuntal. (Perhaps we should forget “polyphonic” completely and teach the (technically more correct) term “contrapuntal”.) And “imitation” is still constantly used either where “doubling” or “plays along with” seemed the candidate’s real intention. Such misuse of musical terms obviously is the cause of many lost marks, since candidates write down answers that imply something quite different from what they actually intend to say.

More general musical concepts/elements also seemed to cause confusion, as the following mismatched answers indicate: *Texture – fortissimo; rhythm – sequence played by upper strings. Diatonic harmonies moving in semitones* was another puzzling response. As mentioned earlier, questions on rhythm, especially, elicited some peculiar answers. So was the case here, with *staccato rhythms, fast rhythms* and *arpeggiac rhythms* all being found. As part of a description of the opening of the “Eroica”, one candidate referred to *two relatively short monophonic chords*, also referring to the use of *Klangfarbenmelodie* later in the extract – though without pinpointing the device in any way. More than one candidate considered the tempo of this extract to be “andante”. Many, too, made extremely general statements like *imperfect cadence* without giving any indication as to its location. As last year, the comment *diatonic with some chromaticism* was ubiquitous. Since this could be said to be a commonplace of music in the Baroque and Classical eras – and could be equally true of many passages of Romantic music – such a comment on the harmonic content of an extract is best made in relation to a specific passage, and with a particularly good reason, such as contrasting significantly with a preceding/following section.

Some candidates, as they did last year, devoted too much attention to the use of instruments, sometimes giving unnecessary details on their historical development that were not directly related to the extract(s), and to the detriment of other aspects of the music. Other errors included misidentification of instruments or commenting on instruments that were not in the extract. Some candidates heard the (8ve/unison) arpeggios at the start of CPE Bach’s D major symphony as “scalic”; and the repeated 1st Violin Ds/F#s etc. that accompanied these arpeggios were almost invariably considered as a pedal, despite there being no dissonance in the harmonic progressions, with these notes all being a part of the underlying chords. Some candidates talked of “straight” or “irregular” rhythms - occasionally even “scalic rhythms”. One candidate wrote: *the tonality of both (extracts) is major, reflected by the time signatures*.

There was some confusion as to the form of each extract – forgivable in such circumstances. Indeed, many candidates decided to steer clear of this aspect completely.

There were, of course, some very logical and perceptive answers, and a pleasing number of candidates scored very well in this question.

Haydn Symphony No 103 “Drum Roll”

- Q.9 (a) There were few problems here, though most of the options had their takers.
- (b) There were many blanks or wild guesses here. Viotti was known by some, however.
- (c) There were several ways of answering this question – e.g., F minor (or iv) or G7 (or V7). Some appeared to have ignored the key signature, writing F major rather than minor for the first chord.
- (d) References to orchestration were acceptable as long as they included specific details; “orchestration” by itself was not sufficient. Neither was a stark answer of “harmony” without an accompanying (and relevant) example. One candidate gave more than one answer on each numbered line – 1. *Tremolo/trill; 2. Ostinato/pedal* - leaving number 3 blank. The second answers to both 1 and 2 above are correct, but could not be accepted, since each line required just one answer, only the first of which could be marked.

- (e) Some answers made no reference to texture – e.g., *trills* and *staccato*. Some candidates wrote on the use of melody.
- (f) This was rather hit-and-miss. C minor (rather than major) was given quite often, while answers on the cadence were also disappointing.
- (g) One candidate totally misunderstood what was required here, treating the question as if it were a “tick the correct box” type.
- (h) Some failed to supply bar numbers, so losing valuable marks, while a small number thought the tonality had changed to major.

Area of study A: Religious Choral Music

Q.10 Pleasingly, most candidates recognised the contrapuntal nature of both extracts. Lack of a thorough understanding of musical terminology, however, affected some candidates’ marks even when this was the case. Such was the candidate who, having commented on the contrapuntal nature of both extracts, went on to describe Extract 1 as *homophonic throughout*. Only the most perceptive candidates picked up on the canonic nature of the second extract, with a small number of those even being able to hear the correct pairing of voices. Extract 1 was fairly often considered by some to be in a minor key, to use pizzicato strings or to begin with basses (or altos).

The failure to recognise the overall tonality of the extracts was unexpected in this question. As always, however, there were some full and musically mature answers in evidence. As in the Symphony comparison, most chose to answer by dividing the page into two, with a smaller number opting for the more usual paragraph format. Some merely used bullet points.

- Q.11
- (a) This was not well answered on the whole. Some improbable names were suggested, among them, somewhat surprisingly, Perotin!
 - (b) Responses were more successful here, though some only managed one correct answer. A small number named the solo instrument as a trumpet, which naturally affected the marks awarded.
 - (c) All options were in evidence, unfortunately with the correct answer being the least frequent.
 - (d) Generally not well answered, with “*appoggiatura*” being especially disappointing. Some failed to provide bar numbers, merely giving answers such as *tenor solo* and *continuo*.
 - (e) The diminished 7th was identified by a pleasing number of candidates; the 3rd inversion dominant 7th, however, evaded recognition by all but the most perceptive of candidates, with a fair number leaving it blank.
 - (f) This was much more successfully answered.
 - (g) As was this.

- (h) “Discussing” the use of voices required more than just listing the order of entries of the soloists in the movement – i.e., candidates should not have expected to get all three marks merely for giving the bar number of each solo entry. The **unaccompanied** bass voice (or initial solo statements), the SATB homophonic texture from bar 51 were the favourite correct answers. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates chose to write on aspects other than the voices.
- (i) A number lost valuable marks here, with some puzzled by, or appearing not to know the meaning of, the word “tonality” – e.g., *soloists use simpler melodies ... , when the soprano solo enters the tone changes to a more expressive and sad one* or *(bar 51) the tone changes to antiphonal*. Others confused tonality with harmony. Even had this been the question, candidates did not always supply sufficiently detailed information on the subject – e.g., *strings play a chord every 2nd and 4th beat*.

Unit 6 [New A Level]

The new exam specification and paper format appears to have caused few problems for centres/candidates, except perhaps for one (the sole candidate at the centre) who made no attempt to answer Q9. (There was nothing elsewhere on the paper to suggest that this candidate could not have answered these questions.)

The three set work format (one principal, two secondary) also appears to have worked well for the most part, though some candidates may require some practice in getting the correct balance between all three set works in the final (extended writing) part of Qs1&2. Disappointingly, however, some candidates confused musical details concerning the three set works – almost exclusively in the Impressionism option. Perhaps having the same composer (Debussy) for two set works was a factor here, while the 21st century pieces are also more diverse, so more distinct. At times, it seemed that musical knowledge of the secondary set works was less secure than that of the principal composition, while, on the other hand, for some candidates the final part of the questions proved to be very nearly their only source of marks. A very small number of candidates, having answered the questions on “Reflets dans l’eau” or “Night Dance No.1” to a very high standard, fell at the last hurdle in Q1(e) or Q2(f). When this did occur, the loss of marks was very disappointing, particularly in an exam in which the grade boundaries are so restricted.

The similarity between the format of the AS and A Level questions in the three options meant that there were no real problems here, either. On the whole, the second question was answered more successfully than the first (particularly in the “Popular Music in Wales” option), with some answers in the first question being disappointing – see later remarks on the individual questions.

There was a wide range of marks in evidence in the set works questions, where the Brahms symphony was more popular than Verdi’s Requiem. Indeed, marks were quite polarised here, with some candidates having obviously learned their work thoroughly while others seemed to lack the technical expertise and musical knowledge required to answer such questions well. Once again, terminology caused problems.

The essays, as in the last spec, were generally disappointing – see comments below – with a real need for musical detail to be given by candidates rather than vague generalities. Even with very good candidates, it seemed the norm to mention a work then add some general comments on it, but it was rare to encounter specific, relevant musical information.

Section 1

Area of Study F: Strand 1: Impressionism

- Q.1 (a) A disappointing number made no attempt to address the question, choosing instead to give a general description of the musical features of the passage – e.g., *sustained accompaniment, descending chords bass clef*. Some candidates were less technical in their answers – e.g., *fits into the form as it paints a picture of what the water is doing*.
- (b) (i) Again disappointing on the whole, especially considering there are only two basic thematic ideas in the piece. There were many incorrect answers, of which bar 33 occurred most frequently. Incorrect answers here meant that answers to (ii) were of necessity also unsuccessful.
(ii) Although the question specified melodic/motivic material, some attempted to comment on other musical features, such as harmony.
- (c) (i) “Octatonic” was the favourite (and incorrect) answer. All options were underlined, though “quartal” only rarely.
(ii) Some answers were very vague – e.g., *harmonies are richer and more expressive – while some mentioned aspects not related to harmony – e.g., triplets, motif x is reflected in bar 75, harmony in octaves (90-91), harmony is scalic or chords are played in triplets*. Answers even spawned a new technical term – *unisonic*. Only the best candidates referred to the Bbm substitute for Db.
- (d) Here, a small number referred to the Db in the final two bars (i.e., just the single Db major chord) as a pedal, while poor use of terminology was the reason for many losing marks – e.g., *RH chords in unison or imitation in bars 81-86*. Some answers were disappointingly naïve/simple – e.g., *chordal or light in texture*. Curiously, some referred to glissandos here.
- (e) Since this final question is worth 10 marks, candidates are advised to read it carefully to ensure they fully comprehend what is required of them. Sadly, some candidates appeared not to know what “form” meant. One described the structure of *Reflets* as *consisting of falling triads and octatonicism*. Another candidate filled the entire space given for the answer (plus an extra 6 lines of their own) with (otherwise correct) information on the tonal schemes of each of the three set works, without once relating them to form. An otherwise good candidate spoke in terms of an *arpeggiated structure with increasing notes that add momentum the form of the piece (Reflets) slowly rises and goes back into falling and rising motion*. Perhaps most disappointingly, more than one candidate confused the form (and other aspects) of the three set works, despite having access to the scores. At the other extreme, there were answers that not only accurately and succinctly outlined the form of each piece, but dealt perceptively with “unusual” features in the use of what are considered to be otherwise traditional formal types.

Area of Study F: Strand 2: Chamber Music in Wales

- Q.2 (a) As in Q1(a), “form” was completely misunderstood by a small number of candidates. Others gave the bar numbers of each section within the extract but did not relate them to the piece as a whole.

- (b) (i) There was a disappointing number of wrong answers here.
- (ii) Several mentioned the link with Tone Row 1, or were even more specific, comparing the semitonal motion in both. Some, however, perhaps misreading the question, seemed intent on finding a difference rather than a relationship.
- (c) A good number answered correctly, but “atonal” made up quite a proportion of the answers. Possibly, they failed to read the question properly and did not concentrate only on the piano part.
- (d) Terminology was occasionally a problem here – e.g., *flute and piano play in a monophonic texture (147)*, which does not mean the same thing as “flute and piano (RH) melody played in 8ves”, which the candidate almost certainly intended. This is yet another example of how incorrect use of simple musical terms can lead to needless loss of marks. The more perceptive candidates mentioned the use of rests and the different (type of) time signatures used here.
- (e) Most candidates referred to the reappearance of the piano figuration from Dance 1a; slightly fewer were able to accurately locate the earlier occurrence of the flute part from Dance 1B, however. Hardly anyone mentioned the re-establishment of C minor as the tonic key.
- (f) In spite of *Night Dance No.1* being specified in the question, many candidates wrote on all three Night Dances as a group, so claiming that the most notable difference between the three set works was that there were three movements here rather than just one. (Fortunately, some of these candidates subsequently went on to talk briefly on *Night Dance No.1* and so gained some credit for their answer.) As in Q1(e) some good candidates lost valuable marks here, one of whom merely wrote generally on all three set works, hardly referring to form at all. This question was not successfully answered on the whole, and, again as in Q1(e), there was some confusion as to the individual form of each set work.

Section 2

Area of Study F: Strand 3: Popular Music in Wales

- Q.3 (a) There was more than one acceptable answer here, and incorrect answers were few and far between.
- (b) (i) This was answered disappointingly. Several heard the G (second box) but it was rare to find the correct C# in the first box. Some heard C natural.
 - (ii) Some answers were confused – e.g., minor 3rd. Again, the correct answer (sus4 or merely sus) was rarely given.
 - (c) “Perfect” and “plagal” were found fairly frequently, rather than the correct “imperfect”.
 - (d) The term “rhythm” again seemed to mystify the majority of candidates! Answers included *anacrusis*, *syllabic* and *stepwise movement in the melody*. Some decided not to attempt the question at all. Despite the wording of the question, “syncopation” was occasionally given as an answer.

- (e) Two correct answers were a rarity here. Most candidates managed just one mark, with “false relation” and “bass riff” appearing in equal numbers.

Q.4 A small number of candidates began by giving a potted history of the Manics, rather than getting down to the job at hand. Despite this, there were few poor answers here, with many candidates scoring at least half marks. The problem occasionally appeared to be getting the correct balance right. Some wrote copiously on the extract (not always, however, sticking to “use of instruments”), but then all but ignored referencing “at least one other song” as requested. On the other hand, some wrote sparingly on the extract, choosing instead to spend their time either commenting on the Manics’ musical style in general or listing several songs with, at times, quite insignificant comments on each. Many commented on vocal material/use of voices, in spite of the question specifying use of instruments only.

Area of Study F: Strand 4: American Musical Theatre

- Q.5 (a) Many answered on tonality as well as/instead of harmony here. A good number heard 7th, 9th and/or diminished chords, failing to hear the passage’s single underlying major chord. The more perceptive candidates recognised the “progression” from a consonant (major) chord through dissonance caused by chromatic contrary motion back to the initial major chord. Some were more concerned with naming instruments than with commenting on harmonic features.
- (b) Correct answers were few and far between, with almost every conceivable interval between a minor 3rd and an octave being suggested.
- (c) Many misunderstood (or misinterpreted) this question, as answers such as *female solo* and *head voice used* indicate. Relatively few mentioned the melodic repetition in lines 1-2. References to the sustained notes and syllabic writing were the favourite correct answers.
- (d) On the whole, this was well answered. Many heard the pedal notes, the descending (chromatic) line, the syncopation and ostinato – and were usually able to locate them accurately.
- (e) Again well answered. Some had some difficulty identifying the oboe (often calling it a flute or clarinet) but usually still gained the mark for an accurate description of the music. The timpani roll, tremolo strings, piano chords and French horn (also occasionally misidentified) statements of the “Sunday motif” were all given. The cymbal crash, however, appeared to go largely unnoticed.
- Q.6 Some candidates said very little on “Bless the Lord”, focusing their attention instead on an (apparently prepared) run-down of a random selection of Schwartz numbers. Several more, even when they did provide some detail on the extract, devoted too much space to the question’s “comment on at least one other work” instruction, giving it as much attention as the extract itself. Otherwise, candidates mostly demonstrated a sound knowledge of Schwartz’s musical style in general and were able to recognise them in the extract. As in the Pop Music option, there were few poor answers here, with many candidates scoring at least half marks.

Area of Study F: Strand 5: Jazz Legends

- Q.7 (a) The majority of candidates were successful here, with a variety of answers in evidence – e.g., the major key, the diatonic nature of the music (until the very last moments) and the underlying two-chord basis. The pedal largely seemed to have gone unnoticed.
- (b) Not so successful. Some answers concerned neither form nor tonality – e.g., *scalic movements* or *A and B use same chords*. Many candidates, however, identified the extra bars in A3 or had something pertinent to say about the major/minor keys employed.
- (c) Answers were mostly correct, but all possibilities were ticked.
- (d) Descriptions that were reasonably accurate, with an appropriate location, were all accepted – and there were many of them. Some answers, however, were too vague – e.g., *notes are embellished with improvisation*. Others heard trills.
- (e) Most candidates identified the “double time” (faster tempo) here, or that the new section began with reference to the B rather than A phrase as expected.
- (f) 1946, 1956 and 1976 all appeared as answers. Some of the reasons did not always accord with the music in the extract – such as the use of an electric piano - or suggested stylistic traits more related to either bebop or Davis’ electric/rock phase. There were, though, many correct answers.
- (g) Incorrect answers (e.g., *screaming through trumpet*) were few and far between here. The use of the mute (some could also identify it as a Harmon mute) was, of course, the favourite answer, but more technical details, such as the limited use of vibrato, the bent notes and even the half-valving, were all mentioned.
- Q.8 Answers were good overall, though some candidates chose (purposely perhaps?) to ignore mentioning the harmonic features as requested. Some, disregarding the information given that the piece was in Eb minor throughout, talked of sections in a major key. There was also some confusion at times over the identification of reed and brass instruments; after the initial appearance of the baritone sax, spotted by a good many, the saxes were barely mentioned. Some of the descriptions of the texture were consequently rather imprecise. As elsewhere in the paper, “polyphonic” seemed to have been used frequently as meaning “thickly textured/many instruments playing” with no contrapuntal connotation whatever. This, of course, affected the mark gained. The best candidates referred to the 7th/9th chords in, for instance, Chorus 2&3, and the dissonant nature of the piano solo in Chorus 4. The whole-tone element here was heard by a very small number, as was the rather unusual piano texture, with its wide distance between LH and RH. The “A Train” and “Black and Tan Fantasy” were (quite naturally) the favourite “other works” referred to by candidates, and for the most part successfully.

Section 3

Area of Study E: The Western Classical Tradition

- Q.9 (a) The vast majority missed the C# and E natural in bar 6, while only the most perceptive (or those with perfect pitch) heard the E natural in bar 7. Many, however, had no difficulty with the rhythm, so achieving at least half marks for this question.
- (b) Some thought the A natural in bar 10 was an Ab and so missed the following B natural. More disappointingly, several lost a mark for the rhythmic error in bar 11 by only circling one note and/or merely writing down one crotchet as the correction.
- (c) The mark was available for a number of harmonic features here – the V7 chord, the 4-3 suspension or an apt description of the decorative D – which at least one candidate correctly identified as an échappée. Many candidates seemed to have either misunderstood the question or not to have read it properly, sometimes merely naming the cadence or the basic chord progression in the last couple of bars. (If the V7 chord was correctly given here the mark was awarded, however.)

The Symphony

- Q.10 (a) Many candidates lost marks for writing a very general description of the passage in question without recourse to technical terms, so providing no relevant information on the musical content. Some stated the obvious or made rather vague statements such as *the bass provide harmonic support* or *this section has a lot of textural interest*. The location of the extract was sometimes given merely as *part of the exposition*, which was not sufficient as an answer. A good number considered it to be the 2nd subject. Neither was “transition” acceptable for “closing section”, the two terms describing two very different musical functions. More worryingly, one candidate referred to it as the *B section*. Several candidates’ answers appeared to be based on a purely visual description of (elements of) the score at any one point rather than being a true analysis of the music – e.g., *The upper strings introduce an ascending and descending melodic figuration which is based upon semitones and minor 3rds mostly or the melody is largely played in the strings with woodwind and brass playing chords and a crotchet melody*. Some candidates restricted their comments to simple statements pertaining to texture – e.g., *The woodwind and viola play in unison, while the trumpet, violins and the cello all play in unison*. Since the technical terms for texture were (as here) often misunderstood, this resulted in answers that made little musical sense.
- (b) This was answered more successfully on the whole. The same errors did turn up, but the more general nature of the question meant that marks were awarded for less technical musical features, such as the use of dynamics, *sf* articulation and the like, which approximated to the type of answers given in (a).

- (c) This proved more problematic. Many candidates merely named individual chords, making no attempt to provide information on the harmonic context. This is very similar to the situation in which candidates describing the use of instruments simply name some of them. Many recognised the key as C major (though several considered it to be C minor) and the diminished 7th chords embellishing the C major tonic chords were identified by some. The more knowledgeable alluded to the tonicisation of D minor in bar 409. Only a very small number mentioned the possible modal influence in the harmonisation of the “chorale” melody.
- (d) In general, this was well done.

Q.11 More than one candidate began by discussing (often in some detail) Beethoven's “Pastoral” Symphony, even though the question specified a post-Beethoven time period of 1830-1900, while one candidate wrote a page and a half without mentioning a single composer or work, other than briefly referring to the set work, which, of course, is not programmatic. Some wasted valuable time by devoting almost a page to a description of the format of a typical Classical symphony.

Very many unsubstantiated claims/statements were made by some candidates – e.g., (on Smetana's “Vltava”) *This (the programme) allowed Smetana to explore a variety of techniques and stylistic features.* What exactly these were was left to the examiner's imagination. Time and again, statements such as the following were made – (in relation to Liszt's “Dante” Symphony) *Both movements contain many programmatic elements in order to portray the story of the journey through hell and purgatory.* Again musical detail was entirely lacking. This was a shame, since very many candidates chose a variety of appropriate works. Unfortunately, however, there were many instances of mismatched composers and works in evidence, such as Mendelssohn's “Symphonie Fantastique” (mentioned by more than one candidate). There were also some puzzling statements with regard to some works. Mendelssohn's 4th Symphony, for example, was described as “monothematic” and as having all four movements linked – musical features that seemed to suggest Schumann's, rather than Mendelssohn's, 4th Symphony. In the majority of cases suitable works were mentioned, but virtually no information was given on them. Berlioz's “Symphonie Fantastique” was the exception. Several candidates wrote at some length on this seminal programmatic symphony – though not always remarking on the use of the “idée fixe”. Occasionally, too, information given was incorrect; such was the case with the candidate who tried to justify Berlioz's choice of an oboe to present the initial statement of the “idée fixe”. (This appears first on flute.) More commonly, candidates wrote copious amounts on the programme itself – not always correctly, with some citing a picture or poem as the work's inspiration – particularly the execution at the end of the 4th movement, describing in gory detail the fall of the guillotine, the thud of the severed head in the basket and even the dripping blood! It was extremely rare, however, to find any information on the musical means by which this gruesome depiction is achieved.

Vivaldi's “Four Seasons” was occasionally cited as an example of a Classical symphony; the same composer's “Planets” was also mentioned by more than one candidate (from different centres). Rachmaninov's “Isle of the Dead” (a good choice had it not been composed in 1909, outside the time limit set by the question) was attributed to Beethoven by one candidate. One candidate wrote very briefly on Berlioz's Requiem, while to another “Faust” was a composer rather than a work!

Some ignored the programmatic element almost entirely, focusing instead on matters such as the differences between Classical and Romantic style in general, usually describing them in terms of the size of the respective orchestras and of the advancement of orchestral instruments. As essays progressed, it was not unusual to find the programmatic connection becoming more and more tenuous. Schumann's 4th Symphony was a favourite with candidates, all of whom mentioned the four linked movements, but none of whom (understandably in the situation) wrote a single sentence on any programmatic elements. The situation was rather similar with Dvorak's "New World" Symphony, where the American link was mentioned, but specific examples of the "tribal" elements that were, according to several candidates, in evidence in the work were not given.

Q.12 Religious Choral Music

- (a) As in the similar question in the Brahms option, this was mostly answered correctly.
- (b) Again as in the Symphony option, marks were satisfactory here because of the general nature of the answers required; the opening *ff* dynamic, the tremolo upper strings, the timpani rolls (neither "trills" nor "tremolo" was acceptable here, despite being given by a disappointing number of candidates) and the legato, lyrical character of the "salva me" material were all common (and acceptable) answers.
- (c) The tendency was to name (random) individual chords rather than actually describing the harmony/tonality of the bars concerned (see comments on Q10(c)). The same diminished 7th chords were identified here as in the Brahms extract, and the more knowledgeable candidates named F minor as a tonic chord in bar 337.
- (d) There was quite a wide range in the quality of the responses to this question. Some candidates found it extremely difficult – to the extent of omitting it entirely in some cases – while others scored full marks.

Q.13 Fewer candidates opted for the Religious Choral Music element, but similar faults were in evidence here as in the Symphony essay. Some candidates (even the better ones) merely wrote a general account of religious choral music within the specified time period, ignoring the "word painting" aspect of the question. Even when the subject was broached, it was rare to find specific musical detail on the works mentioned. Liszt's Requiem was one of a very small number of works to receive some pertinent remarks on word painting, while Brahms' Requiem was also often cited as a work containing much effective use of word painting. Here, however, it was highly unusual to encounter a candidate who could give a specific musical example of genuine word painting. Instead, candidates focused their attention on more general remarks, such as the work *comforting the living rather than the dead, which Brahms accomplished by his choice of lyrics and also his soft choices in timbre and use of controlled textures*. One candidate's reference to the "Dies Irae" in both Brahms' Requiem and Mendelssohn's "Elijah" seemed to suggest that she had not actually listened to relevant passages in these works. As in the Symphony essay, there were a number of occasions where composers and works were mismatched or inaccurately described – at times even by the very best candidates. For instance, Brahms' Requiem, according to a number of candidates, began and ended in a minor key, with one otherwise excellent candidate even stipulating C minor. Candidates were well aware of Brahms' unconventional choice of text for his Requiem, but appeared not to have realised the extent to which this choice had influenced the character of each movement. Only a very small number of candidates had anything of real relevance to say as far as Brahms' Requiem was concerned – such as the lack of violins in the opening (major key) movement.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk