



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE (NEW)
MUSIC**

SUMMER 2022

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.

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MUSIC
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2022
UNIT 1 PERFORMING

General Comments

After a long hiatus, it was very encouraging to see the hard work that has been going on in centres to prepare for this element of GCSE Music. Moderators welcomed the return to the moderation process and commented on the pleasure they received on moderating such diverse and entertaining performances.

Centre Administration

There were many successful submissions where centres were well organised and consequently the moderation process ran smoothly. The uploads were carefully labelled as per the adapted 2022 exam board instructions and mark sheets were completed accurately with teacher and candidate signatures.

However, a significant number of centres had to be contacted for various reasons:

- Composition folios uploaded instead of Performing folios.
- Incomplete submissions.
- Many had forgotten to upload the Performance Timings sheet. Some centres included it with the first candidate alphabetically while others included it with the highest scoring or lowest scoring candidate. There were several instances where centres had not included a timing sheet at all; these had to be contacted and most were able to provide these promptly following a first request.
- Many mark sheets were missing authentication from teacher/candidate. Please note that signatures may be typed. This is an essential requirement before moderation can take place and centres are urged to check all mark sheets very carefully before uploading.

These omissions resulted in the need to contact centres for correct work to be uploaded. Thank you to Exams' Officers and music departments for uploading the extra requirements promptly in most cases.

Clerical errors were frequently in evidence, some of which were substantial e.g. if one piece was performed, the single mark was not doubled. Other clerical errors included:

- Marks not added/subtracted for awarded difficulty levels.
- Timing penalties not applied correctly according to the adapted 2022 instructions (especially where there was also a difficulty scaling to include).
- Mark sheet totals incorrectly transferred from Surpass to lamis

Marks were rectified by moderators.

Please note that ZIP files are not acceptable for uploading any Music submissions, and centres will be contacted via the examinations officer or head of centre to upload correctly as in the subject guidance document on the website.

It is also preferable for scores, mark sheets and Programme Notes to be uploaded as PDFs rather than Word documents if possible, with scores and Programme Notes separate to marksheets.

Please check for communications from WJEC for future instructions for uploading work correctly.

Moderators also reported that in several cases, if there were issues with submissions or teacher marking, centres had not acted upon the advice given in previous moderator reports.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Timings

The vast majority of candidates met the minimum timing requirements with several candidates performing well above the required timing, often performing more than one piece where the one would have sufficed.

Where the centre timings sheet was included, it was clear to see which candidates, if any, performed under the adapted time limit.

Unfortunately, there were instances of incorrect timings noted by centres – mainly being too generous, especially if they were close to the minimum time of 2 minutes. For future reference, please insert a repeat which makes musical sense. I emphasise ‘musical’, in that some candidates repeated sections or even whole pieces several times in order to achieve the minimum timing. This is not satisfactory practice and I would urge centres to explore further repertoire for such candidates.

It was sad to see some talented candidates being penalised for not reaching the required timing. Short introductions and links are acceptable but there were several examples of lengthy introductions and links included in centre timings. Some centres are still timing from the start of the teacher announcement (not required) or quoting the length of the MP3, rather than from the start of the candidate’s performance. There were instances also where centres had not timed any of the candidates’ performances.

Recordings

The vast majority of recordings were of very good quality indeed. Moderators reported a few instances where balance was an issue in recordings with the candidate’s part being overpowered by the accompanist; but on the whole, centres had carefully checked the quality and placing of microphones.

Drum kit recordings caused a few issues this year, as it was either evident that some candidates were unable to hear their own backing track, so did not play in time, thus affecting marks, or the backing track was played too loudly which overpowered the candidate, making moderation of Accuracy marks difficult. Distortion was also reported on several drum kit recordings. A contentious issue is the use of click tracks. I am pleased to report that most centres are now taking the exam board advice that this is a performance assessment, and if the click track is loudly audible, offering the candidate the same support as a piano accompaniment playing the melody to support a singer, then the difficulty level could be affected.

There were increasing numbers of vocal candidates who sang with mobile phone backing tracks. These mostly did not provide adequate support nor appropriate balance between the singer and the track.

A few centres edited the raw audio recording by adding effects to enhance the candidate's performance. As technology in schools is constantly advancing, it is important to remember that, as stated in the specification, recordings should be 'unedited'.

Many teachers still announce the candidate name and number, as well as the instrument played and the name of the piece. This is unnecessary and as stated above, should not be included in the timing of the submission.

Scores/Lead Sheets

Scores were generally well-presented and carefully annotated by most centres. The annotation of vocal scores in particular is a time-consuming process and centres who fulfilled this requirement are to be commended. Repeat marks were clear, and rhythmic and melodic variants were clearly marked in the relevant places on the score. Performance directions were added to the simplest of pieces. This really helped with the moderation process. There are still centres where unannotated scores (or no scores at all) were presented which made the moderation of marks for accuracy to the score very difficult to justify. It is not acceptable to state 'Candidate's own interpretation' or 'Ad lib throughout' at the top of the score and then award high marks for accuracy; this was occasionally the case for complete centres' submissions! Lyric sheets must not be submitted as substitutes for vocal scores. Again, moderators reported several guitar tab scores which bore no resemblance to the actual performance. Effective tab scores contained performance directions, rhythmic detail and where necessary, a melodic outline, which aided the moderation process.

The best lead sheets contained much required detail in terms of structure, chords, melodic and rhythmic patterns with clear performance directions. It was also very pleasing to see the detailed information provided with several DJ, sequencing and rapping performances. Some of these will be uploaded to the exam board secure website as support for teachers offering these options.

Scores were mostly submitted correctly, with pages in the correct order in one PDF format. It must be observed that:

- Scores should be scanned into one file with pages not uploaded as individual files.
- Only the score for the candidate's performance should be uploaded; some centres uploaded complete workbooks.
- Scores should be checked for orientation, missing pages and incorrect order of pages.

Some centres uploaded an original recording to compare with the candidate's performance in order to moderate marks for accuracy. This is not accepted by the exam board and these centres were contacted and asked for scores or lead sheets.

Difficulty Levels

For the majority of centres, difficulty levels were correctly applied, with the abbreviations of ESL (Easier than Standard Level), SL (Standard Level), MD (More Difficult than Standard Level) or the exam board grading indicated on the mark sheet. It was also helpful for moderators if the mark sheet indicated that the difficulty level had been awarded by the exam board.

The complications arose when the music was an easier or shortened version of a graded piece e.g. different versions of Einaudi's 'I Giorni' and Beethoven's 'Für Elise'. Centres are encouraged to contact the exam board if in doubt regarding the difficulty level of a piece, which is not obvious from the performance descriptors in the specification.

Repertoire

It is not surprising that given this year of choice, nearly all candidates that were moderated gave solo performances. Very few ensembles were submitted, although the majority of those heard were carefully chosen to best display the candidates' strengths.

Most centres chose appropriate repertoire which reflected the skills and diverse musical interests of their candidates. Centres are to be applauded for providing candidates with such a wealth of repertoire and it was obvious that the majority of candidates thoroughly enjoyed displaying their performing strengths. For the most part, centres submitted pieces found in the syllabuses of music boards including Rockscool, ABRSM and Trinity.

The performances ranged from simple pieces to highly technical submissions. It was interesting to note that in addition to instrumental and vocal performances, there were far more sequencing, rap and DJ performances, some of which were of an extremely high standard. There were instances of inappropriate language in some rap and DJ performances which is not permitted; it is wise to check material before candidates embark on their performance preparation.

Vocal candidates have definitely moved away from the popular repertoire of three years ago e.g. songs from 'Wicked' and 'Les Misérables', in favour of more contemporary musicals such as 'Hamilton', 'The Last Five years', 'Waitress', and 'The Addams Family'. Most candidates had chosen totally appropriate pieces for their particular performance standard, and this is to be commended. There were some really excellent and outstanding performances, all worthy of full marks. Many others ambitiously played pieces of a higher grade that were clearly beyond the candidates' current capabilities and submitting a SL or even ESL piece would have gained these candidates more marks across the three assessment columns. This was the case for some weaker candidates who, had they played simple pieces with dynamics and expression, would have fared better.

There were some very simple keyboard pieces where the candidates only attempted the right hand part. Please note that such pieces are unlikely to score higher than Band 2 for Technical Control as normal piano technique involves using two hands. Also, please ensure that performance directions are marked on the score.

In the few ensemble pieces submitted for moderation, there were one or two centres who submitted what they described as ensemble performances but should actually be classed as solo performances, since the candidates performed solo parts with other performers providing what would be described as an accompaniment or harmonic support. For future submissions this would be a concern. It is therefore important that centres confirm the requirements of an ensemble performance and check with the exam board if they are unsure.

Programme Notes

The standard of Programme Notes was very mixed, ranging from no submission at all, to a single paragraph in a few cases, and a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the performance piece from the best candidates.

The latter demonstrated excellent attention to detail regarding the chosen elements and were well-structured and logically written with excellent use of musical terminology. The evaluations of the technical demands were equally detailed, focussing clearly on specific areas of the chosen piece. The weaker efforts rarely mentioned musical elements or the technical demands, concentrating instead on interesting facts about the composer/performer, or adding too much biographical or historical information.

Some of the candidates appeared to have copied background information from websites as there were hyperlinks present in their documents. Several candidates failed to mention the link to the Area of Study; this is a requirement for the Programme Note as detailed in the Specification.

The specification asks for detailed explanation of three or four elements which are featured most prominently in the music and the technical demands of the chosen piece. Some submissions covered too many elements at the expense of detail. Others evaluated their performance instead of describing the technical demands of the piece.

The marking for Programme Notes was generous in several centres. Marks in the top band cannot be awarded if the candidate presents an evaluation of his/her performance rather than the technical demands of the piece. Several centres awarded top marks to candidates who described their performance.

It was sad (but possibly understandable this year) to see some gifted candidates who did not attempt a Programme Note. This area of Unit 1 offers valuable marks and candidates should be made aware of this requirement and the final marks affected with a non-submission.

Assessment/Overall Standard

Most centres had used the assessment criteria carefully and thoughtfully and therefore marked candidates appropriately.

Several performances were truly excellent and some centres seemed reluctant to award full marks when it was fully justified at this level. Sometimes, centres were generous in the Accuracy column when there were several inaccuracies in relation to the score or where performance directions were not observed.

Unfortunately, there was a common trend to mark quite accurately for middle and high ability candidates, but mark quite harshly for the lowest candidates. Some centres were awarding marks for accuracy from band 1 where the performance definitely warranted marks from a higher band, as there was evidence of fluency and accuracy in the submission. Several moderators reported evidence of 'double penalising' under Accuracy and Technical Control. If a performance generally contains intonation issues, then marks should be lowered for Technical Control. However, if there are occasional moments when notes are not on pitch, then marks for Accuracy would be compromised.

As mentioned earlier in the report, simple pieces which are performed accurately and fluently, observing performance directions, may score highly for Accuracy, but due to the limited nature of the piece which does not afford the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate a high standard of instrument specific skills, marks would be lowered for Technical Control.

It is vital that scores are annotated appropriately if centres are to award top marks for Accuracy. Vocal candidates cannot achieve top band marks for Accuracy if centres are marking from a lyric sheet.

I strongly urge centres to take note of advice given in previous moderator reports to centres as there was a tendency for the same issues of marking, administration, scores or levels of difficulty to be repeated this year.

As moderators we would like to acknowledge how difficult it may have been to prepare candidates for submission this year and we would like to pass on our genuine congratulations and thanks to all teaching and peripatetic staff who have persevered and helped all candidates to provide musical performances to be proud of.

Summary of key points

- Take note of advice given in previous moderator reports.
- All files must be uploaded and labelled as according to the guidelines issued by the WJEC.
- It is vital that scores are annotated appropriately.
- For 2023 and beyond, confirm the requirements of an ensemble performance and check with the music team if unsure.

MUSIC
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2022
UNIT 2 COMPOSING

General Comments

Administration

Uploading

The majority of centres uploaded sample coursework correctly and in line with WJEC guidelines. Most work was clearly labelled, though there were some instances where the title of the mp3 composition file did not match the title of the composition as noted by the candidate in the composition log. Whilst this was not a problem this year as candidates only submitted one composition, this could be an issue in future years as we return to the full assessment process. Zip files were not always as easy to access; the best type of files (from the perspective of the moderator) were those uploaded as pdfs. Word documents had to be downloaded, whereas a pdf file opened in a tab in Surpass which made the process quicker and easier.

All centres responded promptly to the notification of any missing work - or indeed, incorrect uploads, clerical errors, performance files instead of composing file, or errors in transferring marks to IAMIS (with one moderator reporting an extreme example where some candidates had been given three times as many marks as they should have been in IAMIS, whereas another would have lost 39 marks!). Some work had been uploaded in a variety of separate files to accommodate the individual parts of the musical score. For future reference, please ensure that these are collated into one document. Submission guidelines are on the website.

Scores and recordings

Scores ranged from excellent, containing details such as dynamic, articulation and expression markings, to non-existent. There were some examples of handwritten scores (which are perfectly acceptable). Some candidates produced informative lead sheets and descriptions, although there were still cases where centres submitted screen shots without any further annotation. Please remind all candidates that additional annotations and explanation must be added to screen shots to describe the specific musical details, and where key themes were presented and subsequently developed. One centre did not produce any scores at all. The inclusion of this accompanying paperwork still does not appear to be always regarded as a necessity, although it is clearly set out as an essential requirement in the specification. Not all candidates composing songs or raps submitted the lyrics.

Overall, recordings were of an excellent standard, mostly ripped directly from the computer software. Some play the music from the computer and record it on another device, rather than ripping it from the device, which affects the sound quality. Several moderators reported of talking and background noise over some live performances.

Occasionally, the balance was not particularly good, with voices/instruments being rather faint, or even missing. A number of recordings included noisy click tracks, and there were also others with parts that seemed not to have been quantized and so sounded out of time.

Please be reminded that there is no requirement to announce the recordings.

Some songs had been presented as midi files, with but with the vocal line recorded as live audio. This was very effective and invariably meant that the result had a better underlie of the text. Candidates had obviously reflected on where the stresses of the text fell with the melody through performing the music, and then modified the result as necessary.

Candidate Logs

Most candidates typed their logs which assisted the moderation process. There were a few handwritten composition logs, and whilst this is not discouraged, moderators felt that these were a little difficult to read at times.

The quality of written work varied considerably. Some candidates were able to describe and evaluate the composition process using a broad range of specific music vocabulary. Most were concise and clear in terms of intentions, the process of composing and the inspiration or influence. Many candidates were specific in stating their chosen brief, with some selecting to use current or modified previous WJEC or EDUQAS briefs.

Other written work, however, demonstrated a lack of understanding as regards the creative process, whilst other candidates were not able to explain how their pieces linked with the chosen briefs. Other logs were way too 'waffly' or analytical, with some candidates repeating the information which had been also detailed on the leadsheet. Writing long descriptive paragraphs in the 'state the brief' section are unnecessary. In one case, the teacher had written several of the logs, not the candidates – please be respectfully reminded that the candidate log is for the candidate to complete.

Quite a large proportion of candidates had simply written 'free brief' or left it blank.

The candidate log (available to download from the website) asks clearly for some important pieces of information, and careful attention must be paid to all parts of the log. Many candidates left sections empty, or inserted incorrect information (e.g., ticking that the work was all computer generated, only for the moderator to listen to someone singing, with no details to explain the situation).

There are still candidates who do not make clear what software has been used. Many candidates using loops in their composition (and there seems to have been a massive reliance on loops/pre-set rhythms/arpeggiations in the current session) left the section about loops blank or wrote 'none'. Moderators must be able to know exactly what the candidates' own work is; there were reports of almost identical 'backing tracks' from some centres where it was clear that the material was not original.

Other candidates mentioned the inclusion of samples in the relevant section of the composition log, but the information about the original sample was limited and as a moderator it was often difficult to know and understand how the material had been edited. For example, candidates may not even say which part was based on a sample or even describe how the sample had been developed.

Even more importantly, many candidates are not correctly completing the section of the log where they are meant to explain how other people have learned their music in the absence of a score.

Many candidates played/recorded all the parts themselves, which was impressive. Some students wrote "my teacher did/said..." throughout the log, and often it was not clear where and when candidates were entirely responsible for elements of their work.

Moderators gave examples of various solo drum kit pieces - but one contained little to no original material as the candidate stated they used 'the generic accompaniment pattern that everyone learns'. The musical details should have been included.

Some candidates mentioned in their log that they had been involved in the 'Dyfed Young Composers' project - in this situation also, candidates need to be clear on what specific advice (if any) they had been given.

Please remind candidates of the necessary requirement to fully complete the section of the log which asks how the recording was produced. When there is no score and other performers are involved in a live recording, how the candidate retains responsibility for the creation of the musical content is often not at all convincing. Guide instrumental or vocal lines, either sung, or played on keyboard by the candidate must be included. We can only assess and appreciate what work is clearly the work of the candidate.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Requirements for 2022: *Candidates were required to submit ONE composition, either in response to one of the four set briefs set by the Board, or a free composition for which they set their own brief.*

Suitable Tasks

Most tasks were fit for purpose. Compositions for drum set solo do not offer the candidates the full spectrum of marks, particularly in assessment column 1. There were also some examples of dance tracks, EDM and Einaudi style "modern minimalism" works, where pieces felt as though they were ambient rather than demonstrating thoughtful musical development. A number of centres presented class tasks, and these were formulaic, limiting creativity. One moderator reported of a situation where the entire class had all presented 12 tone row pieces, (all using 3 instruments, all using glissandos and trills, and extremes of dynamics). Such pieces had obviously been worked out mathematically (and the tone rows were included) but little thought had been given to the texture, and how the parts worked together, as there was no interaction between instruments. Such outcomes lack individual creativity.

Briefs

While some candidates responded to one of the set briefs, most enjoyed the challenge of the free composition, and there was a huge variety in terms of the tasks being attempted. Most students wrote detailed briefs which allowed them to identify clearly chosen genres and then match musical decisions appropriately. A large number of centres had clearly identified their students' interests and strengths and that directed the creative processes.

All moderators reported of candidates who did not stipulate a specific brief at all, just stating 'free composition' on the log. Others failed to state their brief clearly enough e.g., 'guitar music', 'some film music', 'music for electric instruments', and so on.

The GCSE specification clearly states:

'Composition briefs...(must) always provide details of the audience or occasion, plus additional musical details. Examples of composition briefs can be found in the sample assessment materials.'

Future candidates could also be provided with past set briefs to get the idea of what is required. They would do well to remember that a successful response to their selected brief is directly assessed in the assessment criteria i.e., AO2.1c.

Video game music was very popular (and quite well done, overall); there was also a lot of film and tv music, much of which was also quite successful, with a good attempt to use instruments to create colour and mood. There were a huge number of 'pop' songs and lots of pieces in standard forms such as binary and ternary. A Ukrainian candidate used the current 'situation' as a stimulus, which was interesting.

Content

The duration of compositions was generally consistent, with only a few falling below the minimum suggested requirement.

The work that was submitted this year was extremely varied, both in the choice and creation of briefs and in the quality of the final outcomes. Work from some centres had outcomes that were musically satisfying right across the sample. Others were more challenging difficult to moderate, as the musical material lacked substance and conviction.

Compositions that fell within the top marking bracket were stylistic and drew upon a wide range of elements, demonstrating excellent understanding of the music rudiments. Some candidates displayed impressive orchestration skills and made superb use of technology to realise multi-tracked and polyphonic ideas. Best practice was identified when the initial ideas had clearly been drafted, refined, and re-worked before being presented; when candidates had carefully considered the harmonic plan, including cadences and modulations, when texture had been handled with care, and included delicate contrasts to maintain interest, develop ideas and add complexity, when candidates skilfully combined the musical elements to create a sense of purpose and direction, and were confident in using several strategies to develop initial ideas. There was some excellent control of harmony in evidence which reflected a sophisticated grasp of cadences, modulations, circle of 5ths etc.

Compositions that fell within the middle marking bracket showed a satisfactory to good degree of musical style as candidates drew upon a fairly wide range of compositional techniques to create ideas. Further work by candidates in this category to improve phrasing and increase melodic clarity was advised. A number of compositions ended abruptly this year as the coda seemed to be a 'forgotten section'; concluding the composition with conviction is an important consideration, especially with reference to the assessment criteria for structure (AO2.1c). Finally, some moderators felt that some compositions were too long for the content presented - certain ideas outstayed their welcome.

A recurring observation was that a lack of refinement to ensure the initial material was convincing and secure made a difference to the standards of the outcome. Compositions failing to hit the highest marks had certain features in common: when candidates stuck with root position chords and utilized repeated basic chord progressions; when the work was heavily reliant on melodic repetition; when the melodies lacked shape, careful phrasing and a sense of direction; where candidates had not given sufficient thought to the structural outlines, using unnecessary repeat marks, or not working within any identifiable structure or storyline. Some candidates write of their intentions in the logs to keep the chord structure intentionally simple – not really a good ploy.

Compositions that fell within the lower mark bracket were often brief and lacked sufficient understanding and control of the musical elements. Such pieces often lacked focus and shape and included content that was considered to be extremely limited.

Some songs were well written, with a musically shaped melody, solid structure and an attempt to vary accompaniment patterns. The more successful tended to be those which were sung live, and -as has already been mentioned - these certainly had more successful word setting.

Many candidates presented pieces that were solely made up of loops, with no original material at all. There were some talented candidates who had composed impressive parts lines for some instruments but used loops for others. This limited access to higher marks. Across the full range, from the lowest to the highest bands of assessment, there were lots of examples of pieces which had no real sense of phrasing. The music meandered forward, without any cadences or any sense of shape, meaning the outcome lacked coherence. The more successful candidates explored and extended their initial ideas, structured their work carefully and ensured that there was variety and contrast with regard to a number of musical elements. Creation of mood and atmosphere through careful choice of instrumental timbres, as well as vocal sounds, was a strength in some compositions and it was clear that real care and attention had been given to creating an accurate reflection sense of the candidates' chosen styles/genres.

There seemed to be a decline in the use of composing devices which could be taught to candidates in short class-based composing activities. Sequences, pedal notes and ostinatos were under-used as were ideas such as rhythmic augmentation or diminution, and imitation and canon. There also seems to be a need to encourage some candidates (especially those who find composing more demanding) to experiment with interesting rhythmic features such as dotted rhythms, triplet patterns, scotch snap, and syncopation.

Good harmonic work included use of inverted chords, modulation, cadences and thoughtful progressions in a diatonic (and sometimes chromatic) sense. Some candidates wrote well in the minor key (especially in the theme and variations option). There were also mature examples of harmony including added note harmony, especially in a jazz idiom. Weaker understanding was far more basic, sometimes based on modal ideas or unrelated passages with random and rather unconvincing chord progressions.

Candidates who were confident in their control of the musical elements were able to use subtle changes in dynamics, tempo and articulation to great effect, which had a profound positive impact on the subtlety of expression within the composition. There was also a huge variation on the use of rhythm; some had clearly worked at developing tied note rhythms, syncopation, triplets, dotted rhythms, scotch snaps, cross rhythms etc. Others barely deviate from crotchets and quavers. Centres may benefit from undertaking more short rhythmic tasks on specific rhythmic features to promote rhythmic variety in composers' work.

There were some great examples of Electronic Dance Music where the musical choices worked well, with candidates really understanding the style and characteristics of the genre. Too often though, the interesting sonorities of the synthesizers masked a lack of musical invention. If candidates are choosing EDM, studying the chosen genre would help both with structuring the work and exploring harmony; dance music is formulaic, so candidates would have a pre-existing structure to work with and sections to explore (introductions, build ups, break downs, drops etc). Often, candidates produced a series of hooks and riffs that did not quite complement each other.

Perhaps candidates could be advised to create a harmonic progression before creating the hooks and riffs to ensure that the independent layers work together. They could then explore the potential of each section.

Assessment

Many centres had carefully considered the assessment criteria thoughtfully and therefore marked the candidates appropriately.

The most impressive compositions were duly acknowledged for excellent work and in such cases, moderators were in full agreement with centre marks. Much of the work across the range was very fairly assessed, although there were centres where the marking was overly generous. Strangely, there seemed to be a lot of centres with one 'rogue' candidate that was very over marked.

Some centres seemed to give higher marks to pop/rock pieces that were often simple, using only four chords, with very little variation in accompaniment or development. Conversely, there were other phenomenal pieces that were not always fairly credited, including some extremely skilful songs, containing contrasting sections, interesting progressions and modulations which genuinely deserved Band 4 marks.

At times, a too generous mark had been given when a candidate had- attempted to develop initial ideas, but at times the ideas themselves were not strong enough. However, some of the very simple pieces were far more musically shaped and coherent than some of the more complex pieces. There were quite a few Blues pieces that didn't deviate very far at all from the 'given' pattern and lacked sufficient individuality - such pieces were clearly over-marked. Where work was considered to have been too generously assessed, it was almost always because moderators considered that there was a lack of refinement and meaningful, imaginative development. Ideas repeated without developing rhythm or melodic patterns were a common issue as was the rise of the 'four-chord trick' pieces which repeated the same progression and lacked harmonic (and often textural) variety. Similarly, there were also lost of examples where melodies seemed at odds with the harmony which under-pinned them, and this observation and the obvious lack of musical security had been seemingly overlooked.

Summary of key points

- All files must be uploaded and labelled as according to the guidelines issued by the WJEC.
- Ensure that all compositions without a score are accompanied by leadsheets and explanatory information, or fully annotated screenshots. Please refer to the GCSE Guidance for Teachers.
- Carefully all recordings for balance/missing tracks/interference/background noise.
- Candidate logs must state the software use and explain how loops or pre-existing ideas have been utilised. Furthermore, guide tracks for any part in a live performance not performed by the candidate must be included.
- Candidates must be encouraged to compose according to their abilities.
- Please be reminded that no credit is given for any idea (or interpretation of an idea) that is not the candidate's own work.
- Encourage individual working and avoid 'class tasks'.
- Keep the requirements of the GCSE assessment criteria at the forefront of all choices and thinking.

MUSIC
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2022
UNIT 3 APPRAISING

General Comments

Although there were several positive responses this year, it is advised that all teaching and learning must focus on the main elements of music **and the use of musical terms as listed in the specification**. Centres can use a wide range of musical examples from the four areas of study while giving the candidates enhanced experience of each element of music in a variety of genres. Advance information was published this year which provided details of genres, styles and sections of the set works to help with revision, therefore it was disheartening that many candidates struggled with certain questions especially relating to prepared works by Grieg and Manic Street Preachers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Prepared Extract

- Q.1**
- (a)** A large number of candidates did not identify the section heard in the extract. Section A2 is the only time when the theme is imitated.
 - (b)** Some candidates identified the accurate key at the start of the extract. The full name of the key was required.
 - (c)** Most candidates thought that the texture was homophonic in bar 2. In relation to part (a) the texture was imitative or polyphonic.
 - (d)** Some candidates accurately identified the melodic interval as a 6th and additional candidates highlighted that melodic movement was appropriately disjunct.
 - (e)** Many candidates were successful in providing the meaning of *arco*.
 - (f)** There were a small percentage of correct responses for this question-part. The ornament was a trill but many answers were related to instruments, dynamics and texture so this did cause some concern.
 - (g)** The majority of candidates precisely identified Grieg as the composer.
 - (h)** The majority of candidates correctly identified 1875 as the date when the music was originally composed.

This was the first year for the new set work 'Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance' by Grieg to be examined. It was felt overall that responses were quite disappointing as this was the prepared piece of music and some of the information could have been established positively before sitting this examination paper. It is suggested that centres focus on musical language and musical elements in each of the main sections of the set work. and discuss with candidates the general context and background of the piece in more detail. Candidates should be more thoroughly prepared for this part of the examination.

- Q2** In addition to musical content, this question assessed the accuracy of specialist terminology and the quality of written communication. Candidates were required to describe four elements of music. Even though it has been mentioned in previous reports, a large number of candidates wrote about many other elements of music not requested in the question. For future examinations, it is essential that candidates read the question carefully to ensure they do not merely list everything they hear in the extract of music. It was once again felt by the team of examiners that many candidates were still answering in the style of the old specification even though that last paper was assessed in 2017. Candidates had the option to write paragraphs about each element separately or write in a more chronological manner. They could also have used headings if they wished which would have focused their work more effectively and deterred them from writing about everything. It is important that the responses include clear location where appropriate. This question was worth 9 marks and candidates were expected to write a number of points about each musical element. Unfortunately, there were very few marks in the 8-9 category and the average was 4-5 marks. More detail and information were required generally for each element of music and potential changes throughout the extract of music. Candidates did not need to write two whole pages and it is important to note that rough notes in the box were not marked. Some candidates repeated points later in their work so it is important to check responses appropriately. Many candidates spelled the following words incorrectly: orchestra, violin, cello, harpsichord, accompaniment, performance and piece. To gain full marks in this question, candidates needed to describe all of the elements listed. Here is an example of a full mark answer (9 marks) – it is very succinct but provides positive responses about the elements required from the question:

In the extract I heard an orchestra (violins, violas, cellos, double basses, harpsichord) and a mixed choir (soprano, alto, tenor, bass). The string instruments were bowed and played with staccato and legato at different times in the music. The voices are melismatic and legato. The texture begins as a melody and accompaniment then becomes polyphonic (imitated) when other voices enter. The extract ends with a homophonic texture.

- Q.3** (a) Very few candidates achieved four marks in total when completing the missing rhythm. It is advised that pencil should be used in this question so that work can be erased easily and amended – the examining process was difficult at times because there were lots of crossed out note stems and beams. Most candidates were able to score at least half-marks in this question. It is of interest that a number of question-parts were un-attempted here.
- (b) The majority of candidates identified the instrument accompanying in the extract.

- (c) A large number of candidates incorrectly highlighted the tonality as minor when it was modal.
 - (d) The majority of candidates identified the style as Welsh Folk – unfortunately a minority incorrectly stated that it was Cerdd Dant.
 - (e) There were issues with this question and not many candidates ticked the correct two features. Sequence was sometimes popular as the correct response but many candidates did not recognise the answering phrase.
- Q.4**
- (a) A large number of candidates stated that the tonality was major when it was minor. It is important to listen to the intervals and chords rather than be swayed by a tempo or style.
 - (b) The majority of candidates identified the correct time signature.
 - (c) Some candidates recognised the tempo by providing an appropriate Italian term.
 - (d) Some candidates identified the dominant 7th chord at the start of the second extract.
 - (e) There were issues with this question and not many candidates responded with two correct melodic features of the brass parts. Some candidates recognised the fanfare, repetition and sequence. A very small percentage of candidates recognised the sustained notes, arpeggios/triads and disjunct movement.
 - (f) This question was answered quite well. Some candidates ticked more than one option in the second column and hence did not achieve any marks.
- Q.5**
- (a) Very few candidates identified the oboe as the solo instrument.
 - (b) Only some candidates selected the correct pitches heard by the oboe.
 - (c) Some candidates recognised the key signature which had two sharps.
 - (d) A large number of candidates identified the harpsichord accompaniment.
 - (e) Most candidates correctly identified the texture as homophonic with melody and accompaniment. There were also a range of incorrect answers for this question that consisted of melody, harmony and structure terms.
 - (f) Some candidates responded with diatonic harmony for this question. Very few candidates commented on the location of cadences or the number of chords used in each bar.
 - (g) About half of candidates identified the anticipation note and it was felt that this needed more focus in pedagogy. Sometimes the process of elimination can be useful in these circumstances.

- Q.6**
- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct time signature.
 - (b) Some candidates understood that the trumpet was muted. There were a range of written answers and illustrations here which were not accepted.
 - (c) Most candidates recognised the harp performed a glissando.
 - (d) A large number of candidates identified the major tonality.
 - (e) Very few candidates identified the bassoon as the solo instrument.
 - (f) The majority of candidates identified the correct family of accompanying instruments.
 - (g) Most candidates responded with the correct dynamic marking.
 - (h) Many candidates identified the two correct musical features of the accompaniment.

- Q.7**
- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct tempo.
 - (b) Some candidates described the rhythm correctly at the start of the extract.
 - (c) There were issues with this question and not many candidates responded with correct answers. Strummed was the most popular correct answer.
 - (d) The majority of candidates identified the correct section of the set work.
 - (e) Some candidates responded with the correct missing chords. Many candidates had written the chord Am in at least one of the boxes.
 - (f) There were issues with this question and not many candidates responded with correct answers. Arco (bowed) was the most popular correct answer.
 - (g) The majority of candidates identified the band performing in the extract.
 - (h) Unfortunately, only a small percentage of candidates correctly identified the specific style as Alternative Rock/Britpop.

This was the first year for the new set work 'Everything Must Go' by Manic Street Preachers. Again, it was felt overall that responses were disappointing as this is the set work and centres have had guidance and information in advance. The candidates should have an advantage in both prepared set work questions as they equate to 25% of the total marks of the appraising examination paper.

- Q.8**
- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct time signature.
 - (b) Very few candidates had full marks for describing the features of the introduction correctly. Popular answers included repetition, texture building and riff.

- (c) The majority of candidates identified trumpet as one of the wind instruments heard. For information, candidates did not need to specify which type of saxophone.
- (d) Most candidates identified the correct bars where a drum fill and chord change could be heard. This was completed effectively on the whole.
- (e) A small percentage of candidates identified the musical style as Funk, Soul or Motown.

Summary of key points

- Candidates must read the questions carefully and only respond with answers linked to specific elements of music requested.
- More focus is needed on the elements of music through the areas of study (e.g. a lesson on harmony could use examples from all areas of study).
- Candidates should be tested more on element headings (e.g. what are the typical answers for melody) without listening examples in the first instance. Several responses in the examination were incorrect but not even correct under the element requested.
- In particular, it was felt that more focus was needed on identifying woodwind instruments, harmony, melody and texture. It is advised to describe texture using the key words from the list of musical terms not simply thick or thin. However, if there is a change in texture credit is given for the words thicker or thinner.
- Candidates require more regular test exercises on each element of music before attempting the identification of listening extracts. It is important to know the possible answers when asked about structure, for example.
- Candidates need more support with note values.
- Candidates must use a pencil for any musical dictation activities so they can erase work making the examining process less difficult.
- Candidates need more focused work on melodic intervals which will improve answers linked to melody, harmony and tonality.
- Candidates must be encouraged not to leave blanks.
- Further information will be available in the forthcoming CPD to assist with the extended SPAG question, rhythm notation and melodic intervals.



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