



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE (NEW)
MUSIC**

SUMMER 2018

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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 2018
UNIT 1 PERFORMING

This report is based on feedback received from members of the moderating team for GCSE Music.

I should like to thank teachers for all the hard work they have undertaken during this academic year preparing candidates for the Component 1: Performing. On evidence, the process for the majority of centres has run smoothly with few glitches and teachers are hopefully finding that the new system of uploading pupil work presents few problems.

Centre administration:

There were many very organised and efficient uploads where correct files were labelled in a uniform manner with candidate name or number and solo/ensemble clearly visible; mark sheets on the whole were filled in correctly and marks adjusted for difficulty level.

Unfortunately, some moderators encountered several issues – missing student and teacher declarations, missing timings of individual pieces, miscalculations of marks and non-adjustment of marks for under-time performances and difficulty levels. Several centres had to be contacted for the correct work to be uploaded and I thank them for their swift responses.

Some teachers gave useful comments in the teacher comment box which were helpful in giving an insight into certain individuals' work. Some used this space to explain the content of ensemble performances, others noting the absence of work. This was particularly useful and avoided unnecessary messages to centres regarding missing work.

Please also note that 'Piece 1' refers to the ensemble on the mark sheet; several centres placed details of the solo performance in this space.

Timings:

This was sadly an issue for several centres when the submissions did not reach the minimum time requirement of four minutes. Some teachers had adjusted marks appropriately but several had awarded a mark for the performance of one piece. The specification states clearly: "a minimum of **two** pieces must be performed". There were several recordings where the teacher's spoken announcement of the piece was included in the timings noted as were long musical introductions; it is vital that teachers time from the candidate's entry. When this occurs it may have implications for the overall mark awarded and may incur an under-time penalty if it means the candidate falls short of the minimum requirements, as set out in the specification.

There is no need for an announcement prior to each recorded performance.

Recordings:

It is a pleasure to note that the majority of MP3 recordings submitted were of a high quality with the role of the candidate clear to the moderators. There were a few recordings which cut out after a few seconds. It would be really helpful for all moderators if centres will please check recordings in future before uploading; it delays the moderation process if centres have to be contacted regarding missing or short recordings.

Several schools had added reverb to their recordings to enhance the sound; this is not in line with the specification which states that the attempt should be 'unedited'.

In some ensemble recordings, where possible, parts need to be more carefully balanced; at times either the candidate or their supporting performers were especially prominent and it became difficult to distinguish the other parts and to judge the candidate's ability to maintain a balance.

Scores/Lead sheets

Although most centres had provided clearly annotated scores or lead sheets with the role of candidate highlighted, too frequently, scores and lead sheets were found to be lacking, either in their presentation (e.g. poor quality photocopies which obscured some notation), or in their failure to indicate significant deviation from what had been written (e.g. additional repeating sections, melodic/rhythmic variation). This was particularly evident in popular and musical theatre songs. Some teachers just wrote blanket statements across the top of the score e.g. 'performed freely' or 'with stylistic changes'. In order to moderate marks for accuracy, specific bars on the score must be either changed or bracketed with the words "melodic embellishment at this point".

There were examples too of solo copies submitted for ensemble with unacceptable comments such as "candidate adds improvised harmony parts"!

Lyrics with chords written above are not appropriate as lead sheets for vocal or guitar performances. It is essential for the moderation process that lead sheets contain detail as outlined in the specification with an outline of the melody and strumming pattern clearly indicated. Drum scores must show an indication of rhythmic patterns and structure.

Please note that the submission of YouTube links or recordings in lieu of scores/lead sheets is not admissible.

In cases where there is insufficient detail in the score provided, the highest marks cannot be awarded for accuracy as there is not sufficient evidence to support this.

Very often, the role of the candidate in an ensemble performance was totally unclear on the score. The clearest scores were those with the candidate's role highlighted.

Again, I urge centres to check the orientation of score pages and that all pages are uploaded.

Difficulty Level

On the whole, difficulty levels had been correctly awarded, although vocal music in particular was often quoted at a higher level when some of the songs offered were limited in their vocal range and rhythmically simple e.g. the song "Hallelujah". Please contact the WJEC/Eduqas Subject Officer if in doubt of difficulty level and consider carefully the pages in the specification which give a clear indication of requirements for each level. It is important to note also that pieces of Grade 4 standard which are simplified for the candidate cannot be stated as 'More Difficult' on the mark sheet.

There were a number of centres giving pupils Grade 3/4 pieces to attract marks for difficulty, but several lost more marks for accuracy and technical control which negated the extra marks. Centres choosing simple, more repetitive pieces for their weakest candidates fared much better.

Solo Repertoire:

Most candidates had chosen totally appropriate pieces for their solo performances commensurate with their ability and reflecting their individual musical interests which is to be commended. It was a joy to hear so many performances which were full of expression and musicality.

Across the centres, there was an impressive and exciting range of genres featured from classical solos to vocal rap performances, from bagpipe solos to outstanding djembe performances.

Again Rockschool and Trinity Rock and Pop proved to be popular with guitarists, drummers and vocalists with some impressive improvisations also offered.

Please note that for the purposes of an examination, explicit or otherwise inappropriate lyrics must be avoided.

Ensemble Repertoire:

It was pleasing to hear so many excellent ensemble choices, ranging from instrumental groups, piano duets, close harmony vocal groups to rap duets and some outstanding steel pan ensembles where the melody line was passed from one performer to the other, fulfilling the specification criteria admirably.

Some of the best performances were from pieces that had been arranged by teachers for their candidates. Scores had been carefully notated to include the role of the candidate which facilitated the moderation process.

Piano duets where the candidate performs the primo part, taking the melody throughout, do not meet the requirements for ensemble as per the specification. An alternative for piano players, which several centres offered this year, was the accompanying of other performer(s). This was a good choice for both advanced pianists and the less able, as accompaniments are readily available at a range of standards.

Musical theatre numbers are still popular but some ensemble choices in this genre were unwise e.g. "For Good", which contains far too much solo material and not enough opportunity for interaction; the same with "Panis Angelicus" where Part 1 takes the melody throughout. One centre swapped parts very successfully and annotated the score accordingly.

Centres should also take some caution when adapting solo repertoire for ensemble performance to ensure that it still meets the requirements of the specification; candidates must be able to demonstrate ensemble skills. This was evident in some Rock School guitar performances which were really solo performances again with accompaniment provided by a bass player and drummer. Similarly, vocal lines which take the melody throughout are considered to be solo performances.

Again, I urge centres to submit scores to the WJEC/Eduqas Subject Officer to confirm the suitability of certain ensemble pieces.

A significant number of centres used the same ensemble pieces for all of their candidates. I understand how this helps teachers to prepare pupils, but I do wonder if this practice offers candidates the best opportunity to gain high marks.

Teacher Assessment:

Overall, marking was deemed fair and objective and moderators reported that they were in agreement with many centres regarding the assessment of candidates' work. The quality of the work went from some truly magnificent, high standard performances to the very basic. The grids were used well on the whole; however, there were instances when candidates received a "double penalty" for intonation issues, scoring low marks for 'Accuracy' as well as 'Technical Control'.

Regrettably, some (very able) candidates were awarded zero for this component as the timings of their submitted performances failed to meet the requirements of the specification, as directed by the Regulators. Frustratingly, if some of these performers had been instructed to follow the written repeat markings, they would not have fallen short of this vital requirement!

Programme Notes:

In many instances, very good programme notes were submitted which were well expressed with use of sophisticated terminology, well presented, displaying a sound knowledge of theoretical aspects and strong language skills. The highest marks were awarded to those candidates who presented their programme notes clearly structured with the connection to an area of study and background, the use of elements and technical demands.

In several instances, too much focus was given on background and history and not enough detail and references to the musical elements used in the piece. Candidates are encouraged to use a range of information sources for the programme notes, but must ensure that they present work all written in their own words to be able to access the higher marks. Some failed to connect with an area of study and neglected to mention technical demands.

It was a shame that some candidates did not attempt this at all. Some centres had noted this, others had not which caused some confusion and unnecessary work in contacting the centre to confirm.

MUSIC
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2018
UNIT 2 COMPOSING

This report is a general overview based on feedback received from the members of the moderating team. I trust that teachers, and all those responsible for the guidance of future GCSE candidates in Music, will find the content of valuable use.

Administration

All centres uploaded their sample coursework this year in line with WJEC requirements. For many this was a successful process, for others, somewhat problematic. There were the usual problems of missing authentication signatures and errors in calculations, but of more concern this year were missing and /or incomplete files, tracks and documentation (including the necessary marksheets). Partial uploads were noted by almost all of the moderating team. Most centres were swift to respond to requests for the missing work, but unfortunately this was not always the case and on a few occasions the Composing work was uploaded under the Performing Unit (and vice-versa). Some work had been 'scanned', at times appearing very faint, occasionally loaded upside down and at times mislabelled. Best practice has been recognised by all the team as well-organised, clearly labelled, and uploaded on time! In an attempt to clarify, please note the following comments which may assist teachers next year.

- **Labelling work**

The file names must be clearly identifiable, and not too long. In all, there must be 7 items to upload - can I therefore suggest the following labelling system:

1. (Candidate number) Log
2. (Candidate number) Marksheet
3. (Candidate number) Evaluation
4. (Candidate number) Set brief - score
5. (Candidate number) Set brief - mp3
6. (Candidate number) Free brief - score
7. (Candidate 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.

- **Titles**

A number of candidates omitted to include titles for their work. Most were labelled appropriately and often imaginatively – other titles were felt to be totally unrelated to the music.

- **Putting marks on IAMIS**

There were some errors and miscalculations noted by moderators which affected the rank order.

Candidate Logs

The log is the opportunity for candidates to highlight their composing skills and display their understanding of the composing process to the moderator. Most took the opportunity to present the processes and decisions they had undertaken to produce their final composition, with some presenting very detailed explanation. This is valued and praised by all moderators as the **information supports the musical outcome**. It was acknowledged that standards were still extremely varied, and unfortunately there were many occasions when the procedures were still not clear; this usually related to instances when the recording was performed by someone other than the composer, or when the recording was different to the score. Some candidates omitted to state the brief, others did not surrender the required (or indeed sufficient) details of live performances, and disappointingly rather too many were vague, lacking in detail and sufficient explanation. Moderators noted logs that were left incomplete, or presented illogical information not showing understanding, or were not even attempted. Please remind candidates that completion of the log is a firm requirement of the specification.

Best practice/guidance for the candidate

- Type up the information and submit as a word document, with digital signatures
- Always state the selected brief in the space provided on the log, remembering to mention details of audience/occasion – it is not up to the moderator to seek out such details. There were a number of confused instances where one brief was stated on the front sheet, but another described in the log; as the musical response to the brief is assessed this is an important consideration
- Leadsheets must include details of the overall structure, harmonies, descriptions of the melodic and rhythmic content, and lyrics when a song is submitted.
- Explain the different choices made, the steps taken, the techniques employed and targets set in agreement with the teacher at each stage
- When no score is available, and in the case of a live performance, there must be a clear explanation on how parts have been taught to performers. This almost always lacks clarity: please remind candidates that credit cannot be given to any work that is not their own. If candidates are able to play sing each part, then they should multi-track the work themselves – this should not be a problem if they have taught others what to do. One centre had encouraged students to record the melodic line of their song on keyboard, then someone sang it above on a separate track, alongside the guide track; this was considered to be good practice
Please remember: the assessor must only credit what the composer has produced. When they perform what they have been ‘shown’, the question arises as to why the candidate did not record their own ideas
- Explain exactly how backing tracks have been created i.e. identify when pre-existing patterns have been used. When a candidate has created their own ideas, then credit is deserved.

Avoid

- The practice and explanation in the log of ‘I told them what to play and they played it for me’; this is not appropriate for examination work
- Relying on other people’s practical skills to improve the content of the piece with embellishments, added decoration or improved content

- Including explanation in the log which really doesn't make sense in relation to the music (e.g. 'I checked to make sure everything blended together'...if the piece is full of dissonance)
- Submitting work where the input of the candidate is unclear e.g. a song where apparently all the candidate has done is written the words
- Embellishing the work of the candidate e.g. when a candidate has supplied chord symbols/triads for an accompaniment and the content is 're-interpreted' for the recording by someone other than the candidate. When this occurs, ownership is lost
- Using 'sample' sounds without explanation of the source and use.

Scores/Leadsheets

Most candidates presented scores and /or leadsheets with their compositions. Most notated scores were very well presented, and some centres had clearly supported candidates in the preparation of leadsheets which were excellent - informative, well detailed and including snippets of notation and analyses within the overall structural outline which detailed harmonies and compositional devices. Unfortunately, moderators still reported folios which only presented screenshots (of little use in themselves) or songs without the lyrics and harmonies. Please note: when a score is not available, the inclusion of explanatory accompanying information is a firm requirement of this specification. It is encouraging to note that candidates are now also providing thoughts on dynamics and tempo /general performance markings, which demonstrates control over the musical elements. This year, there seemed to be more handwritten scores than previously; of course, this is perfectly acceptable if it suits the candidate!

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. A number of moderators 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 the 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 issues include background noise, incorrect positioning to 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.

Timings

Most centres submitted folios that satisfied the time requirements of 3 minutes, with many pieces lasting between 2 – 3 minutes. Some compositions were far too long, and most of these rather lost focus in terms of the structure.

Appropriate tasks

Most tasks were considered to be appropriate, though drum solos persist. At their best, these can include exciting rhythmic and timbral content, but they inhibit the candidate from showing control over such elements as melody and harmony. Some free compositions were presented as the result of class projects, with the whole class performing together to produce very similar and rather basic outcomes. This is not in the nature of the specification as we encourage individual working and a naturally differentiated outcome. It was pleasing to see that most centres encouraged candidates to work to their strengths.

Use of ICT

Centres are using a wide range of technology to encourage candidates to explore a range of musical elements and sounds, with some candidates describing their use of iPads and even phones. A few lament the lack of appropriate equipment in the department.

Thankfully most (but unfortunately not all) candidates were clear in their application of ICT, clarifying when and how samples and loops had been used - if at all. Some exceptional examples of the use of ICT were noted as candidates explained the processes of sequencing and balancing final mixes. Other work was drowned out by drum loops and swamped by reverb. All moderators advise the careful checking of the final audio mix-down, and respectfully remind candidates of the priority of working on the musical content and not getting too carried away with sound effects! Finally, moderators advised of the care needed to refine and quantize appropriately, as some outcomes were very basic – though conversely some were very complex and unmusical.

Evaluations

The quality of written work varied considerably from one centre to another. Many candidates had clearly observed the structure outlined in given guidance, and were able to reflect and evaluate the process and the outcome using a broad range of appropriate, specific vocabulary; other submissions were considered to be overly descriptive and regurgitated or re-worded information from the logs. Some pieces of written work lacked sufficient musical detail and disappointingly, a number of candidates (even one complete centre) did not submit any evaluations. Putting this last point into perspective, it may be worth reminding future candidates that the Evaluation is worth more marks than each one of the set works questions in the Appraising examination! Another centre took the log and evaluation to be the same document – unfortunately, this affected the marks. A good number of moderators felt that the evaluations linked with the 'Afanc' were the most successful, as candidates evaluated the success of their treatment of the elements in relation to the story.

Most responses to the task met the minimum required word count, a few were very short and insubstantial though others were excessively long: this gained no further credit. While being concise is an admirable skill, all of the evaluative work that fell short of the minimum required word count lacked the critical judgement necessary for accreditation in the top band. Some efforts by candidates in the same cohort were overly similar - while it was generally felt that guidelines are helpful, the modelling of an answer, or use of a 'template' is not appropriate. Please refer to page 23 of the specification which states: '**Feedback must be limited to general advice and teachers must not provide specific guidance on how to improve the work**'.

The vast majority of the marks were in band 2 and 3, with many of the centres' marks in line with the assessment grid.

Best practice/guidance for candidates

- Explain how the music links with, and reflects, the chosen briefs
- Explain the choice and use of elements in relation to the selected brief
- Mention the effectiveness of the final recording (many candidates omitted this)
- One centre had required candidates to include snippets of scores in their work to explain and highlight key points (certainly not essential, but considered to be an effective idea)
- The use of a sub-heading format enabled candidates to be more specific in their reference to the choice and use of elements, and the impact these had on the piece itself. The structure of the written evaluations was often competently done, with good reference to form, textures, melodic and rhythmic work, colour, dynamics,

instrumentation/voices etc. i.e. elements and the impact they have on the composing.

Compositions

- **General content**

The new specification has introduced slight changes to the requirements for coursework, and it was felt that the extra emphasis given to the briefs has been a positive move, with compositions being generally focussed. Many candidates submitted compositions of a similar genre, but this was perfectly acceptable and it was felt that this allowed them to work to their strengths (e.g. two piano pieces, 2 pop songs, 2 woodwind pieces, 2 film scores etc). In most cases (though not all) compositions from within a centre drew upon a wide range of genres and musical combinations with pleasing success, with good use made to create interesting textures, and achieve variety and contrast in the use of the musical elements. It is commendable when centres allow candidates to explore their own interests and develop their own strengths.

Compositions recognised as being in the **top assessment band** were focussed, had structural clarity, thoughtful melodic substance and rhythmic ideas of interest; candidates made use of varied/extended chordal patterns and demonstrated flair, and stylistic invention – interplay between parts was natural, textural ideas were varied and the interweaving of ideas was effortless and creative.

Compositions that fell in the **band 3** showed a satisfactory to good degree of musical style as candidates drew upon a fairly wide range of ideas and techniques to create interest – further work to improve phrasing, increase melodic clarity and refine and develop ideas was advised by moderators here.

Compositions in the **lower assessment bands** were brief and lacked sufficient harmonic and melodic understanding.

Relating to all the work, it was noted by all moderators that in terms of the **harmony**, set triads/4-chord tricks were a common starting point for many pieces. Once established, the better candidates then went on to explore other progressions and used more interesting chords – but many pieces copied the patterns relentlessly. It almost appeared to be the default setting from some centres where all candidates had approached their compositions in the same way (seen in the information provided by candidates in their logs). The best candidates had invested time in harmonic exploration of chromatic and diminished chords and modulation to keys other than the obvious dominant, relative major or minor and this was impressive. Unfortunately (perhaps in line with many examples in the pop music industry) reliance on repetition and the use of a limited chord progression seems to be a growing trend, whereby the **melody** lines were also often triadic and seemed to be of secondary importance. Much melodic work was awkwardly placed, lacking direction, structure, focus and character. The use of **texture** was a strength in many pieces – imitation was the most prominent device, though also noted was very pleasing use of layering, and antiphonal dialogue. In terms of **rhythm** and **metre**, some work did not venture beyond crotchets and minims with the occasional sets of quavers –but there were many occasions when candidates tried to use as many different rhythms and time signatures as possible, giving in a muddled outcome which lacked clarity. Candidates are best advised to refine all initial ideas carefully, then work on ways to develop their initial material in a musical and focussed way. Those candidates who included **dynamic markings, articulations and performance directions** were in a good position to gain further credit in their ‘control’ of the musical elements.

N.B. the use of repeat marks: there is no benefit in including repeat marks solely for the purpose of extending the piece. Some were included for no obvious structural reason, and contributed nothing extra. Even when they have been included - as expected - in a certain structure (such as Binary Form), the repeat is not counted within the total time allocation.

Response to the set brief/Areas of Study

Brief 1: Musical Forms and Devices

Ternary Form was for the most part successfully conveyed with development of certain ideas evident. There were examples of well-structured pieces with a sense of melodic shape, a pleasing understanding of key relationships, and an excellent balance between Section A and B to develop ideas. Some responses were less convincing – e.g. where the B section was completed unrelated, where there was a lack of variety or development or where the form had been misinterpreted (i.e. ABCA – as identified in the logs). There was an abundance of ‘waltzes’ often presented by entire cohorts; some moderators felt that this brief held opportunity for a greater variety of interpretation.

Brief 2: Music for Ensemble

Perhaps the least popular choice, but candidates here offered successful musical interpretation between the characters, using sophisticated musical devices and content. One candidate stated that they had not chosen this brief because they couldn’t speak Welsh – please note, there was no requirement that the content here had to be in Welsh. It was open to interpretation and could have been in any language!

Brief 3: Film Music

The brief most favoured by candidates. Almost all included appropriate sounds and ideas, though many compositions were naïvely presented and constructed; the best were highly imaginative, atmospheric, full of originality and demonstrating excellent use of layering, contrasting timbres and textures, with ideas cleverly manipulated and developed. Many candidates used Logic Pro here to very good effect, but it was encouraging to see a number of impressive piano pieces and orchestral pieces in a more traditional style as well. Some film pieces seemed a little lengthy and repetitive, the less successful were no more than a string of short unrelated ideas. There was much use of dissonance – not always well controlled.

Brief 4: Popular Music

This was also a very popular choice. Many candidates used GarageBand (some more successfully than others), others performed all their own ideas using tracking facilities, while certain candidates created their own backing tracks (through a programme such as Sibelius, Musescore or similar) and performed their ideas themselves – all excellent practice. There were some impressive rock songs, and indeed, most captured the style very well. I would advise against the use of a ‘fade-out’ at the end of a song; as it is intended for an exam where structure is assessed, a strong conclusion would be far more beneficial. The more successful outcomes varied the accompaniments, developed ideas, added countermelodies /backing vocals and included a contrasting middle 8/instrumental. Some songs included short sections of rap. Mostly lyrics were appropriate, but not all; please ensure that the content is appropriate for inclusion within a GCSE examination course.

Free compositions

These offered opportunity for contrast. There was a wide range of choices as expected, with extremely sophisticated and inventive material presented by the strongest candidates. On the odd occasion, the content was far too similar to the first composition.

Some candidates managed to impress in **Minimalism**, but they were in the minority; the weakest examples merely copied and pasted motifs/cells and layered them, with little development other than shifting the cells forward a crotchet beat. These pieces did not

demonstrate development or contrast and were difficult to justify as band 4 compositions. Those that 'bent' the rules a little to produce outcomes that were interesting and more substantial were stronger.

The best **Jazz** pieces demonstrated flair and true musical understanding, with some presenting detailed, annotated improvisatory sections. **Blues** pieces were still in evidence, again with the best work being more original and less reliant on set patterns; more often such pieces were very basic and overly repetitive.

A number chose to compose pieces in the **Western Classical style** and for the most part these were impressive and showed advanced understanding. Some **Film** scores were superb, full of intensity and imagination: some linked with video clips (timed well with scenes described on the score), others used storyboards or described the scenes appropriately.

Serial compositions were in the minority, with the most effective being exciting and showing understanding of the genre; with the less able candidate the outcome was far less convincing.

Teacher Assessment

In many cases moderators agreed with the centre assessments, where good valued judgements had been made of the candidates' work. A few centres had underestimated the quality of their centre submissions where the work was considered to be above that as judged by the centre; some moderators also commented on some of the more simple pieces – often bottom ranked by centres – being at times more musical than some of the more complex, rather muddled work, as they presented successful initial ideas even if they were not developed. Most disagreement was noted when moderators were unable to justify top band marks for work that did not develop ideas sufficiently, lacked clarity of form and suitable harmonic language, as such pieces simply did not reflect the top band assessment criteria. Some marks were generous because the compositions fell short of the time requirement and lacked development. In terms of the evaluation tasks, the judgement was often well placed, if again slightly generous on occasion; some were considered a little harsh.

As stated in previous reports, it is important for us all to apply the assessment criteria realistically; in this way we can work together to maintain consistency and achieve agreement in regard to the relative merits of the candidates' compositions.

Teachers are urged to attend CPD for continued training in this specification. Please also access the support material online.

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UNIT 3 APPRAISING

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates positively identified the tonality.
- (b) Many candidates did not name the note value as a minim (or half note), but stated the number of beats instead, or even, in many cases, identified the pitch name.
- (c) Many recognised sequence as the musical device.
- (d) Many candidates identified musical features correctly but a large number only underlined one answer (two were required).
- (e) Texture should be described using a key word from the list of musical terms in the specification – thicker and thinner may be used only as contrasting terms
- (f) This question, in identifying chords was disappointing, considering it was the set work. 0 marks were awarded for contemporary chord symbols as the question clearly requested roman numerals. The specification states that candidates should be familiar with both.
- (g) Full marks were only awarded for ‘Abdelazer Suite’ as the question asked for the full name. There were many incorrect responses here.

Question 2

- (a) Unfortunately, many candidates identified the solo instrument as a flute.
- (b) The majority chose the correct family of instruments as woodwind.
- (c) The time signature responses were disappointing – very few identified 6/8.
- (d) Most candidates correctly identified the tempo using an Italian term, English term or metronome mark.
- (e) Some good responses were highlighted here when recognising the harmony but many candidates answered with dynamics, texture and tempo comments.
- (f) Performing techniques are set out clearly in the specification and this was disappointing as many candidates answered with devices and used different elements (we are essentially asking how the instruments are being played (e.g. arco, pizzicato, staccato, legato etc.).
- (g) Some candidates identified the interrupted cadence; many thought it was an imperfect cadence.
- (h) Some candidates identified the correct period of music but there were many incorrect responses choosing the Romantic Period.

Question 3

- (a) The minority of candidates recognised the interval as a 4th.
- (b) Nearly all candidates correctly identified the accompanying instrument.
- (c) Most candidates identified the time signature.
- (d) Many candidates chose the wrong style here as Cerdd Dant but it was, in fact, Welsh Song.
- (e) Many candidates chose the correct rhythm.
- (f) Nearly all candidates correctly identified the type of choir.
- (g) In this comparison question, there were many occasions when candidates wrote about voices and instruments (the question did state not to do this). Many identified the faster tempo, thicker texture and louder dynamics. Many incorrect responses included fast, loud and thick which did not compare and some candidates wrote that

the tempo, dynamics and texture were different, but more specific information was required.

Question 4

- (ai) Most candidates identified the correct dynamic marking.
- (aii) There were a positive number of candidates responding to the melodic movement.
- (aiii) The majority of candidates identified the tonality.
- (aiv) The majority of candidates identified the woodwind instruments.
- (bi) Candidates could achieve 1 mark out of a possible 2 if they chose one correct box to signal a chord change. Surprisingly, many responded well and most achieved at least 1 mark. Candidates who simply ticked all boxes scored 0 marks.
- (bii) There were some positive responses to the features of the guitar parts.
- (biii) Nearly all candidates identified the style as rock.

Question 5

- (ai) Many candidates scored 2 out of a possible 4 when completing the missing notes of the melody. There was repetition from the written melody. No marks were awarded for relative pitch – notes were either correct or incorrect.
- (aii) Generally there was a wide range of responses here.
- (aiii) Most candidates correctly identified the accompanying instruments.
- (bi) Many correctly identified the time signature but it had to be inserted in the correct place for the mark. Many candidates wrote the time signature above or below the staff and some placed it before the key signature.
- (bii) There were many incorrect responses, with regards recognising the key from the key signature.

Question 6

- (a) Many candidates incorrectly identified the tonality as major – either minor or modal were accepted.
- (b) Percussion instruments were identified positively but drum (on its own) was not accepted.
- (c) Many candidates responded with wrong musical elements when choosing a musical device.
- (d) Some candidates chose the correct musical feature as accented notes.
- (e) The question asks for three musical elements. Many candidates wrote about other elements so it is so important to read the question in the first instance. Many identified the change in dynamics and added brass as correct answers and metre seemed to cause problems for the majority (time signature) – see specification.

Question 7

- (a) Many identified the section as verse or verse 2. The candidates who responded with verse 1 or verse 3 were not awarded marks, as they were incorrect responses.
- (b) There were many issues here when describing the melody.
- (c) Many candidates chose the correct pitch.
- (d) There were some correct responses to this question and most candidates wrote a contemporary chord.
- (e) Most candidates identified the key incorrectly.
- (f) Nearly all candidates identified the correct instrument.
- (g) The majority of candidates answered correctly with instruments from the rhythm section – again, drum was not accepted (more information was needed). Parts of the drum kit were not accepted either.
- (h) Most candidates identified the year correctly.

Question 8

This question assesses the accuracy of specialist terminology and the quality of written communication. The question asked for five musical elements. However, a large number of candidates wrote about many other elements of music – again, please encourage them to read the question carefully.

Responses for melody and rhythm were low but many candidates wrote positively about tempo, structure and the use of technology. This is a best-fit answer and candidates achieving a mark in the top box (8 or 9 marks) should have mentioned 9 correct responses, by mentioning all five elements of music.

Candidates had 4 additional minutes to write their responses in sentences or bullet points. The extract was heard three times and each playing lasted for just under a minute. There were also 3 x 30 second pauses before the additional time of 4 minutes at the end. This was deemed enough time to complete the question. The question asked to describe the musical elements and an essay was not required. In fact, many candidates who scored 8 or 9 marks wrote five sentences (one on each element of music).

General Points

In this first examination of the new specification there were many positive responses, and it is reminded that all teaching and learning should focus on the main elements of music and the use of musical terms as listed in the specification. Many candidates generally identify tempo, timbre, texture, dynamics, musical styles, tonality and form. Additional support is needed in identifying melodic, harmonic and rhythmic terms. Metre should be taught as time signatures and performance techniques, key identification and chord recognition need greater focus.

In the paper, a large number of candidates spelled the following words incorrectly: quiet, piano, cello, flute, bass and cymbals.



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