



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE (NEW)
MUSIC**

SUMMER 2019

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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 2019
UNIT 1 PERFORMING

General Comments

It has been most pleasing to observe that the process of uploading candidates' work to Surpass for the majority of centres this year has been successful. Moderators have reported that more centres have marked accurately and complied with the specification requirements in terms of uploading the appropriate materials (scores/lead sheets, recordings and marksheets). It is encouraging to see that so much hard work has taken place in centres to prepare for this element of GCSE Music and teachers and peripatetic staff must be congratulated for their perseverance and support, as well as the candidates on their willingness to learn and perform.

It was observed that most centres have acted upon the advice given in last year's moderators' reports and this is a practice to be encouraged.

Comments on individual questions/sections

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. For future submissions, please label items with candidate number, candidate name, ensemble/solo (there is no need to give titles of pieces performed) e.g. '1234 Joe Bloggs Solo 1'.

Many marksheets were comprehensively filled out with candidates and teachers authenticating work through signatures (e-signatures are accepted). This is an essential requirement before moderation can take place and centres are urged to check all marksheets very carefully before uploading.

It was pleasing to note that the majority of centres gave clear information regarding the role of the candidate in the ensemble. Also, it aided moderation when a sentence was added stating that the difficulty level had been agreed by the exam board.

However, moderators have reported a number of errors encountered during the moderation process, which did result in several centres being contacted for clarification. Please ensure that:

- Marking is accurately completed on the marksheets with the correct mark transferred to IAMIS.
- The addition of marks is correct
- The scaling of marks according to difficulty levels is correctly applied
- The scaling of marks due to undertime performances is applied (ensuring the most up to date marksheet is completed)
- Performance 1 is the compulsory ensemble; teachers should be reminded that if an ensemble is omitted, the mark for Performance 1 is 0.

Most issues were quickly rectified by the centres once informed.

Only one recording for each piece should be uploaded; some centres uploaded multiple recordings of the same piece for a candidate with the expectation for the moderator to listen to each and mark the best one! Centres are also urged to check that they have submitted the correct recording for the candidate; several moderators had to contact centres this year asking for correct recordings to be uploaded.

The majority of centres used the appropriate forms although a small number still submitted last year's forms which were acceptable for the last time in 2019.. For future submissions, please download the most up to date form from the website.

Timings:

Most centres had chosen pieces carefully to fall within the 4 – 6 minute requirement and nearly all undertime folios had been awarded adjusted marks in line with the new sliding scale for time penalties. There were many submissions which exceeded the 4 - 6 minute requirement often including extra pieces which took folios way over 10 minutes duration. There was a reduction in the number of undertime performances this year with several centres taking full advantage of being able to submit more than two pieces to support candidates' abilities and to extend folios containing shorter examination pieces. There were, however, still a number of centres that stated inaccurate performance times on the marksheet quoting the length of the mp3 and not the actual performance time. Please do not introduce performances or candidates on the recording and time from the entry of the candidate. This is especially important in ensemble recordings where another performer may start the piece. Short introductions and links are permitted.

Recordings:

The vast majority of recordings were of very good quality indeed. Moderators have reported a few instances where balance was an issue in ensemble recordings with the candidate's part being overpowered by other performers, but on the whole, centres have carefully checked the quality and placing of microphones. Drum kit recordings caused some issues this year, as it was evident that a few candidates were unable to hear their own backing track, so did not play in time, thus affecting marks; distortion was also reported on mostly drum kit recordings.

A few centres edited the raw audio recording by adding panning and digital reverb. Please note that in the specification, it states that recordings should be 'unedited'. MP3 uploads worked well yet there were still several issues with WAV files due to the size of the file and upload limits, and some issues with AIFF files. Please do not submit Zip files, these can hinder the moderation process.

Scores/Lead sheets:

Careful annotations were made in many of the scores to accurately reflect the performers' intentions. There were also several excellent lead sheets detailing melodic, rhythmic and chordal patterns, tempo and expression marks with the structure of the intended performance clearly indicated.

However, some centres either failed to make appropriate annotations, or wrote vague comments like "sung ad lib" or "this score is as close to the performance as I can find" at the start of the score. This will affect marks for accuracy as the moderator has to assess whether the candidate has performed accurately to the score. Please bracket altered bars with a qualifying statement written at the appropriate place on the score such as "melodic ornamentation here" or "rhythmic variation".

Occasionally, candidates did not stick to the structure as laid out in the score; for example, they may have repeated a section or omitted a bridge. Such practice made following the score onerous and frustrating for moderators and centres should ensure that the score or lead sheet accurately reflects the intended structure of the candidate's performance. Transpositions or octave changes should also be clearly noted.

It must be emphasised that it is not acceptable to submit lyrics and chord progressions for vocal or drum performances. If chords are submitted for guitar performances, strumming patterns must also be included. Care must also be taken when downloading guitar tab as a score; it must be accurate to the performance.

Lead sheets for rapping performances need to give enough information to moderate marks for accuracy and expression and interpretation. Whilst on the subject of rap performances, any 'inappropriate' lyrics must be changed; some moderators reported that certain lyrics contained highly offensive language!

The practice of uploading a reference recording for the moderator to compare with a candidate's recordings is also not accepted by the exam board and centres will always be contacted to ask for scores or lead sheets to be uploaded in lieu.

However, there were some teachers who had included incredibly detailed annotations to the scores/lead sheets and/or scored parts individually for candidates in ensembles at great personal effort which all moderators appreciated. The practice of highlighting the role of the candidate in ensemble performance scores made the identification of candidates much easier and was adopted by several centres this year.

Some scores had upside down or sideways pages or used double sided scanning for a single sided score, therefore presenting alternating blank pages throughout. It would help the moderation process if centres ensured scores were all the right way up and presentable.

Difficulty Levels:

In the majority of submissions, the level of difficulty had been judged correctly and it was really helpful for moderators when centres indicated on the marksheet exam gradings of pieces or that difficulty levels had been agreed by the exam board. There are detailed descriptors for most performance disciplines in the specification and teachers are encouraged to contact the subject officer if unsure of the difficulty level of a particular piece. There were numerous cases, of vocal music in particular, which were often quoted at a higher level when some of the songs offered were limited in their vocal range. It would be useful if centres could adopt the following statements when completing mark sheets:

ESL (Easier than Standard Level), SL (Standard Level), MD (More Difficult than Standard Level)

Repertoire (Solo):

Most candidates chose totally appropriate pieces for their solo repertoire, allowing them to showcase their performing skills to the full. All moderators commented on the pleasure of listening to interesting and musical performances in such a variety of performing disciplines. 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.

There were some instances where MD pieces were submitted that were clearly beyond the candidates' current capabilities and submitting a SL or even ESL piece would have gained these candidates more marks. This was the case for some weaker candidates who, had they played simple pieces with dynamics and expression, would have fared better.

Repertoire (Ensemble):

It was gratifying to see that so many centres are now choosing ensemble repertoire carefully ensuring that candidates are offered the opportunity to display empathy in an accompanying role. Marks were frequently higher for those candidates who offered accompaniment as they were often highly sympathetic to the other performer(s) playing/singing the melody. Most centres had clearly worked hard to meet the specification requirements and to provide their lower ability candidates with excellent opportunities for ensemble performing. One successful example noted by a moderator was a teacher arrangement for guitar, voice and keyboard, the keyboard part of which was played individually by several weaker candidates, indicating evidence of a class project.

Where arrangements had been created by teachers specifically for candidates, these seemed successful on the whole but needed more in the way of dynamics to access expression and interpretation marks.

Piano duets, where the candidate performed the primo part, taking the melody throughout, were less evident this year; candidates performing the secondo part often gained more marks for expression and interpretation, due to the sympathetic nature of an accompanying role.

Not all centres chose pieces to stretch their more able candidates. Parts may be swapped to ensure that there is challenge for all.

The nature of some ensembles heard was cause for concern. Several centres submitted ensemble pieces where candidates did not demonstrate a significant amount of ensemble performing skills which as a result were close to not fulfilling the minimum one minute requirement outlined in the specification. Most of these were vocal performances, where there was too much solo and unison singing, antiphony and too little singing in harmony. There were concerns where several ensembles were really accompanied solos with the candidate singing the melody line and the teacher adding in harmonies.

This year, there were submissions where candidates had performed the accompaniment to a song but the vocal line was not present (especially prevalent in Rockschool guitar pieces). In these cases, the candidate's accompaniment part is considered to be the main melodic part which results again in an unsuccessful ensemble.

Programme Notes:

Programme notes varied in standard with the best ones being detailed, well-structured and logically written with excellent use of musical terminology.

The specification asks for detailed explanation of three or four elements which are featured most prominently in the music. Some submissions lacked sufficient discussion of the chosen musical elements, however, in the work of some centres, there were too many elements covered at the expense of detail. Some, also, concentrated on the background and historical aspects and forgot to mention any musical elements! This was especially true in rock and pop pieces.

Candidates in a few centres did not address at all the technical demands of their chosen piece despite having been awarded marks in Band 4. In some centres the 'technical demands' content focused too heavily on the candidate's evaluation of their own performance rather than the challenges presented by the piece.

Presentation was frequently impressive, with added photos and music quotations. However, marks should be awarded for content not presentation.

On the downside, there were several candidates who sadly did not submit a programme note therefore sacrificing their opportunity to gain valuable marks.

Assessment/Overall Standard:

Nearly all 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.

At the opposite end, there were a large number of centres who were very harsh in marking their less able candidates, penalising for both Accuracy and Technical Control. If a performance is accurate to the score and fluent, there is justification to award higher marks for Accuracy, even though the piece may be simple and repetitive. Lack of technique should be considered when marking Technical Control. Some centres were generous in awarding Band 4 marks for Technical Control where the candidate performed very simple rudimentary parts. These parts failed to give candidates the opportunity to display the instrument specific skills commensurate with Band 4 marks. There were more examples of centres being overly generous this year and this tended to be in the accuracy and technical control columns. It was clearly apparent that these centres were not referencing the score whilst marking for accuracy and as a result gave high marks which could not be justified. There were also a number of examples where marks were lower than they should have been because mistakes by other members of the ensemble were taken into account when considering the candidate. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the candidate is not penalised for this – indeed it is a sign of good empathy with other performers to be able to cope in such a situation.

There were instances also where a mark of 0 was awarded, when there was clearly a performance which warranted marks.

Summary of key points

- Please scale marks carefully for under-time performances and difficulty levels
- Avoid 'double penalising' under Accuracy and Technical Control, especially for the less able candidates
- Scores must be annotated carefully to justify marks for Accuracy
- Secondo parts in piano duets will demonstrate more ensemble skills than primo parts playing melody throughout
- Programme notes must present detail on three or four main elements of the chosen music and describe the technical demands.

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UNIT 2 COMPOSING

General Comments

Administration

Generally the process of uploading was successfully handled this year as the work was submitted mostly in accordance with requirements. There were some examples of late submissions and missing signatures (both candidate's and teacher's), blank mps3s, incorrect submission of work, incompatible or incomplete files. Of more concern were missing marksheets - these are essential, as the job of the moderator is to agree (or not) teacher assessment. Some centres had uploaded the composing and performing components together, which is not what is required. There were some errors on IAMIS (incorrect addition and incorrect input), though only occasionally this did affect the rank order. One centre did not have any leadsheets, marksheets, scores, logs or evaluations. Where there were problems, most centres resolved the issues quickly.

Uploading work /Labelling

Files should be identified as 'set' brief or 'free brief'. Titles are far less useful – though a title on the log that corresponds to the title on the score / leadsheet is welcome. For information, detailed instructions for this were outlined in last year's Principal Moderator's report. Zip files were considered by some moderators as being less helpful than separate files, and it was often in these cases where work was missing. Although the process of individually uploading the work is perhaps more tedious, it was felt to be more precise in the main. Some centres uploaded scores and marksheets as one document which was considered a little cumbersome by some moderators, though certainly not all. Some work seemed to be scanned upside down / sideways.

Candidate Logs

The standard of the logs ranged from extremely basic to excellent. In the best examples, the musical detail and explanation was succinct and appropriate; weaker efforts included irrelevant and sometimes excessive information, at times presenting tokenistic, seemingly rushed offerings. A few candidates did not attempt to complete the log at all, and some centres used the older version of the log, which was acceptable this year. The updated version is available to download from the website. Almost all moderators felt that the section of the log where candidates have to note their use of loops, chordal realisations and the use of automation was not completed in sufficient detail; even when it was clear that these features had been employed, their use had not been explained.

Occasionally, general information supplied by the candidate did not match with the selected brief or title of a piece (for example, a candidate stating that they were selecting the film brief when the commentary was evidencing the rondo brief; some titles on the logs did not match the titles stated on the uploaded work e.g. 'Alien Attack' on the log, but 'Haunted House' on the mp3 file and lead sheet). There were a number of instances where the role of the candidate was completely unclear in the composition process (particularly where they were not performing on the live recording), when an explanation had not been provided with regards to how parts had been taught to others. Description of any help or advice given by the teacher was considered good practice.

Moderators felt that some candidates would have benefitted from typing up the log when handwriting was somewhat illegible, and for reference, scanned in documents were often unclear - or, at times- even impossible to read.

Candidates mentioned an incredible range of musical influences in their logs, which was encouraging to see. Others noted their use of existing melodies (even though this has been identified as a practice best avoided, as candidates cannot gain credit for any material which is not their own).

There were very few teacher comments on the marksheets (this is optional). Some used the opportunity to clarify missing or incomplete items, while some focused on the level of candidate effort rather than the quality of the composition.

Scores and recordings

Most **scores** generated by Sibelius or similar programs were excellent and there were many scores (of sorts) from GarageBand and Logic. These were not as easy to follow and at times it would have been more helpful if they had been annotated. Some candidates used a combination of printouts and lead sheets and on occasion these really were impressive; other lead sheets and annotations lacked detail and were basic. Songs were not always accompanied by a copy of the lyrics and chords – please advise that this is a firm requirement when the score is not available. One candidate presented 36 pages of screenshots without any annotation, and while this seemed extreme, it was not by any means the only example of this practice; another candidate submitted of separate parts of a GarageBand composition totalling over 50 pages. The 'hide empty stave' function was advised for some musical scores. Submitting all the separate instrumental parts for a composition is not really helpful to the moderator. There were also examples of incomplete scores and chord charts that did not tally with the audio.

There appeared to be a large number of candidates working on a variety of sequencing packages who then exported scores to Sibelius for printing. These scores are often very confused and difficult to follow, virtually meaningless in some cases. They did not aid moderation, and moderators were in agreement that a detailed explanation in a lead sheet and annotated screen shot would be preferable.

Most **recordings** from the chosen programs were of very good quality- just a few crackly files or a file where not all tracks were audible; some tracks and wav files caused a problem by cutting out part way through the track even after downloading.

Live recordings (especially when there were vocals) were extremely successful, as the word-setting was considered to be far more effective than computer-generated vocals. It seemed that more candidates had made the effort to record the vocal line this year as live audio; this was very effective and invariably meant that these songs had better setting of the text. The quality of live tracks varied; in some cases other candidates could be heard playing instruments in the background, at other times general classroom (and outside the classroom) noise was evident. A very small number supplied an incorrect recording or a recording that cut off in the middle of the piece by mistake. Occasionally, a click track was left in place.

Please check before submission!

Evaluations

As with the candidate logs, these covered a wide range of abilities and effort; some were incredibly detailed and went into great explanation where as others had little more than a sentence or two. There were also a number of centres that did not include any evaluations at all, thus hindering the overall grade of the candidate.

Most centres presented evaluations which reached a good standard; responses often contained descriptive and analytical detail, with accurate and appropriate use of subject terminology, but not all candidates were able to fully engage with the evaluation requirement - many did not judge the effectiveness of the final outcome, the final recording, or whether the link to the brief and the musical elements used were used effectively. Some evaluation tasks were simply a repeat of the log, and descriptive rather than reflective.

As a result, a number fell short of the highest marks. Candidates who succeeded in evaluating to a higher standard followed the structure displayed in the example that exists in the teaching guide.

General Standards

The standard overall spanned the full range; there were plenty of excellent pieces and conversely, a fair number that were 'limited'. The majority fell somewhere in between. Some candidates submitted similar compositions for both the free brief and the set brief. While this can play to their strengths, it does not always allow the individual to display contrasts in their work.

It was good to see candidates exploring more complex time signatures this year; some were quite adventurous and successfully placed, others employed to impress but were musically a little out of place. Texture and layering were often effectively worked in compositions, with imitation and sequence being very well used in the best pieces.

Many centres presented work that demonstrated a good understanding of harmony (with thankfully fewer examples of the 4 chord trick), developed melodic ideas using a variety of techniques, utilised interesting and appropriate rhythmic features and encouraged outcomes from candidates which demonstrated consistency of style focussed on responding to the selected brief.

Less effective outcomes presented ideas which

- were dependent on basic repetition and lacked creative development, particularly in melodic and harmonic content
- lacked refinement and control (e.g. when the melody was 'at odds' with the accompaniment in a composition)
- were overly busy in terms of texture resulting in a lack of clarity and focus
- were too many in number, resulting in a lack of organization, unity and coherence.

Most tasks were considered to be appropriate, with many candidates composing for musical instruments and resources that they played or knew about. This ensured that the lines flowed musically and were idiomatic. Some moderators reported of centres where they felt the candidates fell short of accessing the higher marks because their choices had been restricted i.e. every candidate in a class submitted pieces for the same two briefs. They even went one step further, with baselines and drum patterns based on templates, every student writing a song, with almost identical structures. The outcomes had a "professional" sound, but lacked creativity, development and originality.

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 candidates, especially those who find composing more demanding, to experiment with interesting rhythmic features such as dotted rhythms, triplet patterns, scotch snap, syncopation and others.

Comments on individual questions/sections

At times it was evident that candidates in some centres did not have any choice over which brief they attempted, as there were examples of class tasks set for both the 'Set' and 'Free' briefs. While it is recognised that many candidates benefit from this supported working, differentiation of response and individual creativity is to be encouraged.

GCSE Brief 1

Musical Forms and Devices: Compose a piece of music in Theme and Variation form, to be submitted in a local Young Composer's competition. (You must compose your own theme and include a minimum of one variation)

The outcomes to this brief theme were rather formulaic, and moderators felt at times, a little disappointing. In some cases the initial melodic 'theme' was very short, or just consisted of chordal ideas. One centre treated it like a Ground Bass composition— starting with a bass line, then chords, then adding layers (or what they called 'variations') each time they repeated. The most successful responses were when the candidate had composed a musically shaped theme and went on to create clear variations which they labelled on the score. Not all compositions displayed a strong understanding of the form.

GCSE Brief 2

Music for Ensemble: Compose a piece of music for either three voices or three instruments (i.e. a trio) to be performed at a concert organised in aid of Tŷ Hafan.

This was certainly the most popular choice and seemed to produce some of the best works overall. There were very good responses here, with much inventive work, presenting musical ideas that displayed excellent content and interaction between the parts. Less successful outcomes lacked melodic conviction and focus, and at times the results were not considered to be a strong response to the brief as the work felt like a duet with accompaniment.

GCSE Brief 3

Film Music: Compose music to accompany the opening scene of a new film set in Wales 'More Adventures of a Teenage Dragonslayer'.

This was also a very popular brief. There were some impressive individual responses ranging from piano solos, and synthesized pieces to works for the whole orchestra. The tempo chosen was rather slow in some cases, meaning the music lacked a sense of excitement or 'adventure'. There was much mention of Welsh folk tunes (although not directly quoted) and the harp, as the film was based in Wales. It helped when candidates provided a description of the scene they had in mind. Good use was made of leitmotifs, although these tended to remain undeveloped and the possibilities not explored fully. The best of these were truly excellent- but at the other extreme, some were extremely limited. Many candidates chose to use a through composed structure. Those using orchestral instruments and a range of timbres were often very successful in creating mood and atmosphere, although there were also some very successful pieces for small ensembles, such as piano and cello.

Moderators generally felt that too many candidates focussed on the dragon, rather than the adventurous teenage dragonslayer; some pieces were written in Blues style – other

candidates presented a pop song / ballad for this brief. There were even Chinese dragons portrayed in the content.

GCSE Brief 4

Popular Music: Compose a song in Reggae style to be performed by young performers taking part in a summer music festival 'Barry Beach Rocks'.

While some moderators felt that certain pieces / songs lacked development and the expected, characteristic key features of Reggae music, the best songs were highly effective.

Free Compositions

Some of the free briefs were extremely vague, as not all were sufficiently detailed and some were not stated at all. This did not give the moderator a clear idea of what the candidate's intentions were. Simply stating a genre of music, or stipulating an area of study (without musical details, an occasion or audience) is not sufficient for the free composition briefs. There were some imaginative briefs set, including 'A Melodic Journey through the Alpine Countries', a Bollywood piece, music for computer games (with specific details about the exact level the music is to accompany) and many TV themes and music for adverts. Other 'free' briefs bore little relation to the work (for example, "Medieval Waltz" which was in 4/4 and written for Ukulele and Steel Pans).

Some candidates used last year's briefs as a stimulus.

Some of the 'class tasks' here produced responses that were formulaic, and whilst this approach may well have suited weaker candidates, it appeared to restrict creativity for some (e.g. a class set of waltzes). Many centres allow candidates to work to their strengths and personal musical interests, which is to be commended.

Linking the free brief to 'Musical Forms and Devices' was a common decision, with compositions being written in binary, ternary, and rondo forms. Some theme and variation pieces had used existing melodies and even nursery rhymes as their themes; please be respectfully reminded that candidates must be encouraged to compose their own themes. Film music was also popular choice, often with interesting use of dissonance and a good use of instrumental effects to create mood and atmosphere. Pieces linked to area of study 4 were also commonplace. There were a few club dance compositions which were very repetitive, and all produced very similar results showing little creativity using the same drum line and often modulating up a tone. Blues pieces often focussed heavily on the 12-bar progression with typical patterns, and showed little development of the melodic and harmonic content. Moderators felt that predictable working of 12 bar blues and ground bass pieces restricted the level of marks that were available to award.

There were more examples of solo drum kit pieces this year, but often these did not exploit the possibilities of the drum kit.

Other free compositions delved into serialism and minimalism, with a few achieving highly effective outcomes. Likewise, it was clear when candidates were not comfortable composing in the style and they made it clear in their log that it had been 'imposed on them'! One entire centre all presented 12 tone row pieces. They all used three instruments and all contained many similar features, and appeared to be composing to a 'formula'. Although the end results were fairly effective, as they had used suitable features for the Serialist style pieces, the results were very generic marks as marks across the centre were very similar.

Teacher Assessment

Much teacher assessment was felt to be fair, though there were a substantial number of centres where the marking was considered to be overly generous, or in a smaller number of cases, overly severe. In the overly severe cases, it tended to be due to having a comprehensively talented cohort and approaching the marking from a 'top down' perspective. There were reversed instances of centres appearing to have applied top band marks to the most effective of their candidates' work and working down from there, thus being generous in their assessment of simple or repetitive pieces. Consistency of the marking in assessment criteria for Ao2.1a and 1c seemed to be the most contentious areas. A lot of the time there was little melodic development in composition marked at the top of the first criterion, which was at odds with the wording. This was similar in criterion 3, where the structure was not interesting enough to warrant the top marks and was not always completely stylistically coherent. Some candidates produced very basic evaluations although these ones were very fairly marked.

Not all moderators agreed with the rank order as suggested by some centres. Some centres had assessed compositions as Band 4 but work did not show the musical skill, enough development of ideas and suitable harmonic language to be awarded these marks. Mid-range compositions lacked development of ideas and skilful control of elements and resources. Compositions that failed to convince often had melodies that were triadic, ideas that were overly repetitive, fade-outs used in place of cadences, producing outcomes that relied heavily on ostinati, textural and timbral changes rather than creative development of the initial ideas.

Centres are reminded to consider CPD materials, where exemplars of high / mid / low scoring compositions are available and hopefully will be of ongoing guidance.

Summary of key points

- All files uploaded must be clearly labeled as according to guidelines issued by WJEC. Music files are best uploaded as mp3 (wav and aiff were less successful), and other files as word or pdf (scanned documents were often unclear).
- Centres must always include the marksheets giving a full breakdown of the marks awarded – the total is not sufficient.
- All sections of the candidate log must be fully completed, and all authentication signatures supplied. This is especially important in the case of live performances. Guide tracks should be included when there is no score for performers.
- Candidates submitting rock / pop songs without a score must present lyrics and chords in addition to the leadsheet.
- No marks are awarded for existing musical ideas – credit is only given for original work.
- Please avoid using repeat marks to extend ideas. Within an accepted structure (i.e. binary) they may be appropriately placed to evidence understanding of the form; however they are often randomly positioned in the work, and can be omitted from the recording. Using repeat marks in this way simply limits the candidates from developing ideas. Additionally – avoid over-use of 'copy and paste'.
- Ensure that all briefs for the free composition are achievable and clearly stated in the log; part of the assessment is directly related to 'the response to the chosen brief'.
- Candidates should be encouraged to omit weak sections of work, and be prepared to refine and rework ideas.
- Please encourage individual working and avoid 'class tasks' wherever possible.
- Evaluations must focus on evaluative judgements.

MUSIC
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2019
UNIT 3 APPRAISING

General Comments

This was the second examination of the new specification and again this year there were many positive responses. It is reminded that all teaching and learning must focus on the main elements of music and the use of musical terms as listed in the specification. More focus is needed in identifying structure, harmony, melody and rhythm.

The set works make up 25% of the examination and it was felt that some responses were lower than expected.

It was clear this year that candidates need weekly practice in completing the notes of a melody (pitch). There are examples on the WJEC website which can be used as a starter every lesson – candidates must keep notation clear.

In many instances this year candidates confused elements of music. Please use the list of musical terms in the specification to help – there will be more support and information in the CPD in the Autumn. It may be beneficial to give candidates tests on what possible answers could occur within each element in addition to identifying them in the music. It is advised that the elements are taught throughout KS3 to ensure candidates have the relevant knowledge.

Also, in this year's examination many candidates did not read the question and wrote about different elements of music. In most cases the facts from candidates were correct but they were not asked for in the question – please read the question carefully.

In many one-mark answers or multiple-choice question responses were left blank. Please try to encourage candidates to have a guess if they are unsure – in many cases they have a 25% chance of getting the answer correct.

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

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 Prepared Extract

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct section (C).
- (b) The majority of candidates identified the violin playing the melody.
- (c) Some candidates identified the type of rhythm but there were many incorrect responses here.
- (d) Most candidates identified the sequence in the extract.

- (e) Some candidates did not identify the number of beats per bar – this was disappointing as it is the prepared work.
 - (f)
 - (i) Many candidates identified the key of A minor.
 - (ii) Some candidates knew how the key related to the start of the Rondeau.
 - (g) Most candidates identified the period of music as Baroque.
 - (h) Most candidates identified the composer – there were some incorrect responses here, which were a little disappointing.
- Q.2**
- (a) Some candidates identified the French horn at the start of the extract but many responded with a range of other instruments (many not in the brass family either).
 - (b) Very few candidates identified the second instrument – many candidates thought it was a clarinet.
 - (c) Some candidates identified the texture but a large number of candidates thought the texture was homophonic and in many cases used words that were not linked to texture.
 - (d) Many recognised the legato melody at the start of the extract.
 - (e) Many recognised the conjunct melody at the start of the extract.
 - (f) The majority of candidates identified the performance technique (a big improvement from last year).
 - (g) The majority of candidates identified the dynamics correctly.
 - (h) There were a range of answers for tempo. Many candidates wrote Moderato/Andante but the extract was much slower.
 - (i) Many candidates correctly identified the date of this composition, which related to the period of music.
- Q.3**
- (a) Some candidates described the movement of the harp correctly but many responded with words linked to tempo, texture or structure. Candidates could have responded with repetitive to get a mark.
 - (b) There were issues with this question and many candidates incorrectly identified the tenor voice. There were many female voice responses, which was a little disappointing.
 - (c) More candidates recognised the compound duple (6/8) time signature than in last year's examination which was pleasing.
 - (d) Most candidates identified two features effectively – the most popular responses were male voices, tenors and unison.
 - (e) Many identified that the structure began with an introduction and a verse and chorus followed. All three words were required for the full two marks.

- (f) Many candidates identified the perfect cadence.
 - (g) Nearly all candidates identified the folk style.
- Q.4**
- (a)
 - (i) Very few candidates achieved four marks in total when completing the missing pitch. Candidates must try to make their note heads clearer. A pencil may be used for this section so amendments can be made during the examination. This year featured a bass clef for the first time but the pattern and direction of the melody was confused in many responses.
 - (ii) Many candidates recognised the imperfect cadence.
 - (b)
 - (i) More candidates inserted the time signature in the correct place in this year's examination, which must be applauded. There were many positive simple triple (3/4) responses.
 - (ii) Some candidates positively identified the key of F Major.
 - (iii) Many candidates incorrectly identified the choir as female.
 - (iv) Most candidates correctly identified the crotchet note value.
- Q.5**
- (a) Popular responses for this question were snare drum and crash cymbals. Many candidates wrote drums, which is not enough information in this genre.
 - (b) There were many possible responses here for one mark but many candidates wrote about elements other than rhythm.
 - (c) Many candidates correctly recognised the dynamic at the start of the extract.
 - (d) Nearly all candidates identified the family of instruments playing the melody.
 - (e) The average mark for this question was two. Many responses were detailed but did not answer the question (many elements other than melody, tonality and texture were noted). Most candidates identified a minor key and a homophonic texture – more focus is needed on certain musical elements and I think it is worth revisiting the specification to look at typical responses for melody. Responses such as low and repetitive, for example would have gained another two marks and many candidates failed to identify these melodic terms. It is acceptable to note a difference in texture by stating that it gets thinner but location is needed. Candidates who wrote that texture was thick and thin did not earn a mark.
- Q.6**
- (a) The majority of candidates positively identified the time signature.
 - (b) The majority of candidates positively identified the tonality.
 - (c) The majority of candidates positively identified the harmony.
 - (d) Some candidates correctly identified the pedal.

- (e) Many candidates responded with a correct answer but fewer gained a total of two marks. Once again, there were some melodic elements that could have been used (e.g. repeated, scalic, conjunct or countermelody). Unfortunately, many candidates referred to the general tempo of the piece of music.
- (f)
 - (i) Many candidates positively identified the structure.
 - (ii) Many candidates positively identified that it was ternary form.
- (g) Nearly all candidates correctly identified the family of instruments.

Q.7 Prepared Extract

- (a) Many candidates correctly identified the correct sections in the extract. However, some candidates responded with verse one or two, which was incorrect.
- (b) Many candidates correctly recognised the statements about the riff.
- (c) 0 marks were awarded for Roman numerals here and only some candidates correctly identified the chord as G minor.
- (d) Many candidates recognised the correct rhythm of the riff.
- (e) Responses were generally good for the original location of the riff.
- (f) Responses were very good. The full name of the key was required not simply Bb.
- (g) Most candidates knew the composer although there were a quite a few incorrect responses that stated Rod Stewart and Stereophonics.

Q.8 This question assessed the accuracy of specialist terminology and the quality of written communication. The question asked for four musical elements to be compared. However, a large number of candidates wrote about many other elements of music – once again, please encourage them to read the question carefully. There were some excellent responses regarding the time signature, style, texture, melody and harmony but this was not asked for in the question. It was felt by the team of examiners that many candidates are still answering in the style of the old specification. Candidates needed to show knowledge of the elements through careful comparison of the extracts. The CD track for question Eight was over 13 minutes in length but a large number of candidates failed to answer the question. It may be more effective to get future candidates to write under headings as this will focus their work and deter them from writing about the other elements.

Unfortunately, there were very few marks in the 8-9 category. In some cases, instrumentation and voices were listed for one extract but often missed for the other and the comparison is needed for the marks. Most candidates identified the difference in tempo but structure was the area that needs the most development in future teaching. Extract one had an introduction and the verse/chorus were in a different order in each extract too. In this question, subject knowledge, comparison of all musical elements and the quality of written communication were assessed and examiners marked accordingly.



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