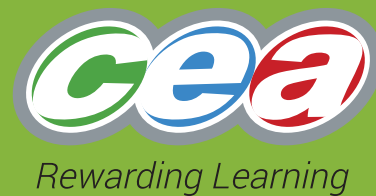


GCE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report
Music**

Summer Series 2022



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2022 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE Music

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

Despite the disruption to teaching and learning over the past two years, it was encouraging to see that the standard in some units was close to pre-Covid standards, with some candidates accessing full marks in performance and high marks in both papers. There was, however, a wider range of marks in all units and a slight increase in the number of candidates scoring at the lower end in all units. The overall standard in all the composition options was noticeably lower. This may possibly be attributed to the fact that this was an optional unit or reflected the lack of opportunity to develop compositional skills during remote learning.

Assessment Unit AS 1 Performance

Overview

Teachers and examiners alike expressed their delight to see a return to live performances. The standard, overall, has dropped slightly from previous years, especially at the top end of the mark range. The range of instruments was more limited than in previous years with lower pitched instruments in each orchestral section noticeably under-represented. Vivas were better prepared than in previous years, but in many instances lacked personal reflection.

It was acknowledged that centres were well set up and were welcoming to examiners. Balance in the rooms was generally good with only one examiner having to suggest the piano soundboard to be moved away from the microphone. CAFs were ready in advance, although several centres stated that it was difficult accessing the correct updates to allow download. All centres were aware of the regulations and all backing tracks were played on equipment which met the required regulations.

There were some issues with teachers wishing to set time limits for examiners and in one case asking an examiner to speed up. This was often caused by performances over the 7-minute limit and more often with excessively long vivas, some lasting up to sixteen minutes. It is advisable that the teacher verifies the approximate performance length in advance and is also mindful of the timing of the viva section. The five questions should not be twice, or in some cases three times as long as the performance.

In most centres, accompanists were competent and enhanced the overall performance.

Repertoire

Mostly two pieces were presented for performance and almost all at Grade 6+ standard.

Marks were occasionally lost in the expressive criterion when only one piece was presented. The standard was often more varied when three or more pieces were performed, and often there was one piece which was especially weaker.

Many programmes would have fulfilled the 5-minute time limit without including a third piece, and this may have improved their final mark. A few candidates performed under the 5-minute limit and there were several centres where almost every student was over the 7-minute limit.

Pianists and guitarists should be careful when choosing pieces that have very repetitive riffs and that do not allow for technical display at Grade 6+ level. Composers like Einaudi or some rock songs do not stretch candidates beyond a syncopated ostinato or primary chord harmony.

Instruments

Singing and piano were the most popular ‘instrument’ choices in most centres. Much of the singing was in the Musical Theatre style and performed very successfully. However, candidates should be aware that songs in modern musicals and pop songs can sometimes have a very limited vocal range.

There were some excellent traditional style performances but there was a need for more variety in some performances in this idiom. Examiners needed to hear a range of expressive interpretation, and this was achieved best in a range of dances and slow airs. Performances were mostly on tin whistle, fiddle and harp.

Some drummers were much too loud with an examiner being offered earplugs in one centre. Teachers should be made aware of the health and safety implications for examiners in small rooms. Some drummers played with a click track and this was acceptable this series, however, it is best for click tracks to be used for practice only.

Very few lower strings were examined, and the brass instruments offered were mostly trumpet and trombone. Woodwind instruments were limited to flute and clarinet with two recorder performances which was a pleasing addition.

There were many excellent guitar performances, but examiners noted that candidates should ensure their sound levels are correct so that their performance can be heard easily, especially with backing tracks.

Tuning of instruments such as the bagpipes and harp should be done, as far as possible, before candidates enter the examination room. It was noted that instrumentalists did not always take care with tuning in the examination room and this often negatively impacted their overall performance.

Performance standard

The standard was encouraging after two years without live performance examinations, but several examiners noted that pupils often would have achieved higher marks if they had chosen a slightly less challenging programme. Teachers should consider whether candidates are better to drop three marks for the Level of Demand in order to ensure a more accurate and controlled performance at a lower grade level.

Pianists generally played repertoire well, though it was noted that some wind players did struggle somewhat with stamina as their performance progressed. Candidates mostly performed examination repertoire and occasionally the grade standard of non-examination repertoire was over-estimated by centres.

Viva

In many centres, the viva had been well-prepared and candidates were all aware of the questions they would be asked. Almost all vivas were over four minutes, with some being unnecessarily long (up to sixteen minutes).

All candidates were able to provide reasons for their choice of programme and were also able to identify the styles of their pieces. Many candidates struggled with commenting on specific stylistic elements in their chosen pieces. More often candidates mentioned generic stylistic traits without reference to their music.

Challenges in the music were identified in most cases but how these challenges were overcome was less successful. 'I just practised it' or 'I played it over and over again' was not enough to get candidates into the top Mark Band. Demonstrating challenges on their instrument or pointing out challenges on scores tended to produce more successful outcomes.

Too often specific recordings were mentioned but with no personal reflection on how these had influenced the candidate's performance. Pop/rock/musical theatre musicians often mentioned certain performers who had influenced them but again this was usually in general terms and lacked a specific insight or reference to their own performance. Some vivas sounded rehearsed with candidates having scripted answers while other candidates had too much information written on their scores to prompt them.

Examiners needed to be aware of readjusting sound levels after each performance as some vivas were hard to hear.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit AS 21 Composing: Composition Task

Overview

It was encouraging to have thirty-four centres submit compositions as this was an optional unit this year, especially as candidates had not previously had the opportunity to submit compositions at GCSE level due to the pandemic and disruption to schooling. Teachers and candidates should be commended for their efforts.

Teacher comments relating to compositions varied from brief, generic comments for all candidates in the centre, to more comprehensive comments providing a detailed insight into the working methods of individual compositions. These comments were helpful for the moderation process but in some cases the comments did not reflect the marks awarded.

In centres whose marks were adjusted, it was evident that teacher marking was generally lenient in Criterion 1 and Criterion 3. Following the moderation process, fewer candidates were scoring in the top Mark Band for these criteria. However, teachers had a good overview of the rank order within their centre and this generally remained the same even after marks were adjusted when necessary.

As in previous years, submissions covered a variety of styles and genres with a good range of instruments and combinations included. There were fewer programmatic, incidental, or SATB choral pieces submitted and as these are ambitious briefs it can be more difficult to access marks in the top band. Instrumental genres included string, brass and woodwind quartets, Irish Traditional sets, pieces for solo piano and vocal compositions. Pieces ranged stylistically from Baroque, Classical, and Romantic idioms to pop, jazz and folk styles. The most successful compositions had a clear genre with stylistic features clearly understood and reflected in their own composition. Submissions which did not have an appropriate focus from the outset, were less successful and often lacked a clear sense of style and purpose.

The online uploading of MP3 audio and commentary files was successful and streamlined the moderation process.

Criterion 1 Creation, Development and Organisation of Ideas

This continues to be the most challenging section for candidates and the area which teachers often find difficult to assess. To achieve top band marks compositions should have a clear formal structure, a well-phrased melodic idea which then allows for further development by means of repetition, sequence, fragmentation, extension, inversion, diminution, augmentation and ornamentation. These developmental techniques need to be incorporated appropriately and candidates are advised to ensure they do not include too many devices and as a result lose an overall sense of musicality. Less successful compositions often lacked fluent or well-phrased melodic material. Ternary form continues to be a popular formal structure which allows for sufficient development, unity and variety as the B Section provides the opportunity for a contrast of musical material. However, at times there was a relative lack of appropriate development of ideas in the returning A Section, with some compositions featuring A and A1 Sections which were almost identical.

Criterion 2 Use of Resources

This, as in previous years, was more successful than Criterion 1. Fewer candidates were writing for large orchestral ensembles, a much more challenging and ambitious brief. Candidates are therefore advised to write for smaller ensembles, using instrumentation with which they are familiar. Instrumental writing was generally fluent and both appropriate and stylistic for the chosen genre. It is important that consideration is given to texture within this criterion, particularly when composing for a solo instrument, and candidates should also be mindful of the limitations in textural variety that may arise.

Criterion 3 Harmonic Handling

In general, harmonic handling was fluent, with many compositions having a clear and successful harmonic pulse. However, candidates should be reminded that to access marks in the top band, compositions should include a variety of harmonic language and sophisticated chords as outlined in the Progression of Skills document appropriate for this level.

Criterion 4 Commentary

All commentaries were presented using the pro forma provided by CCEA. Most were well-written and provided a sound overview of the composition. However, fewer gave analytical accounts of the pieces and often lacked substantial detail. Most information was provided in the correct section and used some musical vocabulary. To assist with the moderation process candidates should include timings in the analytical overview and refrain from citing bar numbers, particularly when a score is not provided as this is therefore meaningless.

Assessment Unit AS 22 **Composing: Composition with Technology Task**

Overview

Both stimuli were popular and there were a variety of styles in the compositions presented including classical pieces, dances, Romantic, 20th century, film music and Irish Traditional.

Some centres submitted compositions which used mostly the same instrumentation and chose the same stimulus, overall form and style. This can be restrictive for students depending on their particular instrument/genre that they are interested in. It was evident that at times it would have been more beneficial to candidates for teachers to encourage contrasting stylistic choices within a centre.

Criterion 1 **Creation and Development of Ideas Based on a Stimulus**

In terms of creation and development of ideas some compositions struggled to establish a clear melodic progression and development of ideas, often relying on repeated statements of the stimulus. At the other extreme, candidates were sometimes over-ambitious, trying to accomplish too much and therefore lost a sense of unity due to too many ideas. The chosen style is important as it needs to provide the scope for both the presentation of the stimulus, and development within a contrasting section or sections, whilst maintaining a sense of overall coherence.

There was some clever manipulation of the stimulus, but this should not be to the detriment of a sense of melodic coherence. In the case of contrasting ideas, these should be balanced, well-shaped, fluent and also subjected to development as appropriate.

The most popular form/structure and the most successful to use was ternary form. Candidates also used theme and variations and rondo form. In some cases, a through-composed structure was employed, however, this did not really allow candidates to produce coherent pieces, as there was too often an imbalance between unity and variety.

It is best practice for teachers to explain why they have deducted marks. It was found that teachers in general marked too leniently, especially in Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 **Use of Harmony**

For Criterion 2, the majority of marks fell into Mark Band 3. The harmonic language used was generally good, but many candidates were unable to access the top Mark Band due to limited variety in the chosen chords, lack of modulation and/or harmonic devices used coherently and for development. Candidates accessing the top Mark Band showed a sophisticated handling of harmony, with a secure understanding of chord progressions and cadential writing.

Teachers' marking was found to be lenient in this criterion.

Criterion 3 **Use of Technology, including texture and timbre**

For Criterion 3, centres often only marked for the use of technology, forgetting that the use of texture and timbre is also assessed under this criterion.

When using the technology, candidates must take time throughout, and at the end of the compositional process, to mix their composition. It was found that panning was often extreme or inconsistent, balance issues were present in many of the submissions and

there was a lack of dynamic and tempo variety being used carefully and idiomatically. The opportunities that technology offers to control articulation, dynamics and tempo can provide candidates with a great range of choice to exploit their resources.

In a number of cases there was some excellent use of texture and timbre. However, some textures were sparse, and the four parts required at AS Level were not fully explored. In general, the choice of ensemble was typical of the chosen style and some of the part writing was idiomatic. When editing the individual instrumental lines in the chosen software, candidates should listen to them in solo mode and consider if this sounds like the actual instrument. Then, when listening to all parts together, a sense of balance can be achieved to ensure the melody is prominent and accompaniment not intrusive.

The final mixing of some submissions was not as well-managed as it could have been with a lack of careful use of reverb and many centres submitting recordings that were in the extremes of being too wet or dry.

The majority of the submitted work used sequencing technology. There were some combinations of both live and sequenced recordings, with successful use of mic placement and appropriate editing using EQ.

Criterion 4 Commentary

Candidates often failed to specify which stimulus they had chosen as the basis for their composition. Commentaries tended to be analytical and detailed, with specific examples provided. At times, there was confusion over where information should be included, particularly in relation to the development of ideas and use of chosen resources. Resources refer to instruments and how they are used to achieve timbral/textural contrast.

In general, the candidates gave insightful information into the processes undertaken. Some pitfalls included not citing a musical example of their influences in Section 1, (e.g. what musical feature(s) has the candidate included from a composer/group/style) and also not giving enough specific detail about their use of the instruments in Section 4. There were some cases where candidates did not fully analyse their melodic ideas and the subsequent development of these in Section 2. In Section 5, in relation to the use of technology, the comments often read like a set of definitions of the different technology techniques used, rather than providing information specific to the candidate's piece. Candidates should explain what panning and type of reverb they have applied to their chosen ensemble and give reasons for their musical choices.

It is important that track timings are included in the commentaries when citing musical examples.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS31

Responding to Music: Test of Aural Perception

Overview

This was a fair and accessible paper, testing a candidate's knowledge of three set works across each area of study, and two unfamiliar pieces of music. Questions were formulated in a clear and precise way and were appropriate for AS Level. Emboldened text highlighted specific requirements of some questions and was helpful for candidates. Candidates continue to make errors such as circling too many features, breaking the rubric of the question, and are also not specific enough in their answers. This was particularly evident in Question 2 Part (e) where some candidates clearly heard and understood what was happening in the music but did not use the correct musical terminology and therefore could not gain credit. Some candidates continue to make lengthy lists of up to eight or more features when the question clearly asks for three features. It is clear that candidates who continue to do this across their aural paper are merely listing features that they know, and are not focusing their attention on what it is that they are hearing. They fail to identify the correct features showing that this approach to answering is rarely successful and should be discouraged.

The overall standard of the papers, with regards to candidate responses, was not as high as previous series with many candidates scoring half marks or less. Some basic facts about set works, such as the period of composition, or musical style were not learnt or accurately recalled. Some candidates failed to pay attention to the particular focus of some questions and thus lost marks. Rubric violations were commonly seen in Question 2 Part (f) and Question 5 Part (c) with candidates circling more than two answers, again losing valuable marks.

Q1 Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77, third movement, Bars 57-11

This question was generally quite well answered. Part (a)(i) saw most candidates being awarded one or two marks. Rising scale, descending sequence and dotted rhythm were the most common answers. Ascending sequence was a common incorrect response. Part (a)(ii) was well answered with many candidates correctly identifying inversion and imitation, a common incorrect response. Part (b) was also well answered, with most candidates correctly identifying pedal and ascending sequence. The third correct answer of diminished seventh was not commonly seen on scripts. Tierce de Picardie and augmentation were common incorrect answers. Part (c) saw the key being well identified. The keys in this question were more successfully answered than in other set work questions. Few candidates scored the full four marks in Part (d), with semiquavers and descending sequence being the most common correct responses. There were mixed responses to Part (e) with the correct key of G major not being well answered. The correct answer of rondo/sonata rondo form was reasonably well done in Part (f), but some answers of ritornello were evident. Answers of sonata form were incorrect and could not be credited.

Q2 Handel: Zadok the Priest, Bars 99-121

The keys in Part (a) were not well known which is disappointing for a set work that candidates have studied. Only a small number of scripts correctly identified F# minor, but D major was more successfully answered. There were very mixed answers given to Part (b), which was, overall, poorly done. Semiquavers was the most common correct answer given. Many candidates gave incorrect answers of rising sequence. Part (c) was well answered with homophonic being well identified. Part (d) was also quite well answered, but incorrect answers given were commonly trill, turn or chromaticism, thus indicating a lack of detailed attention to the question. None of these incorrect responses related to melodic devices, which was the focus of the question. In Part (e) candidates often gained a mark for identifying the melisma sung by the basses. Descending sequence and semiquavers were also commonly correct. A lack of detail in the remainder of the responses meant that credit could not be given. Many vague answers were seen, and candidates were not specific enough in their responses. Melisma alone could not be credited, and candidates needed to state that this was sung by the basses to gain credit. Violation of the rubric was seen in Part (f) with some candidates circling three answers instead of two. This led to valuable marks being lost unnecessarily. More careful attention to the question was required. Part (g) was well answered, with the majority of candidates correctly identifying the Baroque period. Part (g)(ii) answers often lacked detail. Candidates were required to identify organ continuo and therefore a vague answer of continuo could not be awarded any marks.

Q3 Kern: 'Ol' Man River' from Showboat, Bars 45-74

This third question, on a set work, was answered with varying success. Part (a) was extremely well answered with almost all candidates correctly identifying the bass solo voice, along with the instrument in Part (b). The answers for the instrument in line 11 were less successful. Incorrect answers were commonly oboe and double bass instead of cello. The key in Line 11 was well answered in Part (c), but many candidates struggled to accurately identify the key in Line 3. Descending sequence and perfect cadence were well answered in Part (d). The majority of candidates gained two out of a possible three marks in this question, with augmentation a commonly incorrect answer. Examiners could not credit answers of diminished in Part (e) as a specific answer of diminished seventh was required to gain a mark. Part (f) highlighted the candidates who had thoroughly learnt this set work. Marks were generally awarded for TTBB (or male) chorus and homophonic texture, but only higher-level answers gained the full three marks available, with the specific and accurate detail about Joe's solo in Line 14. It was rare to see a candidate correctly state that the melody was in the first basses. Answers to Part (g) were surprising as, despite this being a set work, many candidates failed to gain the mark. Incorrect answers included folk, Jazz, African-American, Latin American and Musical Theatre.

Q4 Haydn: Nelson Mass, 'Dona nobis pacem' Bars 1-25

Some answers to Part (a) listed voices in choral order of SATB, showing that candidates had not read or understood the question properly. Tenor and bass were frequently confused with many candidates only scoring one to two marks. Part (b) was poorly answered with very few candidates achieving any marks. The rising fourth was misidentified as a rising fifth in some scripts and sequence and imitation were frequently answered in error. The cadence was better identified than the key in Part (c) with incorrect answers mostly being the tonic key. Unison was the most common incorrect answer in Part (d), but on the whole, this question was answered well. Part (e) was also answered more successfully, but Part (f) proved challenging for many candidates. The period of composition was poorly identified, with Baroque appearing

as a frequent incorrect answer. However, some candidates were able to gain credit in Part (f)(ii) despite answering an incorrect period in the previous question. Predominance of strings was well-answered. Answers about use of timpani were often too general and could not gain credit without the specific detail of use of tonic and dominant. Other answers in the mark scheme were rarely given on the scripts.

Q5 Smetana: 'Vltava' from Má Vlast Extract A, Bars 39-70, and Extract B, Bars 122-137

Candidates seemed to find this final question more challenging at times. Part (a) was well answered with the violin being commonly identified. Very few scripts gave answers of oboe, but the majority of candidates gained a mark in this question. Part (b) was poorly answered and there were frequent incorrect answers of duple metre rather than 6/8. The minor key was often answered correctly. There were repeated rubric violations in Part (c), showing a lack of attention to the question. Many candidates circled three answers instead of two and again, lost marks as a result. In Part (d), major was answered more often than diminished seventh. Part (e) saw triangle being well answered with most candidates gaining a mark. Glockenspiel was a common incorrect answer. Part (f) was also well answered with most scripts correctly identifying the homophonic texture. Part (g) was less successfully answered with many incorrect answers of trill, turn and acciaccatura. In Part (h)(i) many candidates failed to recognise the Romantic features of the music, with the Classical period being commonly answered in error. In Part (h)(ii) a substantial number of candidates failed to achieve any marks as they mainly listed Classical features. Many scripts mentioned the use of percussion but failed to state the instruments they had heard. Specific detail was required for candidates to gain marks in this final question.

Assessment Unit AS 32 Responding to Music: Written Examination

Overview

It was pleasing to see that, as in previous years, the majority of candidates attempted all questions. Responses indicated a variety of abilities, resulting in the awarding of a wider range of marks than usual. Overall, the standard of responses were mixed with marks ranging from as low as 2 out of 70 up to marks in the mid 60s.

The readability of the questions was good, with most candidates understanding and responding appropriately. It should be noted that candidates should not write abbreviations for keys, as this cannot be credited. In the extended writing questions, some candidates continue to lose the focus of the question and lost marks by writing lengthy amounts of irrelevant information. For example, there was some confusion about the tonality and harmony in Q3 Part (a) and an inability to focus the writing on these aspects of the music. Perhaps this reflected what had been learnt, rather than a misinterpretation of the question. Where a question focuses on tonality and harmony, there can be no credit given for lengthy responses about the texture or motifs within the accompaniment and orchestration. General points without the context of the text fail to provide enough detail for credit. Some answers in the extended writing questions were extremely brief and occasionally written in bullet point form. Such responses failed to provide a fluent well-developed answer and therefore gained low marks. The strongest responses read fluently with the quality of written communication being matched by the specific relevant musical content provided. These answers frequently discussed the music in a chronological way, showing a strong knowledge and understanding of the set work. Rubric violations were seen in this written examination for the first time in many years. Several candidates answered Question 3 Part (a) and Part (b), without taking time to read and understand that only one option for

Question 3 should have been answered. There was no evidence that these candidates had read or seen either option for Question 4, which tests a different area of study - Secular Vocal Music (Musical).

Q1 Beethoven: Symphony No. 3, in Eb major (Eroica) Mt.4, Bars 347-380

This question was answered with varying degrees of success. Part (a)(i) was well done with most candidates correctly identifying oboe. Part (ii) of this question revealed scripts with quite a number of unsuccessful answers. Many candidates failed to identify the double dotted rhythm and could not be credited for stating dotted rhythm as an alternative. Scripts which simply stated the poco andante tempo without stating that this meant that the tempo was slower, could not be given credit. In Part (a)(iii) the Eb major key was more successfully answered than C minor. The chords were generally quite well identified in Part (c) with most candidates scoring four or more out of six available marks. However, some candidates continue to struggle to express a dominant seventh chord, with different variations of Bb7 appearing as Bb maj 7. It is the responsibility of centres to make this convention clear and non-negotiable. This question discriminated between those who had the ability to identify all three chords. Responses for chord inversions revealed a similar polarisation in understanding, with around half of the responses correctly identifying root and first positions. Unfortunately for some, if the chord was incorrect, then the inversion was also incorrect consequently. Out of three possible answers for harmonic features in Part (d), suspension was the most commonly identified. Some candidates struggled to identify any harmonic features, or were at a loss as to what constituted a harmonic feature, providing answers that related to melodic and rhythmic features instead. In Part (e) most correct answers seen were rising scale and chromaticism. In Part (f) triplets was very well answered but answers of "offbeat" could not be credited. Many candidates answered Part (g) correctly, but incorrect responses were commonly sonata or rondo form.

Q2 Mozart: String Quartet No. 19 in C major, K465, Mt.3, Bars 1-432

This question was successfully answered by many candidates with questions such as Part (a), Part (c), Part (d)(i) and Part (e) producing many correct responses, with little confusion as to what was expected. Most candidates correctly identified the homophonic texture, but where unison was not offered as an answer, it was commonly misidentified as monophonic. The chord table was completed with mixed success, similar to Question 1. Again, some candidates gave answers of D major 7, rather than D7. Part (c) was not particularly well-answered, with many candidates giving answers that were unrelated to ornamentation. Part (d)(i) was mostly well done, but (d)(ii) saw candidates frequently confuse F major for C major. This incorrect key of C major was commonly seen on scripts. In Part (e), diminished could not be credited. Some candidates misinterpreted the question altogether and did not give a chord at all, rather, a key or other unrelated feature. Part (f) saw many candidates being able to detect descending sequence, parallel third textures between violin 2 and viola/violins 1 and 2, and imitation. The fourth developmental feature (repetition up an octave) proved difficult for candidates to express. The change of key or modulation was commonly correct in scripts, but many candidates suggested that the piece had been transposed up a pitch/note/tone. Part (g) was not well answered with few candidates gaining a mark for waltz dance style.

Q3 (a) Rutter: A Clare Benediction

This was the more popular option, with the majority of candidates answering this question which was moderately well handled. In quite a number of scripts, cadences were either wrongly labeled or incorrectly referenced. There were still a handful of candidates who could not conform to the convention of using the

text as a reference and relied on bar numbers, which resulted in a lack of clarity and dissociation from the lyrics. Candidates of differing abilities emerged more noticeably with the use of language and structure in their writing. Candidates who recalled many instances of tonal and harmonic significance often indicated real understanding and aural memory as opposed to learning facts from the score. On several occasions, some candidates included more vague references to cadences without stating the key and it should be emphasised in centres that both pieces of information are required for clarity and credit. Correct text references are also essential, and a number of candidates failed to gain credit due to vague comments without text references. There were a number of marks available for individual award of seventh chords, but references were frequently inaccurate and therefore candidates lost the opportunity to gain these marks. Responses were mainly awarded marks that fell in Mark Band 2, some in Mark Band 3 and several in Mark Band 4. Candidates were more able to successfully comment on the beginning and ending of verses.

(b) Gibbons: This is the Record of John

Overall, responses to this question were weaker than those offered for Question 3 Part (a), with the majority of marks awarded being in Mark Band 1 or 2. It seemed difficult for candidates to remain within the context of the second full chorus. Some candidates struggled to discuss the correct location asked for in the question and others referred to incorrect parts of the text. The marks available for texture were not commonly awarded as many candidates were confused about the textures and could not recall them accurately. Answers, generally, were found to be lacking in depth and musical detail. Some candidates did not accurately recall the SAATB choir/chorus used. The fugal entries and pitches were more often inaccurate or not known showing a lack of knowledge of this set work. Similar to Question 3 Part (a), cadences were not fully discussed and again, it should be emphasised to candidates that the type of cadence and the key should be referenced with accurate text.

Q4 (a) Schöenberg: One Day More

This question was more frequently answered than Q4 Part (b) and was generally more successful with most marks awarded being in Mark Bands 2 and 3. Encouragingly, some candidates were awarded marks in Mark Band 4, which was pleasing. The language used in the question was clearly understood by candidates with the majority of responses discussing the features of the melodic material and their development appropriately. Most answers displayed a good knowledge of the set work, with the majority of candidates correctly using key musical vocabulary in relation to Valjean, Marius and the Thénardiens. Responses gained less credit when there was a missing key description which would uniquely and significantly characterise the motif in question. For example, many candidates unsuccessfully attempted to describe the repeated semiquavers sung by the Thénardiens, mentioning repeated notes or four semiquavers instead. Some candidates included irrelevant discussion about Eponine, Javert and Cosette which occupied too much of their answer. Stronger responses clearly emerged whenever candidates explained the final combination of melodic motifs in C major. Many scripts gave inaccurate descriptions, citing a homophonic rather than unison texture, and gave insufficient detail of the diminution to two semiquavers on "One more Dawn". The majority of candidates were able to score marks for content that included correct musical features and links with previous songs in the musical. Some candidates did not include text references for the use of triplet and scotch snap in Marius's theme and therefore could not gain credit. Weaker responses failed to link comments

with the text and the majority of candidates discussed the development of the theme as being sung in parallel thirds with Cosette. This is inaccurate and there should always be direct reference to specification guidance, scores and fact files for accurate learning and recall of musical knowledge.

(b) Rodgers: Soliloquy

This question was considerably less well-answered by the smaller number of candidates who chose this option. The majority of responses were awarded marks in Mark Band 1 or 2, gaining credit for up to three or four points. A good number of responses accurately described and referenced the triplet melody, but it proved more challenging to offer an accurate description of how this motif was treated. The “half again as bright” was sometimes described as a descending idea, rather than a descending sequence which was the response that gained credit. Similarly, only a few candidates recognised the augmentation of the dotted “half again as bright” quaver rhythm, to the dotted crotchet quaver rhythm. The second half of the “my little girl” section was poorly analysed with many candidates being unsuccessful in their attempts to explain the workings of the melody at this point, with language which did not capture the features succinctly. The successful candidates used triple or double-barreled musical vocabulary, such as, “repeated pitches on high F”. Responses displayed a range of abilities in terms of expressing musical features in an efficient manner. For example, in the climax (beginning from “I got to get ready”), only a few candidates gained credit because most failed to offer a level of description and detail required by the mark scheme. Many weaker responses discussed the story line and context of the song rather than the relevant content of melodic features and their development. Weak structure and content resulted in lower marks overall in this question.

Assessment Unit A2 1 Performance

Overview

With the restrictions slowly lifting this year, it was a welcome return to visiting examiners travelling to centres to examine live performance. Teachers were welcoming and facilitated performance examinations well. Examiners were grateful for the kind hospitality as they are frequently travelling some distance and have several centres to examine in one day. There was an overall sense of relief that live performance could take place again, from candidates, teachers and examiners alike.

Standard of performances

The standard of performances was generally very good. Candidates were evidently nervous this year due to the lack of performance opportunities in recent years and having missed the opportunity to grow in their performance skills through GCSE and AS examinations. In previous years, the majority of marks fell into Mark Band 3 and Mark Band 4. This year, as perhaps anticipated, the marks sat slightly lower than usual with the majority of marks awarded falling into Mark Band 2 and Mark Band 3. A small number of candidates gained marks within Mark Band 1, and a pleasing number of candidates were awarded marks in Mark Band 4. Thus, the range of marks was wider this year.

At the upper ability range, candidates had crafted well-chosen programmes which demonstrated a good, or very good, technical control across a contrasting range of styles.

At the lower end of ability, candidates struggled to maintain fluency or to perform with true musical meaning. More candidates than usual chose to perform music at the minimum standard of Grade 5. It was pleasing to continue to see some candidates performing at an exceptionally high standard, with musical maturity beyond their years.

Variety of instruments/voice

There were performances on a wide variety of orchestral instruments and voices, along with the addition of one Chinese ethnic instrument, examined this year. There were fewer brass instruments than normal, with piano, voice, flute, clarinet, electric guitar and drum kit being the most commonly examined instruments.

Repertoire

Repertoire continues to be chosen from popular ABRSM and Trinity syllabi. Repertoire was, in most cases, suitable for the technical ability of the candidate and consistent with their preferred genre. Singers chose repertoire that was mainly within the musical theatre genre and these candidates seemed very comfortable performing in this style. Some candidates did not include enough variety in their programme, or perhaps chose pieces that did not serve to display their musical skills in performance. In some cases, it was difficult to establish a mark for expression and style or to gain a full picture of a candidate's ability due to the nature of the music chosen for performance. In most centres, programmes were contrasting, allowing candidates to showcase the full range of their ability.

Criterion 1 Technical control and accuracy

This criterion assesses fluency in the performance relating to pitch, intonation, rhythm, tone and articulation. Marks are most commonly lost for persistent issues of intonation, uneven rhythm in fast passagework, and stumbles that caused a loss of fluency or break-down of the performance. Candidates should be encouraged to take time to tune their instruments between their pieces, as well as before they begin their programme. Most performances were fairly competent or largely accurate with the majority of marks falling into Mark Band 2 and Mark Band 3. It was pleasing to hear some performances that showed flair and high levels of musical maturity, some even performing above and beyond the demands of A Level.

Criterion 2 Expressive interpretation, sense of style and communication

Candidates tended to score well in this criterion when an understanding of the style is evident through an appropriate tempo chosen and maintained, and a suitable dynamic colour added. Performances in Mark Band 1 and Mark Band 2 were frequently limited and could sound "wooden", with a delivery of mostly accurate pitches but no real sense of style or musical phrasing. Marks awarded this year mostly fell into Mark Band 2 and Mark Band 3. When the music was beyond the candidate's capabilities, there were often difficulties connecting with the expressive content. The most successful candidates were able to personalise their performances by thinking beyond the printed music and adding their own expressive interpretation of the music. Where a candidate is scoring very high marks in criterion one, the marks in this criterion almost always follow suit.

Criterion 3 Viva Voce

Candidates were well prepared, with the viva voce being generally well-answered in Questions (i) to (iii). Question (iv) was less well-answered. Candidates were able to list the technical difficulties they encountered but gave limited information on specific instrumental or vocal techniques when discussing how these were overcome. Many candidates simply stated that they practised the section in isolation and with a slower tempo. This is generic to all practice. Candidates often failed to discuss how their listening to recordings impacted their own performance. It was unfortunate that some superb performances, gaining full marks in criteria one and two, were let down by low marks in the viva voce. Only a very small number of candidates scored full marks in their viva voce, with the majority gaining marks in Mark Band 2 or Mark Band 3. By contrast, there were a few instances of a very well-prepared viva voce where a mature understanding of the music was evident.

Level of Demand

All candidates performed within the requirements for the level of demand. There were more candidates who performed at Grade 5 standard than usual this year, but this proved to be a wise and measured decision, and one which paid off in comparison to those candidates who performed programmes at higher grades but struggled to meet the technical demands of the music. In these cases, the fluency of performance was often impacted, and the marks awarded reflected this. A candidate should always choose music which sits well within their technical ability.

Timing

Performances were, on the whole, well-prepared with accurate timings which met the required time of 8-10 minutes. Some candidates continue to perform more lengthy programmes and this can result in issues of stamina towards the end of the performance.

General Comments

External noise at centres can be disruptive to the examination process and where possible, teachers should ensure that bells and all other announcement systems be turned off. Where this is not possible, performances should be scheduled appropriately to avoid this distraction.

More centres than before are hiring accompanists to fulfill this role during performance examinations. This works well for many candidates, with accompanists being extremely accomplished and sympathetic to the candidate. This serves to enhance the performance and helps relieve some additional workload from teachers at a pressured time of year.

Use of technology is something critical to consider in advance. All computers or laptops used for backing tracks must be disconnected from the Internet. Candidates may not wear smart watches into the examination room and mobile phones must never be considered appropriate for playing backing tracks. Where a centre is uncertain, please seek advice from CCEA in advance, and open a conversation with the examiner to explain how devices have been disconnected and made appropriate. Thankfully, there were no instances of malpractice in this format this year.

Candidates should be advised that it is best practice to receive lessons from a specialist teacher on their instrument or voice. Where this is not the case, it is frequently evident in performance and marks awarded are commonly reflective of this. The marks of the viva voce are also impacted due to a lack of depth and detail given.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit A2 21 Composing: Composition Task

Overview

In total, 32 centres (including five consortiums) submitted work in this unit. Being an optional unit, submission numbers were lower than in previous years, with the work of 115 candidates presented for moderation. While the largest centre submitted the work of 10 candidates for moderation, many centres had a smaller cohort, with six centres each submitting the work of one student.

The standard of compositions was lower than previous years, and some centres found assessing this unit challenging. This may have been the result of a return to formal composition post-pandemic or due to the optional nature of this unit for this session.

Instrumental submissions encompassed a wide range of musical styles including classical, romantic, neoclassical, minimalist and jazz. A small number of candidates opted to write programmatic film scores with varying degrees of success. It should be noted that it is difficult to apply the CCEA assessment criteria to some compositional styles, in particular minimalism and neoclassicism. This is due in part to their repetitive and frequently very dissonant nature. The most popular instrumental forces selected by candidates included string, brass and woodwind quartets, solo piano, and pieces for solo instrument with piano accompaniment.

For instrumental pieces, formal structures included ternary form and theme and variations, with the latter generally handled well and allowing for imaginative development of the initial thematic material.

A number of candidates submitted electronically generated pieces which perhaps would have been more suited to AMU22 (Composition with Technology).

Vocal composition submissions included pop songs and SATB choral pieces. Most pop songs were strophic in structure, although a few were through-composed making the development of musical ideas more difficult. Choral pieces, both secular and sacred, generally followed a ternary form structure or were through-composed. Word setting was approached with varying degrees of success in both popular and choral genres.

Across all centres, candidates' work was produced using Sibelius, Garageband or Logic software. Good quality audio recordings accompanied all compositions. While Sibelius recordings of vocal pieces continue to be submitted, these rarely do the compositions justice. Live recordings were much more successful in enhancing the listening quality of vocal compositions. Many candidates submitted scores with their composition, and these were a useful aid to the moderation process. However, a number of songs did not include lead sheets.

Teacher Comments

Teacher comments ranged from the very brief, quoting directly from the mark scheme, to those which gave a full scale analysis of the composition, which often was not reflected in the candidate's own commentary of their work. Teacher comments tended to be generous in their appraisal of candidate compositions, often referring to compositional features not obviously present in the music. The best teacher comments clearly justified the marks awarded by the centre and were honest in highlighting shortcomings, if applicable.

Criterion 1 Creation, Development and Organisation of Ideas

Most compositions reflected the musical style selected by the candidate. In the most successful compositions, stylistic features were consistently maintained throughout the piece.

The most common formal structure selected for instrumental pieces was ternary form. In these compositions, Section A material was usually the most successful. Frequently, Section B lacked significant melodic interest and at times bore a minimal stylistic relationship to the outer sections of the piece. Most candidates attempted to develop material in Section A1, although at times this lacked imagination.

Variation form was also a popular structure this session. The most successful compositions using this structure began with a fluent, memorable melodic idea, and the development of this material in subsequent variations was generally imaginative and successful.

The importance of a strong and memorable initial melody cannot be overestimated, and the most successful compositions displayed fluent, well-phrased melodies throughout. In lower scoring compositions, melodic material was often purely motivic or figurative, and in a significant number of submissions clear and coherent melodic content was completely absent.

Many candidates struggled to develop their initial ideas imaginatively and stylistically, often relying heavily on repetition as the composition progressed.

As a result, the majority of candidates achieved a mark in Band 2 or 3 for this criterion, with less access to Mark Band 4 in evidence this year.

Criterion 2 Use of Resources

While instrumental and vocal writing was, for the most part, reasonably idiomatic with some understanding of the potential of the chosen resources, a number of candidates continued to include parts which are playable by Sibelius but not by the actual instrument selected. The most successful and idiomatic writing was for pop compositions, where candidates clearly had experience performing within the genre, or were keen listeners. Guitar writing was particularly idiomatic, with some compositions demonstrating a good range of techniques. Piano writing varied in quality, with some compositions demonstrating sound writing and a clear experience of the instrument, while others were less idiomatic.

Some string writing was not particularly successful, and it frequently appeared that candidates were writing in an idiom of which they had little practical experience. Many compositions did not include any instrument specific effects, such as pizzicato or double stopping.

Musical textures were more often overly busy and lacked variety and clarity, with melodic interest often obscured due to a lack of textural clarity. A significant number of candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of appropriate part writing, with overlapping and voicing issues throughout their compositions. In both instrumental and vocal compositions, writing for homophonic textures was generally more successful than that for contrapuntal or polyphonic textures.

Most candidates achieved a mark in Band 3 for this criterion.

Criterion 3 Use of Harmony

Harmonic writing was generally fluent, but lacked the sophistication expected at this level to achieve a top band mark. Most candidates had a reasonable understanding of harmonic pulse and displayed a confident use of primary and secondary chords, cadence

points and modulations. However, a significant number of candidates submitted work that demonstrated an extremely limited understanding of harmonic pulse and progression with unprepared and unintended dissonance occurring throughout their compositions.

While there were some attempts to include chromatic harmony at the expected level and to modulate to more remote keys, many of these lacked fluency.

Pop song compositions regularly included chordal extensions as appropriate to the style but were over-reliant on repetition of one or two chord sequences.

A relatively small number of candidates achieved a Band 4 mark for this criterion, the majority achieving a mark in Bands 2 or 3.

Criterion 4 Commentary

The majority of commentaries were well-written with a competent use of musical terminology and appropriate attention given to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Clearer commentaries presented information using paragraphs, timing references and sub-headings, or with tables and musical examples. Most gave a good general overview of the composition but lacked the substantive analytical detail necessary to achieve a top band mark. A common issue with lower Mark Band commentaries was that information was not clearly organised under appropriate headings.

While most commentaries reached around 1,000 words, a significant number fell well below the 1,200 word limit. Lack of timings or bar numbers in commentaries made the moderation process challenging, as did the lack of lead sheets with songs. Reference to bar numbers in the absence of a score was of very limited use.

Section 1 Candidates should clearly state the style of composition and describe stylistic influences. A number of candidates provided insufficient information in this section, some including only one sentence. When candidates referenced a particular style, the most successful commentaries highlighted particular characteristics of the style that they explored within their music. Many commentaries contained either irrelevant or very basic information regarding the context and style. Some references to style were not reflected in the work candidates presented.

Section 2 Candidates should clearly outline the structure, describe melodic ideas and explain how these ideas are developed. Reference to initial melodic ideas was generally well-explained, but most commentaries lacked detail relating to the development ideas.

Section 3 Candidates should describe and account for their selection of resources and textures. When addressing the use of resources, many candidates still referred only to the recording or notation software, and most candidates made no reference to texture.

Section 4 Candidates should describe keys, chords and chord progressions, cadences and modulations. A list of chords is not sufficient. Many candidates did not provide a basic harmonic analysis, with some making generalised comments about the opening key or referring to the inclusion of perfect cadences. Where candidates scored well in their harmonic handling, commentaries in Section 4 usually reflected this.

Most commentaries achieved a mark in Band 2.

Centre Marking

Centre marking was found to be mostly generous across all marking criteria.

Criterion (i) marking was the most problematic. Some centres credited candidates for features not present in their work. Many compositions lacked a coherent structure, fluency, clearly phrased melodic material and the imaginative development of musical ideas. As such, these pieces fulfilled the descriptors of Mark Bands 1-3. However, many centres incorrectly awarded marks in the top band for this criterion.

For Criterion (ii), candidates were frequently awarded full marks by the centre despite instrumental and vocal forces not being completely idiomatic, and often musical textures lacked variety and clarity.

In Criterion (iii) many candidates were awarded a top band mark, but there was limited evidence of the harmonic fluency and sophistication required at this level reflected in their work. Fewer candidates explored chromatic harmony than in previous years. Many submissions displayed the harmonic features expected at AS Level or GCSE, rather than A2 Level.

For Criterion (iv) the majority of commentaries were awarded top band marks by the centres, however, many gave a general overview of the composition, rather than substantive analytical detail. A significant number of these commentaries fell far short of the 1,200 word limit.

Assessment Unit A2 22 Composing: Composition with Technology Task

Overview

In comparison to previous series there were fewer top band submissions this year. Both of the stimuli were popular. Most centres submitted the work correctly. Marking by centres was found to be more lenient and in these cases there was an adjustment to moderator marks.

Criterion 1 Creation and Development of Ideas Based on a Stimulus

A variety of styles were used by candidates for their compositions including baroque, classical, romantic, cinematic/programmatic, tango, synth/electronic, jazz, reggae and Irish traditional. The most successful compositions had a clear sense of style from the outset and included many characteristics of the style throughout the work.

In many submissions there were attempts to structure musical ideas appropriately but in a limited number of compositions the structure was not always clear or there was a significant imbalance between sections. The most popular form used by candidates was ternary form, however, there were also many candidates who used Theme and Variations.

Many candidates did not access Mark Band 4 in this criterion as they had not sufficiently developed the stimulus material and/or contrasting ideas were not sufficiently strong melodically or consistent with the chosen style.

In their comments, teachers should always try and explain why they have deducted marks. It was found that teachers, in general, marked leniently in Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 Use of Harmony

For Criterion 2, the majority of marks fell into Mark Band 3. The harmonic language used was generally good, but many candidates were unable to access the top mark bands due to a lack of extended chords, chromatic harmony, lack of modulation to an unrelated key and coherent use of harmonic devices. In some of the weaker submissions there were weak chord progressions and variable use of cadences.

Teachers' marking was found to be lenient in this criterion.

Criterion 3 Use of Technology, including texture and timbre

Music technology was employed mostly from a satisfactory to good degree. However, there was limited evidence in the submitted work of technology being used to a high degree.

Candidates must take time throughout and at the end of the compositional process to mix their composition. It appeared in some submissions that this work was not finalised appropriately at the end of the composition process. In some cases, there were problems with panning and the balance of parts. In many of the submissions there was a lack of dynamics and tempo variety not being used carefully and idiomatically. The opportunities that technology offers to control articulation, dynamics and tempo can provide candidates with a great range of choice to exploit their resources.

Teachers should ensure they take account of the candidate's use of texture and timbre when assessing this criterion and make reference to it in their comments. In a number of cases there was some excellent use of texture and timbre. However, some textures were sparse, and the six parts required at A2 Level were not fully explored. When editing the individual instrumental lines in the software, candidates should listen to them in solo mode and consider if it sounds like the actual instrument. Then, when listening to all parts together, a sense of balance should be achieved to ensure the melody is prominent and the accompaniment not intrusive.

The final mixing of some submissions was not as well-managed as it could have been with a lack of careful use of reverb, with many centres submitting recordings that were in the extremes of being too wet or dry.

Criterion 4 Commentary

Commentaries were mostly good, many achieving six of the eight available marks.

In many of the commentaries there was confusion over where information should be included, particularly in relation to the development of ideas and use of chosen resources. Resources refer to instrumentation and how this is used to achieve timbral/textural contrast. Candidates should ensure they include information in the correct section.

Candidates generally gave insightful information into the processes they had undertaken. Some commentaries didn't cite musical examples of their influences in Section 1, (for example, what musical feature(s) has the candidate included from a composer/group/style) and not giving enough specific detail about their use of the instruments in Section 4. There were some cases where candidates did not fully analyse their melodic ideas and the subsequent development of these in Section 2. Specific detail on the chosen resources (instruments used) should also be given in Section 3.

It is important that track timings are included in the commentaries when citing musical examples, particularly if no score is included.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit A2 31 Responding to Music: Test of Aural Perception

Overview

This paper was appropriate for a range of different abilities and the majority of strong candidates performed consistently well across the whole paper. Most questions were realistically answerable by an A Level Music student who had revised set works thoroughly and had a sound understanding of the different elements of music and periods of musical history. The set work questions did produce some unusual answers, particularly in relation to the style or period. This would suggest either a lack of revision or a lack of contextual/historical understanding of the music. At the lower end there were a few papers with most answers not completed, resulting in a total mark in single figures.

Candidates must remember that this is an aural paper and continual listening of the set works, unfamiliar and contextual extracts throughout the course is essential preparation for this type of examination.

Q1 Debussy: 'Nuages' from Nocturnes, Bars 21-38

The majority of candidates were able to identify the solo instrument in Part (a) as the cor anglais with the oboe being the most common incorrect answer. In Part (ii) a pleasing number of candidates scored three marks. However, many answers incorrectly referred to a falling tritone/tritone without stating that the opening theme spanned or outlined a tritone. Most candidates identified the two instruments playing the two-note motif in Part (c) but some answers to Part (d) circled a descending sequence instead of ascending sequence. There were some candidates who did not know the twentieth-century style of this set work and more often harmonic features supporting the impressionistic style were too generalised, or not actually present in this specific extract. Candidates should avoid recounting long lists of features such as, 'extended harmony, unresolved dissonance, chromatic, dissonance, unrelated keys' and try to be more selective in their responses in this type of question.

Q2 Fauré: Libera Me from Requiem, Bars 52-98

Descriptions of the brass accompaniment in Part (i) were either very detailed, with all possible answers included in responses, or very weak. Common incorrect features included references to unison textures, off beat or dotted rhythms and countermelodies. 'Repeated notes' was too vague to gain credit at this level and a number of candidates talked about trumpets rather than horns. Only a small number of candidates who had an obvious detailed knowledge of the different sections of this set work were able to identify the two keys in Part (b) correctly. Answers to Part (d) proved more accessible, though 'tierce de Picardie' was a common incorrect response. In Part (e) most candidates could recognise the texture correctly but struggled to identify the voice types singing as alto and bass, with many incorrect references to tenor and bass. At least half of the candidates were unable to identify the period of this set work as Romantic, with many incorrect references to Renaissance revealing a limited understanding of this piece.

Q3 Handel: 'I Rage' from Acis and Galatea, Bars 1-20

Many candidates showed a better understanding and knowledge of this vocal set work and scored highly. In Part (a) many responses referred to the melisma, semiquavers and scalic movement, scoring the full three marks available. The question clearly indicated that the features were in relation to the first presentation of "I rage" and therefore references to rising sequences and Eb major triadic lines were not creditworthy. While many candidates were able to identify the interval in Part (b) correctly as a tritone, octave and fifth were common incorrect answers. In Part (c) only those candidates who had obviously revised this set work thoroughly were able to identify three harmonic features and descriptions of 'capacious mouth' in Part (d) were often very vague and barely citing the low F. The key at the end of the extract was more often correctly answered, as was the type of solo voice. A significant number of candidates did state that this was a baritone, possibly confusing this set work with the Libera Me.

Q4 Stainer: The Crucifixion; Extract A.Mt.2 Bars 83-93 and Extract B. Mt.3 Bars 63-82

This question proved straightforward for many candidates though again the voice type was more often identified as a baritone rather than a tenor. Part (b) and Part (c) were well-answered with candidates more often only losing a mark for stating 'diminished' rather than 'diminished seventh' in Part (c). Recognition of the recitative style was well-answered by those candidates who understood the context of the question. In Extract B the dotted rhythm was very well recognised but candidates tended to state rising scales rather than arpeggios when identifying the melodic features of this soprano part. Most candidates were able to recognise the texture as imitative/polyphonic in Part (f). However, only a smaller number could discern the order of entries as moving through the voices from bass to soprano and vague incorrect references to fugue and canon appeared in responses. Despite the English text given, many candidates stated that the type of work was a 'requiem' showing limited understanding of these different types of sacred vocal work forms.

Q5 Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 5. Mt.3.Bars 106-1481

Part (a) and Part (d) of this unfamiliar Baroque extract were mostly accurate for even the lowest scoring scripts. While most of the candidates could identify the texture in Part (b) as imitative/polyphonic, fewer could identify the antiphonal nature of the writing and the pairing in thirds. There were many vague and incorrect comments in relation to 'call and response'. Many candidates struggled to realise that this was a concerto grosso and not a solo concerto, despite there being more than one solo instrument playing. Those who identified the period of composition as Baroque and cited an appropriate date, usually then were able to give the answers detailed in the mark scheme, though some candidates lost a mark due to simply stating 'harpsichord' and not 'harpsichord continuo'.

Q6 Prokofiev: Cinderella, Op.87, Act 2: Waltz Coda, Bars 1-64 (plus the D.C)

The majority of candidates found the recognition of the opening tonality, ornament and rhythmic features fairly straightforward. However, in Part (e) many could only name the percussion instruments playing but could not provide any detail of what and when they were playing and therefore were not awarded any marks. In Part (f) a significant number of pupils stated that this extract was nationalistic in style. Answers were more often incorrect for Part (g) with many candidates failing to state that the harmony was dissonant. In Part (h) many answers correctly identified the dance style as a waltz but some incorrectly stated that the extract was in the style of a 'minuet'.

Assessment Unit A2 32 Responding to Music: Written Examination

Overview

There was a very wide range of marks for this paper with a pleasing number of candidates scoring into the mid 60s out of a total of 70 raw marks. At the lower end, there were some very low total marks in single figures, and often these scripts had a significant number of questions not answered. They also displayed limited, if any knowledge at all, of the set works. While the range of questions allowed candidates of all abilities to access marks, too many responses indicated insufficient preparation or lack of revision on the part of the candidate. In terms of analysis, the first set work score question appeared more challenging to the candidates than the unfamiliar score analysis in Question 2.

The short, extended writing responses require the candidate to be focused in terms of answering the question, citing the text and providing accurate and detailed information relevant to the question. At times, extended writing responses contained no creditworthy information at all, and many responses simply cited lists of features without linking these to any text or location and therefore could not be awarded any marks. While the quality of spelling overall was of a reasonable standard, the structure of written responses was more often confused and unclear with poor sentence construction.

Q1 Bernstein: ‘Lonely Town’ from Three Dance Episodes from On the Town, Bars 1-27

Total marks for this question ranged from very high to very low. In Part (a), the most commonly awarded marks were for triplet, ascending/descending scale, and falling fourth, with some incorrect answers such as inversion and tied notes over the bar line. Part (b) proved challenging with only a handful of candidates showing an awareness of instrumental ranges and clefs, and being able to recognise the interval between the clarinet and bass clarinet as a tenth or compound third and not simply as a third. A range of answers appeared for Part (c) with a number of candidates simply stating ‘pedal’ without stating ‘tonic’ and therefore receiving no mark. Most candidates were able to identify the three keys in Part (d) but the chords in Part (e) proved more challenging with the fourth chord of F# major often identified incorrectly as F# minor. High scoring candidates in this question had a clear knowledge that the chordal ostinato in this movement alternated between two sixth chords. Other candidates offered a wide variety of chords with no apparent logical process as to their harmonic analysis or awareness of the root note of the chord. Most scripts identified the jazz influence in this movement but thereafter an understanding of jazz-like features was often missing with ‘syncopation’ the most successful response.

Whilst many candidates could state “muted” they were not specific enough, stating brass or brass instruments rather than specifically identifying this as the trumpet. Blues notes, flattened thirds etc., were very occasionally listed, and a little less frequently, added notes with sixths or sevenths.

Q2 Brahms: Serenade No. 1 in D, Op. 11: Extract A: Mt. 1, Bars 60–87; Extract B: Mt. 4, Bars 1–25

Around a third of responses managed to identify all three keys correctly with the third key F# minor sometimes incorrectly cited as F# major. Weaker scripts suggested flat keys, which revealed a limited understanding of key signatures. The chordal analysis in Part (b) proved straightforward for many candidates, although a common error for some was to identify the E7 chord as E major 7. Too many candidates lack a clear understanding of the difference between these two types of chords. Candidates should consider their analytical approach when asked to comment on

the presentation and development of a melodic motif and it was evident that many candidates worked bar by bar chronologically. Stronger responses acknowledged octaves instead of unison in the initial cello and viola presentation. Many responses recognised the second violin's subsequent imitation/repetition and many also noticed the interval between the first and second violins. Few candidates identified the parallel 3rds correctly and even fewer specified that the double basses and cellos played in "unison" (some responses mistook unison playing for octaves in this case). Inversion was recognised by some candidates, while others talked incorrectly about "contrary motion" rather than inversion. Nevertheless, four marks were commonly awarded in this question. Candidates are advised to always read the question carefully, as some answers included discussion of the woodwind in their answer, which was irrelevant.

There were many full marks in Part (e) with correct identification of both the dotted rhythm and the ascending sequence. Similarly, there were many correct answers to Part (f) and Part (h) with fewer candidates proving able to use the term 'countermelody' to describe the developmental device in Part (g).

Q3 (a) Chilcott: Agnus Dei section, A Little Jazz Mass

Responses to this question on the Chilcott set work revealed a clear dichotomy between candidates who had revised thoroughly and could comment accurately and in detail on the vocal scoring and harmonic features, compared to those who could not. It was common for weaker responses to show a lack of specialist terminology related to vocal scoring/texture and harmony, and to include much irrelevance and generalities about other elements such as melodic features. Some candidates did not know that the movement was scored for an SATB choir.

Strong responses were clearly structured round the three main phrases of text and their repetitions. Responses that showed limited detailed knowledge of this set work movement, struggled to refer to any specific text apart from the section's opening text Agnus Dei. Information about jazz-style scoring/instrumentation was all irrelevant to the question being answered.

(b) Byrd: Agnus Dei, Mass for Five Voices

This was the less popular option in this section on Sacred Vocal Music, yet it seemed to allow for pupils with varying ability to demonstrate their knowledge. Again, candidates' responses varied in standard, from a satisfactory and simple knowledge to a very good knowledge and insight into the main musical features. In comparison to Part (a), candidates could comment on any musical features, yet some failed to mention basic features of the third Agnus Dei presentation such as the full SATTB vocal scoring. The more successful candidates showed maturity when structuring their answer, so that the first and second Agnus Dei and three "Dona Nobis Pacem" statements were treated distinctively. Those candidates with a more detailed and sounder understanding of the harmonic and textural progress of the text were rewarded when they explored the Dona Nobis Pacem statements. Weaker responses found it difficult to make a clear distinction between the musical features of the first and the second presentations separately.

Weaker answers revealed an overall lack of structure, and potentially valid musical detail presented by the candidate lacked coherence because the location was uncertain. Careless responses often omitted citing the key when referring to cadences. Again candidates with deeper understanding reflected that the 4-3 suspension referred to the second chord in the cadence rather than highlighting the general use of a "suspension" with no real sense of the context or further detail.

Q4 (a) Schumann: Ich grolle nicht

This question was mostly completed to a good standard but was the less popular option in this section on Secular Vocal Music. Those who had an obvious well-prepared and thorough knowledge of both the text and harmonic progression in both verses were able to structure a successful coherent response, making it clear to the examiner the exact reference based on the directly quoted German text and phrasing. Furthermore, a number of chords were identified specifically, and most named cadences conveyed a genuine understanding of the key at that particular point in the discussion. At the lower end, a few candidates struggled to gain marks for basic features of the piano accompaniment.

The less successful responses were not able to give specific examples of different types of chords. In other cases, the reference was one or two words and comments were about general major 7ths and added 6th chords in the general vicinity of some inaccurate text.

(b) Copland: I bought me a cat

This more popular question resulted in a range of marks between candidates who recalled each creature's accurate music depictions, compared to those who were only able to recall one or two details for one or two animals. Higher-level responses often had a very succinct and efficient style of writing. A number of candidates failed to communicate a full written response. Some listed the musical features associated with each animal in a bullet point format rather than structuring a response which answered the question with creditable spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is contrary to the objectives of this extended writing question and should be discouraged.

There were some animals which were recalled more successfully than others, generally based on the order in which they are presented in the song. The duck was often accurately discussed with many candidates also selecting the goose and hen, with two or three observations often successfully explained. It proved challenging to some respondents to associate the correct instrumental techniques with the correct animal. Confusion with matching techniques correctly to the appropriate creature and missing or incorrect details meant that some candidate's responses were weaker and less coherent. One misinterpretation, which led to the inclusion of irrelevancies, was quoting the onomatopoeic references, and explaining this rather than focusing on the musical depiction of the three animals chosen for discussion. Despite the composer's name featuring in the question, the misspelling of 'Copeland' appeared quite often in responses.

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