

GCE AS Music 2016  
**Composition with Technology Exemplar 1**  
*'A/B' Boundary*



*Based on Stimulus material from the Specimen Assessment Materials*

**Creation, development and organization of ideas based on stimulus:**

Good understanding of writing for chosen string quartet ensemble, with suitable exploration of textures and timbres – arco/pizz, legato/staccato, full ensemble/solo part writing, dynamic contrast. Clear theme and variations structure. Use of musical devices such as ostinato, repetition, fragmentation, melodic decoration and expansion, pedal, oscillating accompaniment figure, consideration of instrument range for musical impact, melodic sharing. Some room for more development through devices such as imitation/sequence/counter melody, perhaps in the last statement of the stimulus. Ending is a little abrupt – full statement of stimulus would make for a more convincing arrangement.

**Harmonic handling:**

Harmonies are secure throughout. Mainly primary chords in root position for first statement of stimulus. Some use of dominant 7ths and cadential points considered. Use of pedal and ostinato for added harmonic interest in variation 3. More complex harmonic exploration in final variation with use of 1<sup>st</sup> inversion, 7ths and secondary chords. Successful modulations to dominant and relative minor keys. Slightly awkward/unconventional use of repeated tonic chord in modulatory link passages leading to variations 1 and 3. Room for some exploration of more complex chords perhaps earlier in the piece.

**Use and control of technological resources including texture and timbre:**

Instrument patches chosen successfully for string ensemble. Software manipulated effectively to produce contrasting timbres: arco/pizz, legato/staccato, attack/decay e.g. viola melody. Dynamic contrast considered. Balance is good throughout, with exception of variation 1 where the melody is passed around the ensemble. At times the melody does not carry enough over the accompaniment line. Chosen tempo is suitable and tempo changes/pauses handled well to imitate the sound of a live string quartet. Phrasing is good – however, sometimes the software could have been used more effectively to manipulate the melodic shaping for a more natural sound e.g. variation 2 violin I part sounds a little mechanical. Quantise/velocity/piano roll tools all used successfully. Reverb/EQ and panning good. Mastering ok.

**Commentary:**

Sufficient analysis of music and insight/reflection of intentions and working method. Musical language used appropriately, and information is provided clearly and concisely.