

MUSIC

Paper 9703/01

Listening

Key Messages

Breadth of listening experience, and developing the ability of candidates to reflect on it and make connections, is needed to give them wider scope in choosing and answering questions.

General

There was a wide spread of marks, from impressively high achievement to a handful of very inadequately prepared ones. The majority sat comfortably in the middle range with a pleasing number in the upper rather than in the lower bands.

No candidate was unable to tackle three questions and, generally, what was required had been understood. A few made too much in two of their three questions of very similar points and references to the same narrow range of repertoire. There are increasing signs that candidates are beginning to reflect more on their own performance repertoire and to recognise relevant opportunities for an answer to make references to their understanding of it. Similarly, more candidates in this session referred appropriately to musical techniques in traditional music of which they had personal experience. These trends towards cross-referencing between the activities of performing, composing and listening are to be encouraged.

Conversely, i.e. more narrowly, there was a handful of candidates who duplicated in their answers large sections of material already presented in their Reports for Component 9703/05. While some saw a legitimate new aspect to their topic that they could relevantly introduce, others seem simply to have used it as an opportunity to persuade the Examiners that they had a wider knowledge of music than they could, in fact, demonstrate.

Section A

Question 3 was by far the most popular question. Few candidates tackled **Question 2**.

- 1 Most candidates knew something about the Sonata Form structure of the symphony's first movement but few were clear about the 'double exposition' nature of it in the concerto. Many correctly observed that the concerto had only three movements against the symphony's four but disappointingly few recognised the Menuet and Trio in the latter as the significant additional movement. Several compared the slow movements, generally in rather vague terms, but few attempted to compare the two finales. The different role of the orchestra in each genre was frequently mentioned but hardly any candidates exemplified this.
- 2 The few candidates who attempted this question found it very difficult to give 'a full account'. Some misunderstood the notion of 'link' and answered in terms of unlikely similarities of mood.
- 3 Candidates seemed to have considered this a much more straightforward, perhaps less demanding, question than either of questions 1 or 2. On the contrary, the demands were as great, in that **(i)** an 'account of the music' of each instrument required an ability to describe in a recognisable way what each instrument played in detail; **(ii)** the discussion of 'role' required a secure understanding of texture and the ability to recognise what was significant about individual instrumental rhythmic, melodic and harmonic roles within it; **(iii)** absolute precision was essential.

The best candidates were able to describe and 'account' for some of the detailed features e.g. why the viola provided the bass in Variation II, or how the pitch of an instrument affected its timbre and, consequently, its effect in the balance of the ensemble.

The spread of achievement was very wide. Some candidates referred to violas and cellos (plural) throughout their answer; others counted the Theme itself as Variation I and wrote, therefore, only about one of the variations specified in the question. In most cases familiarity with and general appreciation of the music and the basic techniques were discernible by 'reading between the lines' of the answer, but the actual language expressing understanding was sometimes very vague, e.g. 'sunshine'/'darkness', or even couched in descriptive metaphors of 'cool forests'/'sunny beaches'.

Section B

The majority of candidates chose **Question 6**, very few **Question 5**. Those who answered **Question 4** were, generally, by far the best prepared showing close familiarity with, and understanding of, the music of each song.

- 4 All the candidates who chose this question clearly did so because they had a fine appreciation of each text and the techniques Schubert used to interpret it. Almost all kept to the point. The difference between the answers lay principally in the extent of relevant detail cited. Most discussed the piano's role in portraying the natural background of brook and mill and in reflecting the singer's changing moods. Some concentrated on one aspect more than the other. Most were able to pinpoint how particular words in the text were emphasised, e.g. 'mein!'. A few, usually out of enthusiasm, gave a little too much space to features of the vocal line and forgot to demonstrate how the piano supported it.
- 5 Though the music was clearly very familiar to the few candidates who chose this question, and their explanations of composers' interpretative techniques were usually convincing, the distinctions between recitative, arioso and aria were rarely clearly understood. The basic differences between recitative and aria/song were not always correctly defined and candidates had difficulties with Arioso, which is less tractable to define and describe.
- 6 The question was generally well understood and references to all three Core Works were often enthusiastic and appreciative, some candidates explaining scenes and moments in vivid detail, but few were able to pin down and explain precisely how the music achieved its effects. The techniques most frequently cited were modality (usually referred to as 'tonality' but this was almost always used as a term for simple contrasts of major/minor), tempo, dynamics, chromaticism and, particularly with reference to examples from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, the use of melisma and word-painting. Instrumentation was often listed but often without convincing examples.

The examples of some candidates ranged more widely, including music they themselves performed, popular and traditional music as well as a few, enterprising, purely instrumental examples. Some commented on the contribution of performers, particularly in relation to jazz repertoire.

Section C

Question 9 was by far the most popular, answers to the other three questions being almost equally divided.

- 7 Candidates were generally aware that the orchestra had grown in size and could trace the development from the strings and continuo orchestra of Purcell to the increasing role of wind and brass in Beethoven's music. Some wrote at length about the transition from harpsichord to piano as though they believed the latter to have become a staple of the late eighteenth-century orchestra. Most were vague about Verdi's orchestra, simply asserting that it was bigger, louder, denser and more versatile, without being able to support this view by reference to any specific examples from *Otello*. Better-informed answers ranged successfully beyond the Prescribed and Core Works citing between them Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, Handel's *Water Music*, Vivaldi's *Seasons*, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*, Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* and on to the use of electronic instruments in the present day.
- 8 Most candidates had some understanding of the modern terms, though they had difficulty distinguishing between them. Some described in relevant detail the sort of relationship a performer might have today with his/her record company. Although there was a general understanding that the situation was very different in the Vienna of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this was too often described only in terms of aristocratic patronage. The circulation of pirated copies was rarely mentioned. Few distinguished between the different experiences of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven and hardly any discussed the growth and impact on composers and audiences of publishing. It was

a particular surprise that no-one mentioned how Haydn earned any money for composing the *Emperor Quartet* and who owned it, when.

- 9** Several candidates argued, in varying degrees of convincing detail, that the presence of lyrics limits the audience's freedom to interpret the music they are listening to. Others attempted the difficult task of distinguishing ways in which vocal and instrumental music can both, at times, be 'effective' or 'ineffective'. The most purposeful answers were those that argued that instrumental music can be both more powerful and/or open to wider interpretation: the success of these answers depended on the level of support given by detailed discussion of pertinent examples. An impressive array of repertoires was drawn on in the best answers ranging from primitive man, Gregorian chant and other religious traditions, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionist, twentieth-century and popular music, up to thoughtful observations on the expressive possibilities of modern technologies. At the opposite end of this breadth of references, one candidate's answers consisted solely of examples already examined in detail in answer to **Question 6**.
- 10** Fewer candidates chose this question but the answers of those that did were very much to the point, illustrated with detailed references to, and explanations of, apt examples that they knew well, usually as performers themselves.

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| <p>Paper 9703/02 Practical Musicianship</p> |
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Key messages

- A good standard of work was achieved, with candidates playing to their strengths.
- Centres should note that the choice of disciplines within Element 2 is complex and should be checked carefully with the syllabus.
- Work for this component must be packed separately from others in this syllabus as it goes to different examiners.

General comments

Candidates achieved a good overall standard in this Component. There were some outstanding performances in Elements 1 and 2, and some very promising compositions in Element 4. A few Centres prepared their candidates for Element 3 and the work presented for this was of a rather variable standard.

Almost all candidates offered **Element 1**. Most presented appropriate repertoire that enabled them to perform to the best of their ability and which demonstrated their technical skill and understanding. A wide variety of instruments was heard this session, ranging from standard orchestral and band instruments to those from the Chinese and Caribbean traditions. Candidates were ably accompanied on the piano, where applicable, and most Centres provided suitable venues for the performances. Unfortunately, a few candidates were disturbed by extraneous noise from within and without the room. The majority of candidates gave satisfactory spoken introductions and some were able to speak at length about their choice of repertoire and its content. However, some candidates gave no introduction, or merely named their pieces. The introduction puts the forthcoming programme of music into context for their audience, the Centre Assessors, and the Moderator, and its relevance and the extent to which its content is reflected in the performance is assessed in **Section E** of the assessment criteria.

All four options from **Element 2** were offered this year with candidates working to their strengths in their choices. Most candidates showed progress during the course and the majority of Centre Assessors provided detailed comments about the interim and final assessments. A wide variety of ensembles were heard from trios and quartets to orchestras, bands and choirs. A number of pianists and guitarists demonstrated their accompanying skills, and improvisations ranged from those in a jazz style to the avant garde.

There were syllabus infringements in the submissions from some Centres and a reminder of the requirements of this Element might prove helpful:

- the two disciplines (and the actual music) offered in Element 2 should be distinctly different from that offered in Element 1
- candidates should choose their TWO disciplines from:
 - the instrument used for Element 1 in duet or ensemble (not if Element 1 has already been presented in ensemble) – participation in an orchestra or choir may be included here
 - a second instrument – as a solo or in ensemble
 - accompanying on the instrument used for Element 1, or another appropriate instrument
 - improvising – solo or ensemble (Centres should ensure that the candidate demonstrates *improvising* skills in the assessment rather than performing something they have prepared over a long period of time)
- work in both disciplines should be carried out over a period of not less than six months
- assessments should be carried out for each discipline on THREE separate occasions during this time

- recordings should be made on each occasion
- the relevant section of the working mark sheet should be completed on each occasion – this is important as, without it, Moderators are unable fully to understand how Centres have arrived at the marks awarded
- audio recordings are acceptable for any solo activity, but DVD recordings are essential where the candidate is part of any ensemble where there might be any element of doubt about which performer heard *is* the candidate
- at the final assessment, the last section of the working mark sheet should be completed and a mark should be awarded using the appropriate assessment criteria
- ALL the recordings, with the dates of each assessment and track numbers, together with photocopies of the music performed and the working mark sheets, should be sent to CIE with the Centre's submission for this component

Only a small number of candidates prepared **Element 3**. A set of six to eight exercises demonstrating understanding of techniques in an established notated tradition should be submitted. Teachers should provide a clear outline of the course undertaken for this Element and should choose exercises based on actual repertoire. Whatever the chosen tradition, the work should be carefully notated. Marks should be awarded for language, technique, progress and the accuracy of the notation.

The number of candidates offering **Element 4** continues to rise. Outcomes were very similar to last session. Where candidates used instruments they played and understood, they showed the ability to develop their ideas to create compositions of appropriate length which demonstrated good understanding of medium and texture. There were several outstanding live recordings and some exemplary sequenced ones. Here, candidates had a real opportunity to understand how effective their music was. Other candidates, however, chose to compose for instruments (often a large number of diverse ones) of which they had little or no first hand understanding and produced sequenced recordings and scores which showed lack of attention to detail. Those candidates who do not present a score should provide detailed notes on the process of composition. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their composing skills through the completion of a range of short tasks before undertaking work for final assessment so that some of these problems can be resolved at an early stage. Centre marking for this Element was often a little generous and assessors are encouraged to consider the wording of each section of the assessment criteria very carefully when awarding marks.

Overall in this Component, most Centres submitted all the necessary paperwork and provided CDs/DVDs of good quality. It is essential that an accurate track list is provided so that candidates' work can be correctly identified.

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| <p>Paper 9703/03 Performing</p> |
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Key messages

- Candidates had prepared thoroughly for this component and performances conveyed much enjoyment.
- Centres should ensure that candidates understand the requirements of the spoken introduction and its assessment in Section E of the criteria.
- Work for this component must be packed separately from others in this syllabus as it goes to different examiners.

Once again, this session, it was a delight to listen to a range of very accomplished young musicians performing in their Component 3 recitals. It was clear that almost all candidates had prepared thoroughly for this aspect of the syllabus and really enjoyed working on their chosen repertoire. Vocal music included art songs, musical theatre and afro-fusion, while instrumentalists mostly chose music from the romantic and modern eras. There were a number of jazz and popular music performances and some candidates performed music from their own country.

The majority of recitals were of an appropriate length. While the suggested timings are only guidelines, recitals which are too short run the risk of preventing the candidate from accessing the highest mark bands because of failure to demonstrate a wide range of techniques. Some candidates performed in front of an audience and most were competently accompanied, where applicable. Much time had clearly been spent in preparation with accompanists, thus enabling candidates to perform to best advantage in the examination.

Most candidates had thought carefully about the focus of their performances. Almost everyone linked their pieces together in an appropriate way and had undoubtedly learnt much from researching their chosen focus. Candidates are required to give a short, spoken introduction to their performance. This should describe the overall focus and show how it is reflected in each item. Most candidates demonstrated genuine understanding in their introduction, but a few merely listed the pieces they were about to perform. The content of the spoken introduction is assessed in **Section E** of the assessment criteria – Stylistic Understanding – and the full range of marks cannot be accessed if no detail about the music is given.

Microphones and cameras were suitably placed and Centres presented their candidates' work on CDs or DVDs of high quality and had taken care to ensure that the candidate could be readily identified. The majority of Centres had packaged the work in a way that was easy to manage and enclosed all the required paperwork including photocopies of the music performed.

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| <p>Paper 9703/04 Composing</p> |
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Report to Centres

This report contains comments and appropriate feedback on the work and assessment of candidates from this season's examination. It will focus on the positive achievement of candidates and provide guidance for the future preparation of candidates' work in composition.

Administration

Centres ensured that the work of their candidates was sensibly packaged and presented in a manner that facilitated examination of the compositions. Occasionally CDs were insufficiently labelled. All DVD or CD submissions must be checked, ensuring that the material is accessible on conventional playback equipment. WAV / MIDI / MP3 formats are not permitted; DVDs should use a standard multi-platform software format.

General Comments

The range of submissions this year included those that presented a single composition as well as those opting to compose a group of shorter related pieces. The most successful candidates were those who had progressively learned about the craft of composing through attentive listening and engagement with compositional skills assimilated through performance.

The techniques required to construct a work lasting between 8 and 12 minutes are substantial; the ability to develop ideas as well as prune and refine – these are all essential concepts.

Candidates have considerable freedom in the choice of style and medium for their composing. Some examples of the types of submissions this year include:

- A set of songs (typically 3) for a single voice; rock, pop, ballad and gospel styles were represented
- Composing for solo piano – structures include related 'movements' or a 'song without words' approach
- Compositions 'cinematic' in concept or influence
- Pieces that explore particular instrumental sonorities e.g. tuned percussion / electric guitar
- Jazz-influenced composition
- Minimalism
- programmatic influence – e.g. Constellation formations (e.g. Orion, Alpha Centauri) allowing for musical variety within a unifying concept

Materials

Successful candidates took time to establish effective basic ideas upon which to expand. The choice of harmonic language, whether tonal or non-tonal should be convincing and there will often be a clear sense of aural familiarity with the work of other influential composers communicated in these choices. Harmonic materials are often an important starting point for songs and minimalist writing. Candidates should remember to use chord inversions as well as root positions. Pitch combinations which may initially be derived by experimentation should, nevertheless, be consciously manipulated in the context of an unfolding minimalistic work.

Candidates constructing well-shaped thematic materials were able to do so, both on a motivic scale and in the shaping of longer melodic lines. It is often good practice to spend a significant amount of time re-shaping and perfecting these. Attention to the rhythmic elements of these materials was an important factor contributing to overall success.

Use of Materials and Structure

For the complete work a single theme or key will not create sufficient opportunity for development and variety although the principle of continuity and repetition is important too. Less successful candidates produced rather too many disparate materials and lacked the technical control required to produce coherence. Balance is very important.

Having a sense of an overall plan (even if it becomes necessary to deviate from it for musical reasons) can be a helpful framework within which to present ideas. Many candidates will construct their initial ideas in an improvisatory, experimental way but technical crafting is also required to use these materials in their most productive way.

Whilst techniques of development and expansion can be learned from the study of relevant composers, candidates should also understand the courage required to prune and refine their ideas.

Use of Medium and Texture

Careful consideration needs to be given to the choice of instruments, voices or sounds to be used in the composition. Compositions clearly intended for 'live' performance should aim to be idiomatic – writing in a way that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the character and possibilities of the chosen forces. An invaluable resource is the performing experience of candidates who are studying alongside one another. By attempting a live performance, however partial, as the work progresses, a candidate may learn a great deal and have the opportunity to modify their work in the light of this. Non-pianists often create textures that are too heavy in the left hand and do not balance with the music written in the upper register. By taking advice from performers and studying scores that demonstrate interesting and effective textures, for example, a great deal can be learned about writing more successfully for piano. Some pieces constructed with the aid of notation software can give an impression of brilliance but on closer inspection sections of the music prove impossible to perform.

Some impressive knowledge and understanding of orchestration techniques was observed in the work of candidates who handled large forces with flair and creativity. Mindful listening can be an effective way of learning about these skills. Other submissions, however, were over-ambitious and uneconomical in the number of different instruments employed.

Notation and Presentation

The majority of candidates were able to communicate their intentions effectively via a notated score. Accurate rhythmic notation was difficult for some candidates but this should not be allowed to hinder the creativity of candidates. It was pleasing to see some candidates working hard to present accurate notation with faithful and vibrant performances to accompany the score.

If candidates choose to compose in a style that incorporates some element of improvisation, they must ensure that a full explanation is given with regard to the performance. If the performer is the composer this should be made clear; if the improvisation has been supervised by the composer, the means by which this has been facilitated must also be explained.

Some scores contained the required level of instruction and performance detail but rather too many disregarded the need for marks of phrasing and articulation on the score. These are vital indicators for wind players showing slurs, detached notes etc.; for string players they are the means by which bowing requirements can be understood.

Whilst it is understood that a live performance is not always possible, unedited sequenced recordings are often a disappointing representation of the composer's intention. An 'a cappella' work is difficult to justify in a sequenced version, for example, because it is impossible to represent the words. A recording with voices, quietly doubled on an instrument, is an acceptable and valid compromise in such circumstances.

Concluding Remarks

Although there is no requirement to produce a commentary for the composing submission, it was nevertheless very instructive when some candidates chose to explain a programmatic influence or a connection with a different area of music study.

Whilst there was some evidence of candidates working very rapidly to produce work with insufficient time for reflection and refinement there were others who showed an exemplary awareness of the self-discipline needed to work across a wider time span to produce imaginative and skilfully crafted work.

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Paper 9703/05

Investigation and Report

Key messages

Reading needs to be assimilated and understood and the music to which it refers listened to at first-hand.

Judgements about the music should be supported by precise reference to musical examples.

General comments

The typical wide range of conventional 'classical' and 'popular' topics was extended, this session, by the welcome inclusion of some more regional, local ones, e.g. a detailed and very convincing comparison of three very different versions of a calypso. Most candidates were safely aware that their Investigation had to explore some aspect of the repertoire presented in Component 3 or 4 in a much more energetic, thoughtful way, than simply compiling a programme note or a commentary on the process of composition. Some had investigated the development and repertoire of one of their genres, others had listened carefully and critically to two or more performances of a single significant piece. The standard was generally good. Where there was weakness, its roots usually lay in not having listened closely to a sufficiently wide range of repertoire (in the case of 'genre' Investigations): second-hand judgements about the music were reproduced without evidence of any attempt on the part of the candidate personally to explore the pieces referred to.

A few candidates enclosed with their Report all the notes they had made in the course of their Investigation including, in some cases, 'listening logs'. While the Examiners would not wish to recommend that this would be appropriate in all cases (and to insist on it would place an unjustifiably heavy burden on Centres in terms of packaging and postage costs) there were some occasions in which reference to the notes could illuminate something that was not entirely clear in the Report.

In most cases the enclosure of a CD containing brief extracts to exemplify specific points in the text made a valuable contribution to the Report. The plea for them to be playable on stereo audio equipment, rather than PCs alone, had generally been heeded and the Examiners were grateful for this. Only one did not work at all: what it might have contributed to the assessment was therefore unknown. As the report concerned a comparison of interpretations this was a very unfortunate omission.

Although not appropriate to all types of Report, reference to the score either by embedding brief MS examples in the text, or identifying relevant bar numbers, was a very effective way of demonstrating the candidate's close familiarity with, and understanding of, the music. (In the latter case – bar number references – it was necessary to have enclosed a copy of the score in order that the Examiner might verify the accuracy of the statements.)