

# Performance Studies

Advanced GCE A2 H548

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H148

## Report on the Units

---

**June 2009**

**HX48/MS/R/09**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new syllabuses to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this Report.

© OCR 2009

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622  
Facsimile: 01223 552610  
E-mail: [publications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:publications@ocr.org.uk)

## CONTENTS

### Advanced GCE Performance Studies (H548) Advanced Subsidiary GCE Performance Studies (H148)

#### REPORT ON THE UNITS

<b>Unit/Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
Chief Examiner's Report	1
G401	2
G402 Performance Contexts 1	7
Grade Thresholds	15

## Chief Examiner's Report

This was the first major assessment session for the revised four-unit Specification and there was considerable evidence that the rationale underlying the changes was the right one. Studying fewer units appeared to have helped to focus the minds of candidates in a more integrated experience and there was evidence of applying knowledge and understanding across both AS units. Four important points are therefore highlighted at the outset of this report as being overarching principles that examiners reported from the current session.

- The acquisition of technical vocabulary is an essential component of understanding the way in which the performing arts work, and what is learned in G401 (Creating Performance) should be easily applied in G402 (Performance Contexts 1) and indeed across the A2 course as well.
- The same point applies to the historical and contextual framework in which the performing arts operate. To fully understand the significance of their practical learning, candidates need to be introduced to the conditions in which, and reasons why, work was produced, and this too is a feature that cuts across all of the units in the course.
- A similar principle applies to performance work. The intention in this Specification is to encourage candidates to perform work in order to understand how it is constructed and here again the integration between units plays an important part in achieving this. The study of set works for their own sake smacks of an outdated approach dependent on a narrow canon of so-called masterworks whereas in Performance Studies, works studied for Performance Contexts 1 are exemplars of the way in which practitioners use a range of techniques to create exciting work for contemporary audiences.
- Practical engagement with work for study is therefore the intended approach, and examiners reported in the current session that the most successful written responses were where candidates had clearly assimilated an understanding of a piece through their own personal engagement with it. This is particularly important in encouraging thought about the role of a potential audience, and the way in which the piece might aim to communicate with that audience.

A number of points were also made about the need for candidates to develop their examination technique, and the following extract from this session's report on the legacy specification applies equally well to the revised specification.

- *In written examinations there is an increasing need for Centres to provide induction skills of structuring a logical, coherent argument, not dependent on narrative response. The single greatest challenge facing candidates in Performance Studies is not ability in (or enthusiasm for) performance, but learning techniques of how to construct an essay under examination conditions, and mastering how to structure a through line of argument*

Finally, there are more opportunities in the revised specification for using all three art forms, and it is hoped by the examining team that this will put an end once and for all to the misguided view that Performance Studies consists of Dance, Drama and the selection of Music.

# G401

## General comments

This was the first large examining session for this unit and it was exciting to see the range of performances and standards achieved by candidates across the country.

Staff at Centres had put in a considerable amount of hard work to present their candidates' submissions well. There are important points to bear in mind to ensure clarity in the submission of the coursework.

- Each commentary should be annotated clearly with K/U, PP, QL to show where marks have been awarded. Additional comments that draw attention to an important part of the performance are helpful
- The CCS should have full and clear comments on it to support the marks. These should not merely be a copy of the marking criteria in the Specification
- On the second side of the CCS it is helpful to write the name of the candidate at the top to aid the moderator in their work
- The clarity of the DVD and identification of each candidate is important. Moderators need to be able to assess the Centre's marking for each performer. If this evidence is unavailable or significantly unclear then moderation cannot take place.

The marking criteria for the Specifications were clear and enabled Centres to mark accurately, especially in terms of the written part of the unit.

## Written Commentary

The most successful submissions were those where candidates wrote in a concise, objective style, clearly analysing the process that they had been through. Making links between the art forms was an integral part of the commentary and each performance piece had a clear intention and style which the candidates used as part of their analytical discussion. It was good to see a number of Centres who had obviously taught and guided candidates in their written skills and where the technical language of the subject, as outlined in the Specification, was an integral part of the teaching so that the candidates used it with ease and obvious understanding.

Because of the challenges of remaining within the 3000-word limit, stronger candidates avoided discussion about workshops, warm-up exercises, costume and problems within the group and focused instead on how their skills had developed and how the performance pieces had evolved. There was clear understanding of distinct stages of *Improvise*, *Rehearse* and *Perform*.

Moderators reported that care needed to be taken by Centres to ensure that appropriate material is given to candidates as part of their taught course. Understanding of the art forms suffered when each was seen as a narrative and candidates became too involved in the 'story' rather than the technical means with which to communicate it. There needed to be clear evidence that candidates had engaged with the technical skills necessary to devise pieces of performance, whether in *Dance*, *Drama* or *Music*.

The first section of the unit is focused around the three distinct art forms and it is important that candidates develop skills in these first before combining their knowledge and skills in the *Community Piece*. It is therefore unfortunate that 'Stomp' was often used by Centres to deliver

the music aspect because this limited the candidates' engagement with Melody and Harmony. Similarly, where music was devised simply as a series of sound effects to accompany a story, candidates' understanding was severely limited. Candidates also needed to understand that the lyrics of a song are not the same as the music. It was a shame to see a few examples where candidates had decided to make a piece more interesting by adding a 'bolt-on' section from another art form and then using this to discuss a link. Successful practice is where there were performances in three discrete art forms yet where the Centre had clearly taught the candidates to be aware of how concepts across the arts were similar and complementary which were then explored and developed in the Community Piece.

The second section of the written submission consists of the discussion of the Community Piece. Given the clear pressure on word-limit, high marks were awarded to those candidates who:

- clearly stated the project and the performing style at the start of the section;
- were able to analyse the process succinctly;
- stated how the three art forms were used to create the final piece of theatre;
- evaluated the outcome against their stated objectives.

Moderators were not concerned about the different projects or the different styles that might have been employed, as some sort of theoretical exploration of decision-making. Since it is expected that Centres will decide the project, deliver teaching on that style and the skills needed, candidates should not be discussing what projects might have interested them or how they might devise such a piece. Those who did simply wasted valuable words in the Written Commentary.

It was exciting to see the range of very exciting and interesting projects that Centres presented. Pantomime, Commedia, the Musical and Physical Theatre / DV8 were some frequently-occurring performing styles and these allowed candidates to create exciting work. Other styles were more eclectic but successful where Centres had ensured that the art forms were used in a complementary and appropriate way, clearly developing the skills of candidates. The Specification states that candidates should '...perform a piece in a specific performance style' and this has to have integrity and be understood by the candidates in order to devise within it and communicate this understanding through the written commentary.

Less successful submissions were more influenced by the candidates' own personal skills and interests, which were not always in accordance with those of the whole group. In terms of the written commentary, it is important that there is clear evidence of performance style and intention as well as how the three art forms work together. This section of the commentary lends itself to candidates displaying their understanding of links between the art forms. However the more able candidates showed this ability throughout the commentary. Candidates were not expected to write at length about how characters were developed within a style although an awareness of crafting within the chosen performance style was considered essential. The most able candidates wrote in a way that reflected an understanding of the creative process within their chosen brief and not simply a diary-like review of the process they have undertaken. Interestingly, some Centres had obviously set up this part of the course as a preparation for the Student-Devised Performance in Unit G404, which worked well.

The Specification is quite clear in stating that the community piece should relate to a community-based stimulus. It should comment on a relevant situation, past or present, within the local community and have a clear purpose and a defined audience and venue, all factors that should inform the devising process. The strongest candidates were able to state the venue and intended audience at the start of this section of their commentary and were able to show concisely and objectively how this influenced their decisions.

Successful projects were based around local figures such as Lewis Carol or local events such as mining disasters or the destruction of a local arts Centre. Projects that were more general and nebulous such as racism and drug abuse were less successful and lacked a community focus, often in the devising as well as the intended audience and performance style. Those Centres that had guided their candidates to research and perform within a particular style and research a specific local project enabled their candidates to achieve high marks.

#### **Feedback tips**

- Write in a clear, objective style analysing the performance process, giving examples from each performance piece
- Ensure that there is a clear intent and style for each piece.
- Show understanding of the technical terms stated in the Specification through their practical use.
- Show understanding of links between the art forms especially in the discussion of the Community Piece.
- Ensure that the Community Piece is clearly related to a local stimulus and that the venue and intended audience informs the project from the outset.
- Provide a clear, objective evaluation of the final performance.

#### **DVD and Performance**

It is important that Centres plan for the recording of the performance at the start of the course, assembling the necessary equipment to be able to submit a DVD of the performance.

Moderators reported that the quality of DVDs in this session was very variable. The following points were made many times:

- Candidates should announce themselves, name and candidate number, in costume, at the start of the DVD.
- DVDs should be appropriately divided into chapters where there is more than one performance. This recording of the performance is the evidence that the Centre is presenting of the candidates' performing ability. If there is a problem with the recording then, as a last resort, there could be audio recordings or a script available.
- DVD recordings should be clearly labelled and with clear identification of the candidates.

Centres need to be aware that moderators will check the DVD and if it is not present, or candidates cannot be identified, the work will be returned to the Centre.

A number of other issues were also identified by moderators:

- The question of length of performance is similar to the question of length of written work. The Specification provides clear guidelines and these posed no problems for the majority of Centres. It is important to remember that it is better to submit a shorter piece of high quality rather than a longer, more uneven piece.
- The Specification also makes clear how many candidates constitute a group. Whilst it is appreciated that large Centres face problems of scale, it is important that discrete groups perform one self-contained performance that displays their skills and that each group is clearly identified on a DVD that has been chaptered appropriately. The **only** candidates

in the piece should be those entered for the exam, no other performers should appear on the DVD.

- Every effort should be made to ensure that candidates have a good performance experience and Centres need to give this careful consideration when selecting the venue. As part of this, Centres should ensure that candidates are able to rehearse adequately and that Health and Safety issues are taken into account.

There was a wide variety of performing styles and projects seen and it was exciting to see this range in action. Some performances were site-specific and in promenade format that demanded a range of skills from the candidates. On these occasions it was vital that the candidates stay in role when interacting with the public.

There were also occasions when candidates used existing material in their performances, either because it was part of the style, as in some aspects of Pantomime, or because extracts were used of the work of local practitioners. The highest marks are reserved for work that is original and the candidates' own, although this does not preclude the use of a strictly limited amount of existing material so long as there is clear evidence of integrity and originality of use within the context. For example, if a candidate sings an existing song within a pantomime he or she is clearly showing evidence of a skill and can be credited as such under Performing Skills. However they could not then receive marks in the top band for Devising unless they had also clearly been involved in devising the music for another section of the Performance Piece. In such an instance, the Centre should make this clear on the CCS and state why they have decided to award the marks they have.

In awarding marks for Devising, candidates can only be awarded marks in the highest bands if there is a clear intention, a clear performance style and the work is original. Pieces designed simply to shock or entertain can only be awarded the mark of 4. This might be an overall mark for the piece if this is the intent of the whole group, or a mark for an individual if a candidate's portrayal of a character is shallow and is unable to work supporting the vision of the whole piece. Here it is pertinent to draw attention to the use of historical topics and personalities. When there is a distortion of history and fictionalisation of aspects of historical characters there needs to be a reason and clear intent for doing this. There needs to be a specific point that the candidates want to communicate to a specific audience. Simply using the character as a vehicle of fun and to entertain is going to limit the marks available for devising.

Candidates need to show a range of performance skills across the three art forms and clear evidence that these have been rehearsed and refined. Although Centres were more confident in awarding marks for technique development through rehearsal, there was less security about performance energy. There were many instances where candidates had completely misplaced performance energy that interfered significantly with the work of other performers. A pertinent example is the use of comedy: too often candidates had little awareness about how to affect an audience through the delivery of a comic line or action. On the DVD it was obvious to see that a performer found a situation funny but was unable to manage this successfully without destroying the action around them.

**Feedback tips**

- Devise a piece that has an intention to inform and affect an audience that goes beyond the intention simply to shock or to entertain
- If existing material is used, consider the integrity of this against the performance style and where in the Piece the candidate can display original devising skills
- Ensure that candidates display skills across the three art forms
- Ensure there is clear evidence that the piece has been well rehearsed in the venue, and that candidates are using performance energy appropriately.

## **G402 Performance Contexts 1**

### **General Comments**

This was the second examination session for the new format of this paper. The first session in January consisted of only a few centres. In that first session, examiners felt that the standard of work was generally weaker than in previous sessions with significant evidence that a number of candidates struggled with constructing and presenting AS standard essays. It was presumed that this was because some AS candidates would lack the maturity demanded at AS level.

This session a few candidates planned their responses in detail, which generally led to responses that had more coherence to the line of argument. Some plans were just a list of words which often resulted in responses that were lacking in focus and seemed to show how the question would be dealt with in terms of what would be included, regardless of what question that was being asked was. Candidates who used spider diagrams used them to identify information but this did not always help in the ordering of thoughts and often responses tended to cover a wide range of ideas rather than moving logically through points to a logical conclusion.

Quite a lot of candidates seemed to struggle with timing and a resulting imbalance between their two answers. As in January there were a number of candidates who appeared to have struggled with time management and some candidates wrote good essays in one area but wrote a weaker response for the other area.

Candidates who seemed to have a reasonable knowledge of the stylistic techniques of a practitioner sometimes struggled to exemplify ideas using details of movement material, musical notation and performance, quotation and practical explanations. Essays frequently did not communicate a sense of how the studied works appeared on stage/in live performance.

There were one or two candidates who constructed very sophisticated responses that reflected a logical and progressive train of thought substantiated by close references to the works they had studied. Mid-band candidates took the structure of the piece as the structure of their response, particularly in dance responses, whilst the weakest candidates offered no structure at all, simply jumping from point to point with no connecting arguments or reasoning and with no supportive evidence from their studied works.

A significant number of candidates repeated the question but clearly did not understand it and struggled to communicate their knowledge or to apply that knowledge to the question set. Better candidates offered insightful opinions and interesting standpoints and understood the socio-political and performance context in which the practitioner existed and made these links clear. The best responses drew from a good range of references.

It was evident that many candidates were clearly prepared in advance of the examination, following prepared structures often consisting of in-depth analyses that clearly connected with the question. Weaker candidates failed to relate their knowledge to the question and those candidates who reproduced past-paper question responses often ended up following the action of the studied work without showing any real in-depth appreciation of the structure and form of the work/s. The best conclusions were summative and well-rounded, referring directly back to the question being addressed. Once again some of the weaker candidates chose to ignore the set question in favour of writing everything they knew about the studied practitioner regardless of whether that information was relevant to the question.

Some candidates chose to reinterpret the set question but this sometimes resulted in a more simplistic version of that question so the Godber 'Nightclub' question became 'why is Godber

popular?’ On the other hand there were some very interesting well supported counter arguments that challenged the opinion inherent in some of the questions.

Many candidates failed to show a clear understanding of key terms, and this is something referred to in the Chief Examiner’s summary at the opening of this report. Either terms were poorly interpreted, as with *blues scales*, or the definitions were totally ignored; some candidates seemed to have problems with understanding such terms *Physical Theatre* or *Feminist*. As identified in past reports there is still a lack of reference to techniques and ideas by their technical names and examiners noted that few candidates seemed to have a working knowledge of the words learnt and used in G401.

There were some sweeping statements made that showed a simplicity of thought ‘*Godber writes for the middle classes..*’ ‘*Lloyd only writes a play when..*’ There were also some strange misquotations from texts with directorial interpretation seen as synonymous with the creator’s intention. Some candidates were lucky enough to meet their practitioner but this meant that some candidates focused on what they said rather than textual references. Strongest candidates substantiated all their ideas using close references from the studied works. Such examples were carefully selected to support an idea. There was a surprising lack of movement material in the dance responses, which meant that the responses were vague and narrative. Too many candidates still focused on biographical detail with some candidates still taking the narrow view that all Newson’s work is “about being gay”. Bourne responses also sometimes suffered from a lack of movement detail.

Musical responses generally had very few musical illustrations with hardly any candidates using notation. Many musical responses showed little evidence of any real understanding of musical structure and form, with some responses being literary rather than based in practical experimentation and exploration of techniques and theory.

The quality of language was variable with most candidates being clear but matter-of-fact. It was clear that some weaker candidates struggled with the demands of the set questions and had obviously not had practice in ordering their responses and ensuring that the question was addressed whilst ensuring that the knowledge and understanding acquired during the unit was successfully conveyed.

There were many shortened titles of works and an increase in the use of Americanisms and computer spellings and many candidates used ‘etc’ when they would have gained further credits if they had explained what else they would have said. Punctuation was often poor and handwriting was sometimes illegible. Examiners noted that in this session there was much more evidence of repetition of ideas being used when the candidate’s knowledge was limited and they ran out of ideas, in order to pad out responses.

## **SECTION A**

### **Matthew Bourne**

**Q1** The focus of this question was on performance skills.

Bourne himself was a dancer and candidates were expected to recognise the demands placed upon the performer at specific points in the studied work(s). Some candidates struggled with this question and did not fully appreciate that Bourne expects both physical dexterity and dramatic ability. Some candidates were very vague, presenting a range of personal reflections and general truths such as ‘*dancers must be fit*’ ‘*ready to learn*’. Such candidates often focused on irrelevant biographical detail or on Bourne’s personal life.

The weakest candidates used a very limited range of reference although there were some good observations relating to Bourne's influences such as Busby Berkley and Hitchcock, and how these were reflected in his work and the ensuing demands such sequences created for the dancers. Strongest candidates appreciated that Bourne expects his dancers to have a huge stylistic repertoire and that they often need to be actors as well. Candidates seemed to struggle with giving practical details that were located clearly within the piece but those who did were able to identify specific moments in the studied work/s and to show what was required of the dancers and the specific effect that is being sought.

- Q2** This question focused on the structure of Bourne's work and the view of some critics that Bourne, who is recognised as one of the most popular and most performed modern choreographer, has diluted the classics by tinkering with them. Others believe that he has reinvigorated ballet as an art form. Some people believe that Bourne's work is far more about appealing to the general public by creating relevant and entertaining theatrical spectacles rather than complex choreography that bedazzles but may confuse.

The best responses were those that created an argument that favoured one side initially but then developed their response further to say that it is both the movement and the structure combined that creates the theatrical impact. Conversely candidates who took one side of the argument tended to completely ignore the other side and so created a narrow response, writing a lot about structure but totally ignoring movement or vice versa. Worryingly, many candidates seemed to struggle with the very idea of 'structure'. Candidates were often clear on the issues inherent in a work and on influences and some were able to analyse linear progression with searching observations on the use of transitions. Some candidates had obviously seen Bourne's work live and were therefore much more equipped to write eloquently about the theatrical experience.

Works studied included : *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker!*, *The Car Man*

### **Shobana Jeyasingh**

No candidates responded to questions on this practitioner in this session.

### **Lloyd Newson**

- Q5** This question focused on performance skills and candidates were expected to decide which of the two approaches they believe a performer should adopt when preparing and performing Lloyd Newson's work.

They may have decided that a melding of the two approaches would be the most effective approach and this was perfectly acceptable as long as they were able to choose moments in the studied work/s to highlight how the chosen approach would help to achieve dramatic success. Most candidates opted for the Physical Theatre approach and were able identify what they understood by Physical Theatre, and were able to identify the influence of Paxton, Bausch, Claid and others. Weaker candidates were unable to explain their understanding of the term Physical Theatre or the expectations of an audience going to see 'dance' and this obviously caused them problems as the response progressed.

There was a surprising lack of discussion about Newson's rehearsal and research approach, contact improvisation, aesthetic risk or pedestrian movement with some candidates approaching the question from a 'why is Newson so shocking' point of view which was self limiting. The strongest candidates explored how the characters are often made up of performers' real experiences and movements that come from the ensemble as well as Newson. Some references were vague, '*there was a man with a blow up doll*' without analysing the significance of these moments. The best responses were those that

really did explore the question from the performer's standpoint, highlighting moments in the work and how utilising a particular approach achieved the most successful dramatic effect.

- Q6** Candidates were expected to show how the arrangement of Newson's material is carefully crafted in order to achieve maximum impact and how images and dynamics are juxtaposed in order to create stark contrast and to keep the audience engaged.

The question should have offered candidates ideas on how to approach the question but some seemed to be confused by the multifaceted nature of the question. The success of any response to the question all hinged on an understanding of the term '*assumptions and beliefs*'. Newson believes that his work should communicate with the audience and lead to self questioning. There were some very interesting responses that focused on Newson's new work '*To Be Straight With You*' where candidates were able to use the practitioner's own thoughts which had been accessed through attending the pre-show talk. They further explored the idea of Newson's work as ever-evolving discussing how his latest works differ from his earlier works. Many candidates identified recurring themes and how these might challenge an audience. Best responses were able to identify particular moments in the studied work/s and show how the content of the work seeks to challenge the audience. Many candidates referred to a wide range of works but concentrated on one as the main focus work.

Works studied included: *Strangefish*, *Enter Achilles*, *To Be Straight With You*, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* and *The Cost of Living*

### **Caryl Churchill**

- Q7** This question expected the candidates to show an understanding of the statement and to be able to assert whether they agreed or disagreed with it and to prove all of their ideas using evidence from the studied work/s to show that Churchill is either a feminist playwright dealing with specific gender issues or a playwright who deals with universal issues that affect humans regardless of gender.

The term 'feminist' caused problems for some candidates as they took it to mean the polar opposite of misogynist. Responses were often brief and rather agitated with some candidates obviously incensed at the ridiculousness of the assertion when it was so 'obvious' that Churchill 'hates men' and seems to blame them for all the ills in the world! Several candidates argued that Churchill is more of a political polemicist, referring to the often-ambivalent observations on the impact of Margaret Thatcher. The strongest candidates were able to illustrate some of the socio-political factors that arose during Churchill's lifetime that led her to focus on women's roles and issues such as the changing roles of women, greater expectations, class issues and the "de-feminisation" of women in order to conform to a more male-led work ethic with the stereotype of women having to become more like men to succeed e.g. the Iron Lady. Candidates who studied works other than *Top Girls* often saw Churchill in a far more positive light. Some candidates speculated that although Churchill may not see herself as a feminist her focus on women in her works may mean that most people would think that she is a feminist.

- Q8** Candidates were asked to explore the significance of different dialogue forms in Churchill's work and why the particular form is used at a specific point in a work and to what effect.

Candidates were free to explore structural and formal innovations and experiments with rhythm, pace, imagery, time and voice and issues such as character, tone, subtext and use of silence. The responses depended heavily on the candidate's understanding and interpretation of the question. Even the very weakest candidates were able to make some meaningful observations on the use of overlapping dialogue although some of these were extremely simplistic. Most responses seemed to focus on describing the characters and

play synopsis as well as focusing on Churchill's rehearsal approach and her use of overlapping dialogue and of *non sequitur* within conversations. Such candidates were able to present a reasoned argument that reflected careful study of Churchill and her work and her search for/dismissal of realism with successful identification of the use of digression and the significance of silence. The best candidates explored Churchill's intent and the techniques and devices used at specific moments in the studied work/s and their intended effect.

Works studied included : *Top Girls, Cloud Nine*

### **Athol Fugard**

**Q9** Very few Centres had studied Fugard. This question asked the candidates to explore how Fugard seeks to convey a particular message through the characters that he presents to the audience. They represent a group of people far greater than their individual lives and reflect the greater suffering of the larger world outside the world that they inhabit.

Candidates were expected to show how Fugard uses characters to provoke and challenge the audience and to question the status quo. Fugard's plays are character driven and audiences gain an insight into the inner workings of a character so that decisions and incidents become forgivable and understandable rather than shocking. It should be noted that "*Tsotsi*" is a novel and a film but is not a play and is therefore not acceptable as the focus work although it is perfectly permissible for candidates to cross-reference to devices and techniques used in it to illustrate common features in his work. Most candidates were unable to fully explore Fugard's work and the responses seen lacked real knowledge and understanding. This meant that the significance of techniques such as the use of music and dance to create cultural context was lost as well, ignoring that Fugard creates a truth in his characters by presenting physical performances that uses language, movement and gesture to create the correct context (e.g. the opening of *The Island*)

**Q10** Candidates were expected to show that they understood the way that Fugard manipulates the classic unities of time, place and action in order to convey meaning.

As with question 9 candidates did not show an in-depth understanding and knowledge of Fugard's work. It was anticipated that candidates may not understand the concept of the classic unities but that they should be able to show how Fugard uses the three elements and to what effect. Traditionally the unity of time limits the supposed action to roughly that of a single day, unity of place limits it to a single locality and the unity of action limits it to a single set of incidents that have a beginning, middle and an end. If the candidate works methodically through each element showing how Fugard utilises each one then it would be possible to present a real understanding of the theoretical context of his work and the practical implications in terms of how he conveys his story using those elements.

Works studied included : *Boesman and Lena Master Harold...And the Boys*

### **John Godber**

**Q11** Godber is determined that his work should be easily accessible. Candidates could have referred to Godber's early experience in writing for soap operas and daytime television but they should then have related that experience to show how this is reflected in his work which also offers an episodic structure with fast moving scenes.

Keeping the audience engaged is the prime intent and candidates were expected to be able to identify how Godber employs different techniques and where they are evidenced in his work in order to achieve that aim. Examiners noted that there was a lack of detailed references to the studied texts with some candidates focusing on negative vulgarities.

Weaker candidates confused character with actor and sometimes confused directorial interpretation as witnessed in a specific production with Godber's original intention. Stronger candidates were able to identify features such as fast-pace dialogue, changing settings and stereotypical characters and how they were used to keep the work fresh and how updating the works by using more contemporary music could attract new audiences.

Some candidates were able to relate Godber's work to the current economic and education crisis and use text and performance references to establish how this connection keeps the work relevant. A few candidates misunderstood the question and only focused on *Bouncers* being set in a nightclub and so they listed nightclub features without applying that to the set question. Some candidates wrote lengthy autobiographies without relating that information to the question at all. Strongest responses acknowledged the type of audience that Godber seeks to perform to and were able to articulate nightclub features and how he makes his work relevant.

- Q12** Candidates were expected to show that they understood the characteristic features of Godber's work but were also expected to be able to show how music and movement are used in the studied work. There were some interesting discussions regarding music as the musicality of speech using rhythm and verse, repetition and choral speech and effects. The updating of the music was a popular topic and good responses explored how music was used to create mood and character, often heralding the entrance of a particular character. Good responses were able to identify the choreographed action of the pieces and were able to differentiate between Godber's original intent and directorial interpretation, showing how the action of the work could be choreographed effectively to create maximum impact so sequences such as the bouncers mimed actions, the porn film episode and the physical representation of the contrast between state and private schools in *Teechers*. Such candidates understood the function of music in terms of injecting pace, and clarifying contrast and status. Weakest responses simply listed some of the recognized features of Godber's work without referring to the work studied or addressing the question in any real depth.

Works studied included: *Shakers*, *Bouncers*, *Teechers*

### John Adams

- Q13** Very few Centres responded to the question relating to this new practitioner. Candidates were expected to identify their own understanding of the statement that John Adams has the ability to narrow the stylistic gap between popular entertainment and the concert hall and to attempt to justify whether they agree with it or not using evidence from their studied work to illustrate their ideas.

Examiners noted that the candidates who attempted to address this question were able to show a firm understanding of Adams' work/s and how his work has resonance of other influences that connect the audience to the work in a way that narrows the gap between popular culture and the 'high art' of the concert hall. These candidates used appropriate examples from the works to prove their ideas and showed how Adams explores all forms without fearing that the melding of different styles will weaken them. Candidates were generally able to identify specific musical techniques and Adams' experimentation with form as well as identifying his exploration of powerful political themes in works such as *Nixon in China* and *The Death of Klinghoffer*

- Q14** Minimalism was pioneered by Steve Reich and Philip Glass and it seeks to reorganise familiar elements in a post-modern manner, to emphasise a steady underlying pulse, repetitive motifs and a stable harmonic framework. Adams took this system and refined it to avoid the impersonal mechanics of such a system by adding emotion, a blending of styles and a broad architectural sweep.

Candidates were generally able to identify the features of Minimalist work and to show whether they believed that Adams was influenced by Minimalism. Best responses were able to identify the structure of the work studied and the diversity of styles used within one piece and to give specific examples from the studied work to illustrate ideas.

Works studied included: *Nixon In China*, *I was looking at the ceiling and then I saw the Sky*, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

## The Beatles

**Q15** It was expected that candidates would show how the Beatles initially studied and assimilated the styles of the artists who had gone before them. They then synthesized these styles into their own unique style and it was very important that candidates were able to identify whether they feel that the Beatles created an entirely new and innovative style or whether that style was derivative.

In the exploration of those ideas, candidates were expected to show a knowledge of the range of musical influences that the Beatles studied, including early Rock and Roll, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, Country and Western through to Spector's Wall of Sound and Broadway show tunes. Strongest candidates were able to clearly identify such influences and show how they are reflected in the studied work/s through the selection of carefully chosen examples that showed how the Beatles style evolved. The weakest candidates concentrated on the personal dramas of the Beatles, particularly the effect of drugs abuse on their musical compositions and there were some startling misconceptions about life in the 1960s. Not all candidates were aware that The Beatles stopped performing live in 1966 and ignored the studio work created during that period.

**Q16** This was a less popular question than Q15 and candidates seemed to struggle with the demands of this question. Candidates were expected to understand the structure and form of the Beatles' work and to be able to identify specific musical elements and techniques that were utilized to create specific effects and to show a clear understanding of their derivation. They were expected not to be bogged down in a discussion of personalities but to identify the individual styles of the Beatles and how these were spotlighted in performance.

The question asks for a qualitative judgement to be made and candidates may have had very different views on the subject, which was perfectly acceptable so long as those views were justified using evidence from the studied works. Very few candidates were able to fully discuss performance skills as their experience of the Beatles was based purely on listening to their work rather than experiencing how their music was actually performed and how each Beatle was chosen to sing on a particular song in order to showcase a particular style and to highlight specific lyrics to evoke emotions and mood. Candidates seldom discussed in any depth specific musical elements or techniques, other than the rather obvious Eastern influences. There was little reference to the individual vocal skills of each of the Beatles so many responses remained as an overview of them and their work.

Works studied included: *Get Back Please*, *Please me*, *She's Leaving Home*, *When I'm 64*, *Norwegian Wood*, *Help*, *She Loves You*

## George Gershwin

**Q17** Candidates were expected to acknowledge that Gershwin's work demands a high level of dramatic skills as well as vocal technical skills. Some unusual singers have performed Gershwin's work as well as other more expected performers.

In responding to this question candidates were expected to show an appreciation of the fact that Gershwin's work has the potential to provide drama, both musically and lyrically and how the songs have the power to connect the audience with universal themes and emotions. Often candidates could identify character and to some extent mood and atmosphere but many ignored the first part of the question concerning how the songs could be performed. Examiners found this surprising, as study of the songs inevitably would include the study of how they might be presented. There was often little awareness of the audience and of physicalisation and candidates struggled to identify performers or to show how the structure of the music was translated into performance. Weaker candidates who used the question as a tick list would have shown greater understanding if they had identified key techniques and explored that technique, providing evidence of its use and suggesting reasons for its use.

**Q18** Only a few candidates answered this question, and those that did so struggled to provide enough musical detail to support their claims.

The most able candidates made reference to Gershwin's musical history and how this was reflected in his work. Such candidates explored musical techniques such as syncopation, the inclusion of blue notes and showed how they were used in Gershwin's work. The weakest candidates did not respond to the question set and appeared to have regurgitated past paper responses or failed to recognize the influence of Jazz and Blues in Gershwin's work.

Those candidates who were confident in terms of identifying the musical structure and form of Gershwin's work were able to write in a lucid and perceptive way about the blending of musical styles and the influence of many different musical styles, including Jazz, Blues and Classical. Works such as *Rhapsody in Blue* and *American in Paris* were successfully used to illustrate the melding of classical form and the innovative spirit of jazz.

Works studied included: *The Man I Love*, *Fascinatin' Rhythm*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Summertime*, *A Foggy Day*, *Someone to watch over me*, *They can't take that away from me*, *Nice Work*

# Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Performance Studies H148 H548  
June 2009 Examination Series

## Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
G401	Raw	70	58	50	43	36	29	0
	UMS	140	112	98	84	70	56	0
G402	Raw	60	52	45	39	33	27	0
	UMS	60	48	42	36	30	24	0

## Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H148	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H148	8.2	30.7	57.5	78.9	92.5	100.0	1906

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

[http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums\\_results.html](http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html)

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**1 Hills Road**  
**Cambridge**  
**CB1 2EU**

**OCR Customer Contact Centre**

**14 – 19 Qualifications (General)**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

**Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations**  
is a Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England  
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU  
Registered Company Number: 3484466  
OCR is an exempt Charity



**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
Head office  
Telephone: 01223 552552  
Facsimile: 01223 552553