

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

MUSIC

J536

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Version 1

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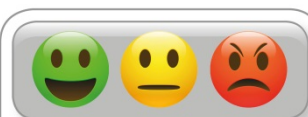
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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 5 series overview

As expected for a non-tiered examination, the 2019 Listening and Appraising paper had a range of marks from 1 to 76. There was evidence of some excellent teaching with many candidates writing with accurate detail, using appropriate language and showing good aural awareness. Conversely there were also many vague answers such as 'repetitive', when 'repeated phrases' or 'repeated melody' was needed, and the use of musical words such as monophonic, polyphonic, melisma when they were not appropriate to the question being asked.

Many candidates were able to gain marks for the identification of instruments, particularly high and middle ability candidates. Lower ability candidates continue to find this type of question difficult and practice is essential in order for candidates to feel confident when writing their answer.

High and middle ability candidates clearly learn and understand much of the musical terminology used in this examination. However there are some who find musical vocabulary difficult and words such as 'structure', 'timbre', 'accidental', 'tempo' and 'dynamic' caused difficulty for them. Reinforcing these words regularly within the classroom is vital.

Candidates would score higher marks if they aim to respond to what they hear in the extracts rather than merely recalling the information that they have learnt.

Question 1 (a)

1 This question is based on Area of Study 4 – Film Music.

You will hear this extract played **three** times.

This extract is a piece of classical music by Richard Strauss. It was used in the 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey* to help to convey the sun rising above the earth.

(a) Tick the box next to the first three notes played by the trumpets.

[1]

The correct answer, the third note pattern, was seen regularly in answer to this question. The second and fourth patterns were also seen, but rarely the first. Candidates recognised that the notes were not scalar but the choice of intervals was not always correct.

Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) (i) Name the pitched percussion instrument heard in this extract.

..... [1]

A good proportion of candidates answered this question correctly but there were others who either did not read or listen to the question or who did not understand what a 'pitched' percussion instrument was. Drum was a frequent wrong answer because it is not specific enough; candidates must learn to be specific in the identification of a drum, 'timpani' was the instrument required. Instruments from other orchestral families were also seen (see Exemplar 1 below).

Exemplar 1

Trumper [1]

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) Give **two** features of the music that this instrument plays which help to create the scene.

1

2

[2]

Good answers were focused and explained key features of the music that the timpani played like 'roll', 'loud' or 'played in between (the trumpet phrases)'. Some candidates did not write about the timpani and instead gave answers that applied to other instruments or the music as a whole and so were unable to gain credit. Information about the music as a whole was required in their answer to Q1d.

Question 1 (c)

(c) Name the instrument that is left alone **at the end** of the extract.

..... [1]

This was generally well answered by candidates, who gave the correct answer of 'organ'. There were some less able candidates who gave answers such as piano or synthesiser which was incorrect.

Question 1 (d)

(d) Give **three** other musical features of this extract which help to convey the scene.

1

2

3

[3]

Many candidates from all ability levels scored 3 marks here with answers such as 'crescendo', 'texture thickens', 'long notes' and 'brass' (see Exemplar 2 below). Some answers were too vague to be given any credit, lacking the correct detail required. In Exemplar 3 the answers of 'loud' and 'thick texture' were not true for much of the extract and so could not be given. Getting louder, crescendo or the texture thickens was what was required. The answer of 'slow' was true of the whole extract and so was an acceptable answer.

Exemplar 2

- 1 There are sustained notes. Pedals.
- 2 There is a wide pitch range. High pitch.
- 3 There is a descender. It is ~~a~~ major. Modal.

Exemplar 3

- 1 loud ~~at~~ dynamics
- 2 Slow tempo, reflects the slowness of the event.
- 3 Thick texture, reflects the size of the event.

Question 2 (a)

2 This question is based on Area of Study 5 – Conventions of Pop.

You will hear this extract of Rock 'n' Roll **three** times.

(a) How many beats are there in a bar? [1]

The vast majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Underline the term for the style of the opening guitar solo. The piano also uses this style later in the extract.

Polyphonic Call and response Improvised Imitation [1]

This was also well answered by the majority of candidates.

Question 2 (c)

(c) Give the name for the typical bass line played at the beginning of this extract, after the opening guitar solo.

..... [1]

A good proportion of candidates gave the correct answer of 'walking bass' for this question. There were some who wrote 12 bar blues but this is the chord pattern upon which the walking bass is played and so was not credit worthy.

Question 2 (d)

(d) Describe the structure of this extract.

.....
.....
.....
..... [3]

This question was very well answered by those candidates who understood the word structure. They gave answers of 'introduction', 'verse' and 'chorus' to get their 3 marks. A description of the music played in each of these sections is not appropriate here; the answer required the use of terminology that is appropriate to the structure of the extract heard, in this case a song. Answers that referred to letter names were also not appropriate because the extract was a song. '12 bar blues' was also credited here.

Question 2 (e)

(e) Give **three** features of the vocal melody and/or the style of singing.

1

2

3

[3]

Answers to this question were quite mixed. Good answers were seen by many candidates but once again there were a significant number who gave answers that were not accurate enough because they were not true for the whole extract. Some of the most popular correct answers were 'syllabic', 'loud', 'harsh', 'high pitched' and 'sides'. Long notes was a popular incorrect answer because much of the extract in fact had quavers or fast notes. The long notes only occurred in the chorus and that detail was required to gain a mark. A number of candidates wrote male but while this style is often sung by male singers it was not deemed to be a feature of the vocal melody or style of singing.

Question 3

3* This question is based on Area of Study 2 – The Concerto Through Time.

You will hear this extract **four** times.

This is an extract from a Concerto Grosso. Using your knowledge of this style write a paragraph, using sentences, describing the music that you hear. You may wish to refer to instruments, rhythm, melody, accompaniment, articulation, dynamics, context and any other features that are relevant to the music.

..... [9]

Some excellent answers were seen in response to this question with many candidates clearly engaging with the music. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the Baroque Concerto Grosso and there were some very detailed and accurate descriptions of the music, many of which gave an excellent perception of the chronology of the extract. However, in some cases the descriptions were rather generic and so they missed out on the top band because their responses could have fitted lots of pieces rather than this specific one. Exemplar 4 is a very good answer. It does not quite get full marks but it is in the top band. There is good knowledge of the style, clear recognition of the important instruments, some general awareness of the dynamics and articulation and some clear chronology. There is detail missing that is required for a full marks answer which can be seen in Exemplar 5. Weaker responses gave some detail of the music and relatively few answers scored below 3. Instrument recognition was an issue for some in this extract, especially those who felt that there were flutes, clarinets and even some brass when the instruments, other than strings, were 'oboes' and 'bassoons'. High ability candidates used accurate terminology such as 'Ripieno', 'Concertino' and 'Basso Continuo'. Middle ability candidates were not always able to give the names but they were able to describe the groups and features. Weaker responses were usually able to gain some marks for basic features but lacked the aural awareness to describe the music in any detail.

Exemplar 4

The piece is minor and has a polyphonic texture. ^{and has more than one solo which play the melody} It was written during the Baroque period because of ~~these~~ this. The piece opens with the basso continuo (harpichord and cello) playing a staccato bassline before the ^{solo} violins enter. They play quite loud and staccato. Then the solo oboe enters playing quietly and much more legato. It is accompanied by a bassoon, but not the harpichord. Then the harpichord and violins re-enter. Then the violin plays by itself and is very staccato. When the oboe then joins, it becomes more legato. The bassoon then accompanies the solo oboe again before the violins enter again towards the end. In the final few beats the piece slows down and ends with a perfect cadence. Throughout the piece, allavers are prominent when the solo instruments play.

Exemplar 5

structure in rounds form and the articulation is staccato

Then the concertino solo instruments come in and there is evidence of terraced dynamics here ^(a concerted feature) and it goes from forte to piano. The melody played ^{is} here comprises of sequences and includes decoration in the form of ornaments. ^{There is imitation here:} Next the strings (violin e.g.) come in and play fast moving quavers with the woodwind - ^(e.g. trills/mordents) imitation and dialogue between them. Then the ritornello returns ^{with a dynamic} forte and the strings and basso continuo can be heard. ^{accompanying and thick texture.} (has a fairly low pitch). There is another concertino section with repetition from the woodwind (basso) and sequences with a fast tempo. Finally, the ritornello returns and the extract finishes on a perfect cadence, with a loud dynamic and uses trills.

Question 4 (a) (i) and (ii)

4 This question is based on Area of Study 3 – Rhythms of the World.

You will hear this extract of Indian Classical Music played **three** times.

(a) (i) What is the term given to the rhythm pattern used in this music?

..... [1]

(ii) What is the term given to the note pattern on which the melody is based?

..... [1]

Those candidates who had learnt the information regarding Indian Classical music gained marks for both of the 4 (a) questions: 'Tala' for 4 (a) (i) and 'Raga' for 4 (a) (ii). Those who had not learnt this information wrote answers such as chaal, mistaking this extract for Bhangra, or inappropriate words like drone or scale.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Describe the timbre of the melodic instrument.

.....
.....
..... [2]

This question showed a clear lack in the understanding of the key word 'timbre'. Candidates who knew what timbre meant answered well with answers such as 'warm' 'mellow' and 'airy'. This is one of the elements of music and is a word that needs to be understood by candidates. It is vital that centres teach these terms with their appropriate vocabulary and candidates should be encouraged to learn words such as these so as to be able to access all the marks available within the paper. (See Exemplar 6 below).

Exemplar 6

The woodwind instrument follows its
own melody whilst the drum accompanies
..... [2]

Question 4 (c)

- (c) Give **five** features of the music that are typical of this style. (Credit will not be given for just naming instruments or for repeating answers given above).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

[5]

Some excellent answers were seen to this question from candidates of all abilities who had very good knowledge and understanding of the features that they heard within this extract. (See Exemplar 7). Other candidates muddled this with Bhangra and so wrote confused answers that were not related to the music that they heard. A number wrote about the vocal parts which were not present in this extract. Some candidates referred to the 'tala' and 'raga' from question 4(a) which the question told them not to do. However, if they got it wrong above they did get credit here. A number of candidates gave very generic descriptions of what they would expect to hear often referring to the structural divisions of Indian music which was inappropriate for an extract lasting one minute. The majority of candidates gained at least 2 marks for this question.

Exemplar 7

- 1 microtonal melodies
- 2 Improvisation
- 3 there's a drone in the background ^(sustained)
- 4 there are pitch bends and slides
- 5 lots of ornamentation in the melody.....

[5]

Question 5 (a)

5 This question is based on Area of Study 5 – Conventions of Pop.

You will hear this extract **four** times.

A single stave score of the main melody is printed opposite.

- (a) Using the given rhythm, fill in the missing notes in bars 7, 15 and 16.
(Please note that bar 8 is blank and does not need to be filled in).

[7]

Almost all of those who attempted this question gained some marks. Understanding the nature of the tied notes should have gained the candidates at least 1 mark. However, many also gained marks for the correct shape in bar 7 but many found the descending interval in bar 15 difficult. Many candidates gained credit for shape rather than correct notes in bars 15 and 16. Marks were often gained for a mixture of correct notes and correct shapes. There were candidates who did not attempt to answer this question which lost them a significant number of marks.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) On which beat of the bar does the bass drum play throughout this extract?

..... [1]

Many gained the correct answer of '3', but beats 1, 2 and 4 were seen. Other responses, reflecting the fact that some candidates did not read or listen to the question, gave answers like bar 10, which could not access marks.

Question 5 (c)

- (c) What is the tonality of the final chord of the extract (bar 25)? [1]

A good proportion of correct answers, 'major', were seen but a significant number thought the tonality was minor. Tonality was one of the musical words that some found difficult to understand but it is a key feature of much of the music within the specification and so candidates need to learn about it.

Question 5 (d)

- (d) Suggest the name of an artist who might have performed this song.

..... [1]

A large number of appropriate answers were seen for this question. The artist was 'Roberta Flack' and a number of candidates knew this. However, any female artist that performed Pop Ballads in the 1970's, 80's and 90's were credited. Some candidates opted for artists who did not start performing until after the year 2000 and these were not accepted. There were a few candidates who gave a male artist which was not appropriate.

Question 5 (e) (i)

(e) (i) What style of song is this? [1]

Most candidates were able to correctly answer 'Pop Ballad'.

Question 5 (e) (ii)

(ii) Give one reason for your answer.
..... [1]

A very good proportion of all candidates gained a mark here, even if they did not get part (e) (i) correct.

Question 6 (a)

6 This question is based on Area of Study 2 – The Concerto Through Time.

You will hear **two** extracts of music from the same concerto. Extract A followed by Extract B will be played **four** times.

(a) Name the solo instrument. [1]

Candidates with good instrument recognition skills gained a mark for 'cello' here. However there were a significant number who, although they recognised that it was a string instrument, incorrectly wrote violin or viola not listening carefully enough to the instruments range. Other instruments were seen such as clarinet, trumpet and recorder.

Question 6 (b) (i) and (ii)

(b) (i) Name the period of composition for this concerto. [1]

(ii) Give **two** musical reasons for your answer.

- 1
 - 2
- [2]

Many middle ability and able candidates correctly recognised this music as Romantic. A few wrote only dates, which do not give the name of a period of composition as the question required and others thought the music was from the Baroque or Classical period. Those who answered 6 (b) (i) correctly gave successful reasons in 6 (b) (ii) such as 'dramatic', 'large orchestra', 'chromatic harmony' or 'rubato'. Those who gave an incorrect answer in 6 (b) (i) were able to gain some marks for similar correct answers but many thought that the orchestra was small and that there was a harpsichord. Candidates gave answers that were not true of the extracts that they heard.

Question 6 (c)

(c) Compare the tempo and/or metre of these extracts.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Many candidates gained good marks for this question. Most were able to recognise that 'Extract A was slow' and 'Extract B was fast', or give the comparison 'A was faster than B' (see Exemplar 8). A good number heard that 'Extract B got faster' and that 'Extract A had rubato' within it. There were, however, candidates who did not understand the terms tempo and metre and so gave answers that were not relevant. Metre proved more problematic than tempo with many candidates thinking that both extracts were in four beats in a bar, when this was true of B but not of A which had three beats in a bar. There were a few candidates who did not make it clear which extract that they were talking about so they could not gain any marks (see Exemplar 9).

Exemplar 8

The tempo in A is slow in comparison to B in which the tempo is much faster. The metre of A is 3 beats in a bar and the metre of B is 4 beats in a bar. A also uses dotted notes and B does as well. They also use quavers. [3]

Exemplar 9

The tempo starts off slower then gradually increases (accelerando). There are also diminuendo and decelerando.

Question 6 (d)

- (d)* Using your knowledge of the concerto, **compare** the music in both extracts. Consider the way the solo instrument and the accompaniment work together. You may also wish to consider dynamics, articulation, instrumental techniques and any other features that are relevant. Give similarities and/or differences.

.....
 [6]

The response to this question was generally good with the vast majority of candidates scoring some marks and a good proportion scoring 4 and above. Some candidates gave answers from the previous questions regarding the tempo which was not appropriate but there were some well-focused answers from candidates who heard and then explained various valid comparisons between the extracts. Comparisons regarding how the solo instrument and the orchestra worked together were particularly pleasing with many candidates noticing the interaction between the 'cello and the clarinet that were accompanied by chords from the orchestra' in Extract A (see Exemplar 10), as contrasted with the 'cello melody being repeated by the orchestra' in Extract B. Many noticed that Extract B was more dramatic or virtuosic and more able candidates were able to give specific details about this. Good comparisons were also given regarding the dynamics and articulation with varying degrees of detail. In general many noticed that 'Extract A was generally more legato' and that 'Extract A was more generally quieter with Extract B having a wider range of dynamics which changed more suddenly' (see Exemplar 11).

Exemplar 10

Extract A has less texture - the cello plays while the accompaniment (mostly clarinets) holds chords. There are some moments of call and response ~~in~~ between the soloist and accompaniment.
 However, extract B ~~to~~ starts with the

Exemplar 11

less prominent. In extract one, the ~~big~~ dynamics are quieter and have less crescendos and diminuendos.

Question 7 (a)

7 This question is based on Area of Study 4 – Film Music.

You will hear this extract **four** times.

A single staff score of the main melody is printed opposite.

This extract is from one of the films about the trainee wizard Harry Potter.

- (a) Suggest a suitable tempo for this extract. [1]

A lot of tempo names were seen in answer to this question but many were too slow, quite a large number of candidates opting for *moderato*. The crotchet pulse was too slow for this tempo and an answer of 'moderately fast', 'fast' or 'allegro' was what was required. Lower ability candidates did not understand the word tempo and gave inappropriate answers such as *legato*.

Question 7 (b)

- (b) In the **vertical** box on the staff at the beginning of the extract write the time signature. [1]

The majority of candidates answered this correctly writing '3/4' in the box provided. Once again weaker ability candidates struggled with this and 4/4 was often seen as well as single numbers which did not constitute a time signature.

Question 7 (c) (i), (ii) and (iii)

- (c) (i) In the box **above** bars 1 and 2 give the name of the instrument that plays the written melody. [1]
- (ii) In the box **above** bar 9 give the name of the percussion instrument that is heard. [1]
- (iii) In the box **above** bar 25 give the name of the instrument that plays the written melody. [1]

The answer of 'triangle' in 7(c)(ii) was generally given correctly. The recognition of orchestral instruments was answered very well by high ability candidates and quite well by middle ability candidates. However, lower ability candidates struggled to distinguish between the various woodwind and brass instruments and often chose flute instead of 'oboe' for 7(c)(ii) and trombone instead of 'French horn' for 7(c)(iii).

Question 7 (d)

(d) Underline the name for the ornament played by the flutes in bar 18.

Trill Mordent Acciaccatura Turn [1]

A good proportion of candidates gained a mark for 'acciaccatura'.

Question 7 (e)

(e) In the box **above** bar 19 give the name for the accidental used twice during the bar. [1]

Unfortunately weaker responses often included one of the answers from 7(d) here. They clearly did not know what an accidental was. Those candidates who did were able to gain the mark for 'flat'.

Question 7 (f)

(f) In the oval box **below** bars 24 and 25 write an appropriate dynamic. [1]

Once again understanding the term dynamic was crucial in answering this question correctly. Many who did chose the correct answer of 'forte', 'loud' or 'mezzo forte'.

Many candidates appeared to find the addition of instructions from the questions inside the boxes helpful.

Question 7 (g)

This music is heard when 'Aunt Marge' is blown up like a balloon and is floating in the air after a spell to make someone fly has gone wrong.

(g) Give **three** features of the music that help to convey this amusing scene. (Do not repeat information given above).

- 1
- 2
- 3

[3]

Some excellent answers were seen to this question from all ability levels, as found in Exemplar 12. There were candidates who were once again too vague in their answers and/or who repeated answers from earlier in the question that they were expressly told not to do (see Exemplar 13). There were many answers that could have been given in response to this question including 'waltz-like', 'playful', 'fast notes' and 'staccato'.

Exemplar 12

- 1 *Wide range of pitch*
- 2 *Melody passed between instruments*
- 3 *Very staccato*

Exemplar 13

- 1 use of bassoon
- 2 use of crescendos
- 3 use of woodwind instruments like flute.

Question 8 (a)

8 This question is based on Area of Study 3 – Rhythms of the World.

You will hear this extract **three** times.

(a) Where does this style originate? [1]

The majority of candidates gained a mark for 'Brazil'. There were some candidates who muddled the aural sound of the percussion instruments with that of African drumming but there were clear musical features to point away from that and clearly towards the Samba.

Question 8 (b)

(b) In the first part of this extract a whistle is heard. What is the role of the person who plays the whistle and why is it used?

.....

.....

..... [2]

An excellent proportion of candidates gained 2 marks for this question clearly understanding the role of the whistle and its player and why the whistle might be used.

Question 8 (c)

(c) Name **two** instruments that you can hear which are typical of this style (apart from the whistle).

1

2

[2]

All who identified this music as South American samba went on to gain both marks for naming two appropriate instruments. Those who thought the music was African did not always score marks here.

Question 8 (d)

(d) Give **four** features of the music that you can hear in this extract.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

[4]

Once again good answers were seen here from all ability ranges. The most popular answers seen were 'fast', 'loud', 'call and response', 'syncopation', 'ostinato/repeated rhythms' and 'polyrhythmic'. Some candidates mistakenly heard melody or wrote about the major key, which is not possible for an ensemble of only unpitched percussion.

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