

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

MUSIC

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Music

H543

For first teaching in 2016

H543/05 Summer 2025 series

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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. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 5 series overview

H543/05 Listening and Appraising is the written paper for A Level Music. The paper targets two Assessment Objectives as detailed in the [specification](#)

Assessment objectives

AO3: demonstrate and apply musical knowledge.

AO4: use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music.

Areas of study

Candidates need to analyse, explain and compare styles of music, musical elements and the conditions and context in which music was created in four Areas of Study:

- AoS1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven
- AoS2: Popular Song: Blues, Jazz, Swing and Big Band
- Two other Areas of Study, chosen from:
 - AoS3: Developments in Instrumental Jazz 1910 to the present day
 - AoS4: Religious Music of the Baroque Period
 - AoS5: Programme Music 1820 – 1910
 - AoS6: Innovations in Music 1900 to the present day

In the examination, candidates have to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills in answering questions on:

- AoS1 and AoS2:
 - Unfamiliar music and its related background
 - Prescribed repertoire and its related background
- AoS3-6: Wider listening based on the chosen Areas of Study

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• read the questions carefully and followed the instructions • gave music examples of passages in the score or song • wrote in paragraphs, grouping ideas together concisely • expressed their opinions with confidence.	• were unfamiliar with the prescribed works by Haydn and Cécile McLorin Salvant • wrote about the accompaniment instead of the singing, or about the programme instead of the music • gave limited or general opinions, without music examples • left out some questions.

Misconception



If possible, comparisons should include detail about both halves of the comparison.

- Haydn's London symphonies have four movements, the earlier ones do not.
- Cécile McLorin Salvant whispers 'Hey, little girl', but Jack Jones doesn't.

Better to have:

- the earlier ones often have three movements.
- Jack Jones sings it with a full tone.

Section A overview

Section A has two questions on unfamiliar music from Areas of Study 1 and 2.

In addition to the exam paper, candidates are provided with downloadable music extracts and (in a separate insert) an outline score in two staves of the instrumental extract and a lead sheet of the song.

In general, Question 1 has shorter questions and Question 2 has longer ones. The order of extracts and questions may change from one year to the next.

This year, Question 1 asked about Area of Study 2: Popular Song (Barry Manilow singing *You Make Me Feel So Young*). Question 2 featured Area of Study 1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (the beginning of the slow movement from Mozart's *String Quartet No. 14 in G major, K. 387*).

Question 1 (a)

- 1 • **Track 1** is a recording from Area of Study 2: Popular Song: Blues, Jazz, Swing and Big Band.

The extract is 'You Make Me Feel So Young' by Josef Myrow & Mack Gordon. The singer is Barry Manilow, recorded in 1998.

A lead sheet of the song is provided: **Extract 1** in the **Insert**.

The lyrics sung on the recording are below:

You make me feel so young,
You make me feel so spring has sprung,
And ev'ry time I see you grin,
I'm such a happy individual.
The moment that you speak,
I wanna go play hide and seek,
I wanna go and bounce the moon
Just like a toy balloon.

You and I
Are just like a couple of tots,
Running across the meadow,
Picking up lots of forget-me-nots.

You make me feel so young,
You make me feel there are songs to be sung,
Bells to be rung,
And a wonderful fling should be flung.
And even when I'm old and gray
I'm going to feel the way I do today,
'Cause, you make me feel so young.

(Instrumental)

You and I
Are just like a couple of tots,
Running across the meadow,
Picking up lots of forget-me-nots.

'Cause you make me young,
Give me songs to be sung,
Feel like bells should be rung,
And a wonderful fling to be flung.
And even when I'm old and gray
I'm gonna feel the way I do today,
'Cause, you make me feel so,
You make me feel so,
You make me feel,
I feel so young.

- (a) In what key is the music at the beginning of the song?

..... [1]

Most responses were correct.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Explain how the vocal melody in bar 1 to bar 8 is constructed.

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Most candidates were able to be given marks in this question. There was 1 mark for recognising the basic structure (in phrases, repeating the same motif at the beginning of each). Good responses were able to comment on the ascending shape of bars 1-4 and the use of sequence.

Less successful responses wrote about Barry Manilow's vocal performance. 'Constructed' in this question means how the melody is put together or composed.

Question 1 (c)

(c) What device is played by the bass from bar 17 to bar 20 (⌚ 0'46" to 0'52")?

- A cadence
- B pedal
- C riff
- D sequence

Your answer

☐

[1]

Most candidates could hear the repeated note in the bass and correctly identified 'pedal'.

Question 1 (d)

(d) Identify **two** features of the tonality in the instrumental section from Ⓢ 1'23" to 1'48".

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Most candidates realised that there was at least one change of key. A few were able to identify Eb major at the beginning of the instrumental section, modulating to E major after eight bars.

Question 1 (e)

(e) The second time (Ⓢ 1'59"), Manilow sings bar 23 to bar 24 as an ascending scale.

If bar 23 is 'A' and bar 24 is 'B', which combination of A **and** B matches what he sings on the recording? Write your two answers below.

A1



Pick-ing up lots of for -

B1



get - me- nots, 'Cause

A2



Pick-ing up lots of for -

B2



get - me- nots, 'Cause

A3



Pick-ing up lots of for -

B3



get - me- nots, 'Cause

A4



Pick-ing up lots of for -

B4



get - me- nots, 'Cause

Your answers [2]

The two halves of the melody make a whole tone scale. A few candidates got both right.

Question 1 (f)

(f) Explain Manilow's treatment of the melody at the end of the song (from bar 25, Ⓢ 2'03").

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..... [6]

Many candidates answered this question well. The lyrics sung on the recording were printed in the exam paper. Candidates were able to identify which lyrics were different and then begin to explain the ways in which the melody was different this time. Candidates who gained marks well described different aspects of the melody, using musical terminology. They commented on the sequences (ascending and descending) and gave the exact length of the long notes. They explained how the melody was in a higher register, building up to notes at the top of Manilow's range. He returns often to a high E, which seems to suit his voice. The exchanges with the band contributed to the excitement of the end of the song.

Candidates who scored less well often gave examples of changes to the words without explaining how the melody changed. Sometimes they wanted to discuss basic points of performance, such as vibrato or slides up or down between notes.

Exemplar 1

Marlow sings up an octave, and changes the written
 rhythm and melody to a strong descending sequence,
 the lyrics changing to 'you make me young' to better fit the
 new rhythm. In bar 24 he then sings the ascending sequence
 but substitutes 'bells', 'rings', 'war' and 'fling', augmenting the
 phrase to 4 bars, as the words in between the held lyrics are
 changed to triplet ~~sequences~~. Flong is held for 3 bars as the climax to
 the phrase. 'Dó' 'to-day' are then sung with accents, ^{almost} shouted,
 the melody rising. The last line is repeated ^{four} ~~three~~ times,
 the melody rising and ending on a high C. [6]

This exemplar makes a number of musical points, supported by specific detail. The sequences are identified. There is a clear sense that the melody has been extended ('augmenting'), with some precision about bar lengths. There is a clear sense of the overall shape ('the climax to the phrase ... rising and ending on a high C').

The response was given 6 marks.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 • **Track 2** is a recording from Area of Study 1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

The extract is from a string quartet by Mozart.

A skeleton score is provided: **Extract 2** in the **Insert**.

- (a) Describe **three** contrasting passages to show the variety of textures in this extract. Give the bar numbers for each of your chosen examples.

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

3

.....

.....

[6]

Almost all candidates gained marks in this question.

First, the candidate needed to read the question carefully. It asks for three passages. 'Passages' suggests longer than a single bar. 'Describe' – the command word of the question – means to write about the music in some detail. 'Variety of textures' suggests each passage presents a different arrangement of the instrumental parts.

The mark scheme allowed 2 marks for each of the three answers. Many candidates understood the texture in which the violin plays the melody, and the other instruments accompany. Bar 29-30 is in octaves. The passages in which there was an interplay between the parts were harder to explain clearly.

Single beats, such as the upbeat to bar 1 where the violin plays unaccompanied, were not regarded as passages, so there was no separate mark for 'monophonic'.

The most successful responses listened to the recording and explained the melody, bass and inner parts. Less successful responses sometimes put a label on the texture ('homophonic', 'monophonic') rather than describe the music.

Misconception



Candidates should be careful with the terminology of 'polyphonic' textures. Textures that are 'canon' ('canonic') or 'fugue' ('fugal') are specific types of music. The extract from Mozart is more 'imitative', with exchanges between the instruments of short motifs.

It is generally better to describe the texture in more detail, rather than simply giving it a one-word description. Candidates should write about what they hear, step by step: melody, bass, inner parts.

Question 2 (b)

- (b) Listen to bar 39 to bar 42¹ (⊙ 2'38" to 2'50"). The first violin and viola parts are written in the score.

Complete the second violin and 'cello parts in bar 39 and bar 40.

[4]

Candidates found the dictation question challenging. There were several correct answers, but mostly fewer candidates gained marks. Some skill was needed to pick out the two missing parts. High-scoring responses, if not completely correct, heard the chromatic descent of the second violin part, perhaps with a few mistakes. The bass was a little more difficult, but there was 1 mark for getting the general shape with the leaps in the correct places. Lower-scoring responses were not able to distinguish between steps and leaps. Sometimes the notation of the quaver rhythm was wrong, even though it is exactly the same as the viola rhythm.

Question 2 (c)

(c) What is the date of composition for this music?

A 1762

B 1782

C 1802

D 1822

Your answer

[1]

Most candidates calculated the most realistic year of composition. Candidates should know the dates of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven compositions really well.

Question 2 (d)

(d) Explain how Mozart was able to earn money from composing music, including his string quartets.

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..... [4]

Candidates who did well on this question knew specific details about Mozart's career, such as his employment by the Archbishop of Salzburg and his move to Vienna as a freelance composer and performer. They referred to Mozart performing his own piano concertos in subscription concerts. A few knew of the idea of selling compositions to a publisher for a fee and that string quartets might be sold in a set of six.

Less successful responses were rather general, perhaps referring to a 'wealthy patron' without giving any details.

Section B overview

Section B is based on the study of prescribed works, one each from Areas of Study 1 and 2.

Candidates who did well in Section B were usually:

- able to write in detail about the prescribed music by Haydn and Cécile McLorin Salvant
- familiar with Haydn's development of the symphony over time
- able to make critical judgements on the music of *For One To Love*, supported by examples.

Question 3 (a)

3 Area of Study 1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

• **Track 3** is a recording of **Extract 3**. It is part of one of the prescribed movements from Haydn's *Symphony No. 103 in E flat major*.

There is a score of **Extract 3** in the **Insert**.

(a) Comment on the melody and harmony in this extract.

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..... [10]

Most candidates were well-prepared for this question. Candidates were familiar with the prescribed work and recognised that Extract 3 was the recapitulation. Most identified the obvious melodic events in the music, such as the first and second subjects and the return of the Adagio theme from the opening of the movement.

Candidates who did well were able to break down the melodies into shorter motifs. They had a good knowledge of harmony. They identified the Ab major and Ab minor chords and the diminished chords in the transition to the Adagio. They communicated a clear sense of what the music sounded like.

The less successful responses made general comments about the harmony, perhaps identifying a few perfect cadences. Sometimes candidates referred to sustained notes as 'pedals', without saying if it was a tonic pedal or a dominant pedal. Information about the instrumentation was not needed for the question.

Exemplar 2

This extract begins with the recapitulation, ~~covering music already heard in the exposition,~~
~~but this time in the tonic~~, with the 1st subject theme in bar 158², characterised by
 dotted and slurred quavers ~~and~~ (the first three quavers from motif "a") and slurred
 semiquavers (the four semiquavers in 159² from motif "b"). This consists of two ^{four} ~~five~~-bar
 phrases, the second of which is cut off half-a-bar early by the transition. It is heard in
 the tonic, E $\flat$ major, ending in a perfect cadence in 165² so the transition begins in E $\flat$
 major as well. The transition begins in the same way as the exposition, with the "transition
 motif 1" (heard in 1st violin in bar 166). This is played three times over a tonic pedal
 in ~~violin~~ 1st violins, ~~flute~~ flute and clarinet, and viola. Then from 169 the melody
 consists of triads movement and semiquavers, going through a melodic sequence to bar
 172 with upbeat accents. The music has modulated to the dominant, B $\flat$ major
 and settles on this chord for a few bars (with the dominant note punctuated by timpani).
 A Ic-V7-I cadence takes the music back into E $\flat$ major for the second subject at
 bar 179. This lyrical theme is played in the tenor by violins and cellos,
 and the second four-bar phrase is cut off a bar early by a repeat of bar 185
 (using motif "c" - first heard in bar 181 in 1st ^{A $\flat$} violins, consisting of dotted quaver
 and semiquavers). There is a deviation into ~~E $\flat$~~ major in bar 188 ~~it~~ with
 strings in rhythmic unison, then A $\flat$ minor. At bar 194 there is a V7 [10]
 (B $\flat$ 7) in 3rd inversion arriving at a halted diminished 7th at
 bar 200.

(more at end)

3)a) The introduction theme from the beginning is heard again in lower strings, starting in Eb as before, then modulates and this 12 bar phrase is split in half by a ~~perfect~~ perfect cadence in Eb. The semitonal nature in bar 202 had been a significant feature in the whole movement. We return to alligro at bar 213 with the introduction theme transposed into a motif based on that semitonal nature and motif "c". Motif "a" becomes a cadential figure and there ~~are~~ is a I - vi - ii^b - V7 progression twice, before 3 perfect cadences in Eb major. It must be noted that mostly in this extract, there is functional harmony based on primary chords.

This response shows a detailed, concise way of including points about both the melody and harmony. There is a clear picture of the flow of the music, the way it moves from one idea to the next: 'going through a melodic sequence ... modulated to the dominant ... settles on this chord ... takes the music back into the major ... a deviation into Ab major ... arriving at a hushed diminished 7th...'. There is a perceptive understanding of the music as a whole and in its detail.

Bar numbers are used consistently to highlight examples in the score. The technical language of harmony is clearly understood, for example, the I - V - I cadence and the third inversion of Bb7.

The exemplar is part of a longer response. It was given 10 marks.

Question 3 (b)

- (b) Compare Haydn's 'London' symphonies (such as No. 103) with his earlier symphonies. Comment on differences in, for example, structure, orchestration and musical style.

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..... [10]

Candidates were knowledgeable about the London symphonies. Many were able to refer to details from the prescribed work, particularly the double variation structure of the second movement. Examples from the other London symphonies often explained the nicknames (the 'Surprise', the 'Military', the 'Clock'). Haydn's relationship with the Esterházy family was familiar to many. There were examples of the early concertante symphonies (*no. 6, Le Matin* was often mentioned) and the so-called 'Sturm und Drang' symphonies (*no. 45, Farewell*, was a common choice).

The responses that scored well provided convincing musical detail. They explained the smaller scale of the earlier symphonies, for example, by comparing the size of the early first movements with the grander, innovative structures of the London works. Salomon's larger orchestra, with its double woodwind, brass and timpani, was effectively compared with the strings, oboes and horns of earlier symphonies.

Responses that scored less well tended to lack detail. There was no explanation of how the orchestra at Eszterháza was smaller, except to say that it was. Sometimes the quality of the earlier symphonies was underestimated. Some suggested that Prince Esterházy was too strict and held Haydn back from writing longer symphonies. Others credited Eszterháza as providing Haydn with the conditions he needed to become the 'father of the symphony'.

Question 4 (a)

4 Area of Study 2: Popular Song: Blues, Jazz, Swing and Big Band.

• **Track 4** is a recording of **Extract 4**. The song is 'Wives And Lovers', sung by Cécile McLorin Salvant on the prescribed album, *For One To Love*.

There is no score of this music.

- (a) Compare Cécile McLorin Salvant's performance of 'Wives And Lovers' with one or more recordings of the same song by other singers. Use examples of vocal style and technique to explain how the singers interpret the song.

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..... [10]

Cécile McLorin Salvant's song engaged many candidates and generated strong opinions. It was most often compared to the original Jack Jones recording, with commentary on attitudes to women in the 1960s and the present day.

The best responses had precise references to Salvant's wide range of vocal devices to express her ideas about the song. Examples were easily located by quoting the lyrics. There were inevitably fewer details on the other song because candidates were working from memory. Candidates knew that Jones's version was in $\frac{3}{4}$. There were good discussions of his classic, controlled 'crooning' vocal style.

Candidates who did less well had a limited recall of the second version. They remembered that Jones's approach was sexist but could not explain the musical reasons why that is so.

Assessment for learning



Questions about how a singer 'performs' or 'interprets' ask the candidate to write about:

- things that can be heard when you listen: the sound of the singer's voice, how closely the singer follows the score, additions of ornamentation or smears/falls, manipulation of timbre/tone, how the melody lies in the singer's voice (high or low, chest voice, head voice), dynamics.
- the emotional or expressive message of the performance, how the song is presented/delivered so that the listener connects with its meaning.

The first are questions of fact. You should be able to listen to the music, discuss what you hear with someone else, and agree about what happens in the music.

The second is your personal response. It may be different from someone else's.

Candidates should gain experience of discussing the interpretation of songs with other their peers, teachers and with singers.

Question 4 (b)

- (b) Discuss the effectiveness of Cécile McLorin Salvant's recordings. Refer to songs from the prescribed album and/or other examples of her performances. Do **not** refer to 'Wives And Lovers'.

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..... [10]

Candidates responded well to these songs. They were aware of the themes running through the album and the meaning behind the choice of songs. Many candidates wrote about each song in turn. Other candidates restricted themselves to one or two, *Le Mal De Vivre* was the most likely to be omitted.

For many candidates, *The Trolley Song* was the one that generated most detailed comment. The highest scoring responses consistently gave examples of moments in the song. Often these were examples of singing a particular phrase. Many wrote in detail about the role of the jazz trio in creating the sound of the tram and about Aaron Diehl's piano solo. There was much perceptive commentary on the young woman falling in love on public transport. Candidates concluded that Salvant's interpretation was either mocking the ridiculous scenario or presenting a charming picture of a girl on a harmless adventure.

Responses that gained fewer marks only had limited knowledge of the prescribed songs.

Misconception



Saying that an album has won an award, however prestigious, is not the same as evaluating it yourself.

'*For One To Love* won a Grammy' is contextual evidence that the album was admired, even popular. Candidates should add their own views to make clear their response to the music.

In the same way, quotes from composers and critics do not count as a personal evaluation. When Ellington says 'playing "bop" is like playing Scrabble with all the vowels missing', candidates don't have to agree with him.

Section C overview

In Section C candidates must answer two essay questions, one each from two different Areas of Study.

The essay questions in Section C require candidates to 'use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music' (Assessment Objective AO4, A Level specification, page 24).

Most candidates answered from Area of Study 5: Programme Music, usually Question 9. Questions 5 and 12 were the more popular choices after that. There were fewer answers in Area of Study 4: Religious Music of the Baroque Period.

Candidates who did well in Section C generally:	Candidates who did less well in Section C generally:
- made confident 'evaluative and critical judgements' throughout the essay - described a few relevant passages of music in detail, with vivid language to communicate knowledge and enthusiasm - gave specific points of historical and social context relating to the music.	- found it difficult to evaluate the music or support an opinion with examples - only partly understood the question and wrote at length about unimportant points.

Question 5*

Area of Study 3: Developments in Instrumental Jazz 1910 to the present day.

5* Discuss the challenges of improvisation for jazz musicians. You should consider the features of successful improvised jazz (not jazz that is notated), for example, New Orleans style, 'head arrangements', 'free jazz' or another style of your choice.

Use examples from the music of **one or more** jazz musicians to support your answer.

[25]

Candidates were well-prepared for this question. Often there was a good overview of developments in jazz from its beginnings to 'free jazz'. Sometimes writing about each stage of the development of jazz made the essay very long. Sometimes candidates left out musical examples in order to get through the history.

Candidates had a broad understanding of the shifts in popularity from early New Orleans-style improvisation to solo dominated jazz, and then to big band swing and bebop. There were some generalisations, such as the claim that improvisation 'disappeared' during the swing area. Candidates should avoid assuming that music progresses or improves with the passage of time. Each time is different.

Candidates who performed well were able to write perceptively about the challenges of improvisation, particularly Charlie Parker in *Koko* and Miles Davis in *So What*. There would be detailed musical examples, such as an analysis of Parker's solo or a commentary on the solos by John Coltrane or Bill Evans. The best responses discussed individual passages in depth.

Effective comments included precise musical language. Some responses described passages of melody, perhaps related to the chord changes, explaining the phrasing or the use of double-time or triple-time. Some candidates communicated their understanding of the influence of individual soloists, for example, the electrifying effect of Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker on younger musicians. Their example forced everyone to work hard to keep up.

Less effective writing was generalised, i.e., a summary of the instruments. Examples could be limited to the opening bars only.

Question 6*

6* Evaluate attempts to maintain the popularity of jazz from 1960 to the present day.

Use examples from the music of **one or more** jazz musicians to support your answer.

[25]

Candidates usually wrote about two or three musicians. Answers usually began with examples of well-established repertoire. Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Herbie Hancock were common starting points. More recent jazz musicians were often discussed at the end of answers. Some of these were interesting and individual choices, such as The Brecker Bros, Maria Schneider and Abdulah Ibrahim. Where candidates scored well, they wrote vividly about the music, conveying a real sense of its qualities. Candidates who gained marks often wrote in detail about one or two musicians only, which allowed them to develop their ideas in more depth.

In a few responses the musical detail was limited. Some responses suggested examples of music that did not maintain jazz's popularity. Descriptions of these were very brief, perhaps a summary of the instrumentation and comments about the difficulty of listening to the music.

With 'difficult' or challenging genres of jazz, candidates should aim to listen to extracts from the music a number of times to get used to the idiom. They could be advised to find someone to listen alongside them, someone with sympathy for this style or a more experienced musician or listener. They could ask the person to help them to analyse what they hear, make notes and discuss it with them. After that they may be in a position to make a proper evaluation.

Question 7*

Area of Study 4: Religious Music of the Baroque Period.

- 7* Choose **one** composer you think has had the greatest impact on the development of Baroque religious music. Explain your choice.

Use examples from the music to support your answer.

[25]

The question allowed candidates to write about any composer. For most this was J.S. Bach. There were some highly detailed, appreciative accounts of his religious music. Many responses featured the cantata *Wachet auf* and/or the *St Matthew Passion*. Some candidates struggled to explain his 'impact'. While he was admired by other composers, he was largely ignored by audiences until the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it was perfectly acceptable for candidates to write about the quality of his music alone without worrying about his lack of fame in his lifetime.

There were some very good accounts of the music of other composers, such as Gabrieli, Monteverdi, Schütz, Purcell, Vivaldi and Handel. Much of it referred very effectively to the music, but contextual information was often limited. There was a little knowledge of how musical styles grew and developed in Europe in the baroque period. There are good examples of composers travelling to improve their education, for example, Schütz to Venice or Handel to Italy. Lully exercised his influence on French music through his tight control of music publishing in France.

Question 8*

- 8* Compare recitatives and/or arias by composers of the Baroque period. Comment on their effectiveness in setting Biblical or religious texts.

Use examples from the music of **two or more** composers to support your answer.

[25]

Candidates who performed well on this question had a good understanding of the music. Arias from Bach and Handel were commonly chosen, sometimes with their associated recitatives. Candidates responded well to Bach's settings of German text, for example, in the cantatas. Often there was a clear understanding of Bach's method of enhancing the significance of the text. His style of setting the text was compared to the more direct dramatic methods of Handel, for example, in *Messiah*. Good responses explained the influence of opera on the style of Handel's oratorios.

A few responses wrote effectively about solo settings from Monteverdi, such as 'Nigra sum' from the *Vespers*. Less successful responses had weak knowledge of the music or wrote about choral music.

OCR support



Centres may wish to look at the prescribed works in the AS Level specification for suggestions of suitable works for each Area of Study in Section C.

Works by women composers include:

Area of Study 3: Maria Schneider: *Arbiters of Evolution* (2015)

Area of Study 4: Elisabeth Jaquet de La Guerre: *Esther* (1708)

Area of Study 5: Fanny Hensel: *Das Jahr* ('*The Year*') (1841)

Area of Study 6: Anna Clyne: *Night Ferry* (2012)

Question 9*

Area of Study 5: Programme Music 1820–1910.

- 9* Discuss the importance of melody in expressing the programme in music composed between 1820 and 1910.

Use examples from the music of **one or more** composers to support your answer.

[25]

The music most often chosen included Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*, Smetana's *Vltava*, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Strauss's *Don Quixote*. Candidates who performed well usually restricted themselves to two or three works. Also, they were disciplined in only writing about the melody. They did not get distracted by the orchestra or irrelevant details (such as the pizzicato strings after the stroke of the guillotine in *March to the Scaffold*). They worked hard to describe the melodies. For example, there was discussion of the unusual phrase lengths in the 'idée fixe' in Berlioz. Good responses were able to link this effectively to the restless moods of the lovestruck artist. Many responses effectively gave an account of the themes and the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Responses that gained fewer marks sometimes wrote too much about the programme. The episodic nature of *Vltava* led to essays that were too much about the story or the instrumentation. The opening semiquavers, the main theme and the polka at the wedding were relevant. The national significance of the music was important. Less effective responses became too caught up in the story, sometimes in overlong paragraphs. Responses were improved when they switched to another work which offered a fresh approach.

Exemplar 3

9) Melody was an essential part of programme music from 1820 to 1910, with it often being used to represent particular characters or places in the programme of the piece. Some composers ^{often} preferred to use the same melodic ideas throughout their music, ^{developing} it and altering it to the requirements of the piece at that time, whilst others preferred to use a variety of different melodies.

Symphonie Fantastique by Hector Berlioz is an example of a composer using a melody and tracing it through the piece in order to create a sense of continuity, whilst varying it to fit in with the programme at the point of the story it is in. This main melody is called the *idée fixe* and is first presented in the 1st subject of the 1st movement. The *idée fixe* is characterised by its two opening leaps, ^{deep breath} ~~begin~~ as is the artist is taking a sigh and then ^{ascending} ~~descending~~ movement - like a sigh. This is programme music as the *idée fixe* is used to represent the artist falling in love, based on Berlioz's own experiences with the actress Harriet Smithson - whom he wrote this symphony in order to impress. The melody at this stage is ^{with} accompanied by a 'heartbeat' accompaniment provided by pizzicato strings. The *idée fixe* next appears in the 2nd subject of the 1st movement, being used as a means of modulating. The *idée fixe* then appears in every movement afterwards, some more so than others. In Movement 2, Un bal the artist is at a ball, emphasised by the triple time, $3/4$ time signature. The *idée fixe* here appears as the subject of the C theme, or the second alternating theme, of the Rondo - representing the artist seeing his love on the dancefloor. Before the A theme then returns as the dancefloor becomes more

crowded and the artist can no longer see his love. Movement 3 is called 'scène aux champs' and represents the artist being in the countryside, with the key of this movement, F Major, being the same as that of Beethoven's 'Pastorale' Symphony which this ^{movement} piece plays homage to. The *idée fixe* here is alternated with darker more dissonant passages as the artist begins to go crazy at the lack of recognition from his love. As the movement progresses, the darker passages begin to take over and the *idée fixe* is eventually drowned out by these sounds, representing the artist killing his love. The final two movements then - of course - take place in an opium induced dream. Movement 4, 'March au supplice', represents the artist being taken to his execution - in an upbeat brass fanfare. The *idée fixe* is almost entirely absent from this movement, in keeping with the fact that the love interest is, at this point, dead. However, the *idée fixe* makes a brief appearance near the very end of the movement with the first 4 bars being played by solo clarinet to show the artist thinking of his love as his last thought before his death. The *idée fixe* is then cut short by an *sf* tutti chord to represent the fall of the guillotine and the death of the artist. Despite his apparent death, the Symphony is not yet over as Movement 5 represents the artist being in hell. The *idée fixe* is briefly presented before being subject to musical vilification by being played by *f* clarinet and piccolo ~~and~~, at a faster tempo in a very dissonant manner. Overall, the *idée fixe* in *Symphonie fantastique* is used to bind together the whole Symphony and remain representative of the love interest - the melody is fundamentally important to the storytelling of the programme.

Vltava by Smetana uses melody in order to bring a sense of continuity by returning to the main river melody whilst also representing the journey on the river with the differing melodies that it alternates with. The opening theme is the water theme, with each woodwind instrument representing a stream of water, coming in playing scales with imitative entries before eventually being played together to represent the one, large stream of the river. The main river melody is then presented in E minor. It has a very grand feel, being almost entirely conjunct and rising and falling, like the movement of the boat ~~also~~ across the water. This ~~then~~ flows into the Hunters Call theme in 2/4. The melody here is played by brass in a fanfare-like style, ~~play~~. The melody is very triadic and accented, much like the melody of a march would be. This then flows into the Wedding theme, which is characterised by the conjunct movement of the staccato notes. There is a very rustic feel to this melody with it being ^{accompanied} by an almost drone-like accompaniment. This is followed by the Dance of the Nymphs, which is a dance-like melody characterised by the crossing rhythms. There is then a brief reappearance of the river theme but at a slightly faster tempo to remind the listener we are still on the river. The St. John's Rapids theme follows with brass and percussion being hugely prominent in the highly contrapuntal texture. The river theme is again present here ~~and~~ but is played by woodwind with a chromatic twist. Vltava then closes by representing the river theme melody but instead in E Major and full tutti orchestra, with particular emphasis on tonic-dominant. Overall, Vltava by Smetana presents ~~the~~ ^{a variety} of different melodies, with one consistent one throughout - the melody is very important for creating both interest

and a sense of continuity.

This response shows a good understanding of the link between the melody and the programme. The opening leaps and the descending phrases are linked to the dramatic feeling of love which links 'the artist' with his 'beloved'. The writing is clear and gets to the point quite quickly. It lacks a little detail but there are good basic ideas. The 'heartbeat' reference suggests that the candidate knows this music quite well. It just gets into the top band of marks.

The extract is part of a longer response which was given 21 marks.

Assessment for learning



Centres should make sure that the music covered in their schemes of work is suitable for study at 'A' Level. Particular care should be taken with music that has been studied at GCSE or earlier. At 'A' Level there should be an appropriate musical or contextual challenge for all candidates.

Question 10*

10* Explain the social and musical influences that made the tone poem / symphonic poem a popular form of programme music from the 1840s to 1910.

Use examples from the music of **one or more** composers to support your answer.

[25]

Many candidates had a good grasp of the background to the romantic period and the development of programme music. Candidates wrote about the greater freedom of form offered by the symphonic poem. Also mentioned were the romantic fondness for literature, story-telling, poetry and drama and the development of expressions of national identity. *Vltava* was popular again, along with Russian works, such as by Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov.

Candidates who performed well provided good detail on the music and a clear awareness of context. Less successful responses sometimes wrote about examples before Liszt, such as *The Hebrides* overture, or *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which is solo piano music.

Question 11*

Area of Study 6: Innovations in Music 1900 to the present day.

11* Discuss the impact of **traditional music** on music from 1900 to the present day. Traditional music may mean the melodies, rhythms and sounds of a composer's own country or those of another culture or continent.

Use examples from the music of **one or more** composers to support your answer.

[25]

There were some good responses to this question. *The Rite of Spring* was often chosen as an example of traditional music. The opening melody was mentioned, along with some of the rhythmic patterns, linked to examples of melodies. Vaughan Williams was often given as an example of English music. There was an awareness of the efforts of British and European composers to collect traditional melodies (in the field with a portable recording device) and then to incorporate these into their compositions. Some examples of Bartók were used, sometimes specific dance-based pieces or the *String Quartet No. 5*, with its exciting Bulgarian rhythms.

Some of the less successful responses were limited in their knowledge of the music. Others included music that was 'traditional' in the sense of being composed by earlier composers.

Question 12*

12* Evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches to composing music between 1960 and the present day.

Use examples from the music of **two or more** composers to support your answer.

[25]

A wide range of music was chosen in answer to this question. Music from the American minimalists came up regularly, particularly *Different Trains* by Steve Reich. There were interesting choices in more recent music, with summaries of the method of composition. Candidates who did well were able to explain the technical aspects of the music and give a clear impression of what it sounded like. Their enthusiasm or admiration for the music was convincing.

Candidates who did less well remembered how the music was composed but could only offer a limited evaluation. For example, there were detailed accounts of the live and recorded string quartets in *Different Trains*, supported by examples of the spoken phrases. In addition to the long process of describing the composer's method, there has to be some element of evaluation. The commentary on the effectiveness of the music may run consistently through the whole essay. Alternatively, the candidate can stop describing the music to explain their view in separate paragraphs.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should have the chance to develop the skills and language to discuss their own ideas about the artistic value of music. Contemporary music can be challenging to listen to. There is a danger of reducing difficult music to a series of facts, but missing its expressive qualities, its challenges to how we feel.

A live performance of contemporary music can be an amazing experience.

Alternatively listen to a good recording with the volume turned up.

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