



General Certificate of Education

MUSIC 1271

MUSC1

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - June series

This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#) in Sections B and C

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2009 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX
Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

MUSC 1

General

In this first year of the new specification the AS examination paper combined familiar features with new elements. The paper balances a listening section based on music excerpts (Section A) with essay questions on the new set work in Section B and on the chosen Area of Study in Section C. After the CD of music excerpts (lasting approximately 30 minutes) candidates had the remaining one and a quarter hours to complete their two essays. The paper elicited a wide range of responses, with candidates achieving a correspondingly varied range of marks. There were some very good responses to the essay questions in sections B and C, and examiners enjoyed reading essays which were detailed, and showed real enthusiasm for the works studied.

There were very few instances of candidates misunderstanding or ignoring the rubric. No candidate answered too many questions in Sections B or C and there were few instances of candidates either not allowing sufficient time to complete both Sections B and C adequately, or failing to answer any question in Section C. The spread of marks across all sections of the paper suggests that it was also successful in differentiating the candidates.

Section A

The excerpts in this section were not related to the Set Work or to particular Areas of Study but were drawn from any period of musical history. The scope of features likely to be tested is described on page 6 of the Specification, and teachers and students are advised to take time to read this in order to be familiar with the types of features and the terminology used (for example what is meant by 'compositional techniques', 'instrumental techniques' and so on). This may guide candidates in understanding what is required by the question. It may also point candidates to a sound understanding of the meaning of the technical terms used, something which was not always evident in responses to the questions in the paper.

Question 1

This question was divided between two excerpts. The first (a- e) was taken from Handel's *Water Music*, and the second (f-j) from a jazz piece.

- (a) This proved to be a difficult question for many, with a range of responses across all four choices. It was most successfully answered by candidates who went on to achieve high marks across the whole paper.
- (b) Most candidates were able correctly to describe the texture by using an appropriate term.
- (c) A wide range of answers was given, which may point to candidates not knowing the meaning of the terms.
- (d) Many gave correct answers. Incorrect answers appeared to result from a lack of understanding or knowledge of ornaments.
- (e) Many candidates identified the modulation. Its occurring just before the end of the excerpt may have helped candidates in narrowing down the choices.

- (f) Both instruments were recognised by most candidates, but those who only recognised one could only score 1 mark here. Very few candidates failed to recognise either of the two instruments.
- (g) This was generally answered correctly by the majority of candidates.
- (h) Most candidates correctly answered the question as 'Syncopation/off-beat' although a few responded incorrectly with a non-rhythmic device. Some candidates responded with the term 'comping' which was not an accurate answer, and did not gain credit unless accompanied by the correct term.
- (i) Many candidates answered correctly, although a few responses indicated a lack of understanding of the meaning of a 'melodic device.'
- (j) Although most candidates answered this correctly, some candidates used the term 'Walking Bass' which was only credited if given together with the correct answer (*pizzicato*/plucking).

Question 2

The excerpt was from Schubert's Octet.

- (a) Most candidates answered correctly on tonality.
- (b) There were many correct answers within the range of acceptable responses, but some candidates answered incorrectly with 2/4 or 9/8.
- (c) Most candidates responded correctly, although a few did not seem to understand the term *texture*.
- (d) Most candidates scored 2 of the 3 marks here, having recognised the clarinet and bassoon. Many included *oboe* or *flute*, apparently assuming that the term *wind instruments* must refer to woodwind instruments. A few candidates recognised all three instruments correctly.
- (e) There was an even spread of responses here, with some candidates correctly recognising all three features from the list, while others scored 1 or 2 marks. There were few cases of candidates failing to recognise any of the features.
- (f) Although many candidates correctly recognised this as a *perfect* cadence, there was a large number who responded with *imperfect* cadence.

Question 3

- (a) This question differentiated well, with many candidates achieving either 3 or 4 marks for notation.
- (b) Many candidates found this question difficult – perhaps some were still concentrating on completing the oboe melody in question (a).
- (c) Again, many candidates answered incorrectly. As in question 1 (c), this may indicate an unfamiliarity with the technical terms related to texture.
- (d) Again many candidates did not identify the *perfect* cadence.
- (e) Many candidates identified the bassoon, although *French horn*, *flute* and *oboe* were frequent incorrect answers.
- (f) Comparatively few candidates gave the correct answer (6th), with other intervals from the list occurring frequently.

Question 4

The excerpt of music was played twice and the score extract was provided. This style of question clearly suited some candidates very well, and they were able to achieve high marks. At the other end of the range there were candidates who achieved very low marks or none. In a few cases, some or most of the questions were left unanswered.

- (a) Many answers were correct, although some responses indicated a lack of understanding of the technical terms.
- (b) Some candidates scored both marks, although there was a large number who could only give one note or who were not able to transpose the parts correctly at all.
- (c) Most candidates answered correctly, although some failed to read the question properly and only gave one bar number.
- (d) Many candidates identified the imperfect cadence, although *interrupted* and *perfect* were popular incorrect answers.
- (e) Most candidates were able to locate the scale.
- (f) There was a wide range of responses to this question. Many candidates answered correctly but others either failed to give a correct beat or bar number, or gave only a bar number. In some cases, candidates gave a location which was not an example of octaves. This may indicate confusion in reading the viola or bass clefs.
- (g) A few candidates gained both marks while only 1 mark could be given without a correct description of the inversion. There were also many who scored 0, or left the question unanswered.
- (h) Some candidates gave the correct answer while, equally, many candidates clearly did not understand the term 'cadential 6/4'.

Section B

The new set work, Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony, seems to have both challenged and engaged students, as demonstrated in the variety and depth of their responses. The work is an excellent model of sonata structure, but also enables students to glimpse the individual nature and approach to this form, and the genius of Mozart himself.

It was noticeable that many candidates had copied out musical quotations from the score in response to their answers. Since candidates were allowed to take an unmarked score into the examination, this is an unnecessary and time-consuming exercise. Accurate bar numbers would have been sufficient to identify the location of musical features. Centres used a variety of scores for this work, but should note that if bar numbers are absent from the score they may be written in to enable candidates to locate musical examples accurately. A small number of candidates wrote about the wrong movement of the symphony.

Question 05

This question demanded a lot of detail about form and tonality. Many candidates gave full and accurate descriptions of the first movement which indicated a clear understanding of the purpose of the music with detailed musical examples. There was evidence of a clear engagement by many candidates with the music, as evidenced in their depth of knowledge and understanding, and the way this was communicated in their essays. However, some candidates did not provide the required focus on the question; more marks could have been gained by making clear musical references to the score, or by referring to features such as the false

reprise in bar 161, the use of the circle of 5ths and augmented chords, the C minor key change at bar 81 and its return in F minor at bar 269, the variety of second subject material in the Exposition and its use in the Development. Some candidates only tackled one section eg the Exposition, or only briefly mentioned the Development and the Recapitulation. Some essays clearly displayed a lack of understanding of key or structure. There were some instances of incorrect analysis relating to the opening triplet motif, which was identified, mistakenly, as an introduction, and some students did not understand the Italian names for the instruments leading them to write about trombones.

Question 06

This was a popular choice, and, again, was answered successfully by candidates who gave a detailed account of the variety of ways Mozart uses and develops his melodic material, and the different textures found in the third movement. These candidates related the features to the style of the minuet, and used a wide range of appropriate technical terms which were accurately located in the score. Weaker responses showed a lack of focus on the musical elements of melody and texture. At AS level, 'thick' and 'thin' are not really appropriate terms and candidates should be encouraged to use proper musical terminology (eg *homophonic*, *polyphonic*, *in octaves etc*). Some candidates went into great detail on the Minuet and overlooked the Trio, or mentioned it only briefly.

Section C

Candidates offered a wide range of responses. Many were as detailed as the answers to the Set Work questions, including accurate and relevant musical quotations used to support points made, and showed a clear understanding of and engagement with the music studied. Scores of the works studied for the chosen Area of Study may **not** be taken into the examination.

Choral Music in the Baroque Period

Question 07 – Candidates who achieved the top mark band showed real engagement with the music and were able to illustrate the techniques used by composers to convey the text by detailed and accurate references to the music. However, some less successful candidates made the mistake of discussing the text at the expense of musical detail.

Question 08 – Again candidates in the top mark band chose contrasting choruses and demonstrated comprehensive knowledge and understanding supported by detailed musical examples. Unfortunately some candidates wrote about only one chorus, while others wrote only briefly on one or more.

The Musical from 1940 – 1980

West Side Story, *Oklahoma* and *Sweeney Todd* were by far the most popular choices since all contain ample musical material and students were able to tackle questions on dance movements and characterisation with confidence.

Question 09 – Many candidates wrote at length and accurately described how composers have used the music in a variety of different ways to portray different characters. However, as in question 07 there was the danger of too much storytelling; better candidates concentrated on fully describing suitable passages in some depth, while less successful attempts were often superficial.

Question 10 – This was less popular than question 09; however, the better answers focussed on the musical elements of rhythm and metre, and instruments and texture. It was important to choose two passages which enabled candidates to comment fully on the distinctive dance features. Weaker answers lacked focus and accurate musical detail and contained inappropriate examples. In a few instances, candidates had selected passages from only one Musical. The choice of essay questions should always enable candidates to draw on what they have studied, but centres should note that the Specification states that significant *Musicals* from the period should be studied.

British Popular Music from 1960 to the Present day

This Area of Study was a very popular choice: the most successful answers came from candidates who had an in-depth knowledge and gave clear musical examples relating to the question, rather than candidates who just wrote about their favourite groups.

Some candidates used examples which included musicians who were more influential in the USA or Europe than in Britain. It is acknowledged that many musicians from outside Britain have had a great influence on British Popular Music and that it is often difficult to make the distinction between these musicians and those whose music is merely popular. Generally groups or artists who have contributed to the British music scene and are recognised as part of it were considered acceptable subjects for study.

Question 11 – Some candidates chose pieces which were good examples of the different ways in which voices and instruments had been used. Essays referred to specific examples and there was a lot of relevant musical detail. Other candidates failed to focus on these elements, and responded either too briefly, or by writing all they knew without relating it to the question.

Question 12 – This was less popular than question 11. Some candidates failed to address the reference to ‘social comment’ and just selected two songs with no reference to the question, or did not relate the music to the text. Other candidates provided too much context at the expense of appropriate musical references. There were some essays where candidates selected appropriate musical material, eg the ‘Sex Pistols’ and were able to describe in some detail how the instrumental and vocal techniques had been used to reflect the text. They were also able to place the work in context.

Conclusion

As this was the first year of a new examination, teachers and students are to be congratulated on their preparation and enthusiasm in tackling new works and a new listening unit so successfully. Centres will undoubtedly have benefitted greatly from this experience, which will inform their planning and preparation for next year’s examination and enable students to take forward skills learned in this unit and develop them to meet the demands of study in A2.

Mark Range and Award of Grades

Grade Boundaries and Cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA website.