

Examiners' Report  
June 2013

GCE Music 6MU06 01

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## Introduction

In this fourth year of the present specification, it is pleasing to report an improvement in performance. Standards have been maintained in the Music in Context and Continuity and Change in Instrumental Music Sections. There has also been an improvement in responses to Question 1 (Comparison) and also the dictation section of Question 2.

In the case of Question 3, the most popular option proved to be section (b) on Goldsmith's score to *Planet of the Apes*, followed by section (a) on Bach and then (c) on *Baris Melampahan*. The first of the Question 4 options proved to be significantly more popular.

There is evidence that Edexcel's guidance notes on prescribed works had been used to good effect, and there were fewer responses in the very low mark ranges. While organisation of essays could still be improved in some instances, there was very little irrelevance or evidence that candidates had misunderstood the focus of the question.

There were few rubric infringements, although candidates should be reminded not to write in pages of the paper not specifically allocated for a particular response, eg using the blank pages for Q 3 (c) to continue an answer for 3 (b).

## Question 1b

Question 1 drew on excerpts from works by Purcell (Fantasia in G minor and Curtain Music to *The Indian Queen*). It was generally well answered, with an appreciable number of candidates achieving full or nearly full marks. The sections which seemed to cause most difficulty were (a), (b) and (e).

(a) Given that one of the prescribed works for this year is Holborne's Pavane and Galliard, using very similar intentionally selected performing forces to those in Excerpt A, it was surprising to see so many candidates choosing a combination of lute and viols or even string quartet.

(b) Again, a large number of candidates failed to identify recorder as the wind instrument in Excerpt B. Answers included clarinet, oboe, cornett and, frequently, lute.

(e) Relatively few identified Purcell. Many opted for Byrd and Gabrieli, no doubt focussing more on the archaic nature of Excerpt A rather than the self-evidently Baroque Excerpt B.

## Question 1c

(c) This question was usually well answered, although some responses were of excessive length.

The texture of excerpt A is imitative counterpoint, where as the texture of excerpt B is mostly melody dominated Homophony



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer gave the required information simply and directly, and gained full marks. Notice there is one mark for counterpoint and one for imitative.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Keep your responses in this section brief and to the point.

A has a more polyphonic texture whereas B has a homophonic style.

A has a thicker texture due to the single timbre of the viols making it harder to distinguish the parts.

A - Polyphonic  
B - Homophonic



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Here the candidate made two basic points and was awarded 2 marks.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Avoid unhelpful expressions such as 'thicker' and 'thinner' when writing about texture.

## Question 1d

(d) There were also many good responses to this question. Some candidates veered off the point, commenting more on texture or the location of the melody.

In the first part of the excerpt all instruments have equal melodic impact i.e. there is no melodic line that leads. A is in  $\frac{4}{4}$ . The melody of excerpt B is entirely diatonic. In excerpt A it is a minor ~~key~~ key but the melody is major in excerpt B. Excerpt A is nearly all scale with compound B uses broken chords.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Although the candidate eventually scored full marks, there were lengthy irrelevant remarks at the outset.

## Question 2a

This part of the examination was based on the Benedictus from Haydn's *Theresienmesse*. Question 2 continues to pose the greatest challenge of all to most candidates. There were very few candidates gaining high marks, though it is pleasing to report that there were more successful, or almost successful, attempts at the dictation question.

(a) Even the best attempts frequently lacked one or both of the C sharps. A number of candidates had neglected to note the time signature. In such cases, it was assumed that the three crotchets at the start of the first bar in the examination paper itself made up a complete bar of 3/4. The rest of the extract was then notated in triple time, so far as this was feasible. There is evidence that a few candidates found it difficult to differentiate the soprano line from the rest of the texture.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is an example of a basic misunderstanding of the metre of the extract. The candidate clearly failed to realise that the music was in cut common time with 4 crotchets in the bar. Marks were awarded when the correct rhythmic values came at the appropriate point of the bar, gaining the candidate 2/8.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Always look at the time signature.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

Apart from missing C sharps, this was correct as far as it went, gaining 5/8.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Try placing a dot over the staff on the skeleton score for every sound you hear. It should help you estimate the extent of the information needed. Sometimes it also helps to work back from the end.

### Question 2bi

(a) (i) Tonic had to be given for credit, and many candidates who failed to gain a mark here simply gave pedal as an answer. Some other responses included circle of fifths and sequence.

### Question 2bii

(ii) In most cases, the cadence was correct. Identification of the keys, however, frequently proved difficult.

### Question 2biii

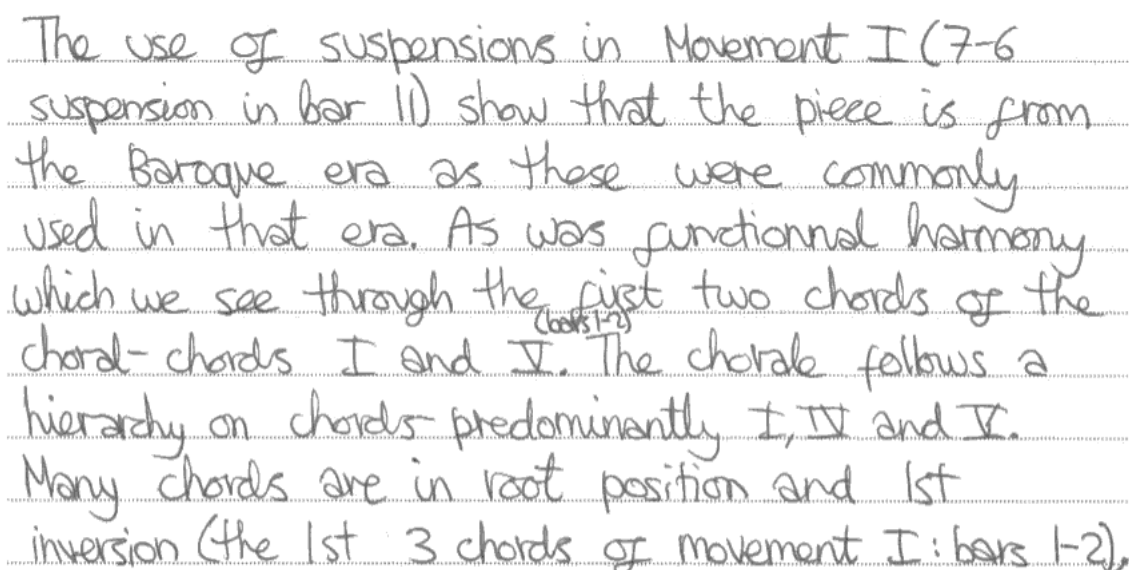
Only very rarely were all three chords correctly described. Clearly there was insufficient feeling for the implications of the context, ie discerning that the likely chord at the start of the cadence was Ic, and then working out a possible likely way to arrive there.

There was a higher success rate in identifying the composer in (e), with many choosing Haydn. Beethoven was the most popular runner-up, with Berlioz trailing behind Brahms.

A pleasingly high number gave the correct date in (f), although (g) was less well answered, with many giving cantata and anthem rather than mass.

### Question 3a

(a) There were many good, detailed responses to this question, with candidates usefully referring to the historical context, the broad design of the cantata at the time Bach was writing, the typical structures and types of movement as exemplified in the prescribed work, the instrumental and vocal forces employed, as well as use of counterpoint, reliance on functional harmony and aspects of word-painting. There were, however, many errors and misconceptions, eg the notion that the congregation would have joined in Movement I, the derivation of the cantus firmus (often given as Movement III), the identification of the cantus firmus in Movement I (sometimes described as the ritornello theme in the strings or else the vocal parts); misreading of the score itself (there were frequent references to the viola continuo).



The use of suspensions in Movement I (7-6 suspension in bar 11) show that the piece is from the Baroque era as these were commonly used in that era. As was functional harmony which we see through the first two chords of the choral-chords I and II. The chorale follows a hierarchy on chords predominantly I, IV and V. Many chords are in root position and 1st inversion (the 1st 3 chords of movement I: bars 1-2).

in the Cantata, which ~~is~~ is normal for the Baroque era. Conjunct melodic movement was also common at this time and can be seen in bars 62-63 of the 4th movement. The use of chromaticism, particularly in the recitativo, shows that it is a ~~more~~ later piece of Baroque church music (bar 11 - movement II). Organ continuo were



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer, which eventually scored 6/13 suffered from a failure to tackle the nature of the Lutheran cantata directly. There were instead descriptions of aspects of the music which were often accurate but too general to be helpful (eg the digressions into hierarchies of chords and conjunct writing). When valid points were made, they were not fully substantiated (see the point about chromaticism).

### Question 3b

(a) The most popular of the three options drew forth many good answers. Some candidates wrote overly much about the dramatic situation instead of focussing on the music. The best answers dealt comprehensively with the forces used, rhythmic aspects, changing time signatures, serial aspects and dissonance. Less successful answers typically suffered from a lack of substantiation of basic points. One frequent mislocation involved the appearance of the ram's horn, often placed in bar 45 after mistaking the direction in the score to the horn player to change instruments.

- The fast tempo throughout,  $\text{♩} = 160$ , makes the chase tensionous
- The continuous ostinate effect adds to the driving atmosphere e.g. b. 11-22 piano
- There is almost a constant rhythmic drive of quavers in the entire piece, e.g. b. 23-40 woodwinds
- The cross rhythms between parts at b. 42-43 add to the chaotic chase.
- The use of a 'Ram's Horn' in b. 52 makes the violent chase seem primitive and scary.



- The use of <sup>strange</sup> percussion makes the violence seem eerie, such as 'Tombales' at b. 52 and 'Friction Drum' in b. 52.
- Using lots of string players in the violin 1 part creates more chase, e.g. b. 55, violin 1 - 'arco 10 players'.
- The short motifs in the trumpet parts at b. 63-69 create a tenuous effect for a chase scene.
- The high tessitura in the piccolo, flute and violin 1 parts create an uneasy, shocking atmosphere to the chase.
- Using a '12 note row' in the piano part at b. 88 creates serialist, scary aspects.
- All 12 western notes being used in the very first bar in the woodwind section makes a chaotic, violent sounding opening.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response shows that use of bullet points can be effectively used in Question 3 to relay information efficiently. The candidate here gained 8 points.

### Question 3c

(a) The question on *Baris Melampahan* proved to be the least popular of the options in this section, but those who answered often demonstrated a good knowledge of the style of this type of music, giving full accounts of the mode used, the rhythmic organisation, texture, hierarchy of instruments and general background. Less successful responses suffered more from unsubstantiated, rather than factually inaccurate, information.

- The use of the 'Pelog Salisir' - using notes '1 2 3 5 6' of the pelog scale is traditional in Bali music.
- The use of a pentatonic scale is traditional of Balinese music.
- The 'Kendhang' being the leader of the structure and giving the time signal is also typical in gamelan.
- The 'Kempli' keeping a regular pulse throughout the dance - starting at 'U' playing '+++'.  
• The Ugal player playing the Pelog scale, in the 'U' ugal tane' section is a tradition.
- The 'Jegogan' emphasising the last beat of each Gonggan, ie '6', is typical of gamelan dance music.
- The 'Gonggan' - 8 beats in every measure, a gamelan tradition.
- The Heterophonic texture at 'B', with the Ugal on the main tune, while the 'Jegogan' part plays an embellishment underneath using the same material. This is used in Balinese gamelan music traditionally.



**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

The response began well but the quality was not sustained throughout. The candidate gained 7/13.

## Question 4a

In both options a maximum mark for each work is allowed to ensure that the treatment of the prescribed works is reasonably balanced. The maximum awarded per work is 8 illustrated points, or combination of 8 illustrated and unillustrated points. In other words, when candidates make fewer than 8 illustrated points, any unillustrated points made are added, up to a total of 8, eg 5 illustrated + 3 unillustrated. This total is then matched against the Mark-Descriptor grid, eg if a candidate makes 12 illustrated + 6 unillustrated points, the final mark will fall in the 24-27 band, ie 17 or more points with limited examples. In other words, the total of illustrated and unillustrated points is the one matched with the grid.

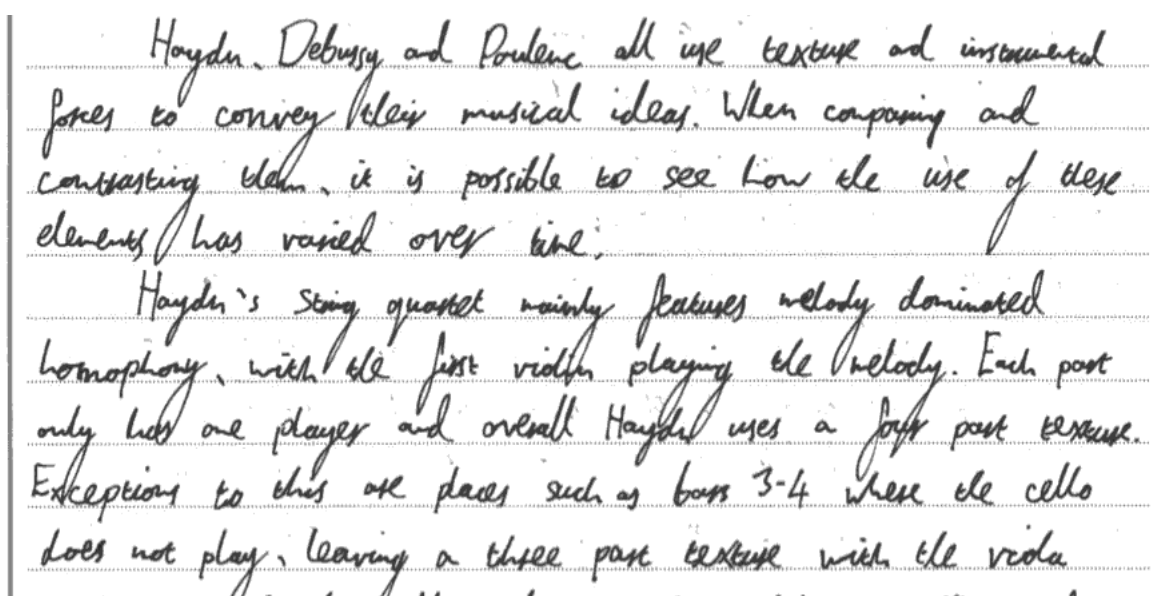
In this section of the examination, candidates are required to write in continuous prose.

4 (a) The question on texture and handling of instruments in three of the prescribed works proved to be significantly more popular. For most candidates, it proved more difficult to write effectively about Haydn and Poulenc than Debussy. It is possible to find the detail required, eg the upper violins in thirds and 6ths/10ths, or in the Poulenc, upper parts in 6ths. In the case of Poulenc's sonata, textures were often incompletely described, eg the melody in the first bar was noted, but the horn's accompanying part in broken chords neglected.

Inevitably, it proved easier for candidates to find credit-worthy information in the Debussy Prélude, especially regarding use of instruments. (It should be noted, however, that simply copying 'sourdine' or 'sur la touche' from the score without further explanation or translation will not gain a mark). Textures were not usually so well described, and in this respect it was typically because of a lack of detail.

There were a few frequently appearing errors or misconceptions, notably the equating of staccato with pizzicato (Haydn), the failure to note reduction to three parts in Haydn, mislocation of pedals in Debussy and Poulenc, false sightings of imitation in Debussy (usually bar 27), the last bar of the Poulenc being described as homophonic rather than octaves, and locating of polyphony at any point of the Poulenc where all parts were rhythmically different.

Quality of written communication: There were many examples of excellent, well-organised writing. Less successful pieces usually suffered from the decision to treat texture and treatment of instruments separately. This sometimes led to duplication of points (especially the monophonic flute in Debussy).



Haydn, Debussy and Poulenc all use texture and instrumental forces to convey their musical ideas. When composing and contrasting them, it is possible to see how the use of these elements has varied over time.

Haydn's string quartet mainly features melody dominated homophony, with the first violin playing the melody. Each part only has one player and overall Haydn uses a four part texture. Exceptions to this are places such as bars 3-4 where the cello does not play, leaving a three part texture with the viola.

acting as the bass. Also, due to the doubling in ~~the~~ the first and second violin in bars 148-149, a 6 part texture is ~~the~~ briefly created. Also in bars 112-113, the viola and violin 2 ~~take~~ take the melody that the first violin has just played. The texture often uses a pedal, especially in the first episode where the cello plays ~~the~~ dominant pedals from bar 36 to bar 59. There are some instances where Haydn pairs the outer parts together, playing with the inner ~~parts~~ parts ~~rather~~ play ~~as a pair~~ also. Haydn does not use pizzicato ~~or~~ writing, but frequently uses staccato in order to keep the jovial mood (violin 1 bars 17-21). Generally, the bass has a slightly more simple part than the others, with longer note values (eg bars 87-92).



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Examiner Comments

The candidate here follows brief introductory remarks with an informative paragraph on Haydn's Quartet. Overall the essay received 30/36.

The texture of the Debussy piece begins with monophony in flute 1 the solo. By bar 4 the piece has begun to become polyphonic with a glissando in the Harp. At bar 13 the piece is polyphonic with the strings playing homophonically under separate horn, flute and oboe motifs. At bar 19 we see what is almost homophony, where the whole orchestra plays a similar rhythm. This doesn't last as at bar 21 the harp plays a quintuplet melody over the sustained notes played by the cello, horn and flute. We see this quintuplet section return a few more times within the piece. The piece is mainly polyphonic thereafter ~~with~~ until bar 55



where it becomes homophonic until the end.



## ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This essay was typified by an inconsistent approach to description of texture as well as an unclear structure. These flaws are evident in the first paragraph, which immediately gives an account of Debussy's work without any preamble. It gained credit for the monophonic flute, harp glissando and homophonic texture at b. 55, although there is evident confusion over terminology in general. The overall mark was 15/36.

### Question 4b

4 (b) Harmony and rhythm often well addressed in Holborne, enabled many candidates to achieve the maximum allowable. Less successful responses digressed to discuss texture and modality at some length. Brahms generated some confusion – 'too chromatic to be functional' being a favourite non sequitur. Few candidates were able to provide sufficient detail in their accounts of New York Counterpoint to score high marks.

Errors and misconceptions included the misplacing of hemiola in Holborne, and the failure to describe fully the tonic pedal at the opening of the Brahms. The Neapolitan sixth had to be located in the piano part, and the (quasi) dotted rhythms in the second theme of the Brahms were not always described fully and accurately enough for credit.

Quality of Written Communication: There were again many excellent responses. Unlike 4 (a), the very different nature of the topics to be discussed reduced the risk of duplication, although this sometimes occurred, when it came to pulsing chords and harmonic descriptions in the Reich.

Anthony Holborne's 'Pavane and Galliard' is a piece of consort music, typical of the Renaissance period. Holborne uses many perfect cadences to end sections in the Pavane. This is evident at bar 15. However, in the Galliard, a phrygian cadence, IVb-II, is used at bar 16, which creates anticipation before going into the final section. As well as this, an augmented 6<sup>th</sup> is heard at bar 5, which is built up between all five instruments.



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Examiner Comments

It appears that the candidate confused Holborne with Brahms, although the anthology is on hand to consult. As it is, two illustrated points were awarded here, and overall the work earned 18/36.



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Examiner Tip

You take the anthology into the exam with you, so remember to use it.

## Paper Summary

Centres and candidates are to be congratulated on their serious and thorough preparations for the examination.

- Listen to other works by your prescribed composer. Not only will it broaden your understanding of that composer – you might find something else you like.
- Listen to other works in the same genre or category by other composers.
- Check the time and key signatures at the start of the skeleton score.
- If it helps, place a dot over the staff for each sound you hear.
- Apply what you learn from your harmonic studies to your listening – don't keep the various strands of the course in separate compartments.
- Study cadential harmony, and typical routes taken to arrive at cadences.
- Support your observations with specific, detailed examples.
- Keep to the point.
- Write your answers in the allocated spaces.

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