

Report on the Units

June 2009

HX42/MS/R/09

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

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

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Chief Examiner's Report

This series saw the first assessment of the AS units for the new OCR Music specification at Advanced level. The three AS units offered this summer (G351, G352 and G353) will be followed by the three A2 units (G354, G355 and G356) leading to the full GCE Award (H542) in the summer of 2010. In addition, the units that involve written papers (G353 and G356) will also be available in January 2010.

The new specification has attracted a significant number of centres new to OCR GCE Music, and it is hoped that they will have found the course challenging, rewarding and musically satisfying. Examiners were impressed by work seen (and often heard) in all units, with material at the highest level representing a thoroughly professional standard of achievement that would not be out of place within the concert hall, at a fee-paying gig, in the catalogue of a major publishing house, or in the pages of a prestigious academic journal.

Examiners have been rigorous in seeking to ensure that standards have remained consistent with those adopted for the OCR legacy specification (3872/7872) and also with the previous OCR A-level Music syllabus (9312), retaining many of the distinctive features from both courses, most notably the live assessment of performance undertaken by visiting examiners.

The period of transition between specifications can be a difficult time for examiners, centres and candidates, but it is hoped that teachers who had experience in preparing candidates for the OCR legacy specification will have found much that was reassuringly familiar in this year's course for the new OCR Music specification. In terms of preparing for next year's A2 units, the text of the new specification and relevant A2 assessment materials are available on the OCR website, and there is a comprehensive programme of INSET training (led by experienced senior examiners) to accompany the new specification.

Examiners were pleased that many of the doom-laden comments prominent in some internet discussion forums proved unfounded. Centres and candidates are advised strongly to consult the specification in order to clarify detail: even a cursory glance through the specification would make it clear that one internet forum comment, advising teachers not to choose OCR Music because candidates would be required to study the whole of Wagner's music drama *Die Walküre*, was very wide of the mark!

Similarly, fears were being expressed that the addition of a discussion with examiners following the Section A recital of Unit G351 would disadvantage candidates because pupils would simply "clam up" at this point. There was no evidence that this was the case or that any candidates were disadvantaged by the discussion. In fact, many examiners noted (as the Principal Examiner's report for the unit mentions) that candidates frequently gave better performances in Section B, having discovered during the course of the discussion that the examiner was actually quite human, and interested in hearing what the candidates had to say about their performance choices in preparing the recitals.

In considering the evidence drawn from this year's AS units, some general advice may be helpful to centres and candidates preparing for future series. The following reports (written by the Principal Examiners for each unit) will provide detailed and helpful guidance based on experienced scrutiny of a wide range of work seen over the assessment period. Issues that surfaced prominently this session included the need for candidates to focus on the choices and decisions they made in preparing performances (not on historical background or composer biography) in response to the discussion of Section B of Unit G351, and (especially for those centres transferring from the OCR legacy specification) to digest carefully the new mark ranges and descriptors in assessing composing material for Unit G352. In Unit G353, Section C requires candidates to study the ways in which music has been transmitted to audiences over time. Preparation for this aspect should involve more than a basic history of the development of recording technology, and should include issues relating to the transmission of

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the prescribed orchestral scores.

Finally, a look forward to the A2 Units that will come into operation in 2010: In Unit G353, centres and candidates need to be aware that the *viva voce* (which replaces the Performance Investigation of the legacy specification) will involve more searching discussion of recital repertoire than the discussion that forms Section B of Unit G351. Candidates will be expected to be able to draw effectively upon knowledge and learning gained from their study of contrasting performances and demonstrate an ability to show how this learning has influenced their interpretation of the music. In Unit G355 there are new assessment mark ranges and descriptors, and the nature of options has changed: in Section A candidates will be expected to work within the “rules” of a particular compositional style, while in Section B the composition will be required to demonstrate some aspects of the Area of Study: Interpretation. In Unit G356, the structure of the paper has changed: the unprepared question of the legacy specification has been removed from Section A, and Section B offers a free choice of any two essay titles. Candidates are free to study a single topic or a range of topics, with each topic centred on three prescribed works (from contrasting historical periods) and related repertoire that should be used to provide candidates with an appropriate sense of musical context.

G351 Performing

This was the first year of assessment for the new GCE Music AS Specification and Unit G351 included a new component (Section B) and an increased choice under Further Performing (Section C).

OCR's examiners would like to thank Directors of Music, Examinations Officers and departmental secretaries for the care taken in timetabling practical examinations and for sending helpful information to the examiner; in almost all centres it was apparent that much preparation and thought had been given to ensuring that recitals ran smoothly, to time, and were as enjoyable as possible for the performers, examiners and – if invited – candidates' audiences. There was the added demand of timetabling the Section B Discussion – **without** an audience - as an addition to the Section A Recital, and isolating candidates taking the Section C Improvisation option for their ten minutes' preparation time.

Most examinations were slotted into the school or college day, (with, in one case, the whole junior school being present) but others were presented in evening recitals with or without audiences present, often at venues away from the school or college, such as local churches and arts centres. Examiners do not mind at all relocating for organ recitals or (tuned) percussion performances!

Examiners are also grateful for the help given with directions to centres and parking, finding hotels where necessary and with trains (and even ferry timetables), and in many cases having lunch or coffee provided.

Section A and Section C

As a team we experienced many thrilling and accomplished performances in all styles, with many maxima attained. Candidates, teachers and examiners all appear to value the live assessment that OCR offers in this most immediate of the performing arts. It is central to OCR's approach that examiners – who are all musicians and performers themselves - enjoy meeting younger musicians and that, in turn, the candidates can enjoy playing or singing to an approachable and sympathetic examining team. It may be beneficial to candidates if the centre can arrange for the examiner to meet with all the candidates at the start of the day (or afternoon) for a short greeting to break the ice.

As a note of caution, examiners are encountering many candidates who are offering pieces beyond their ability, and often the struggle for fluency, or even the notes, precludes much expressive or stylistic detail from emerging. Repertoire should be chosen that facilitates the demonstration of technical control, stylistic understanding and fluency.

Candidates **may** wish to introduce their pieces, or to put songs in context, and - if an audience is present - to acknowledge applause, the accompanist or any backing players. In many centres there was a real sense of occasion and the examiner was able to be embedded in the audience or the department in a less intimidating manner. Ideally, balancing of electric instruments and amplifiers should take place before the **performance** begins and candidates on these instruments need to consider how they link their recital pieces when an audience is present. Dynamic levels should be appropriate to the acoustic and size of the performance space. Page turners are very welcome in the examination room (please do not ask the examiner!) and it is quite acceptable for a member of staff to contribute to the ensembles/duos offered as part of the performances.

By once again using minidisk wherever possible this session, examiners have attained a better quality of recording, making the process of moderation and appeal easier and more accurate. Centres (and audiences) are **not** permitted to record the performances, either aurally or on video. Examiners will bring their own supply of these disks (or occasionally an mp3 recorder), and **most** examiners will also bring their own recording equipment. However, thanks are due to centres that have provided recording equipment – although it is the examiners' responsibility actually to record performances and check levels. **A separate disc/CD is required for each candidate as this forms an individual examination document.**

Another pleasing aspect of this year's performances for Unit G351 was the wide variety of styles and instruments offered for assessment. As an example, in one hour I heard songs from the Pussycat Dolls, a Freddie Mercury tribute band, a CPE Bach flute sonata and a xylophone concerto.

Short over-runs of the maximum time, for the sake of artistic integrity, are not frowned upon; in addition, candidates should not wait for the examiner between pieces, but present them as if in a recital with appropriate gaps or as a "set" at a gig.

The Section A Recital should demonstrate a **range** of techniques and expressive understanding: playing two or three pieces that are over-similar may not achieve this.

Candidates **must** provide the examiner with copies of their music for **both** Section A and Section C (solo parts of accompanied pieces will suffice). This is vital in order for the examiner to assess accuracy and performance directions and, later, for the process of standardisation and scaling - and would be used again in the event of a result enquiry. All photocopies will be destroyed once the process is completed. It is sometimes not helpful if the presented edition is widely variant to that which the candidate has prepared.

Downloads from the internet or photocopies from guitar magazines should be "marked up" as fully as possible, with stave notation alongside tablature. Providing music *after* the performance is not acceptable, especially as the examiners' letters to centres in advance of visits confirm that copies will be required to facilitate assessment. (Equally unacceptable is the presentation to the examiner of a CD recording of an *intended* performance.)

Keyboard and guitar candidates should be dissuaded from performing **accompaniments only** (usually to songs) without incorporating the solo/voice line (as one might encounter in a song transcription) in the texture, **or** without the intended soloist. Similarly, playing only the solo breaks in a rock number (without backing from CD or band) with silent bars between will be reflected in limited reward in the fourth marking category, "Aural and Stylistic Understanding".

Examiners would like to acknowledge the help given by centres in having Section C ensembles on-hand (string quartets, wind ensembles, backing bands, percussion groups and even whole choirs and gamelan ensembles) - often for multiple performances - and providing some excellent accompanists, who were helpful and supportive to nervous candidates. Where pre-recorded backing tracks were used, these were generally well-organised and ready to go, with levels preset, but some performances were affected by poor balance, jumping CDs, false starts or lack of familiarity with introductions. The ability to balance with, and to play in time with, any backing track **will** be assessed.

The Section C Option (iv), Improvisation, was intended to give spontaneous composers and improvisers an extra opportunity to perform. Responses to the stimuli ranged from the aphoristic (merely playing back the stimulus once) to the astounding. A huge range of styles was presented – and the stronger candidates devised pieces that showed clear form, strong techniques of extension and variation, imaginative use of the stimulus, technical range of their instrument or voice, and the ability to judge the need for tension and relaxation with appropriate length.

Section B: The Discussion

This has proved popular with examiners and – it appears – with candidates also. This is an opportunity for the candidate to assess his/her performance and how that may have developed in terms of the interpretative choice made in preparing the work. Questions focussed (and will continue to focus) on issues such as techniques employed, choice of various parameters such as speed, dynamics, articulation and ornamentation (for example). In general, examiners have found that candidates have been well-prepared for this section, with intelligent, detailed and informed answers to these issues. The examiner is not trying to “catch out the candidate” with trick questions, but is merely exploring the **thinking** that has gone into the performance.

Opening questions might focus on reasoning behind the order of the pieces, the impact of the venue and acoustic on performing decisions, how the performance on the day varied from performances given before – or which of the programme is the favourite item. Questions will go on to explore technical and interpretative choices and the evidence of the score itself in influencing performance decisions. Candidates will be rewarded for substantiating answers with evidence or reasons: there will rarely be a question for which a single word answer is appropriate. Similarly, “my teacher told me to play it that way” as an answer does not give evidence of the **candidate’s** thinking and understanding of interpretative issues.

Candidates **may** refer to listening that has influenced them (while still underlining why choices have been made) but the examiner is looking for thinking and decision-making **beyond** mere imitation. Listening and comparison within a focussed style will be assessed in the A2 unit, G354.

G352 Composing 1

The introduction of the new specification Unit G352 has run relatively smoothly, and centres are to be congratulated on the way in which the majority have adopted the new procedures. Moderators are always very grateful to receive work which is complete, has been conscientiously and honestly marked, is well presented and is sent on time.

There was confusion in some centres over documentation, with a number submitting Coursework Cover Sheets from the legacy Unit 2551 – marked out of 100 instead of out of 90! This work was generally re-marked very quickly, and centres are thanked for their prompt response to such requests.

Overall marking tended to be rather generous, with centres seemingly automatically marking at the top of bands rather than being more accurate in their assessment. Teachers are urged to consider more carefully the specification areas for each subsection of the mark scheme and to which the criteria statements refer. In many cases, candidates were awarded marks which were considerably higher than was justified and, in some cases, the wrong aspects were rewarded. It is pleasing that most centres are now providing comments to justify the thinking behind the awarding of marks. However, it is important that teacher comments match the marks awarded by the centre. Often centres have, appropriately, identified errors and misunderstandings by their candidates – and then awarded too high or even full marks. This did not seem to happen often the other way round!

Teachers are also encouraged to use the whole range of marks available for each subsection of the criteria. Within each statement there are two, three or four marks available, and centres should be able appropriately to graduate the marking within the band. For each subsection there is also a brief identification of the areas specifically being assessed – and this should be reflected in the marks awarded.

The new facilities for the submission of marks to OCR caused a few problems, with a significant number of centres failing to get marks onto the system quickly enough – thus delaying the moderation. The accuracy of handling of marks also needs more care in future, as a number of errors were discovered at moderation – arithmetical errors of addition both within a section and in totalling the marks for a candidate, and marks incorrectly transferred from and within the Coursework Cover Sheets. It is, of course, in the interests of candidates that these figures are correct!

It would be a very considerable help if centres would use either the 'official' folded A3 Coursework Cover Sheets (CCS308) or staple together the loose pages of the CCS308. Paper clips are not a very satisfactory substitute as the pages can easily become separated – giving the possibility of confusion.

Section A: The Language of Western Tonal Harmony

There is, evidently, much good work going on in centres in the teaching of Western Tonal Harmony, and the teacher annotations on such work are always very welcome and are encouraged. From these it is obvious that many centres, as part of the normal teaching process, are giving clear written guidance to their candidates as to opportunities missed, incorrect or inappropriate use of techniques and so on. There is, of course, a difficult balancing act between giving too specific direction to the solution of a problem and leaving the candidate adrift without real help. Whilst reference can be made to where improvements or amendments can be made, it is not appropriate, on exercises for submission, to indicate how these may be made.

However, far too much work is being submitted with serious errors which, apparently, have not been referenced against or been part of the teaching process – poor choices of chords, consecutive fifths and octaves, mistreated leading notes, missed opportunities for or inappropriate use of cadential and passing 6-4, inappropriate doubling and spacing (and leaving room for Alto and Tenor parts), extremely low bass lines, poor grammar (note/rest values, rhythmically incomplete bars), lack of awareness of the augmented second in minor etc.

Most centres are providing a good variety of material – folk songs, musical theatre and popular song melodies, hymn tunes and chorales, melodies drawn from orchestral and piano music – but it must be noted that two-part exercises are **not** exercises in writing two-part inventions! The specification requires the provision of a given melody, to which the candidate should provide either full-texture harmony or a bass line plus chord symbols. A canon, for example, is unlikely to provide suitable material. Such two part exercises must, of course, have the intended harmonies identified by way of chord indications. Centres should be cautious about the use of commercially available materials that may provide excellent preliminary exercises, but have too much ‘help’ given by way of cadences/modulation indications for final submissions, where candidates need to be able to recognise such features for themselves. Please note that it is a specification requirement that the given material is clearly identified.

Some centres must also note the requirement that “...*examples may be drawn from any suitable established repertoire. Exposure to ‘real’ music...*” A number of portfolios contained work using home-produced exercises.

Some of the material provided for candidates was too challenging – in some cases exercises suitable for A2 Composing 2 were attempted. At AS level we are not marking stylistic treatments but assessing the basic level of competence in handling the principles of Western Tonal Harmony.

There was some confusion regarding the Controlled Conditions Exercise. This should be a standard exercise, appropriate to each candidate individually, forming part of the normal programme for that candidate but worked without help or guidance and within a time allowance of sixty minutes. It does not have to be the same exercise for every candidate nor does it have to be the last exercise attempted. It is perfectly acceptable for candidates to use *Sibelius* (or a similar program) or a keyboard, if that is their normal way of working – providing, of course, that no help is available either from others or from the program itself. The work should be marked/annotated by the teacher as one of the set of exercises for the submission **but** the work is **not handed back** to the candidate, who has no opportunity to re-work or correct the exercise. This exercise **must** be identified and the appropriate authentication statement on the CCS308 completed by the teacher.

Section B: Instrumental Techniques

Some very imaginative and carefully conceived compositions and arrangements were presented, with a pleasing number of live realisations – these giving candidates the vital opportunity to hear the result of their labours and to benefit from the advice and expertise of their players. Many of the sequenced performances showed considerable skill and care taken in their preparation, with tempo, dynamics and balance adjusted appropriately. Few took the opportunity to mix-and-match with some live players performing with a synthesised backing providing the ‘missing’/unavailable instruments.

The marking in this section tended to over-reward Use of Medium. In this category cognisance must be taken of the appropriate use of the instruments chosen – their range and capabilities used musically, their combination making musical sense and the awareness by the candidate of the physical demands made on the player. A number of pieces demanded relentless and long passages from wind players, used only *arco* in string writing and gave uninspiring parts to some

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instruments. Centres should note the requirements regarding instrumentation on page 16 of the Specification. A few unacceptable, non-acoustic instruments occasionally appeared.

Most pieces seemed to follow a tripartite structure but, occasionally, links between the sections were somewhat crude, with abrupt and often unprepared modulations and little 'closure' to the previous section.

Scores often lacked all the information which would be required to perform the piece properly. It is vital that composers indicate clearly the initial speed and dynamics, articulation and phrasing, bowing and other technical instructions, dynamics etc. – and that this information is laid out clearly so that it does not collide with notation or other instructions. The use of *Sibelius*, *Finale* or other score-writing programs does not absolve candidates of that responsibility. Realisations were generally helpful in indicating the intentions of the composer – although the score markings (if present) were not always followed. Candidates should note that wrong notes and entries etc. in live performances do not lose marks.

Centres are thanked for the technical production of the CDs. Centres should note that **a separate CD is required for each candidate as this forms an individual examination document**: some centres provided one CD for the whole centre, although most of these also provided the very necessary track listing. In some cases the recording level should have been adjusted – with a couple of very quiet performances and several which were greatly over-recorded (somewhat spoiling the effect).

There was a little confusion about the correct assessment criteria subsection into which the Brief and Commentary document fits. This document forms part of the Materials subsection and should include:

- (a) a short statement identifying the intention of the composer (*To write a short piece to be performed by the School Jazz Band at the Open Evening; To write a string quartet in a neo-classical style ...*), followed by:
- (b) the identification of music listened to in preparation for the composition, linking this to features of the resulting piece. The influential listening might also include the experience of the candidate in playing in a local Youth Orchestra, Group or similar.
- (c) An account of the process of composition and an evaluation to complete the Commentary.

The marks to be awarded for this written work are within the Materials subsection total of 10, and the absence of a Brief and Commentary will mean that the Materials subsection is deficient, and will be assessed accordingly.

Overall, this has been a good start to the new specification and centres should take note of the observations in the individual reports on the work of their centre. There is much of which to be proud and the work presented this year bodes well for the future musical development of many of these candidates.

G353 Introduction to Historical Study in Music

General Comments

The first session of Unit G353 produced pleasing levels of performance from many candidates, with a number of scripts achieving near-maximum marks. Centres that have been used to the OCR specification should have transferred to the new unit with relative ease, and there was no evidence to suggest that candidates from centres new to the OCR A-level Music specification found the paper unapproachable.

In relation to previous sessions, examiners were pleased to note a significant improvement in candidate performance in Section B of the unit. The new aspect, requiring candidates to compare two contrasting performances of Extract 2, enabled all candidates to demonstrate aural perception, and most answers showed that the allocation of additional listening time before the writing period begins provided candidates with a very useful window in which to focus on the sound of the two recordings and draw out relevant features for comparison. It is hoped that this very positive trend will continue.

The improvement in the accuracy of candidates' melodic dictation noted in last summer's report has been maintained and examiners awarded many answers maximum or close to maximum marks. Once again, those candidates who failed to achieve maximum marks frequently did so as a result of minor slips or omissions that should have been spotted as a result of careful checking of answers.

Candidate selection in Section A this session was very much in favour of the Schubert "Rosamunde" variations and in general most candidates were able to demonstrate evidence of aural awareness in their responses to the questions, regardless of choice.

Following last year's comments regarding administration, examiners were pleased to note significant improvement in respect of papers tagged in the correct order, and there were also relatively few cases of missing inserts this session. However, it remains the case that far too many candidates penalise themselves by attempting both Extract 1A and Extract 1B, leaving insufficient time to meet the demands of the remaining sections of the unit within the time limit. Centres are advised strongly to set candidates a complete mock paper well before the examination itself so that these issues can be resolved before mistakes are made in the examination room.

This report contains a number of Teachers' Tips which regular readers will recognise: this is quite deliberate duplication, since the experience gleaned from candidate performance in the legacy Unit 2552 will provide useful guidelines for teachers and candidates preparing candidates for Unit G353 of the new specification.

Teacher Tips for the Unit

- DO prepare candidates to answer questions on all **three** prescribed orchestral works and all **three** jazz recordings. A gambling technique in this area is not advisable and can have disastrous consequences for candidates.
- DO help candidates to explore the prescribed repertoire at an appropriate level of depth. Many candidates suffer from a superficial grasp of surface details in the music. The most successful answers suggest that candidates can draw on relevant detail from the music, and also know the repertoire thoroughly as a result of repeated, consistent and attentive listening.
- DO help candidates to engage with aspects of the Area of Study tonality from an early point in the course so that they become confident in writing about aspects relating to chords, harmonic progression, keys and cadences. Evidence suggests that candidates remain less secure in this area than when dealing with other aspects of music, such as structure and scoring. In tackling questions relating to tonality and harmony, candidates should be drawing upon work covered in connection with Unit G351's study of The Language of Western Tonal Harmony.
- PLEASE remind candidates that they should answer questions on **either** Extract 1A **or** Extract 1B, but not both! Previous reports have commented that a preliminary 'dry run' of a full paper as a mock examination can be a useful means of identifying (and helping) individual candidates who might fall into the 1A plus 1B trap in the real examination session. Candidates who attempt to answer questions on both extracts in Section A generally find that they have insufficient time to answer questions in Sections B and C in sufficient detail.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Extract 1A **SCHUBERT, Quartet in a ("Rosamunde"), op.29 no.1, D.804, 2nd movement, bars 1-17, 54-773 & 111-126. Melos Quartett (1975), Deutsche Grammophon 463-155-2, track 6, 00'00"- 01'23, 03'22"- 04'44" & 06'28"- 07'28" [Total length of recorded extracts: 03'45"]**

- 1) Most candidates identified the tonal centre of G major and/or a dominant relationship, but found it more difficult to perceive the move to d minor (the supertonic minor).
- 2) Examiners were pleased to see many completely accurate answers to this question, reflecting a clear improvement in the accuracy of melodic dictation. The most common errors in the line resulted from incorrect measuring of the intervals of a 4th and a 5th.
- 3) Most candidates produced appropriate answers to this question, perceiving the slowing of the pulse in the recording.
- 4) Most candidates answered this question well and examiners awarded many answers full marks. The most common error was the omission of a sharp sign (#) in front of the low G (the first note of bar 11).

- 5) Many candidates identified all four chords accurately, but a common mistake was to place either Ib and I or V7b and V7c in incorrect sequence. Perceptive listeners who had grasped the harmonic concept of the passing 6/4 in work relating to Western Tonal Harmony for Unit G352 should have spotted this progression at the start of bar 23.
- 6) Most candidates perceived the change from quaver to semiquaver movement and some mentioned the greater variety of rhythmic patterns present in the accompaniment of Passage 1ii. Less strong answers tended to comment on the music of just one passage without making a clear comparison.
- 7) Many candidates omitted to mention the obvious here: both passages had a common Section A, with changes in the B section. Common points made included the absence of repeat marks in Passage 1ii and the modulatory nature of the Section B music in Passage 1ii (as opposed to the conclusion of Passage 1i in the tonic).
- 8) This question asked for comments relating to tonality and harmony in Passage 1ii, and examiners were disappointed that many candidates failed to engage with this aspect of the music. The most accurate answers were able to recognise the underlying tonal centres and identify specific chords and/or cadences. Examiners also credited general references to the increasing flatward movement of key as the passage progressed.
- 9) Most candidates were able to identify the specific rhythm pattern and make some reference to its use in Passage 1iii. Common points made included its use in imitation and/or antiphony and its appearance as a bass/accompaniment later in the passage.

Extract 1B **EDWIN ASTLEY, Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased) (no score available), City of Prague Symphony Orchestra/Nic Raine (1996), Silva Screen Records FILMXCD 184, disc 1, track 5, 00'05" - 00'51" & 00'53" - 02'10" [Total length of recorded extracts: 02'03"]**

- 10) Most candidates were able to outline the basic structure of the theme, although relatively few scripts gave a comprehensive answer such as A¹A²BA³.
- 11) (a) Most candidates answered this question accurately.
- (b) Examiners were disappointed with answers to this question and few candidates perceived accurately the triplet figuration that was evident in the recorded performance. Realisation of this rhythmic pattern would have made notation of the rhythm much less complex for many candidates.
- 12) Most candidates were able to identify an imperfect cadence, although examiners were surprised by the number of incorrect answers to this relatively straightforward task of aural perception.
- 13) This was answered well, with most candidates recognising the use of a turn. The most common (incorrect) alternative was "mordent".
- 14) This was answered well by most candidates, with many locating all four chords accurately.

- 15) Most candidates identified the swung rhythm, but many were not able to identify the use of lip smears evident in the recorded performance.
- 16) In general, this question was not well answered, with too many candidates simply providing basic descriptions of the instruments playing. The question specifically required candidates to address changes in the melodic line and examiners were disappointed that so many candidates appeared not to have read this question carefully, resulting in much irrelevant material in their answers.
- 17) This question produced more successful answers overall, with most candidates mentioning the rhythmic ostinato played by the flutes. More perceptive listeners referred to less obvious detail such as the accompanying chords from muted brass, the doubling of the melody from bar 32 onwards and the spread chords from the harpsichord on the first beat of the bar.
- 18) This question was not answered well, with very few candidates demonstrating the ability to identify basic chords used at the end of the passage or to make significant comment on the unusual progression at the particular point in the music. Some candidates were able to refer to the chromatic ascent, and a few were able to identify particular chords or key centres, but in general answers suggested that the degree of harmonic understanding expected at AS level had not been appreciated.

Teacher Tips for Section A

- DO encourage candidates to use the fifteen minutes' listening time at the start of the examination constructively. This time should be used to provide a degree of familiarity with the aural nature of the extract before candidates begin to answer questions on the music. This extended listening period (with access to the questions) should be seen as a valuable time to focus on the two contrasting performances of Extract 2 as well as the chosen passages from Section A.
- DO NOT restrict candidates by limiting their range of experience to either "classical" or "contemporary" extracts. An ability to engage with both styles of music will give candidates a wider choice of question in the actual paper.
- DO provide candidates with opportunities to work through previous papers prior to sitting the examination. The experience will help them to develop valuable answering techniques, and careful discussion of candidate answers against published mark schemes will help both teachers and candidates to develop a clear awareness of the qualities that characterise answers that are likely to gain high marks. A major issue that concerns examiners is the focus of candidates' answers. What is offered as an answer must be relevant to the question set: a question addressing aspects of tonality will not be addressed by a basic description of instrumentation, for example.

Section B

Extract 2 J.S.BACH, *Orchestral Suite (Overture) no.3 in D, BWV 1068, Air, bars 7 to 18.*

Extract 2A: Munich Bach Orchestra/Karl Richter (1961), Archiv 463 660-2, track 2, 03'44" – 05'44"

Extract 2B: Musica Antiqua Köln/Reinhard Goebel (1986), Archiv 415 673-2, track 2, 03'02" – 04'36"

- 19) Most candidates were able to answer all parts of this question accurately, although many were (surprisingly) confused by the pause symbol (\frown) in section (b).
- 20) Most candidates were able to identify accurately the use of an ascending sequence as the most obvious device used in the music.
- 21) Most candidates produced accurate answers to section (c), identifying G major as the key centre, but answers to sections (a) and (b), where the key centre was minor, were much less secure in general.
- 22) Most candidates answered this question well, although many produced workings that were an octave too high. The most common error was the omission of a sharp symbol (#) in front of the note G (on the second beat of the bar).
- 23) This was a new type of question and examiners were pleased to note that it was answered well by most candidates, with many responses achieving high marks. All answers were able to make at least some valid observations on at least one of the performances, and the better answers were able to draw out a range of effective comparisons supported by reference to musical detail in the performances. There was some degree of confusion with regard to period performance, with a number of candidates suggesting that the one-to-a-part performance on period instruments (Extract 2B: 1986) was an older recording than Extract 2A (1961), which used a full string section. Some candidates stated that a harpsichord was not present in Extract 2A, which was not the case: careful listening would have revealed the presence of a harpsichord in this recording, although its rôle was much less aurally prominent than in Extract 2B.
- 24) This question was answered less successfully than Question 23 on the whole, with the level of aural perception proving to be somewhat superficial in many scripts. The most common observations related to the additional cadential ornamentation evident in Extract 2B, but many answers suffered as a result of candidates' inability to articulate clearly the musical detail that they had perceived in their listening. Examiners were looking for specific comments rather than general descriptions such as "the music slows down at the end."
- 25) (a) Almost all candidates were aware that the extract was taken from the Air, and most were able to identify the structure of the movement (binary) or locate the extract as the "B" section of the movement.

- (b) This question was answered well by most candidates. Popular observations included references to the heavily-ornamented melodic line and the continuous quaver movement in the bass. Relatively few answers noted detail such as the characteristic octave leaps in the bass part throughout the extract.

Extract 3 JELLY ROLL MORTON AND HIS RED HOT PEPPERS, Black Bottom Stomp (1926), from Jelly Roll Morton & His Red Hot Peppers, Volume 1: Chicago Days, 1926/1927, Jazz Archives no.110/EPM 158942 (1997), track 1, 01'51" – 02'28". [Length of recorded extract: 00'37"]

- 26) (a) Most candidates were able to identify the trumpet accurately.
- (b) Almost all candidates were aware that the trumpet employed a mute in the recorded extract.
- 26 (c) Most candidates mentioned the use of detached chords, although relatively few answers referred to stop time or to the rhythmic syncopation evident in the performance.
- 27) (a) Many candidates recognised the use of the banjo as a solo instrument.
- (b) Surprisingly few candidates were able to name the soloist accurately as John St-Cyr. Examiners gave credit to a number of near misses (eg "Sincere", "Saint-Sir").
- (c) Examiners were disappointed that many candidates failed to provide sufficient detail in their answers to this question. Mention of the walking bass was a popular feature of accurate answers, and a number of candidates referred to the aurally prominent use of slap bass in the recorded extract. Very few answers noted the reappearance of a break (silence) at the half-way point in the second solo.
- 28) The majority of candidates identified the use of clarinet glissando accurately in answer to this question.
- 29) The specification requires candidates to be able to place a recorded extract in context, and examiners were disappointed that so many candidates appeared to be unaware that the extract was preceded by Jelly Roll Morton's piano solo. Diligent repeated listening to the prescribed jazz recordings well before the examination is vital if candidates are to develop a sufficient sense of context to be able to answer this type of question accurately.
- 30) This question demanded further detailed contextual knowledge and examiners were disappointed that dates given as answers ranged so widely (from the 19th century to 1971!).

Teacher Tips for Section B

- DO make study of the prescribed repertoire a regular part of preparation for the unit. It is important that candidates get to know the music thoroughly.
- DO help candidates to find their way around scores, especially in the early stages of the AS course. It is important that candidates gain confidence in handling the printed scores of prescribed orchestral repertoire.
- DO ensure that candidates listen to the prescribed works as regularly as possible: candidates need to appreciate the music as sound, not just as notes on the page.
- DO read the sleeve notes accompanying the prescribed recordings carefully; these details should be regarded as the *primary* source of authoritative information about personnel involved in the jazz recording sessions.
- DO NOT become preoccupied with the printed detail of complex modern transcriptions of jazz repertoire; study of scores is NOT required in this part of Section B.
- DO NOT leave preparation of the prescribed repertoire until the last minute; this will not help candidates to become thoroughly familiar with the music they need to study.
- DO NOT forget that the prescribed repertoire changes regularly. Consult the OCR website for the prescribed repertoire relevant to any particular session of this Unit. In the study of jazz repertoire, centres and candidates **must ensure that they use the recordings prescribed by OCR**. If centres are in any doubt about a recording they are using, **clarification should be sought from OCR**.
- DO NOT gamble on any particular rotation of prescribed repertoire: all **six** items (three “classical” and three jazz) of prescribed repertoire should be studied for any particular session if candidates are not to be disadvantaged.

Section C The reduction to three questions (from five in the legacy Unit 2552) did not appear to cause problems for candidates, whose answers ranged evenly across the three questions.

The specification defines the broad areas on which questions in this section will focus and very few scripts suggested a serious lack of contextual knowledge or awareness.

The best answers were able to draw on specific knowledge and support this by reference to detailed musical examples, while less strong answers tended to provide a general overview of the issues without dealing with any point in the level of detail expected.

As in previous reports, the use of preparatory timed essays to help candidates develop the skills required in order to perform effectively in this section of the paper is recommended strongly by examiners.

- 31)** Most candidates were able to list the instruments used in each ensemble and make some relevant comparisons, but to achieve high marks for an answer candidates needed to go beyond mere lists of the instruments playing and provide some effective examples of the ways in which the two composers used the instrumental resources at their disposal within the repertoire studied.

The weakest answers betrayed some degree of confusion (for example, mentioning Bach's use of flutes and clarinets) but most candidates were able to demonstrate an awareness of the general use of each ensemble.

The best answers were able to show greater contextual awareness by referring to specific details of the instrumentation that reflected innovatory or unusual use (for example, Bach's use of three natural trumpets playing in the clarino register or Schubert's innovatory use of the 'cellos and double basses to open his symphonic movement).

- 32)** This question was designed to allow candidates to demonstrate some awareness of the circumstances in which early jazz musicians such as Count Basie and Jelly Roll Morton worked. It was not designed to produce over-simplified histories of the development of jazz from the late 1800s to the 1960s.

The weakest answers digressed into a very hazy survey of the historical development of early jazz, only rarely concentrating on the conditions in which the musicians worked. Most candidates were aware of the significance of the Woodside Hotel where Basie's orchestra rehearsed, but many were confused regarding its location (Kansas City, Chicago and New York – the correct location - were popular suggestions).

The best answers were aware of the musicians' need to seek after lucrative residency bookings and recording contracts, and a number of well-informed candidates were able to refer to the influence of Kansas City Radio broadcasts in bringing Basie to the attention of recording executives such as John Hammond, and also to Basie's subsequent mishandling of contractual arrangements for his orchestra, resulting in a punishing recording schedule in return for relatively little financial reward.

- 33) The new specification requires candidates to acquire knowledge about the transmission of music in preparation for this section of the unit, and this question addressed this aspect of contextual understanding. Unfortunately, some candidates appeared to have misunderstood the question and reproduced a basic history of the development of recording technology, similar to those that often featured in **Section C** of the legacy Unit 2552.

In order to achieve high marks candidates were expected to be able to demonstrate knowledge of a variety of ways in which music has been transmitted over time. Most candidates were knowledgeable when it came to writing about recordings and aspects relating to their issue and distribution, but relatively few went further and mentioned the influence of radio and television broadcasts, and ever fewer considered issues relating to the transmission of music by means of printed notation.

The most informed answers demonstrated a secure understanding of a range of musical transmission and examiners were pleased to note that some writing reached a very mature level, with a few candidates considering the fact that a single printed score can give rise to a wide variety of musical outcomes, especially in relation to historically-informed performances.

Teacher Tips for Section C

- DO provide candidates with opportunities to organise their ideas in practice essays before the examination itself. This is helpful preparation for this section of the unit and will point out issues that may need to be addressed before the real examination (eg allocation of time, overall essay structure and a focus on the relevance of information provided).
- PLEASE encourage candidates to focus their writing in order to answer a specific question rather than simply regurgitate knowledge that they have acquired: many able candidates fail to gain marks in Section C because their writing is not consistently applied to the demands of the question set.

... and remember:

LISTENING attentively is the key to success. It is important not to let the sound simply wash over candidates. In an A-level Music course, examiners expect candidates to be able to delve beneath the obvious surface features of music they encounter. Intelligent and attentive background listening can be of enormous help to candidates in developing a sense of context for this section of the unit and in broadening and deepening their musical understanding.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Music H142/H542
June 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
G351	Raw	120	97	87	77	67	57	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
G352	Raw	90	72	65	58	51	44	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
G353	Raw	90	65	59	53	47	42	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

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

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H142	300	240	210	180	150	120	0

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

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H142	19.31	41.66	65.88	83.01	94.16	100	1247

1247 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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