



Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Music

MUSC5 Guidance



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

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.

There are recordings to accompany this document.

Planning the course

Choosing a brief

There are three briefs to choose from, as with MUSC2, but you do not need to make the same choice in the second year of the course. One candidate might move from Brief A to Brief B because they now have more confidence to write a free composition. Another might move to Brief A because they are applying to read Music at university and the techniques will be valuable.

In Brief B and Brief C you can produce an annotation instead of a score.

Working as a group

Although candidates will eventually be working individually, there are several useful things which can be done together as a group.

- All candidates have to demonstrate that they understand and can use a list of advanced harmonies given in the specification. These could be studied and practised together at the beginning of the year.
- Look out for these harmonies in the chosen set works for MUSC4. If you find examples in other works they could be used to practise recognition of harmony for the listening questions.
- It would help towards Brief A if the group can sing some chorales and play part of a classical string quartet, even if some of the parts are played on different instruments.
- Everyone will need to be very familiar with the instruments and software they will use in their composition. This is a good time to share knowledge and try experiments with timbres, textures and various sound sources.
- Practice compositions can be performed to the group and discussed at stages during the year. This will help develop critical skills. All students will need to review their work as they go along, and write a review at the end.
- Talk about the lessons learned when composing in controlled time for AS level. This should highlight the areas that need more practice or a different approach for the A2 composition.

Working individually

All students should aim to write a number of practice compositions before the controlled time begins. Many of these may be short and focused on one skill, but at least one should be full-length. It is not possible to write a single movement lasting five minutes (the minimum recommended for Briefs B and C in the specification) without a good understanding of structure, development and modulation.

Once students have decided which brief they are likely to follow, the preparation can aim specifically at that brief. It is possible to change from one brief to another at any time before the controlled time begins. Warn candidates that if they change brief during the controlled time the hours already used cannot be recovered.

Writing the final composition

You will not be able to advise directly on the work produced for the examination, but you can support the students by:

- answering questions about the use of software and general principles
- giving moral support – students will no doubt have times when they feel they are making no progress
- reminding them to edit scores and to check that recordings produced on ICT show their intentions as precisely as possible
- encouraging them to measure their time carefully so that the piece is finished in good time.

It is quite likely that students who choose Brief A will not need the full 20 hours. They do not need to attend any further sessions once they have completed the two questions.

If there is no score the annotation should contain as much detail as possible about the plan of the piece, the musical material and how it has been developed. It could be a lead sheet with extra details about melody, rhythms, instruments and dynamics, or any kind of diagram which shows the structure of a piece using electronic sounds.

Finishing off

In addition to the score or annotation, all students need to write a review assessing the success of the composition.

If there is time, the review can be written in controlled time. Alterations and improvements could still be made to the composition at this stage.

If the review is written after the controlled time, students should understand that no further changes can be made to the composition.

Sample questions and answers

Brief A: Compositional Techniques

Question 1 – Harmonisation of a Bach Chorale Melody

Jesu, der du meine Seele

Riemenschneider 297

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

S.
A.

T.
B.

S.
A.

T.
B.

A student answer (Track 1)

The musical score is written for Soprano Alto (S. A.) and Tenor Bass (T. B.) in a 3-part setting. It consists of 12 measures. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is common time (C). The Soprano Alto part is in the treble clef, and the Tenor Bass part is in the bass clef. The score is divided into three systems of four measures each. Measure numbers 1 through 12 are indicated above the Soprano Alto staff. The music features a mix of chords and melodic lines, with some instances of consecutive octaves and unresolved second inversion chords noted in the analysis.

The examiners will be looking for

- Technical accuracy
- Understanding of the style
- An inventive and imaginative solution

Technical accuracy

- Many of the chord choices are successful and the bass line begins well, but bars 6 and 8 lose momentum and have unresolved second inversion chords.
- The range of the parts is suitable but spacing could be improved in bars 8 and 9.
- Consecutive octaves are frequent and sometimes very obvious, eg bar 7 S and A; bar 10 S and T.
- In bar 1 the alto part avoids an augmented second interval but this has been forgotten by bar 3.

Understanding of the style

- The parts flow well with fluent rhythms and a characteristic rhythmic pattern in bars 9, 10 and 12.
- Modulation to Bb major is successful but bar 6 asks for F major, and in bar 10 an imperfect cadence in G minor would be more stylish.
- There are no suspensions and only one secondary seventh chord; V⁷d is misplaced at bar 5³.

Invention and imagination

- The harmonisation is mostly strong and purposeful but there is scope for more interesting chord choices.

Brief A: Compositional Techniques

Question 2 – The Classical String Quartet

Menuetto: Allegretto

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, titled "Menuetto: Allegretto". The score is written for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three systems of measures.

System 1 (Measures 1-6): All instruments play a melody starting with a half note followed by a quarter note. The first measure is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. A trill (*tr*) is indicated above the first note of the Violin I part in the third measure.

System 2 (Measures 7-13): This system begins with a repeat sign. The first measure of the system is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violin I part features a trill (*tr*) above the final note of the first measure.

System 3 (Measures 14-19): This system begins with a repeat sign. The first measure of the system is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Violin I part features a trill (*tr*) above the final note of the first measure.

21 **Trio**

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

28

35

39 *tr*

A student answer (Track 2)

Menuetto: Allegretto

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

Measures 1-7: *f*

Measures 8-13: *f*

Measures 14-20: *p*

Measures 21-27: *sotto voce* (Trio)

28 29 30 31 32 33 34

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

35 36 37 38

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

39 40 41 tr 42

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Technical accuracy

Chord choices are mostly accurate. The main exceptions are the change of chord in bar 16, the chord in bar 32, a clash in bar 35 and a weak cadence at the end of the Trio. There is no articulation in the added parts except where it has been copied directly from the given part. There are no added dynamics, so the candidate does not seem to realise the potential for contrast between phrases. Some of the tails on notes are inaccurate and there are rests missing in bars 29–33 and bar 36.

Understanding of the style

The parts are rather sparse at times. It is good to see variety of string texture but some parts seem to stop and start aimlessly. The cello part has some life and rhythmic variety. The idea given to violin 2 and viola in bar 12 is a nice touch. The version has a suitably light and dance-like quality but does not seem very polished. The viola part in bars 7 and 8 is unlikely.

Invention and imagination

This version captures the style of the dance but does not reinforce its character. The Trio is rather featureless: there seem to be empty staves because the writer does not know what to add rather than for a musical purpose. The harmonies are simple and mostly effective rather than inventive and imaginative.

The original can be found as the third movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 20, No. 6.

Brief B: Free Composition or Pastiche

These styles are not alternatives – one may merge into the other. The spectrum of answers will range from adopting the language of a named composer entirely (Bach, Haydn, Debussy, Dave Brubeck, Lennon and McCartney etc) to writing in a completely original style. There are many possibilities in between, as most young composers are influenced to some extent by the music they listen to and enjoy.

Note: Because the specification asks for understanding of tonality and modulation it is not advisable to write an entirely atonal piece. It would be possible to write an atonal section within a tonal movement, or a set of three linked pieces, one of which is atonal.

The examples show how different the results could be. The first is a Violin Sonata in the style of Mozart; the second is a rock song, Spooky goes to Heaven, with an annotation.

A student answer – Violin Sonata (Track 3)

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a violin part on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (measures 1-4) shows a melodic line in the violin with a dynamic of *mf* and piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 5-10) features a trill in the violin part, with dynamics of *p* and *mf*. The third system (measures 11-14) continues the melodic and accompanimental lines with a dynamic of *mf*. The fourth system (measures 15-18) includes a *pizz.* (pizzicato) section in the violin part, with dynamics of *mp* and *mf*.

19 arco pizz. arco mp mf mp

23

28 mp

33 mf

38

mp

This system contains measures 38 to 42. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 38 features a melodic line in the treble clef starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, all under a slur. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. Dynamic markings include *mp* at the start of measure 38 and *f* at the start of measure 40.

43

mf

This system contains measures 43 to 47. The melodic line in the treble clef continues with quarter notes D5, E5, and F#5, followed by a half note G5. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef continues with eighth notes. Dynamic markings include *mf* at the start of measure 43 and *f* at the start of measure 45.

48

mp

f

This system contains measures 48 to 51. The melodic line in the treble clef features eighth-note patterns. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef has a dense texture of chords. Dynamic markings include *mp* at the start of measure 48 and *f* at the start of measure 49. Trill ornaments are indicated above the notes in measures 49 and 50.

52

mf

This system contains measures 52 to 55. The melodic line in the treble clef has a melodic contour with slurs. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef continues with eighth-note patterns. Dynamic markings include *mf* at the start of measure 52 and *f* at the start of measure 53.

55

Musical score for measures 55-57. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line features a melodic line with some rests. The piano accompaniment has a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active treble line. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the piano part.

58

Musical score for measures 58-60. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with some rests. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with some grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the piano part.

61

Musical score for measures 61-63. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with some rests. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with some grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the piano part.

64

Musical score for measures 64-66. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature is two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with some rests. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with some grace notes.

67

Musical score for measures 67-69. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature is two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with some rests. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with some grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the piano part.

71

Musical score for measures 71-75. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line features a melodic phrase with a slur over measures 71-75. The piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns in both hands.

76

Musical score for measures 76-78. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with a slur over measures 76-78. The piano accompaniment features a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and includes chords and eighth-note patterns.

79

Musical score for measures 79-82. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with a slur over measures 79-82. The piano accompaniment features a dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) and includes chords and eighth-note patterns.

83

Musical score for measures 83-86. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has a melodic line with a slur over measures 83-86. The piano accompaniment features a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) and includes chords and eighth-note patterns.

87

pizz. arco

mp *mf* *mf*

91

pizz. arco

mp *mp*

96

mp

101

f *f*

The image shows a musical score for measures 103, 104, and 105. The score is written for a piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The music is marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The treble staff contains a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. There are slurs over the first two measures of each staff, and a *ff* marking is placed below the first measure of each staff.

The first impression of this piece is that it is a very recognisable example of Mozart's style. Harmony, melody, texture, structure and the use of instruments are all stylish and the score provides all the detail needed by the performers.

Looking from the point of view of the specification we can see understanding of all the musical elements listed:

- Structure and development
- Modulation
- Tonality
- Melody, harmony and rhythm,
- Texture, timbre and expression
- Characteristics of the chosen style or genre

There are some details which could be revised, eg the rhythm of bars 8–11 seems misplaced in the bar – a suggestion reinforced when it returns on different beats at bars 45–48. There are also some moments of uneasy harmony. But the imitation of Mozart's style is fluent, and the writing for both instruments natural and idiomatic. There are some attractive chromatic touches in the melodies.

The list of harmonies in the specification (p. 22) is not a 'tick-list' of everything which should be there, but it is a useful guide to the harmonic level of the piece. Some of the chords are used with ease, especially V^7d , but there are no truly chromatic chords. This lends support to the impression that the harmony is a little bland, and the excursion into the minor in the development section could have been more dramatic. This is a very successful pastiche composition, with room for minor improvements.

A student answer – Spooky Goes to Heaven

Spooky Goes to Heaven

Annotation

Spooky Goes To Heaven

I'm better now, you helped me rise above
Better still, I'll face the world with love
Better yet: oceans are forever, oceans are forever
I'd better go, the world is ready for me now...

Because of you I feel like dancing in the rain
Because of you I feel like washing out my brain
Because of you I feel like I can live again
I close my eyes and turn myself right up to ten

I think about corrupted people with their hearts so curled
Who are they to trample on a heart that loves the world?
Money makes the world go round, but not forever
Now, but not forever!
The clouds will wash them all away
And then the sun will shine again

Because of you I feel like dancing in the rain
Because of you I feel like washing out my brain
Because of you I feel like I can live again
I close my eyes and turn myself right up to ten

I used Cubase to record the song, mainly because it's the only one I currently have access to. There are better programs out there, but my view is that it's not the software it's the way you use it!

All instruments are played individually and recorded as Audio tracks, I did not use MIDI. This is simply because I used a lot of synthetic sounds, such as a Sawtooth Wave for the basslines, and so I try to achieve as much "human-ness" as possible by keeping the recordings strictly Live Audio only, no programming.

Drums – played by hand using the Drum Kit setting on a Yamaha PSR-140 Keyboard.

Bass – played using the Sawtooth Wave setting on the Yamaha PSR-140.

Guitars – this song features a Tanglewood LP.

Additional Instruments – I use a Casio CTK-631 as well as the Yamaha to create a number of different keyboard-based sounds.

Samples – This song features my favourite quote from "Back To The Future" as an opening for the song. I feel it fits well with the Journey concept, albeit a journey through time.

“Spooky Goes To Heaven” is a very densely layered song: the best example of this is during the ending sequence, which is a network of about 30 different instrumental parts, some of which are mixed so low that they simply create texture rather than sound.

The initial spark of this song is a fairly basic story: I sat at the piano and just got into the groove of playing a C# over and over again, and it soon became the 3-note introductory riff of “Spooky Goes To Heaven!”

The rest of the song came fairly naturally, one of those great moments when it just flows like magic. All the music was written and recorded in a few hours. At this point I didn’t have any ideas for vocal melody or lyrics, so I decided to reflect on the song as an instrumental piece, to see what lyrical ideas arose.

It actually took some time to finalise a melody and a set of words. I found that the music seemed to go on a journey: the driving guitar-powered verse leading into a laid back, introspective chorus, finishing with a climactic soundscape: something which I like to do a lot! I took this idea of being on a journey and used it to conceive the lyrics that accompany the song.

Review

Spooky is an imaginary character who noticed that the world was losing its heart, the corrupt becoming more powerful, and the powerful becoming more corrupt. So she takes a journey to heaven with her cat Cloudweb, to ask the Angels for help. Finding that this idea didn’t translate brilliantly into poetry, I used a more metaphorical inner-journey as a basis for the lyrics. I discovered that Spooky represented some kind of inner child within myself – naïve, but hopeful and ultimately good-hearted.

When recording, I used a process known as “layering,” which basically involved recording each individual track one at a time, literally layering the instruments over the top of each other until the song was complete. This particular recording technique is great for production: it’s fun to try out different sounds and add extra parts, giving a song texture and flavour. Sometimes a part that was originally written for the guitar, for example, sounded better on a keyboard: I find that layering allows this freedom of experimentation. The flipside is that it becomes more and more difficult to alter the song structure as more and more layers are recorded. Therefore, when using this technique, it’s helpful to have the structure set as much in stone as possible before recording begins.

Comments

This composition scores well on texture and timbre, and the structure is well planned, with a good contrast between the verse and the chorus. There is a lot of interest in changes of timbre and the available technology has been used very well. Some of the chord changes are attractive but they can be over-used. Bear in mind that you need to demonstrate advanced knowledge in this composition, so a greater variety of chords would have increased its mark. It is only just five minutes long, so it would be possible to add an instrumental break in the middle. Bearing in mind the song's theme of a fantasy journey this could be adventurous.

Annotation

Like a score, this should tell us 'what is there'.

There is detailed information about the recording resources and the beginning of the composition process, but the comments about the music itself are rather general. The words could be used as the basis of a plan showing the chord changes, and indications of dynamics and texture changes added. This would give an easy overview of the structure of the song, showing how material is repeated or developed. The sample is identified but it would be valuable to have comments on rhythms and vocal melody as well. The annotation should indicate the plan of the piece.

Review

This should tell us 'why it is there'.

The ideas behind the piece and any comments on its success belong in the review. Here we gain some idea of the mood the composer aimed to create, and there is interesting comment on the advantages and disadvantages of layering.

Sometimes material for the annotation and the review will overlap. You need not repeat anything.

Brief C: Arranging

This piano piece is a suitable model for an arrangement.

Von fremden Ländern und Menschen

Of Foreign Lands and People

Robert Schumann

$\text{♩} = 76$

p

3

3

ped.

5

p

10

rit.

ri - tar - dan - do

p

16

19

A student answer – Arrangement for jazz trio (Track 4)Annotation

First I took the main theme and put it in the right hand of the piano, accompanied in a standard jazz trio style, left hand chords, walking bass, and ‘swing’ style drums. I thought I would first change the chord sequence to:

||: G C Bmin^{7b5} E⁷ Amin D⁷ :|| (and variations of).

I then had a section played on the piano and bass in unison to take me into the next section, which is a sort of cross between the main theme and Chick Corea’s *Spain*. There is then a bass ‘impro’ solo.

This takes into the main theme again played on top of the actual chord sequence used in the original piece.

This goes into a soft version of the main theme in Ab major, which gradually dies away to finish.

Comments

The annotation covers the main points:

- the musical style on which the arrangement is modelled
- an account of the structure of the piece
- the material from the model which has been used.

There is no need to give details of the software as the arrangement is intended for live performance.

However, the annotation is rather brief and it would be useful to have more detail about:

- the elements of Chick Corea’s style which have been adopted
- the role of the drum kit
- the content of each section.

The arrangement is very polished and stylish. Features which would reduce the mark are that it is shorter than the minimum recommended length, and the break before the Ab section is not altogether convincing. This abruptness would probably be lessened in a live performance.

More could be said about this in the review, which is not given here.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT-HOLDERS AND PUBLISHERS

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements in future papers if required.