



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE AS Level
PERFORMING 8MU0/01

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Quality of submissions

The overall standard of submission for this unit was high, including a number of outstanding performances. Very few performances were inadequate, but a handful received a mark of zero as they were not long enough. Centres are reminded that total performance time across the recital must be a **minimum of 6 minutes of music**, not including count-ins, tuning, or any gaps between pieces.

Difficulty Levels

The majority of performances were at Standard (Grade 6) or More Difficult (Grade 7 or above) level, and accordingly received extra marks in line with the scaling grid (p.22 of the specification). A significant number of candidates were tempted by these extra marks into **performing music that was beyond their technical command**; many candidates would perhaps have been better advised to perform easier music convincingly instead. Centres should note the references to 'beyond the current ability of the performer' in the assessment grid 1. Level 5 (out of 6) is only reached when 'the demands of the music are within the current ability of the performer'.

Examiners apply a single difficulty level to each whole performance. Where a performance consists of pieces of different difficulty levels, the **level of the majority of the minimum performance length (i.e. 6 minutes) is taken as the overall average level.**

Difficulty levels are awarded in line with the *Pearson Edexcel GCSE, AS and A level Music Difficulty Levels Booklet* (available online); the difficulty level of music that does not appear in the booklet is assessed by comparing it with similar music in the booklet. **Centres are invited if they wish to suggest difficulty levels for individual pieces**, citing evidence (e.g. exam board and grade; comparison with music in the *Pearson Edexcel GC GCSE, AS and A level Music Difficulty Levels Booklet*). Centres should note that these suggestions will not be binding and examiners may change them if they have contradictory evidence.

Assessment

Under Performance assessment grid 1: Technical control – Technique, a number of singers (both male and female) lost marks by attempting music that was **lower in pitch than their comfortable range**. Some singers chose to sing through PA equipment which had a negative impact on tone quality and clarity.

Under Performance assessment grid 2: Technical control (Accuracy) and Expressive control (Fluency), centres should be aware that the **criteria apply to the whole performance not to individual pieces**. For example, while there may only be a few errors that have little or no impact

in each of, say, three pieces, these will add up to several errors over the whole performance. Some **candidates using backing tracks for music with rubato struggled to perform fluently** as they had no visual cue for pickups.

Under Performance assessment grid 3: Expressive control, style and context, credit is awarded for capitalising on **expressive opportunities notated or otherwise**. Some candidates were adept at following performance directions, but missed some higher marks by failing to bring out the expressive potential of passages without markings. This was particularly evident in some repertoires that tend to be light on expressive markings (e.g. Baroque and earlier; musical theatre and pop).

Recordings

Recordings were generally of high quality, with well-placed microphones; this greatly assisted the examination process. Centres are reminded that performances should be unedited and uninterrupted. Some recording devices automatically adjust levels and/or apply compression which can have the effect of **masking detail and flattening dynamic contrast**; centres are advised to switch off these automatic features.

Under this specification separate CDs/USBs should not be submitted for each candidate. **Centres should submit all candidates on one CD/USB** (or on as few as possible if the work will not fit on one), with **each candidate's performance as a separate track**. Individual pieces within a performance should not appear as separate tracks.

Centres should be aware that **examiners listen to the whole of each recording** and that noise and conversations after the end of the performance should be avoided. There is no need to protect USBs with passwords.

Recordings should include **announcements from each individual candidate**, demonstrating that performances are held in front of an audience of at least two people, of whom one must be the teacher (page 14 of spec.). If possible, it is helpful if the audience applause are not removed from the recording, so that their presence is evident.

Other items for submission

Centres should be aware that there is an **updated Performance Authentication Sheet (PAS) available online**; this should be used instead of the one in Appendix 1 of the specification.

Almost all submissions included adequate scores as outlined in the specification; however **some inadequate scores were received**, including guitar tab with no indication of rhythm.

A reference recording and/or a detailed commentary may be submitted as an alternative for performances where a score would not normally be used, and for **music which the performer has learnt from a recording**. In some cases this may provide the clearest indication of what the candidate intends when they perform, particularly if the performance is closer to a recorded version than a published score.

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