

Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

June 2015

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in
Music

Unit 8: Music and Production Analysis
(20375F)

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General:

This was the third sitting of this unit and included a slight increase in learner numbers since the last session in January.

It is evident that learners are being prepared more effectively in both exam technique and in developing the knowledge and understanding required for this unit specification. This is mostly evident in the extended questions where several learners demonstrated planning in preparation for the questions relating to key musical features.

There is still some concern with the weakness demonstrated in the learner's understanding of idiomatic techniques and musical devices. Several tended to provide answers naming musical instruments instead of identifying the specific technique used by a particular instrument or voice. Similarly, some learners demonstrated uncertainty between texture and dynamics.

It is evident that centres have explored the genre of the first piece; Rock and Roll as several learners showed a firm grasp of this style. These learners were able to offer sound responses to several questions and in particular those requiring specific knowledge of the style. This was particularly evident in question 10 where many learners were able to identify how the style was influenced and gained full credit as a result of this.

Specific details of the performance of individual questions with examples of learner responses are as follows:

Question 1(a) This question required learners to identify the genre of the music and a high percentage were able to identify the piece as Rock and Roll.

Question 1(b) Whilst there has been an improvement in learner's ability to identify the beats per minute (BPM) in previous tests, this question proved more difficult in this instance with several finding this challenging. Centres are advised to invest some teaching time to support learner's understanding of how to identify the BPM of a range of music excerpts.

Question 2 This question, which required learners to identify the decade of the piece was generally answered well by a good number of learners. Some offered a description of the music style of this decade which was not credited.

Question 3(a) This question was generally well answered, but some learners identified the texture as opposed to the instruments playing. The question related to the call between the lead vocal and saxophone. Several responses incorrectly identified the instrument or alternatively used the term 'instrument'. The latter was accepted if preceded by lead vocal. Other responses explained the process of call and response which was not credited.

3 Call and response is used widely throughout the piece.

Identify how call and response textures are used in the following sections:

(a) Section 1: from 0:02 to 0:20.

(1) Q03a 1

The vocals would "call" and there would be a short bar of Saxophone as the "response" to the vocal line

Question 3(b) Most learners were able to identify the difference in the call and response with the addition of the backing vocals to the 'call'. As with Q03(a) many identified the instrument incorrectly.

(b) Section 2: from 0:57 to 1:09.

(1) Q03b 1

the backing singers join in with the vocalist
and the sax still repeats the riff with them

Question 4 Whilst some learners were able to score a full 2 marks here, there were many instances where learners included instruments that:

- i) were not the correct family
- ii) were not used in this piece

Other learners offered bass guitar, which was inaccurate or identified the double bass as the cello.

There continues to be instances where learners include more than one response for each box where the question specifically asks for one of each. In such instances, multiple responses are not credited. Generally, this was a well answered question.

4 Identify **one** instrument used in this piece from **each** of the following two types:

Q04 0

Stringed instruments	Woodwind instruments
BASS Guitar	TRUMPET Drums

(Total for Question 4 = 2 marks) Total 0

This response did not receive credit as the bass guitar is incorrect with two incorrect instruments provided for one response. The latter would not be credited for multiple responses also.

4 Identify **one** instrument used in this piece from **each** of the following two types:

Q04 2

Stringed instruments	Woodwind instruments
Double bass	saxophone

(Total for Question 4 = 2 marks) Total 2

The above response scored the maximum 2 marks.

Question 5 This question was related to the placement of the instruments. Learners found this particularly challenging in the main.

Question 6 There is a clear improvement in learner's approach to this question where it is evident that centres are preparing for this question more fully. There were examples of learners planning their response in the margin that helped them focus on the specific aim of the question.

There continues to be examples of learners providing descriptions of the mood only without identifying a specific point relating to a key musical feature. Where this was the case, it is not possible to award credit just for identifying a mood change. It was unfortunate that some responses specified a point, but identified the incorrect instrumentation.

The examples below demonstrate a good response to this question:

6 Explain **two** ways in which the section from 1:16 to 1:33 has a different mood to the rest of the piece.

Q06

4

1 The saxophone in this section speeds up intensely in a solo ~~instrumental~~ instrumental playing really quick notes in a ~~staccato~~ staccato semiquaver speed. This creates a much more excitable mood to the piece, allowing the instrumentalists to have a cadenza where they can excitedly show off their skills and make the piece more enthusiastic instead of ~~tepid~~ repetitive.

2 The whole song at this point is much louder, as the instruments play forte forte in a massive crescendo from the bridge. This makes the mood change into a more fun and full of energy as the volume of tone significantly increases.

6 Explain **two** ways in which the section from 1:16 to 1:33 has a different mood to the rest of the piece.

Q06 4

1 The band uses dynamics to make a more intense sound. The sudden crescendo adds more aggression to the song, in addition, the drums are played a lot louder.

2 The chromatics used by the saxophonist add tension to the saxophone solo. With all of the instruments getting louder and in a swung rhythm it makes it sound a lot more upbeat in comparison to the rest of the song.

(Total for Question 6 = 4 marks)

Total 4

Question 7(a) The good number of learners were able to score a mark here, but as previously noted, some learners are unable to identify accurate instrumentation and in this instance were uncertain of the difference between tuned and non-tuned instruments. There were several instances where tuned instruments were provided as responses as in the example below:

7 (a) Identify **one** non-tuned percussion instrument heard for the first time from 1:16-1:33.

(1) Q07a 0

~~Drum~~ Clarinet

A most common response was Cymbals as in the example below:

7 (a) Identify **one** non-tuned percussion instrument heard for the first time from 1:16-1:33.

(1) Q07a 1

Cymbals

Question 7(b) There were several learners who demonstrated a firm understanding of the style of this piece and many were able to identify the correct idiomatic technique as 'note-bending' which is evidence of effective teaching and preparation. Some learners were not adequately prepared and clearly did not have the knowledge or understanding of techniques. These learners offered answers relating to instrumentation or in some cases dynamic and texture as in the example below:

(b) Identify **one** idiomatic technique used by instruments to alter their pitch in this piece.

(1) Q07b 0

playing the instruments louder.

(Total for Question 7 = 2 marks) Total 0

A good example of a correct response is below:

(b) Identify **one** idiomatic technique used by instruments to alter their pitch in this piece.

(1) Q07b 1

They Bend the note.

(Total for Question 7 = 2 marks) Total 1

Question 8(a) A very successful response where learners were able to identify the time signature correctly. Although 2/2 was the accurate answer, 4/4 was credited as an acceptable response.

Question 8(b) This question challenged learners and only a few were able to demonstrate ability in identifying rhythmic devices correctly. Whilst repetition was the most popular answer, some learners offered syncopation and ostinato which were all credited.

Question 8(c) This was a very accessible question and most were able to identify the response as 'Outro'. Some offered 'end of song' as their response which was not accepted as this was part of the stem of the question.

Question 9 Most learners attempted this question with several successfully gaining a full 4 marks. Some only provided production effects without providing an explanation, therefore no additional credit was awarded. The most popular answers related to reverb, delay and EQ.

The response below shows the learner clearly identifying the effect correctly with a further explanation gaining the full 4 marks available.

9 This song was first released on vinyl with limited production effects. Q09 4

Explain **two** production effects that could be used to enhance a new recording of this song.

Effect 1

Automatic compression would stop the instruments from getting too loud in sections like 1:16 to 1:33

Effect 2

Equalisation could bring up the bass more compared to the other frequencies, as it's not easily heard in this song.

(Total for Question 9 = 4 marks) Total 4

Some learners did not address the question correctly and offered examples unrelated to production effects such as the example below:

9 This song was first released on vinyl with limited production effects.

Q09 0

Explain **two** production effects that could be used to enhance a new recording of this song.

Effect 1

You could
~~hi-def~~ ~~AA~~ put hi Defenation
on to the instruments.

Effect 2

Edit the Singers voice make it
Sound better And more Clear.

(Total for Question 9 = 4 marks) Total 0

Question 10 This question was very successful and most learners were able to access the marks. Those who had prepared and had some knowledge of this genre were very successful and were able to provide detailed descriptions of how the style influenced Rock and Roll.

There were some examples of learners not attempting the question whilst others responded with Rock and Roll even though this was part of the question.

10 The genre of this song is influenced by other styles of music with key musical features such as call and response.

Q10

2

Explain how **two** styles of music have influenced other key musical features of this song.

Style 1

Rock and roll has influenced them to do a guitar solo, which gives the song a more upbeat style.

Style 2

Jazz has influenced them to have the bass ^{guitar} ~~guitar~~ play a simple repetitive tune throughout the entire song.

(Total for Question 10 = 4 marks)

Total

2

Similarly, 'call and response' was offered and did not receive credit for the same reason.

Question 11(a) Many learners found this question very accessible and were able to identify the type of song as a 'ballad' or 'pop ballad'. There were some instances where 'type' was misunderstood as 'genre'.

Question 11(b) Nearly all learners successfully gained 1 mark here for identifying 'piano' as the instrument that plays the accompaniment.

Question 12 Learners responded better to this question than with Q01(b) where they gave a suitable tempo for the piece in BPM. The mark scheme allowed for a range and a good number of learners had identified correctly within this range.

Question 13 This question was answered well with most learners identifying the minor key. It was very encouraging with the number of learners who identified the precise key of C minor.

Question 14 As with other similar question relating to devices, some learners clearly did not understand the term 'musical device' and suggested a range of instruments or dynamics as their answer. Other provided devices relating to the production, which was inaccurate:

14 Identify **one** musical device used in the accompaniment from 0:00 to 0:38.

Reverb

(Total for Question 14 = 1 mark)

Total 0

Most of the responses were 'arpeggio', but others answered with 'broken chords' as in the examples below:

14 Identify **one** musical device used in the accompaniment from 0:00 to 0:38.

Arpeggio

(Total for Question 14 = 1 mark)

Total 1

14 Identify **one** musical device used in the accompaniment from 0:00 to 0:38.

Broken Chords

(Total for Question 14 = 1 mark)

Total 1

Question 15 Most learners answered accurately identifying the vocal range as 'alto'. Others were credited for recognising the mid to low range.

Those who described the tone and dynamics of the voice were not credited.

Question 16 Most learners attempted this question and were able to score some marks. Whilst many were able to identify a valid point relating to a musical feature, some did not attempt to further explain

how the music communicated the meaning and mood of the lyrics and addressing the question in full.

Most learners were able to provide effective descriptions of the impact of the strings to support the mood and others elaborated on other aspects whilst also linking directly to the lyrics and parts of the music.

Generalisations of the music style were not credited.

Exemplar answers are as follows where both gained a full 4 marks:

16 Explain **two** ways in which the music communicates the meaning and mood of the lyrics from 1:28 to 2:03.

Q16

4

The lyrics are as follows:

*'Under haunted skies I see
Where love is lost, your ghost is found
I've braved a hundred storms to leave you
As hard as you try, no, I will never be knocked down*

*I can't keep up with your turning tables
Under your thumb, I can't breathe'*

1 The instruments gradually gets louder which builds up the tension and gives off a sad impression.

The music communicates with our emotions by using repetition and using different pitches and paces.

2 You can focus on the piano while she sings and then you hear the violins playing a high pitched note, which also gives off a sad mood and it tells you the meaning of the song is based around hurt and sadness.

(Total for Question 16 = 4 marks)

Total

4

16 Explain **two** ways in which the music communicates the meaning and mood of the lyrics from 1:28 to 2:03.

Q16 4

The lyrics are as follows:

*'Under haunted skies I see
Where love is lost, your ghost is found
I've braved a hundred storms to leave you
As hard as you try, no, I will never be knocked down*

*I can't keep up with your turning tables
Under your thumb, I can't breathe'*

1. The music is in a minor key which indicates sadness and the lyrics suggest also suggest this. This creates a relatable and sad mood as many people have loved and lost or had these kinds of problems

2. The piano is also very scattered with broken chords which could suggest not being able to think straight or concentrate on one thought.

(Total for Question 16 = 4 marks) Total 4

Question 17 As with Q07(b) some learners were unable to understand the term 'idiomatic techniques' and provided responses relating to tempo and dynamics. Whilst misspellings were accepted, centres are encouraged to be mindful of the learner's use of the correct spelling of key music vocabulary.

The following examples show an excellent response to this question with accurate spelling:

17 Identify **two** idiomatic playing techniques used by the strings from 2:41 to 2:50.

Q17 2

Technique 1

vibrato

Technique 2

arco

(Total for Question 17 = 2 marks)

Total 2

Question 18(a) This was generally well answered with some providing clear justifications in support of their response. Most were able to explain the reduction of plosives and others also referred to Ps and Bs as in the example below:

18 (a) Give **one** reason why the recording engineer would use a pop shield to improve audio quality when recording the vocal.

(1) Q18a 1

to prevent any harsh sounds & pops that are generated when singers use plosive consonants such as P, D, B etc

Some learners referred to the impact of sound quality which was inaccurate as in the example below:

18 (a) Give **one** reason why the recording engineer would use a pop shield to improve audio quality when recording the vocal.

(1) Q18a 0

To get a smoother, more clearer sound.

Question 18(b) This question specifically related to the audio quality at the specific point in the recording and not after the recording process as many learners misinterpreted. Centres are encouraged to remind learners to ensure that questions are clearly addressed and when a specific point stamp is identified, answers must relate to the point identified.

Question 19 This was a very successful question where learners presented a wide range of responses relating to the recording

environment. The most popular answer referred to the absence of audience or crowd noise.

19 Give **two** ways you can recognise that this piece was recorded in a studio environment.

Q19-1	1
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Q19-2	1
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1. It has not got a audience cheering or clapping indicating, it's not a live performance
2. It is a great quality and level of professionalism showing it is a studio environment recording

(Total for Question 19 = 2 marks)

Total	2
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The above response gained full credit for each response and a total of 2 marks.

Question 20 The question challenged learners quite considerably and as seen in previous sessions, there is a continued tendency for learners to provide a general discussion on the general musical features of the pieces. Learners did not score if the responses were unrelated to instrumentation.

Whilst this specifically targets learning aim A, responses could also relate to learning aim B and would be credited if references related to the instrumentation in terms of the production of these. Some did attempt to do so, but were generally unsuccessful.

There was some evidence that learners had developed some exam technique in the planning of answers. Other learners had produced responses in the form of two charts. Whilst this method is helpful and provides an answer frame for the lower ability, it does restrict fuller responses and an ability to provide comparisons. Where this was the case, learners very rarely scored more than 5 marks as in the example below:

SECTION C

Question 20 relates to **both** track 1 on the CD: **See You Later Alligator** by **Bill Haley & His Comets** and track 2 on the CD: **Turning Tables** by **Adele**.

020 5

20 Compare the use of instrumentation in the two pieces.

See you later alligator	Turning Tables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong saxophone melody • Strong drum beat • 1 main male vocal • Male backing harmonies • Electronic instruments such as electronic guitar. • Call and response used by instruments • Vocals front. • Instruments back. • Distortion within instruments. • Instruments come in after vocals. • Strong bass drum beat beat at the end. • Complicated riffs ♯ • Basic / Simple Bass line • Improvisation by instruments. • Thick instrumentation • Repetition within instrument sequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piano - main accompaniment • String Section to add depth and harmonise with vocals. • Female vocal - Solo. • No drum beat • No distortion of interference from instruments. • Broken chords by piano • Instruments compliment the vocals. • Only instruments in Intro - piano. • Only instruments in Outro - piano and strings. • Instrumentation - Dynamics fade out at end • Simple/basic melody • Simple chord sequence • Strict rhythm, no improvisation • Thin instrumentation texture • No bass line

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong bass line • untuned instruments • Multiple instruments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide vocal range • Scales used by strings • No untuned instruments • Only vocals, piano and strings - violins.
(Total for Question 20 = 8 marks) Total 5	
TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 8 MARKS TOTAL FOR PAPER = 50 MARKS	

The example below demonstrates how the learner has been able to draw comparison and describe a range of similarities and differences in depth culminating in a score of 7 marks.

Question 20 relates to **both** track 1 on the CD: **See You Later Alligator** by **Bill Haley & His Comets** and track 2 on the CD: **Turning Tables** by **Adele**.

0220

7

20 Compare the use of instrumentation in the two pieces.

Track 1 included the instruments; drums, saxophone, double bass and an electric guitar. The saxophone is used as a call and response to the vocals. It tends to play ostinatos and is harmonised. In the mid section, the sax plays an improvised solo which consists of staccato, high pitched notes. The drums play a simple rhythm throughout except during the mid section where they play a filler and build up to playing a rhythm using a lot of cymbals. They then go back to playing a simple rhythm.

In contrast, track two has the instruments piano and violin. Due to the softness of the piece, it doesn't include any percussion instruments. The piano plays a mix between broken chords and block chords. The violin tends to mimic the piano but mainly

it plays sustained root notes.
It sometimes plays a series of notes from high to low pitch. When doing so, it plays staccato notes.

Similar to track one, track two has harmonies played with the vocal. Both tracks use an increase in instruments and dynamics to add power to the piece.

Track two uses softer instrumentation to add seriousness, emotion and meaning to the piece whereas track one uses loud, harsh instrumentation to add attitude and make the song more upbeat.

(Total for Question 20 = 8 marks) Total 7

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 8 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 50 MARKS

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