

Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2016

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in Music

Unit 8: Music and Production Analysis (20375F)

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#### General

This was the fourth sitting of this paper with a considerable increase in learner numbers for this series as compared to previous years.

The paper discriminated well with over 40% of learners achieving pass level and above with several more reaching Distinction level than in previous tests.

Whist there is evidence that some learners responded very effectively to the paper, it is evident that learners are not been adequately prepared for the test. This is particularly noticeable in the questions targeting knowledge of key musical devices (both musical and rhythmic) where responses seen related to dynamics or instrumentation.

Learners are also unprepared for the more extended abstract questions such as 9 and 21, where knowledge of the full unit content is necessary to respond effectively. Learners clearly lack the knowledge required and consequently are unable to apply or synthesis the information to respond.

There continues to be a trend where learners are approaching the paper purely from a production perspective with very limited knowledge of music/musicality. As stated in the grade boundaries, learners must have knowledge of both in order to pass.

The division between those learners who have undertaken prior study of the unit specification and those who have not is very noticeable in this paper more than the other test sessions. Those with prior knowledge have been able to access the whole paper and attempted to provide responses to all questions. Invariably, these responses have shown a grasp of the key concepts of music and production supported with effective exam practice techniques.

The paper has also provided some higher overall grade outcomes than in previous sessions, with the responses given corresponding to the mark scheme.

## **Question 1** Which **one** of the following genres best fits this music?

This was a highly successful question with most learners being able to identify synthpop as the correct response.

**Question 2** What is the tempo of this piece in terms of BPM (beats per minute)?

A good proportion of learners at all levels were able to score successfully here. There were examples of learners' notes and working out on the paper, demonstrating good examination technique.

**Question 3** Identify **two** different **rhythmic** devices used by different electronic instruments during the introduction of this piece from 0:00 to 0:27.

Learners found this question very challenging whilst others failed to read the question clearly. Whilst the majority scored 2 marks for identifying a correct electronic instrument, a significant number were unable to identify the rhythmic device used by the instrument selected.

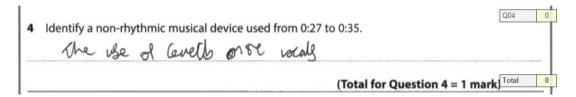
3	Identify <b>two</b> different <b>rhythmic</b> devices used by different electronic instruments during the introduction of this piece from 0:00 to 0:27.
	Electronic instrument 1:
	Synth
	Rhythmic device 1:
	Electronic instrument 2:
	Prum machine
	Rhythmic device 2:
	(Total for Question 3 = 4 marks) Total 2

Some provided descriptions of how the instrument was played, examples of different dynamics were offered and several answered through suggesting a production effect used at a certain point. These answers were not credited. Learners were also able to identify more than one synth and referred to this as synth 1 and synth 2, whilst others used synth and keyboard. This was creditable.

A range of musical devices were also offered such as block chords and some provided tempo changes.

**Question 4** Identify a non-rhythmic musical device used from 0:27 to 0:35.

Learners appeared to have been confused between a non- rhythmic device and a non-tuned instrument as the responses reflect this. Several learners provided drums as an answer whilst others offered a production effect as in the example below:



Some learners were able to show a clear understanding and identify a precise non-rhythmic device as below:

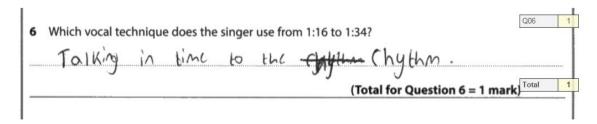
Identify a nor	n-rhythmic musical de	vice used	from 0:2	?7 to 0:35.		Reyboard	
	Stabbing	07	the	charts .	on the	alian	
	V	0				,	
				(Total for	<b>Question 4</b>	= 1 mark) Total	1

It was evident also that some learners did not have the necessary understanding of rhythmic devices in general.

## **Question 5** Which decade was this piece originally recorded in?

This question tested learner's understanding of musical styles and genres and it was evident that those who had prepared for the paper were able to identify 1980s as the correct response.

**Question 6** Which vocal technique does the singer use from 1:16 to 1:34? Most learners were able to distinguish the difference in the vocal sound in that it was not sung. Responses varied between rapping, spoken word and talking in time was also credited for this level.



**Question 7** Identify the type of voice heard from 1:35 to 1:50.

A high percentage of learners were able to identify the type of voice, with most responses being female or alto.



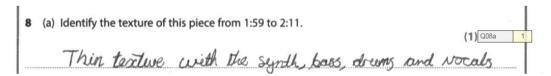
There continues to be some uncertainty with learners identifying falsetto as a female vocal type. Credit was also awarded to answers which identified the range as mid or low female voice.

Singing techniques were also provided e.g. head voice which was inaccurate.

**Question 8**(a) Identify the texture of this piece from 1:59 to 2:11.

Learners were able to successfully identify the texture as thin, sparse or used other descriptions that were acceptable.

This examples show a descriptive response to the question.



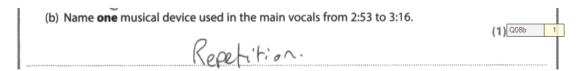
This accurate single response was also credited.



Very few had mistaken the texture as dense or thick which was inaccurate.

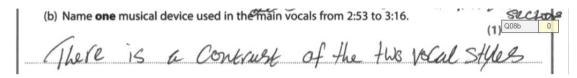
**Question 8**(b) Name **one** musical device used in the main vocals from 2:53 to 3:16.

Learners were able to provide a response to this question and most were accurate.



(b) Name <b>one</b> musical device used in the main vocals from 2:53 to 3:16.	(1) Q08b 1
Rep Harmony	

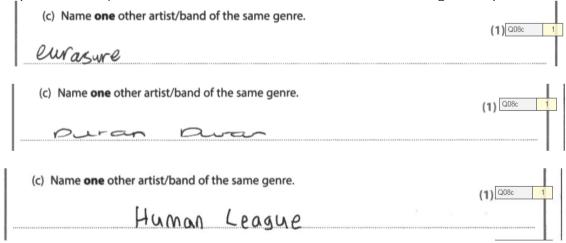
There were a number of learners who provided descriptions of this part of the music. These responses could not be credited as the question specifically asked for a device as in the example below:



It is evident that some learners are unable to identify musical devices and centres are encouraged to focus on this aspect of the unit specification during the teaching and learning period and in preparation for the test.

# **Question 8(**c) Name **one** other artist/band of the same genre.

Most learners showed a good understanding of the style and genre of Synthpop and were able to provide a very wide range of examples for this question. Most responses referred to bands such as Human League, Depeche Mode, Duran Duran and Erasure as in the following examples:



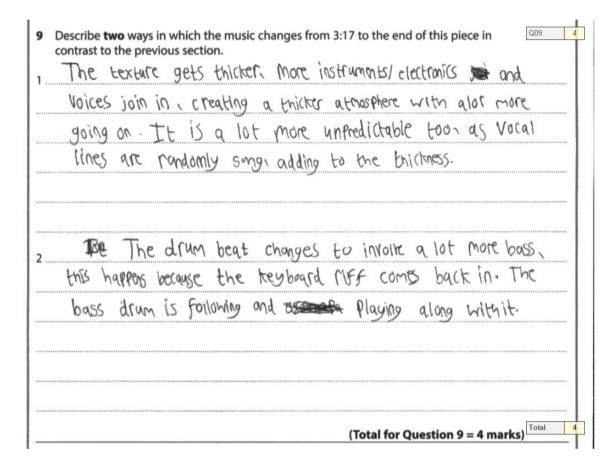
Some learners identified bands of the same period but were not in the style of synthpop, whilst other offered 90s electronic bands such as Moby which is inaccurate.

**Question 9** Describe **two** ways in which the music changes from 3:17 to the end of this piece in contrast to the previous section.

Many learners had not read the question clearly and had responded through providing a difference in mood to gain the second mark.

In this instance, the aim of the question referred to the way in which the music has changed from a previous section. Whilst a significant number of learners have been able to identify at least one way this has changed, some found difficulty in describing through drawing comparison to the previous section for the additional +1 mark.

The example below show a good response to the question gaining the maximum 4 marks:



9 Describe <b>two</b> ways in which the music changes from 3:17 to the end of this piece in contrast to the previous section.
or the vocalist changes to singley in falsetto
settle The lyrics change The style of single
also adjusts to a different "Gene" almost, like sul
singing style, where before was more melodic structure hassed
singing into free open singing
2 The texture of the song becomes more bast
busy in this section because another instrument adds
in with "Riffy" patterns that continously change whereas
before there where downers droved protonged brass setting
Section playing straight chords,
(Total for Question 9 = 4 marks) Total 4

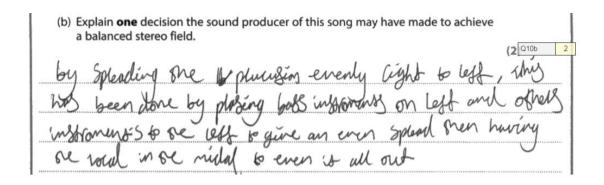
**Question 10**(a) Identify the environment in which this piece was recorded.

Learners responded well to this and most answers referred to Studio or studio overdub. Studio live is incorrect and not rewarded.

**Question 10**(b) Explain **one** decision the sound producer of this song may have made to achieve a balanced stereo field.

Some learners had misinterpreted the question and provided answers relating to editing techniques and a number of irrelevant responses not referring to the 'stereo field' but more the balance overall in terms of volume/levels.

There were also many generalisations and some referring specifically to different programmes, software and studio equipment that were not creditable.



Question 10(c) Music production effects are used widely to enhance this piece. Outline the result of using the following effects.

Most learners had attempted this question in the main, but there was a significant number of learners who had not attempted all of this four part question. This was very challenging for those learners who had not prepared sufficiently for the LA B - the production element of the unit.

The following shows a good response gaining the maximum 4 marks.

(c) Music production effects are used widely to enhance this piece.
Outline the result of using the following effects.

Delay

Reverb makes it sound

Like it in a rown, Like

it reflects sounds from

words,

makes it more interesting

to hear, going for up and

down in volumes

makes it sound gritts

and more heavy than

the original sound

Five it an echotype

effect but keeps in time

With & the Fempo

(4) Q10c

4

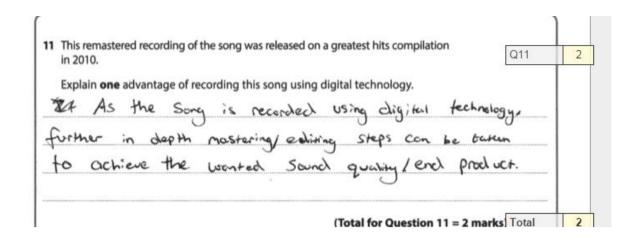
	2.0(4) Q10c	
Effect	Result of using the effect	
Reverb	Reverb adds echo so she peice making it sound guller or Shiner.	+
Tremolo	A fremolo changes The amplitude of the Sound	
Distortion	Distartion can make the peice heavyer by adding layer's	
Delay	Delay makes a Sound last langer oxter it	

**Question 11** This remastered recording of the song was released on a greatest hits compilation in 2010.

Explain **one** advantage of recording this song using digital technology.

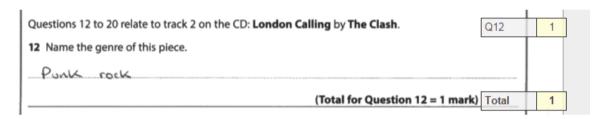
This was a very accessible question where most learners had a sound knowledge of the advantages of digital recording. Most were able to support the point through providing an advantage, whilst some provided two points and did not provide an explanation of the advantage. This prevented learners from accessing the second +1 mark for the explanation.

The following example shows a good response to this question.



# **Question 12** Name the genre of this piece.

Many learners were able to identify Punk or Punk Rock as the correct genre. Some were mistaken with Rock whilst others gave a variety of responses relating to the Rock sub-genre which were inaccurate.



This was an accurate response gaining 1 mark

Questions 12 to 20 relate to track 2 on the CD: <b>London Calling</b> by <b>The Clash</b> .	Q12	0
12 Name the genre of this piece.		
Rock		
(Total for Question 12 = 1 mark)	Total	0

This response only identifies Rock which is inaccurate.

**Question 13** Identify **two** instruments used in this piece apart from the lead and rhythm guitar.

A significant number of learners were able to identify the drum kit and bass guitar, whilst some provided individual parts of the kit as below:

	13 Identify <b>two</b> instruments used in this piece apart from the lead and rhythm guitar.	Q13		2	
	1 Drums / Back . kick class				
	2 Hish hat		-		1
l	(Total for Question 13 = 2 marks)	lotal		2	

For this question, vocals were not credited. Centres are reminded that vocals are not accepted as 'instruments' unless otherwise stated.

## **Question 14** What type of key is this piece in?

Whilst this has been answered highly successfully in past tests, this cohort found the question relatively challenging in the variety of responses seen. Some provided a single letter e.g. A, G, D etc. and a few learners showed some insecurity in their understanding of the difference between time signature and key signature, often providing 4/4 as an answer:



Several were able to identify this correctly as a minor key.



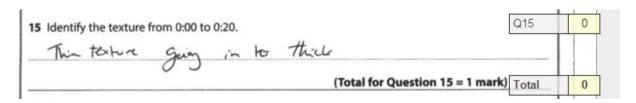
Others did identify the full and correct key of E minor:

14 What type of key is this piece in?	Q14	1	
E Minor			
(Total for Question 14 = 1 mark)	Total	1	

## **Question 15** Identify the texture from 0:00 to 0:20.

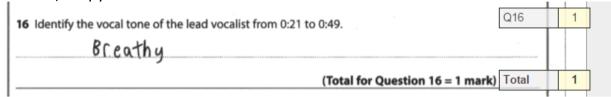
A significant number of learners were able to identify the texture as thin or sparse. Some misinterpreted this and provided responses relating to type of voice.

Most gave one word answers which is creditable whilst others proceeded to describe the subsequent development of the texture as in the example below:



## **Question 16** Identify the vocal tone of the lead vocalist from 0:21 to 0:49.

Learners were successful in being able to identify the tone of the lead vocalist's voice providing a wide range of responses to this such as breathy, course, raspy and so on.



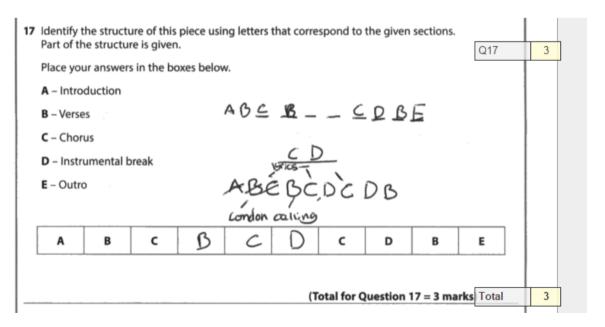
There were instances where answers referred to the pitch which was inaccurate whilst others identified the type of voice i.e. tenor, baritone etc. This was not an accurate response and no credit was awarded as in the example below:



**Question 17** Identify the structure of this piece using letters that correspond to the given sections. Part of the structure is given. Place your answers in the boxes below.

This question was attempted by most learners with a significant number gaining the three correct responses in the accurate order. Those who did not receive the full 3 marks, generally were able to identify B (verse) and C (chorus) but unable to identify the instrumental break (D).

Some learners demonstrated effective examination technique and had evidently spent time working the structure out clearly as below:



**Question 18** Explain **one** idiomatic playing technique used by the rhythm or lead guitars throughout this piece that is characteristic of this genre.

Most learners were able to provide a response relating to an idiomatic technique used by the guitars. Several referred to the different means in which the guitarist articulated the performance through the use of e.g. strumming and pitch bending.

Explain <b>one</b> idiomatic playing technique used by the rhythm or lead guitars throughout this piece that is characteristic of this genre.	Q18	2
the rhythm quitais use a stabbing method		
to chate an agressive mod which is		
, the	-	
KIDITAL FOR DOWNK GENER.		
upral for pank cense.		

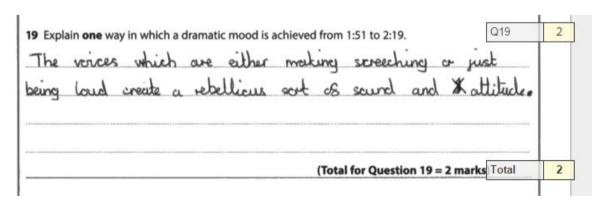
Some found difficulty in providing an explanation and several provided generalisations with regards to the style that were not creditable.

**Question 19** Explain **one** way in which a dramatic mood is achieved from 1:51 to 2:19.

Responses were wide ranging here which reflected the array of possible answers available to fulfil the question. Some learners found difficulty in identifying musical point for the first mark and often this was using basic musical vocabulary.

Whilst some learners identified a musical point, others referred to production aspects and effects which were also creditable as in the examples below:

Musical response:



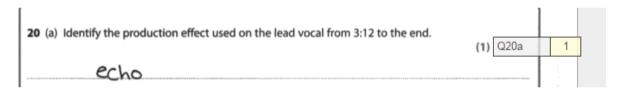
Production response

Explain <b>one</b> way in which a dramatic mood is achieved from 1:51 to 2:19.	Q19	2
The feedback from the guitar and the screaming	y vocals	
are used to create tension.		
and assault accorde to the total		
(Total for Question 19 = 2 mark		

There continues to be evidence of learners not achieving the second point that requires an explanation of the mood itself.

**Question 20**(a) Identify the production effect used on the lead vocal from 3:12 to the end.

Most learners identified this correctly as echo, whilst the other acceptable answer included delay.

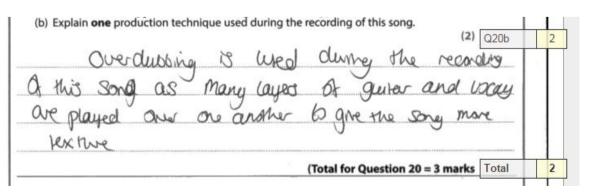


Some used one word responses and a few gave an explanation of how this was used, although the latter was not necessary for this question.

Some learners are continuing to provide multiple answers despite previous notification in past reports that only the first response would be acceptable as an answer. Centres are encouraged to remind learners of this when providing exam technique advice.

**Question 20**(b) Explain **one** production technique used during the recording of this song.

Some learners scored well here when identifying a technique used at the point of recording as in the following response.



**Question 21** Compare the key features of the **style** and **genre** of the two pieces.

Learners continue to find difficulty in identifying aspect of the music to discuss and subsequently the responses tend to be generalisations that lack in comparisons. A few learners misinterpret the means of comparison through only focusing on the similarities. Whilst this may have some relevance, it does restrict the amount of responses that can be made as in this instance, there are very few similarities between the styles and genres of the tracks.

Learners musty focus on identifying a point and justifying this through referring to both tracks in order to achieve credit. Many learners appear to be using the previous questions as an aid memoire to answer and whilst this may be useful, replicating some answers that were inaccurate in the first instance is ineffective.

Centres are strongly encouraged to invest teaching and delivery time in supporting learners with relevant exam technique and providing suitable writing frames. It is good practice to use previous test papers for this.

In order to answer this question successfully, learners must have a sound knowledge of the unit specification in both music and production. Evidence of this was limited in this session, with many learners solely reliant on production knowledge and very little musical understanding.

This is an example of a response gaining 7 marks:

Jord Synth Synth Cord.

#### SECTION C

Question 21 relates to both track 1 on the CD: What have I done to deserve this? by Pet Shop Boys and track 2 on the CD: London Calling by The Clash.

Q21

7

21 Compare the key features of the style and genre of the two pieces.

In the Pet shop boys song they use alot more synth sounds which gives it its electronic feel and making it sound more light headed and 'pop' (like: whereas London Calling upes more live instruments such as electric guitar, dam Kit and big ceremonial drums. This gives it a much harrher sound that appears more to a Rock audience rather than pop.

In addition Lordon Calling is in a minor key making it sound more sinisher and heavy than the Pet Shop Boys song which is in a major key therefore making it sound more up beat and happy.

Forthermore the vocals in what have I done to deserve this' use techniques such as vibrato and melisma's which is common in pop wherear in London Calling which is rock it is more common to use scratchy, nough sounding vocals. In addition the clash tend to use shrieting vocals at points whereas the Pet shop boys stick to a more limited use of vocal techniques and range. Nevertheless there is a similar technique used at 3:28

although	not	to	The	Same	extent.	ſ	
***************************************							

The Pet shop boys also incorporate a constant we of harmonies in the lead vocals as well as using effect such as chorus to make the vocals sound fuller. Although the Clash also use multiple vocal layers, it is only used in certain sections. Furthermore there are sections where it is only one vocal line with no harmoni or effects like chorus. Nevertheless they do both use harmonies throughout

The clash also use distortion on their guitars to create the own and harsh sound characteristic of Rock whereas the Pet Shop Boys are house a more clean and clear tonal quality common in Pop nuric.

Another point of companison is their structure, as clash incorporate of more instrumental breaks for example which is characteristic of back music, Whereas the peturop boys calow a more traditional structure of pop which is dissigned to make it more catchy.

Finally giving back to the vocals of both genres rock tends to follow less of a meladic vocal line which is seen in the clash, whereas a more pop orientated song tands to have a more clear melody in which is what the peturop voy do in (Total for Question 21 = 8 marks Total their song.

Total For Section C = 8 Marks

Total For Paper = 50 Marks

Total For Pap



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