



General Certificate of Secondary Education

MUSIC 42703

Performing Music

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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42703 – Coursework Performing

A small number of centres submitted performances for the new specification in its first year. The performances were all instrumental or vocal; there were no technology-based performances. In many cases a very good standard of performance was achieved, although the candidates were younger than is the case when work is submitted in year 11. From the limited amount of work seen, two particular concerns emerged:

- performing a piece of music which is too difficult for the candidate to deliver successfully. This might well attract a slightly higher demand mark but marks for accuracy, communication and interpretation will suffer. The more complex the piece of music, the more demanding are the stylistic issues, and the descriptors in the Assessment Criteria home in on this aspect. Candidates are better advised to choose repertoire which is well within their capabilities and which they can perform well.
- limiting candidates to a single specific performance occasion, so that a candidate who does not manage to perform well on that occasion has no other opportunity. It is envisaged that the candidates can perform at any time during the course and that the final submitted performance will be the best that they can offer. This year it is likely that there have been fewer performance opportunities as the candidates will only have been two terms into their course, but a further opportunity exists to enter again next year if the centre so chooses.

Individual Performance

There were some outstanding performances from musically mature candidates alongside performances from others who will benefit from another year of tuition.

Some candidates submitted unaccompanied instrumental performances, and in these cases it is often difficult for them to convey the style and the intentions of the composer without the support of the accompaniment. This really affects the musicality of the performance, and the counting (or not) of the rests does not improve the situation. There are unaccompanied studies which work really well and would have been a more successful choice. Performing with backing tracks is another solution, and there is now much more opportunity for candidates using these to demonstrate good communicative/interpretative skills. Another option might be to enlist the help of an instrumental teacher to accompany a candidate if the music teacher is not in a position to do so.

The music performed needs to be chosen with care so that candidates can demonstrate their skills to best advantage. There are many more marks available for accuracy, communication and interpretation than for the level of difficulty of the music.

Group Performance

There was a variety of group performances ranging from duets to larger ensembles. Playing in a large ensemble with many performers does have its problems; in particular, assessment is difficult if more than one performer is playing a particular part. Where a candidate chooses to perform as part of a larger ensemble, his/her part must be clearly identifiable aurally to both the teacher and the moderator and must not be obscured by doubling. Miking up individual candidates is not satisfactory, as the balance within the group will be distorted and cannot be accurately assessed.

Consideration should be given to how well the chosen piece allows the candidate to demonstrate ensemble skills: in some cases there were rather limited opportunities for this. Some pieces for voice/instrument and piano accompaniment fall into this category. Where a group performance consists of a singer/instrumentalist and accompanist, there should be sufficient opportunity to show evidence of true rapport and real responsiveness between the performers in terms of adjustments to pitch/intonation, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and balance. This should be reflected in the mark awarded for Sense of Ensemble. Where a candidate's part is doubled and the candidate is obviously relying on the doubling to support his/her performance, this must be taken into consideration in the marking. It could be reflected in the marking of any or all of the areas of assessment, depending on the effect of the doubling on the performance.

Assessment Criteria

Some centres wrote excellent comments on the Candidate Record Form (CRF) to support the mark they were awarding in each category and this is really important in the moderation process. There were some submissions, however, where the teachers wrote very limited or no comments on the CRF. Comments which justify the marks are invaluable for the moderator to show how decisions have been reached. The key words of the Assessment Criteria (on pages 12-15 of the Specification) need to be considered when awarding marks.

Accuracy: marks were sometimes awarded in the top band of this section despite melodic, rhythmic and intonation errors that affected the fluency of the performance. In such cases a performance cannot be described as being "secure."

Communication: here, the candidate's ability to play/sing the music with confidence and commitment, ensuring a well projected performance, is assessed. The wisdom of choosing a piece which can be played without worrying whether technique will impair the performance will be evident in successful performances.

Interpretation: the particular style and genre of the music played and the various conventions which apply must be taken into account. To attain the best possible marks, the candidate needs to demonstrate understanding of these conventions and their application in a mature manner.

Sense of ensemble: as mentioned above, the marking needs to reflect the responsiveness of the candidate to the other members of the group.

Demand: the Assessment Criteria list descriptors for each mark in the range of 0-3. If a performance is set for a particular grade by another examining board, it would be useful for this information to be included, with details of the examining board and the syllabus year. Where a candidate performs only part of a piece, this should be taken into consideration in the mark awarded for demand.

If there is any uncertainty about any of these aspects, the Controlled Assessment Adviser allocated to your centre is available to help. If you do not know who this is, please contact the Music Department at AQA's Guildford office.

Administration

Many of the submissions were very well administered, but there were instances where time had to be spent sorting out mistakes and omissions. Centres are asked to refer to the Notes for Guidance for this unit, which are on the AQA website, and in particular to note that:

- CRF's must be signed by the candidate and the teacher. This is mandatory, and where signatures were missing the moderator had to request the signed forms and/or return them for completion.
- the CRFs should be fully completed and the mark additions carefully checked, including the total on the last page
- with each candidate's submission there must be the relevant scores/annotations or original CDs. Some centres failed to provide these and had to be contacted to obtain them.
- work must be submitted by the deadline of 7 May
- the centre's submission should include:
 - CRFs, with both signatures
 - scores/annotations/original CDs
 - Centre Mark Sheet (CMS), both pink **and** yellow copies
 - Centre Declaration Sheet, signed by **both** the music teacher and Head of Centre
 - CDs or mini-discs, clearly labelled.
- where a centre is entering 20 or fewer candidates, all the above must be submitted by 7 May. Where a centre has over 20 candidates, the two copies of the CMS must be sent. Within a few days the moderator will return the yellow copy requesting the sample. Smaller centres will receive the yellow copy, indicating which candidates were in the sample, when the work is sent back after the moderating period.
- recordings should be submitted on CD or mini-disc. Please ensure that CDs are formatted correctly to play on standard equipment and not on a computer only. Mini-discs must not be submitted in the extended play mode.
- composite discs are preferable rather than individual CDs/discs for each candidate. Please provide a track list and write the track number on the CRF for the individual and group performance, checking that there are no duplications, omissions or incorrect track numbers. Please ensure that each candidate's work is on the same CD.
- please make certain that everything is correctly labelled and that copies of all materials sent for moderation have been kept at the centre.

Centres are reminded that guidance on this unit is provided in the Teacher Resource Bank for GCSE Music on the AQA website.

Mark Range and Award of Grades

Grade Boundaries and Cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA website.