

# Moderators' Report

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Music  
5MU01 Performing Music

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## GCSE Music 5MU01 Performing

2014 has been a good year overall; the standards and styles of performances marked tends not to change greatly each year and this year is no exception. During the life of this specification, the numbers of pupils performing using either music technology or ethnic instruments has dropped very slightly, but the standards of the less proficient performances have gone up. It is clear that teachers are happier applying the mark scheme and overall this is applied well but, as is to be expected, the Teacher Examiner tends to be a little generous overall. The only exception to this has been noted with a few pupils with lower marks where the TE tended to be harsh with the marking. The performances undertaken were as follows:

Singing (25.53%),  
Keyboards (including piano and organ - 24.20%),  
Guitar (17.59%)

Orchestral instruments made up nearly a quarter of all performances with:  
Strings (6.41%)  
Woodwind (11.67%)  
and Brass (3.88%).

Electronic music and technology made up only 2% of the performances and those on ethnic instruments less than 1%.

### **The areas to be aware of:**

#### **Accuracy:**

Where candidates perform excellently, then a mark which reflects this is important. Teachers often ignore a significant number of errors to give the candidate a higher mark. Take care to penalise inaccuracy, but not to over/under penalise.

Intonation is part of this criterion. Teachers would do well to ensure that the piano is tuned before the recordings and that pupils take great care to ensure that their instruments are in tune before each recording: far too many marks have been lost by candidates because of this, both with classical and pop performances.

### **Interpretation:**

While this is marked reasonably well, the issues come because often a teacher has marked something as good because they have heard an example of dynamics, phrasing, articulation etc. However, to get good or excellent, this needs to be applied consistently throughout the piece. Many instances were heard by moderators whereby the TE had given a good or excellent mark, but there were great swathes of the pieces which were devoid of interpretive detail. There were some well prepared pieces which did not receive good marks because of a lack of interpretive detail.

With ensemble performances, the majority of candidates received a lower mark than with their solo; it is clear that often less time has been spent in its preparation. There were some very fine ensembles heard, but as this is a report, there are three areas which should be looked at for improvement. Firstly, TE's are asked to list the role of the candidate in the ensemble. The preferred method by Edexcel would be, for example: "rhythm guitar in a band consisting of drums, vocals, bass and lead guitar." This clearly defines the part the candidate is playing, but it also tells the moderator to expect two guitars. Clarity always makes the marking process easier.

Secondly, too many centres are still submitting the wrong type of ensemble. This is clearly defined in the specification and has now been firmly established for some years. Centres are reminded that the ensemble should be an undoubled part, which is simultaneously sounding against one or more parts. Thirdly, to re-iterate the above I quote from the 2013 report: ]

A typical example of ensemble "...is the use of a theatre style duet where the solo singers sing separately for most of the song, with perhaps a few bars of harmony towards the end. This, accompanied by a pianist is not acceptable; there is simply not enough material provided to give a fair judgement of ensemble (particularly in comparison with a pianist who chooses a piano duet.) The wording clearly states "simultaneously sounding" and therefore the music submitted should reflect this. Thoughtful centres, who presented theatre duets properly, did so with a backing group, rather than just the piano: this is a useful way to support your good theatre singers, providing an ensemble where there are three or more performers will always get around any difficulties made by duets."

The use of the Level of Difficulty grid is continuing to improve, but still many teachers do not apply it correctly and some clearly do not refer to it at all. This

is the area which results in the largest number of changes (both positive and negative) to candidate marks. To apply the criteria, TE's should look at each descriptor and agree a level: the largest level represented will be the level to apply. If there is some difficulty or if the resultant level is not what one expects then the TE should use their professional judgement and justify this on the MUS form. Realised performances or ones with a commercial recording sent in lieu of a printed score usually had the most problems.

With realisations and technology, TE's successfully applied the criteria overall. Many TE's avoid the technology due to lack of experience, but where candidates have worked to produce some clear and musical realisations of the music, some good marks were obtained. It is important to note that with technology, the marking is much less lenient with regard to accuracy. Candidates will have had ten hours in which to create an accurate sequence and likewise the interpretive detail is equally as discerning. Sequences were often accurate but the choice of sounds or the lack of interpretive detail often let down the final performance. There was a superb example of a movement from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite".

Multi-track recordings were often well recorded, with good balance overall. A number of centres sent in separate mixes made from the same live recording. This can produce some interesting results and it would be better if candidate's had individual recordings from which they could produce their own mix.

To make the moderating process straight-forward for next year, centres are urged to work to ensure that the pupils produce their best performance with the best recording equipment available, the vast majority of centres produce excellent quality recordings, but unfortunately there are still some centres that do not put a high enough priority on this aspect of the exam. TE's are also urged to mark the work using the recording after the event and to apply the Level of Difficulty criteria carefully.

In the ICE document we have changed the way we would like the CD's recorded, applying a greater emphasis on the track list. This was notified in meetings last year and in the report. Leaving out announcements will save you (the TE) lots of time and makes it easier for the moderators to listen to the work. Therefore, when producing a CD please place the tracks in the correct order, without announcements for each candidate, just the main centre announcement on track 1. A detailed written track list accompanying the CD will clarify things for the moderator. If a commercial recording is being

submitted in lieu of a score, then please include this before the actual candidate performance. It is unnecessary and indeed much more hassle to produce individual CD's for this exam.

Create an A4 booklet by photocopying the MUS forms on to one sheet of A3 paper, enabling you to place the scores inside.

Where issues arose during the moderation period, it was pleasing to note that centre's were able to respond to queries promptly.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

