5.4.3 Area of Study 3 - Dance Music

Starting Point

Dance as expressive movement to music, with rhythm as the basis of its organisation. The functions of dance in different contexts, exemplified by:

- ceremonial dance (e.g. in sacred ritual);
- court dance (to celebrate important occasions);
- social dance (public and private ballrooms/dance-halls);
- folk dance (in public places);
- dance as a means of telling a story (classical ballet);
- stylised dance pieces (as instrumental music e.g. Bach, Chopin).

Core

Candidates should recognise and understand the characteristic features and rhythmic patterns of three specified different types of social dance drawn from contrasting social/historical contexts. They should develop an understanding of how these features relate to the original contexts, how and why they might differ, and also study how the form can become detached from its original context (for instance, transferred from dance-floor to concert-room). The three types specified for study are:

- Elizabethan *Pavan* and *Galliard*;
- 19th century Viennese *Waltz*;
- *Disco music* of the 1970s and 1980s.

Candidates should study:

- the contexts of performance (the impact of the venue and the occasion on the way the music is structured and performed) and the way the music matches the changing conventions of social dance (from the stately courtroom with its strict conventions to the intimate and expressive partnered dance, to the more vigorous individual style of *disco music*);
- the characteristic features of the music (rhythm, metre, tempo, structure) and how these are defined by the nature of the dance and its steps;
- the different resources and the way they are used and their impact on the compositional process (from the small Renaissance ensemble playing often in unison to the colourful palette of the Romantic orchestra to the use of ICT in disco music)
- the development of each dance form beyond its original purpose (e.g. the *Waltz* and *Pavan* in 20th century contexts, popular dance of the '90s and '00s).

Links

Area of Study 1: candidates may apply their knowledge and understanding of a dance genre to enhance their interpretation and appraisal of it in performance *(Exploiting the Resource).*

Area of Study 2: teachers may find it helpful to use Baroque dance movements or the Classical Minuet to offer further opportunities for study of dances and of melodic techniques. Variation techniques used in the Pavan and Galliard pair may also offer examples for comparison with Baroque and Classical practices *(Techniques of Melodic Composition).*

Area of Study 4: the historic dance forms studied here provide examples of strongly differentiated styles and cultural contexts, which may supplement the Starting Point *(Traditions and Innovation). Bhangra* and *Salsa* offer further examples of dance music. The cosmopolitan nature of disco music, drawing on Latin percussion, funk guitar, big band sounds and Carnival beats, may form a useful example of another way in which styles have come together.

Language for Learning

Candidates should be taught to understand, recognise aurally, and correctly use the following terminology which describes features which arise specifically within the content of this Area of Study:

- Rhythm values: (¼ beat to 4 beat), dotted notes, syncopation;

- Metre: simple time in 2, 3 and 4, compound time in 2;

- Pulse, accent, *sforzando*, *accelerando, ritenuto, rubato*;

- Harmony: tonic, dominant, harmonic rhythm;

- Middle eight; divisions; variations; ornamentation, *portamento*, *pizzicato*, hook;

- Renaissance instruments: pipe, tabor, crumhorn, recorder, viol, consort, lute, virginals;

- The names of typical Baroque and Classical ensembles and their characteristic features (orchestra, string quartet, continuo, choir);

- 19th century orchestra: all standard instruments;

- Pop instruments: all standard instruments;

- Synthesiser, mixing desk, remix, overlay, drum machine, amplification.

The names of the composers/performers of the music studied should also be known.