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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

MUSIC

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 6020/01

Listening

General comments

Questions in **Sections A** and **B** were satisfactorily done by some candidates, who understood the questions, readily recognised significant features in the extracts and expressed their answers competently. The handling of the final 'essay' question in **Section D** was less secure. It was clear that those candidates who were well prepared on the Beethoven Prescribed Work had memorised lists of compositional traits and achievements for which the composer is now well known. The demonstrable lack of understanding of this list, however, betrayed itself in the difficulty that many of them had in selecting those points which were actually relevant to the question asked. Very few, indeed, even attempted to turn their list into a 'mini-essay' format; those who did, who offered an introduction and a conclusion, usually made a successful attempt to address the question, often getting down fewer 'facts', but showing much more relevance than the comprehensive lists.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

There continues to be a strengthening of aural skills.

Question 1

Answers to the questions on this extract were very confident.

Question 2

Some candidates were so successful in identifying examples of chromaticism in answer to question **(e)**, that they were then misled into believing that the work must be from the Romantic period. Brahms, Chopin, Dvořák, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Schumann, Verdi, Weber and Wagner were amongst those favoured by candidates in answer to **(h)**. Perhaps this shows an element of stereotyping in perception of Mozart's music? Many found it difficult to express what they observed in answer to **(d)**. Some found themselves talking about meaningless 'inverted pedals' in the middle of the texture. This had nothing to do with the question asked about the opening motif. More able candidates were able to explain the function of the passage and even where the music was going.

Question 3

Some candidates seemed to be very comfortable with this style of questioning and with a wide spread of Western repertoire generally. The Examiners were pleased to see that all candidates had listened for positive features in the extracts, to enable them to answer the multiple choice questions. On the other hand, several offered features of ragtime that they knew to be characteristic, but that were not actually evident in the extract offered (e.g. discussion of the sectional form). Some recognised it as *Maple Leaf* and one candidate recognised the chorus from *Il Trovatore*. There are no extra marks for recognising the source of the extract, but clearly, this enabled candidates to be confident about identifying the genre and period or composer.

Section B

Candidates were generally confident about defining characteristics of the repertoire and were careful to answer the questions in the precise terms in which they were posed. Few offered redundant facts about instrument construction or described features of the musical tradition, which could not actually be heard in the extract or were not relevant to answering the question (e.g. information about the nature and function of *ragas* in Indian music).

Section C

More candidates chose to answer questions on the Beethoven Prescribed Work than on the Bach.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates answered some of the questions well. Many had difficulty with (vi), jumping to the conclusion that the bassoon was imitating the flute: this suggested that the concept of doubling at a distance of two octaves was unfamiliar. Only a handful of candidates were able to identify the reiterated dominant seventh chords from the *Prometheus* tune as the source in answer to (v) even though the previous question (iv) had caused them to focus on the broken chord accompaniment played by the clarinet. The questions on *tempo* and dynamics were more straightforward.
- (b) Because the extract was not taken from the obvious beginning of a section, candidates found it hard to relate it to the rest of the movement. The essential nature of the writing - the invertible counterpoint - had not really been grasped.

Section D**Question 6**

Question (a) was answered fairly well: candidates knew the relevant *fugato* passages and were often able to describe the entries in detail. Sufficient knowledge of one of the other movements (its *tempo* or time-signature, form or key or style) was shown to demonstrate some appreciation of the rest of the Symphony and candidates knew its date and place of performance.

Most candidates knew, in answer to (e), that the trumpet in Bach's day had no valves, but they were less certain about the effect of this on its sound and the music written for it.

The Bach essays (g) were considerably more relevant than the Beethoven ones (d), but generally, the improvement noted last year towards a more connected, thoughtful style of writing, was not maintained. Length is not a criterion: it is possible to achieve high marks in the space allotted if facts are chosen judiciously, presented succinctly and coherently, and illustrated by a few entirely relevant examples. The Bach question was perhaps, a little more predictable and candidates were able to shape their facts relevantly: but the examples of music they quoted were less obviously relevant; it was often left to the Examiner to make the connection. In answering the Beethoven question, very few candidates referred to any examples of contemporary audience reaction, yet this is well-documented. Many knew exactly how many bars there were in the symphony and could compare this with examples of symphonies by Haydn and Mozart, but failed to use this point to address the question i.e. audiences found much of his music too long. There seemed, too, to be some lack of understanding about what several of the 'facts' that had been learned really meant. Beethoven's fondness for 'third-relationship keys' was often mentioned and then supported by examples of modulation from E flat major to C minor. Most candidates were able to mention at least one example of the way in which he expanded the orchestra, but too often this was only the addition of the third horn in the *Eroica*. Where candidates were aware of more significant examples (trombone, piccolo, double bassoon), they rarely demonstrated an understanding of the *effect* and why it might have surprised or shocked the audience of the day - hardly any mentioned that his music was often found to be unacceptably noisy.

Paper 6020/02
Melody, Harmony and Analysis

General comments

Examiners were pleased with the general standard of achievement in this Paper and a number of candidates achieved high marks in all three sections of the component. As in 2002, the weakest section was melody writing, where very few candidates were able to show an ability to construct a melodic line that was musically convincing. It would appear that only a handful of candidates are able to perceive aurally what they write on the page.

In this session Examiners noted relatively few errors in relation to musical literacy. As in previous sessions, however, a number of scripts produced a time-signature at the start of every line of music or omitted double-bar lines at the end of melodies. Many of the weakest answers contained incorrect numbers of beats in bars, and the need to check work carefully is as important as ever.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) *Melody writing*

MOZART, *Piano quartet*, K.493, 3rd movement, bars 02-11 (Piano)

Examiners continue to express concern that many candidates appear to be unable to “hear” mentally the effect of what they write on paper. The aim of this exercise is to construct a musically convincing melodic line based on a given series of pitch relationships. In order to obtain high marks candidates must make effective use of the stimulus provided (many answers avoided this completely!) and construct a melodic line that is musically satisfying.

A number of melodies suffered from an approach that was clearly too formulaic: answers had been “prepared” carefully before the examination and did not always fit easily with the printed stimulus. Several scripts produced melodies that became increasingly complex (and consequently less convincing) as the melody progressed. Such answers usually lacked a sense of musical coherence in the melodic line.

Several melodies failed to provide any feel for appropriate underpinning harmony, and many candidates who chose to produce workings in the key of f minor came adrift when dealing (or failing to deal) with the awkward melodic leap between D flat and E natural. Examiners were less than impressed by a few candidates who chose to ignore the given A flat in order to make the stimulus fit more easily into the key of B-flat major.

The given pitch sequence must be used as the opening of the melody (although the note sequence may be transposed) and candidates who fail to make use of the given pitch relationships effectively penalise themselves and restrict the number of credit marks available for their answer.

Examiners advise candidates to give more thought to the placing of cadence points within the melodic line. Many melodies rambled in an itinerant manner without having any clear “resting places”. The effective placing of cadence points within a melody can help to give the line a clear sense of overall structure and balance.

Again this year, many otherwise creditable melodies suffered from dynamic markings that appeared to have been added at the last minute and were frequently not well related to melodic contour. This observation has been a feature of Examiners’ Reports for many years and Examiners are concerned that this important message does not appear to be getting back to candidates. Careful placing of precise dynamic and/or articulation indications is vital if the melody is to impress an Examiner as a piece of “real” and effective musical composition.

(b) *Word setting*EMMA WHEELER WILCOX, *Solitude*, lines 5-8

A very small number of candidates selected this option, and answers were disappointing in general. There was only one example of a fully effective setting of the text, and many answers failed to indicate a high level of basic skill in relation to setting the text of the poem.

The basic requirements of this question are an accurate division of the printed text into syllables and a secure and appropriate setting of rhythmic stresses. Examiners were disappointed that many candidates choosing this option appeared to lack the musical skills required to accomplish the task successfully.

Some candidates produced rather heavily structured answers (perhaps manufactured to a set musical formula prior to the examination?) that did not fit easily with the printed text and failed to reflect any of the musical imagery clearly evident in the poem.

Very few answers contained effective dynamic indications, although the given text presented several opportunities for appropriate dynamic markings that would mirror the sense of the poem.

Question 2*Harmonisation*MENDELSSOHN, *Elijah*, op.70, Chorus, He that shall endure to the end, bars 1-6 and 35-37

Many candidates achieved high marks in this question and Examiners were pleased to note the degree of harmonic understanding evident in a large number of workings.

In part **(a)** candidates' bass lines were mainly appropriate, although several contained awkward clashes with the given melody line or incorrect parallel movement in 5ths and/or octaves. Several lines contained awkward angular intervals and thus did not convey a convincing sense of direction or harmonic understanding.

Examiners were very pleased that so many answers made correct use of a progression containing a passing 6/4 chord in part **(b)**. Most candidates who chose to make use of this type of progression did so in a musically effective context. There were, however, answers that made use of second-inversion chords that were placed inappropriately and did not provide a convincing sense of harmonic progress. Similarly, candidates who selected a string of first-inversion chords that moved in parallel motion appeared to be unaware of the relatively unsatisfying aural effect of such progressions.

Some workings included chords that failed to fit effectively with the printed melodic line and/or the candidate's added bass line. These elements need to be checked carefully so that melody, bass line and chord indications all agree. Examiners were disappointed that a significant number of candidates failed to provide any chord indications in answer to part **(b)** of this question.

Many melody lines were written at a high pitch and maintained awkward large gaps between the alto and soprano lines. Given the relatively uninteresting pattern of the three printed parts Examiners were surprised that only a few candidates made effective use of passing and auxiliary notes in their part **(c)** answers.

Question 3*Analysis*ANTON DIABELLI, *Lesson in C*, op.125 no.10, bars 9-32

Many candidates achieved high marks in this question and Examiners were pleased to note the general degree of accuracy in candidates' answers to questions in this part of the Paper. Many scripts received maximum or near-maximum marks for this question.

Most candidates were able to identify all the chords in part **(a)** accurately. The most common errors were incorrect identification of the second chord in bar 4 as **Vc** rather than chord **V** in root position, and a failure to recognise the added 7th in the **V7** chord at the start of bar 8. Examiners were pleased to see that the majority of candidates identified the chords at the start of bars 3 and 4 as **IVc** and **Ic** respectively, recognising the second-inversion nature of these chords.

In part **(b)** most scripts identified the dominant relationship accurately.

Many candidates experienced some difficulty in identifying the bars based on chord **V7b**. The most common error was to give bars 11 and 15 as answers, but these are based on a **V7** chord in second inversion (**V7c**), not the first-inversion required by the question.

Non-harmony notes were identified accurately by most candidates in parts **(d)**, **(e)** and **(f)**, although some scripts displayed a degree of imprecision by candidates in circling notes printed in the score. Candidates are advised to ensure that their answers are clear: circles should enclose notes precisely. Hastily-drawn enclosures may not help candidates to present their answers with the degree of clarity expected by Examiners.

Part **(g)** caused problems for many candidates who had achieved full marks up to this point in the question and Examiners were disappointed at candidates' apparent lack of perception in comparing the *harmony* of the selected passages. Many able candidates failed to gain credit because their answers referred to details of pitch rather than harmony (for example, "one passage is printed an octave higher than the other"). Relatively few candidates were able to point out both the change to chord **VI** at bar 222 and the earlier occurrence of chord **V7** in the concluding cadence of the final phrase.

Examiners were exasperated to see that some candidates had spent precious examination time making accurate manuscript copies of the printed music for this question and they wish to stress forcefully that such copying of printed extracts is not required! Such time-consuming activity effectively penalises candidates by leaving them insufficient time to address fully the tasks for which they can receive credit.