

CCEA GCSE Music
(Summer Series) 2013

Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

music

Foreword

This booklet contains the Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Reports for CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Music from the Summer Series 2013.

CCEA's examining teams produce these detailed reports outlining the performance of candidates in all aspects of the qualification in this series. These reports allow the examining team an opportunity to promote best practice and offer helpful hints whilst also presenting a forum to highlight any areas for improvement.

CCEA hopes that the reports will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk

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GCSE MUSIC

Chief Examiner's Report

Listening and Appraising

General Overview

The paper this year had a wide variety of questions and each section was equally demanding.

Responses from candidates varied considerably particularly when it came to recognising instruments/instrumentation detail, and in many cases showed a lack of knowledge of some of the set works.

There are still too many answers where candidates rely on vague generalisations – words such as sequence, repetition, polyphonic, homophonic, use of, walking bass and word painting etc. These terms when used have to be linked to text or music.

We would remind schools that the use of “tippex” or “red ink” is not permitted in the examination, and that candidates need to write clearly and legibly if their answers are to be understood and not guessed at.

In the “big” questions (3, 6 and 9) there was a wide range of responses, and gave candidates an opportunity to display their aural and analytical skills. These questions also carry a QWC (quality of written communication) mark – and the standards here did vary greatly.

Many candidates have difficulty writing legibly and coherently which is important in those questions requiring a QWC mark.

Examination Paper Part 1

Q1 *Karl Jenkins: “Requiem”, “Dies Irae”; 1.29–2.24*

- (a) Majority of candidates correctly identified SATB or 4 part choir.
- (b)
 - (i) Again well answered with most candidates correctly noting 4 playings of the ostinato.
 - (ii) This part of the question clearly differentiated between candidates. The last note was more frequently identified. Again, the majority of candidates gained both marks.
- (c)
 - (i) This was less well answered and the standard was indicative of similar-type questions which required higher order analytical and/or extended writing skills. Too many answers comprised non-specific comments, or focused on the *instrumental* setting and did not answer the question. A small minority gained all three marks even though there was a very generous mark scheme.
 - (ii) The written score for the bass part has strong accents marked. The recording was less so and thus the mark scheme has reflected what candidates heard.

Q2 *Extract A: Cara Emerald; "That Man"; 0.00–0.30*

- (a) Common time identified in overwhelming majority of cases.
- (b) (i) The vocal part enters before the 8th playing concludes but the mark scheme rewards candidates who identified 7 complete playings.
- (ii) While majority of candidates gained at least one of the marks for this question with piano and drum kit being most popular, marks were lost by candidates not clearly identifying specific 'drums' used e.g. bass, snare or side drum.
- (c) This part of the question focused candidates' attention on **musical features**. Most common identified the piano beginning the ostinato, three note ascending motif (and one descending), off beat chords, minor tonality and syncopated saxophone. Again there was an extensive mark scheme which rewarded candidates' aural perception.

There were only a small minority of full marks.

Extract B: Glee Cast: "Don't Stop Believing"; 0.00–0.32

- (d) The syncopated motif No. 2 was correctly identified by most.
- (e) (i) Male voice was the most common non-specific answer. A tenor voice was the only acceptable answer.
- (ii) The ostinato (as printed) features 4 chords.

Q3 *Pachelbel: Canon in D major; 0.00 – 1.04*

The response to this question was disappointing given that it is a set work and that extensive analysis notes exist including staff notation extracts used in this question.

- (a) This question clearly differentiated between candidates especially in the identification of the incorrect quaver notes in bars 5 and 6.
- (b) (i) Too many candidates lost a valuable mark by not ticking **two** answers.
- (ii) It was very disappointing to reflect how many candidates did not correctly identify the tonality, given that the clue was also in the title of the set work - Canon in D Major.
- (iii) Here again, too many candidates incorrectly wrote "harpsichord" when the recording is clearly written for organ and cello.
- (c) This part of the question was designed to benefit most candidates and realised this aim with the majority of candidates gaining three marks. Part (ii) identifying 'canon' as the form could have also been identified from the written score.

Q4 *Vivaldi: "Gloria in Excelsis Deo"; 0.00–1.04*

- (a) (i) Correctly identified by most as Ostinato B.
- (ii) Correctly identified by most as trumpet.
- (b) (i) The question aimed to identify technical understanding of simple Italian musical terms. Only a small minority failed to gain the mark here.
- (ii) SATB or 4 part choir accepted. Mixed voice choir is insufficiently specific.

- (c) (i) One mark awarded for identifying a modulation and the extra mark for identifying the move from major to minor. Most gained both marks.
- (d) This was a well answered question with majority of candidates giving clear musical reasons for the choice of Baroque period.

Q5 The majority of answers required correct identification of musical instruments – the most significant weakness identified in past years in both papers. The wording of the end of the question to lead candidates towards instruments from the woodwind section proved beneficial in a large number of cases.

It was disturbing to see how many candidates gained no marks in this question, including missing out on the trade mark 5/4 time signature.

Q6 This proved the most popular question with the majority of candidates gaining 7 or 8 marks. It is encouraging that there continues to be a good understanding of key areas of the music business in this year's candidature.

A large number of candidates lost their only marks in this question in section (c).

The majority understood the main function of iTunes, but failed to identify the live streaming or replay of TV programmes role of the iPlayer.

Examination Paper Part 2

Option 1 Musical Traditions of Ireland

This option appeared to be the least popular of the three, the majority of candidates opting for 2 and 3.

Q1 Extract A The Cuckoo's Nest – De Danaan (0.00–1.23)

- (a) (i)&(ii) Well answered by most candidates – in some other cases a lot of guess work appeared to be evident.
- (b) (i) Surprisingly not all candidates were able to name both instruments here and this was also the case with (c) (i) and (ii) – a common problem in all options as referred to above.
- (iii) Not well answered, being a set work it was surprising how many thought it to be a Jig or Reel.

Extract B Drowsy Maggie – The Chieftains (0.00–1.55)

- (c) (i)&(ii) The same problems here as in the first extract – most knew the title of the piece and the performers (a) but in (iii) and (iv) not everyone named the instruments correctly.
- (d) (i) A wide variety of forms were suggested and in (ii) not everyone knew this was a Reel.

Q2 Carrickfergus – The Chieftains (0.00–2.44)

- (a) (i)&(ii) Once again the naming of the piece and the group were almost always correct as was the naming of the Harp at (b) (i).
- (b) (ii) We had a very wide spread of answers but too few concentrated on what the instrument was actually doing.
- (c) (i)&(ii) In spite of being instrumental recognition were quite well answered, only a few answered with two or one correct instrument.

- (d) (i)& (ii) Were invariably correct.

Q3 He moved through the fair – Sinead O’Connor & Chieftains (3.01–4.52)

In general terms, these questions were well answered. However not everyone managed to achieve all the marks in each section.

In (a) there were many possible musical comments to be made; melisma, female voice, and the tin whistle were easy to spot. Not so many managed to comment correctly on the accompaniment and there was a wide variety of answers and guess work here.

In (b) we were surprised how few managed to give five valid links to the area of study, the majority managing about three or occasionally four.

Option 2 Incidental Music for Stage, Screen and Television

Q4 Extract A Theme from “Doctor Who” (1.55–2.29)

- (a) (i)& (ii) Almost everyone knew the programme title, but unfortunately in (ii) not all named the composer correctly and gave the arranger’s name instead.
- (iii) Some had difficulty naming the triplets but (iv) was very well answered.

Extract B Overture: “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (0.00–0.47)

- (b) A majority managed to name the instruments correctly but at (iii) and (iv) there were too many wild guesses – some naming the family of instruments.
- (c) (i) Most knew the composer’s name (and spelt it correctly), but not everyone knew who wrote the play.

Q5 Morning – “Peer Gynt” – Grieg (2.02–3.57)

- (a) This was a demanding question and relied on the candidate’s knowledge of the piece as well as listening intently during the examination. The results were disappointing with a tiny minority gaining all the marks – too often there were wild guesses and many inappropriate suggestions everywhere. Even in the final question at (d) few scored all the marks – too many having been asked to name the play for which the music was composed wrote “The Peer Gynt Suite”.

Q6 Theme from the film “Superman” – John Williams (0.00–2.26)

There are problems here when candidates do not structure their answers. There are still those who provide a “list” of comments without connecting them to the particular part of the music they mean.

These questions are meant to test a candidate’s listening skills when faced with a piece of unfamiliar music and also the “quality of their written communication”. Providing a “list” of words or short phrases such as “Use of timpani” or “there is repetition” is inappropriate here, and gains no marks.

It is important that candidates read the questions carefully and structure their answers to what is required in the rubric. This did not always appear to happen.

However, there were many good answers and the mark scheme provided for a very wide variety of responses.

Option 3 Vocal Music

Q7 Extract A Handel-Messiah – Recit: “And the angels said...” (0.33–1.06)

Excellent answers here to this question with many gaining full marks, just occasionally some chose “Aria” at (iii).

Extract B The Erl King – Schubert (0.00–1.33)

Some good answers here too – almost everyone knew the title of the song, unfortunately not so many were able to name the three characters (ii), too many adding the Erl King into the mix, often in place of the Narrator. (iii) Most knew the form of the song and also identified the ostinato or pedal at (c) (i) and at (ii) and (iii) named the correct composer and usually the correct period, though quite a few put him back in time into the Classical period.

Q8 Run – Snow Patrol (4.30–5.50)

Mostly correct with a few misnaming the instruments at (a) (i). At (b)(i) a good many gained full marks and there were a few who managed to achieve 2 correct and some who seemed to mark a variety of other areas of the score with “x”s. (b)(ii) and (iii) were not well done with too many wild guesses and too few knowing what a “pause” sign was. (c) (i) A few correct answers but too many only knew it was a major key and scored one mark here. Also (c) (ii) was badly handled and too few knew what the instrumentation was in what is a well-known and loved song. Of course at (iii) the answers were almost all correct though a few did think the performers were “Cold Play”.

Q9 Over the Rainbow performed by Joe McElderry (0.00–2.09)

Another good extract with plenty to write about. Not everyone managed to concentrate on the voice in (a) and the accompaniment in (b), which was purely on the instrumental contribution. There were many very good answers and interesting comments on the style of the accompaniment too though not everyone identified the Ukulele. Awarding the QWC as in the other longer questions was difficult to administer as some excellently produced questions were very difficult to decipher and a few virtually illegible.

Performing and Appraising

- Once again this year we saw a large number of excellent candidates, and enjoyed well presented solo work and many original and exciting ensembles.
- As a team we wish to extend our thanks to the various schools we visited for their hospitality and efficiency in organising the examination in such a way as to make it less stressful for candidates and examiners. It makes such a difference to the progress of the examination when teachers have a pre-arranged rota of candidates with information on their pieces and the order in which they wish to be examined.
- It is important that schools realise that examiners cannot be expected to examine more than 20 candidates in one day. Any school with more than 20 candidates will have them spread over a number of days in consultation with the appointed examiner. This cannot be altered after the arrangements are made, and if absolutely necessary only in consultation with CCEA in unforeseen circumstances.
- We would remind schools again that the “discussion” takes place immediately after the performance of the one piece the candidate wishes to talk about. We also need to emphasise that their chosen piece must be linked to one of the areas of study covered by the candidate.

- Examiners reported this year that it seemed more prevalent for candidates to offer to play pieces well above the level we expect at GCSE. This level is Grade 3 as AS level is at Grade 4. More than often when this happens the candidates perform less well and mistakes of any kind lower the marks achieved. Much better to perform a piece at Grade 3 or 4 well than a higher grade not so well.
- We are still being offered performances which are under 2 minutes in length. Often only a minute long and in some cases even less than that. If candidates do this it limits the examiner in what they can mark and the candidate can be disadvantaged. The piece played must have enough musical content to warrant examination – as a rule around 2 minutes but no more than 4/5 minutes is what we expect. Some candidates opt to play 2 pieces, often overrunning the 5 minutes allowed. If one of the pieces is not as well played as the other then a candidate can lose marks. If they must play two pieces then they need to be under the 5 minutes allowed and equally well played.

Solo Performance

There were some outstanding musicians this year both musically and technically. Also we had the usual huge variety of instruments offered – the entire range of orchestral instruments, traditional instruments, percussion and DJing. It was not surprising to see candidates scoring extremely well this year.

Once again we had a large number of singers, and many opting to present songs from Musicals, often acting the songs too. It is so encouraging to see that the number of singers depending on music on music stands has diminished greatly, allowing their performances to come alive, and the examiners see the “thoughts behind the words” of the songs being communicated.

Accompaniments were provided by backing tracks, pupil pianists and teacher pianists. In most cases these were very effective and sympathetic, but in a few performances were marred by unsympathetic piano accompaniments by over enthusiastic staff.

Ensemble Performance

Once again we were presented with a wide range of excellent ensembles, instrumental and vocal. In general there is a very high standard achieved here as in previous years. Most took time to set up ensembles, checking tuning and balance, with good results.

There are unfortunately still too many candidates presenting themselves with just a piano accompaniment, in what is really a repeat of the Solo part of the examination. Occasionally another instrument might be added in, with a small and often insignificant contribution, to try and make the presentation look and sound like a group effort. We hope this will start to change and that such ensembles will soon be a thing of the past.

Sometimes the candidate’s teacher was involved and in many cases seemed to lead the ensemble, the role we expect the candidate to fill.

There were, once again, many excellent Rock ensembles often with opportunities for candidates to show how well they could improvise. Just occasionally a few were spoiled by a too enthusiastic player on drum kit who tended to forge ahead *fff* taking the other players with him and drowning them out.

We *must* be able to clearly identify the candidate within an ensemble, so it must not be too small or conversely too large – for example, presenting any candidate within a band of 30 + players is doing them a disservice and makes an examiner’s job very challenging.

The Discussion

The examiners were given a scheme of questions beginning with a discussion of the piece, its composer, and background and its difficulties followed by how it is linked to the area of study, then a few brief questions on the areas studied by the candidate and their favourite set work.

This seems to have worked quite well and there were many good reports on this part of the examination with pupils having been well prepared. Most were able to answer coherently, often using technical language when discussing their performance with the examiner.

It is expected that one of the candidate's pieces be linked to an area of study, and in the discussion they are specifically asked to justify this. It was surprising how many were unable to name Option 1 correctly. Too often referred to as "Irish Music" or "Irish Traditional". Also there was a large number of candidates linking their piece to "Incidental Music" when the piece was actually "programme music" or a song from a musical. They must realise that the parameters of this area are quite restrictive and their piece *must* be music composed for a film, TV programme or play. In other words, the piece only exists because of the original source which has prompted it. It is hoped that teachers will bear this in mind when advising pupils on their choices.

It was a good year and all examiners were full of praise for the high standards achieved by the candidates over all. We congratulate them and their teachers for the thought and preparation they brought to the examination this year.

Principal Moderator's Report

Composing and Appraising

General Overview

The high standards of the previous series were once again replicated in this component, although three distinct traits were discernible: firstly, that there were less truly outstanding post-GCSE standard folios submitted; secondly, that the majority of composition folios gained in excess of 65% of the total marks for the component and thirdly, that there were much fewer compositions in the F/G boundary. Fewer folios were awarded full marks at centres but the artistry and flair exemplified was of a very high standard.

It is one of the stated aims of the GCSE Music examination, that it provides a suitable pre-requisite for progress to AS and A2 studies. I am confident that the high standards exemplified by the highest attaining candidates have given them a strong foundation to develop higher level compositional skills.

It is again important to recognise the significant amount of time and effort taken by Centre staff in encouraging their candidates to neatly present their folios and provide a generally excellent quality of scores and CDs.

Recordings and scores

The use of notational software programmes to provide scores continues to increase with an exponential increase in the submission of Garageband inspired compositions.

The vast majority of centres included recordings of their compositions and scores. It is not, however, a requirement to submit recordings and scores for the specification but their provision is a definite aid during moderation.

In the weakest examples, candidates continued to choose 'software' instrumentation inappropriate to the acoustic range or timbral effects of acoustic instruments of the same name. This is an element where a 'research' activity on instrumentation would be beneficial. The logs in many of these cases also gave no indication why certain instrumentation had been chosen.

Success Criteria and Standard of Centre assessments

Assessments made by overwhelming majority of centres, continued to be accurate and correctly reflected the calibre of candidates' work. It was interesting to note that there was a slight decrease in the number of centres reviewed at Post Moderation.

The small number (the smallest number of the new specification) which did require adjustment to marks, highlighted major discrepancies in interpretation of agreed standards which, for those centres affected, should result in greater focus on the assessment criteria grids in the specification and attendance at Agreement Trial support events. Analysis of centres represented at these events confirms that the overwhelming majority are accurately assessing this component.

Criteria (iii) continues to cause most assessment difficulty, where high marks were often awarded for little or no evidence of secondary chords, effective cadences or added colour to the harmonic language as outlined in the criteria.

Criteria (i) still causes some concern when applied to strophic songs which may have multiple verses but little melodic or rhythmic differences or the addition of other layers.

The vast majority of folios presented were assessed by centres under Success Criteria A (where technology is not a core component). A very small number of centres used Success Criteria B, although in most cases, this did not benefit candidates as there was insufficient evidence under criteria (iv) to gain highest marks. Staff at centres should carefully consider if the use of technology Success Criteria B will truly benefit their candidates. 'Loop-based' compositions with little manipulation of the original material and/or an effective final mix, will not gain well under these criteria. The review of Success Criteria B continues and advice will be provided to centres about its future.

Overall, a much smaller number of centres had marks adjusted and in many cases this resulted from inconsistent marking in the centre, new staff marking for the first time and thus inexperienced in the application of the criteria or centres which had already received advice from previous years showing little improvement in internal standardisation.

A considerable amount of time is spent in ensuring the TAC6s issued to centres are as affirming and positive as possible, celebrating good folios which are well assessed, authenticated and presented. Any constructive comments noted by the moderating team are designed to improve future in-centre planning and should not be ignored.

The quality of recordings submitted remains extremely high suggesting the frequent and knowledgeable use of in-house equipment, which is to be applauded. Centres are reminded however that the moderation team must be sure that the candidate composition log **fully** explains the processes involved in these recordings. There was clear evidence from the Summer 2013 series of submissions, that a number of recordings gave an added sophistication to the candidates' work, which had not been fully explained in accompanying logs or on the reverse of the Candidate Record Forms.

The overwhelming majority of centres and candidates are to be congratulated on the manner in which they have managed the time constraints, authentication procedures and controlled assessment guidelines. There is clear evidence of very good practice in most schools, with only a small minority, falling short of agreed standards.

This is a particularly pleasing development, given that there are many more centres submitting Controlled Assessments as part of consortium arrangements. In schools where there is more than one member of staff teaching the component, internal standardisation remains of a high standard.

Authentication procedures and Composition Logs

The Composition log is an integral part of the composition process. The majority of logs submitted used the CCEA template (available on the CCEA Music microsite). For those centres who chose to provide their own templates and/or composition diaries, these were detailed, highly informative, well-documented and beautifully presented.

There were some excellent examples of good classroom practice in the teaching of composition skills, effective self, peer and teacher evaluation and a refreshing transparency in the quality of teaching and learning in Music Departments represented in the cohort.

It is a clear requirement of this component that a Log is submitted for **each** composition, and that they are **authenticated** by teachers and candidates. Those folios which did not adhere to this requirement were returned to centres, inevitably delaying the moderation process.

The specification states that teacher authentication should occur on **three** occasions during the life of each composition. Three progress updates aligned to the pupil comments, dated and signed, is recommended good practice. It was disappointing to note that, despite guidance offered at Agreement Trials, too many teachers simply 'ticked' the box and initialled the pupil comment. As stated last year, although this fulfils the 'letter of the law', the Moderation Team consider it 'best practice' to include a short qualifying comment with each authentication.

Areas of Study

Repeated Patterns proved the most popular related area of study with *Vocal Music and Musical Traditions in Ireland* following closely behind. These were artistically handled by the majority of candidates.

Links to *Vocal Music* continued to result in many well-structured, stylishly-developed and balanced rock/pop/urban songs with well-established references to the features expected. It was most encouraging to note the attention to detail paid by candidates in writing or researching appropriate texts. The moderation team did not encounter any inappropriate lyrics/subject matter. Highest marks are gained under criterion (i) where there is evidence of added 'layers', counter-melodies, descant harmonies etc., in additional verses.

There was a less programmatic element in the work of candidates in the *Musical Traditions in Ireland* Area of Study, but those who did choose this option were particularly effective, with the *Riverdance* set work providing frequent inspiration. Traditional suites of Slow Airs, jigs, reels etc., were popular and a large number brought new insight to the, often formulaic, nature of Traditional Irish/Ulster-Scottish dance forms, supplanting new rhythmic intricacy and harmonic invention in a 'celtic rock' style.

The Moderation team would remind centres that larger instrumental participation should not be interpreted or marked as 'developmental' unless it increases the number of independent melodic/rhythmic lines or adds to the textural/timbral complexity of the composition.

There were some very creative compositions particularly in the *Incidental Music* option and it was here that greatest creative use was made of technology, especially in music to accompany film or computer games. In many cases, the sophistication in blending sound effects and melodic lines, was cinematic in its scope.

Following the reminder to centres at Agreement Trials, there was a large drop in the submission of Musical Arrangements, which **no longer** exist as an area of study. Candidates are, however, still able to compose their own melodies and create musical arrangements of these.

Centres who use class-based compositional tasks as teaching tools clearly outlined individual outcomes showing differentiation between candidates and allowing creativity and freedom of choice. A larger number of candidates used the 'Free Composition' option.

Centre staff are reminded that the specification does require two 'contrasting' compositions to be submitted.

Administration and Compliance with Specification

Summer 2013 series saw the largest number of arithmetical errors by centres. Most common mistakes were associated with transfer of marks from Record sheets to the OMR sheets, i.e. the 'hundreds' box. Computation errors on the Candidate Record Sheets also contributed to this large number of errors. These would have seriously disadvantaged candidates had they gone undiscovered.

Centre staff are requested to pay particular attention to totalling across the criteria, transferring marks from Candidate Record sheets to OMR and totalling down for the final folio mark.

It is a requirement of this specification that all Candidate Record Sheets are countersigned by candidate and teacher and that all Composition Logs are signed by the candidate and authenticated three times during the life of each composition. Large numbers of unauthenticated work had to be returned to centres to ensure compliance in this respect.

Centres are also reminded that submissions to CCEA should include the work of the highest and lowest candidate, even if they have not been requested.

There is also a requirement to include the TAC 2 form of Internal Standardisation, even in one-teacher centres.

Use of Technology

It is most encouraging to note the increase in the technical knowledge shown by candidates in handling a wide range of school and home based media. There were fewer examples of work where candidates had not clearly indicated the use of the pre-programmed tracks/loops, downloaded files or material from media-sharing websites (e.g. You Tube etc.). Teacher assessments accurately reflected the original work of candidates in the vast majority of centres.

It is a major frustration to the moderation team that a number of centres had submitted CDs which had not been correctly formatted for audio playback. This seriously impacts the time frame for moderation to be completed and can cause added annoyance back at centres, to whom material will be returned.

Conclusion

It is my hope that the fine work evidenced in the majority of centres continues and that candidates will continue to benefit from the high quality guidance and direction of their Music staff.

Contact details

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