

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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G353 Introduction to Historical Study in Music

General Comments

Examiners saw more scripts achieving marks of 70 and above than would normally be expected in a January series for this unit, and this improvement in the level of candidate achievement is commendable. It is regrettable that a January series will not be available to candidates in future years.

Once again, candidate performance in this unit depended on the knowledge acquired throughout the course in relation to aspects of musical study required in other A-level music units, notably G352 (Western Tonal Harmony and The Expressive use of Instrumental Techniques) and in the preparatory study of the prescribed repertoire for G353. In general terms, able candidates who knew the prescribed repertoire well were able to achieve high marks in all three sections of the paper. Able candidates who did not know the prescribed repertoire well gained high marks in Section A but were unable to match this level of performance in Sections B and C.

Examiners have noticed that the inclusion of questions on harmony and tonality frequently provide problems for candidates, resulting in few detailed or informed answers and many scripts that simply leave the answer space blank for these questions. It is a real concern to examiners that a number of candidates do not understand what is meant by tonality or texture, preferring to write about other issues, notably instrumentation. Tonality is an over-riding Area of Study in this specification, and although quite a complex aspect of the subject, its study cannot be avoided at this level. Teachers and candidates must engage with aspects of harmony and tonality on a consistent basis if candidates are to acquire the understanding of tonality and harmony expected not only in this unit but also in the composing unit at AS level (G352). Candidates may also be required to draw on their understanding of this aspect of music in discussion with examiners in the AS Performing Unit (G351). If harmony and tonality is not being taught thoroughly at AS level, candidates will be disadvantaged when they reach the terminal assessment stages of each unit.

The prescribed repertoire for Unit G353 changes regularly and the works to be studied for each series are given clearly in the OCR specification for GCE Music. Centres need to ensure that candidates have covered the correct repertoire for the series if candidates are not to be disadvantaged. OCR will not provide an alternative set of questions on previous repertoire if centres discover that the wrong repertoire has been prepared. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the correct repertoire for the series has been covered.

The demise of a January examination series will have a significant impact on candidates who may wish to re-sit this unit to improve on a weaker than expected result at the end of Year 12. In previous years the January series has served as a genuine re-sit opportunity for such candidates, making use of the same prescribed repertoire as the previous June series. In 2014, candidates who wish to re-sit G353 will be able to do so only in the June series, when one of the sets of prescribed repertoire (Classical orchestral works or Instrumental jazz) will have changed.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Extract1A HAYDN, *Quartet in c, op.54 no.2* ("The Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ"), Bars 1-36¹ & 81-96¹. Lindsay String Quartet (1993), ASV Digital CD DCA 853, track 3, 00'00" – 02'17" & 08'13" – 09'06" [Total length of recorded extracts: 03'10"]

- 1) Most candidates recognised the use of a pedal, but the indication of 2 marks as the total for this question should have directed more candidates to the fact that additional information (use of the tonic) was required here.
- 2) (a) This was answered well by many candidates, although *Appoggiatura* was a popular incorrect choice of answer.
 (b) The question drew candidates' attention to the discrepancy between the printed score and the recorded performance. Examiners were pleased that many candidates recognised that the printed *acciaccatura* was performed as an appoggiatura in the recording.
- 3) Many scripts showed that candidates had recognised the use of a sequence, but (as in **Question 1**) the 2-mark allocation here should have alerted candidates to the fact that additional information (ascending) was required for full marks.
- 4) Examiners saw a wide range of answers to this question, with many failing to address the aspect of rhythm highlighted in bold in the wording of the question. Candidates who understood what was required here appreciated the use of syncopation in the passage. Few candidates gained all four marks available for this question.
- 5) Most answers were identified the use of *pizzicato* in the lower strings at bars 21-30, but responses to the first part of the question were more confused, with many responses referring to the use of an accent (articulation) rather than the use of double stopping (a performance technique, highlighted clearly in the wording of this question).
- 6) Examiners saw many correct answers to this question. Common errors included the omission of a G / F̃ as the last note of bar 32 and incorrect interval leaps in the middle of bars 33 and 34. Many candidates appreciated the dominant pitch in bar 35.
- 7) Most candidates recognised the use of an imperfect cadence in the section from bar 19 to bar 20.
- 8) This question was not well answered and very few candidates identified precise detail in their answers. Many candidates continue to use the simplistic terms "thick" and "thin" as descriptions of musical texture at this level. Candidates who identified correctly homophonic texture at the start of the passage were then tempted to assume that any passage later in the extract that was not homophonic must be polyphonic.
- 9) Most candidates perceived accurately a modulation to the relative major at the end of **Passage 1i**.

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- 10) This question was answered well by most candidates. Almost all responses demonstrated accurate perception of the melodic contour, but several candidates failed to appreciate that the melody began (and ended) on a high G.
- 11) This question differentiated well between candidates. The most able candidates were able to identify correctly almost all chords and their inversions. Weaker candidates struggled to place chords accurately, often failing to recognise conventional progressions that should have been covered in work connected with Unit G352 and the study of Western Tonal Harmony. It is important that candidates listen to the baseline carefully; this would have enabled candidates to differentiate between the placing of chord IV in root position and the same chord in first inversion in bars 47 and 48.
- 12) In spite of a high degree of accuracy in responses to **Question 9**, this question was not answered well. A common error was for candidates to give the key in which the passage ended (C major), rather than the relationship asked for in the question. Candidates need to be able to recognise a tonic major / tonic minor relationship between tonal centres.

Extract 1B GERROLD IMMELL, *Dallas – Main theme* (Lorimar Music Ltd, 1978), Soundtrack recording, unnamed orchestra (1982), Soundtrack Music Records Ltd. / EMI Records Ltd., CDSTM 6 / 7243 8 28038 2 9 (1993), track 3 ,00'00" - 00'49", 01'37" – 01'52" & 02'43" – 03'07" [Total length of recorded extracts: 01'28"]

- 13) Most candidates were able to identify the trumpet accurately.
- 14) Although many candidates identified the perfect cadence accurately at bars 25 and 26, there was more confusion over the identification of the cadence in bar 14, with fewer candidates recognising the placing of an imperfect cadence at this point.
- 15) This question revealed candidates' weaknesses in answers that involved extended writing. Many responses were superficial, with relatively few candidates having the patience to listen to the passage and work out precisely what was happening in relation to musical detail. Very few answers produced evidence that explored beyond basic surface features of the accompaniment.
- 16) Most candidates identified the oboe correctly, although many answers suggested brass instruments or an alternative member of the woodwind family.
- 17) Almost all candidates were able to identify accurately a note in the printed melody that was ornamented, but very few were able to explain precisely how the note was ornamented in the recorded performance. *Glissando* was a common incorrect answer here.
- 18) Many candidates find it relatively easy to write about details of instrumentation, and this question produced many high marks. Most candidates commented on the strings playing quavers *pizzicato*, but only a few careful listeners referred to the addition of a cymbal or to the use of rim shots on the snare. Very few listeners mentioned the use of sustained notes in the horns from bar 30 onwards.

- 19) Most responses to this question received either 3 or 4 marks. Examiners saw a number of completely accurate answers, and many with only minor errors (a common mistake was to misjudge the upward leap of a 6th at the start of bar 39). Only a few scripts demonstrated insufficient sense of the overall melodic contour for credit in this question.
- 20) Although this question required the accurate placing of only three chords, very few candidates positioned all three chord names accurately. The printed melody in bars 43 and 45 should have provided some harmonic clues for candidates, but the E printed as the first crotchet of bar 45 confused many candidates and resulted in the incorrect suggestion of an underlying E major chord at that point in the music. Candidates who perceived the $\text{II}^7 - \text{V}^7$ progression (a standard chord sequence in Western Tonal Harmony studied for Unit G352) in bar 45 experienced few problems with this question.
- 21) Some answers to this question failed to provide a range of valid evidence, concentrating simply on details of instrumentation. Most answers mentioned the presence of detached (stab) chords in the accompaniment, but few answers included additional detail such as rhythmic syncopation or the change to *legato* articulation towards the end of the passage.
- 22) This question was answered poorly in general, with very few detailed comments covering all three aspects of music highlighted in the question. Most candidates were able to comment accurately on tonal centres used in the passages, but a smaller number of responses commented on the introduction to **Passage 1i** and/or the extended conclusion to **Passage 1iii**.

Section B

Extract 2 BEETHOVEN, *Concerto in D for violin & orchestra, op. 61*, 1st movement, bars 43 to 77¹.

Extract 2A: Menhuin / Furtwangler / Berlin Philharmonic orchestra (1953), EMI Classics 5-66975-2 (1999), track 1, 01'40" – 02'57" [Length of extract: 01'17"]

Extract 2B: Muldova / Gardiner / Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (2003), Decca Classics 473 872-2 (2003), track 1, 01'36" – 02'47" [Length of extract: 01'11"]

- 23)(a) Many candidates appeared to be unaware of the meaning of the term *sempre* (always) here. Examiners did not allow "piano" as a valid explanation of the dynamic indication *p* in this answer.
- (b) This term was recognised accurately by most candidates, although some very wordy responses took a long time to get to the point of the explanation.
- (c) Most candidates appreciated that the instruction in the score indicated that only one player should perform the printed line. Informed answers made it clear that the instruction intended this to be the *first* (or principal) clarinet or bassoon player.
- 24) This was answered accurately by many candidates. Although candidates understood the notation, many did not differentiate between semiquavers and *tremolo*. A common mistake was not to mention the use of double stopping also indicated by the 2nd violin notation in the passage specified.

- 25) Candidates need to look carefully at the marks allocated to each question. This section of the paper deals with detailed study of a prescribed orchestral work, and the allocation of a single mark to this question should have alerted candidates to the fact that “pedal” provided insufficient detail for the mark. Few candidates qualified the device as a dominant pedal in their responses.
- 26) Examiners continue to be astonished that so many candidates leave blank any question requiring a response to focus on harmony and tonality. There were very few good answers to this question. Most candidates commented on the alternating D major/D minor movement, but only better candidates added any intervening detail. Despite the fact that this is a prescribed work, few answers were able to comment accurately in any detail on harmony or tonality in the extract.
- 27) In contrast, answers to this question demonstrated evidence of good aural perception from many candidates. The best responses were able to pick out specific details across the range of musical features highlighted in the question and draw some effective comparisons between the two recordings heard. Examiners saw some very perceptive comments in relation to the sound of the strings in both recordings, and also in relation to the use of dynamics. Weaker answers tended to concentrate on surface features of the music, but still managed to make some comparison between recordings. Examiners have noticed an increasing tendency for candidates to waste a great deal of time and space in an attempt to nominate the “period” or “authentic” recording. This is not what examiners are looking for and, at best, such comment should only be drawn from a clear recognition of appropriate aural evidence in the recordings. Candidates would be unwise to assume that the two recordings will always feature a “period” performance.
- 28) Answers to this question revealed how well candidates knew the prescribed orchestral score. A common mistake was to argue that the solo violinist entered immediately after the printed extract. This was not the case, and informed candidates were able to refer to the presence of a *tutti* passage in D major with a new theme treated antiphonally within the strings before the soloist enters.
- 29) Many responses argued that the printed extract was taken from the development or the recapitulation, neither of which was true. Informed candidates were able to refer to the end of the 2nd Subject and part of the closing section of the 1st (orchestral) exposition within an overall structure of sonata form.

Extract 3 LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS HOT SEVEN, *Alligator Crawl* (1927) from The 25 Greatest Hot Fives & Hot Sevens, ASV Living Era AJA 5171 (1995), track 9, 00'32" – 00'59". [Length of recorded extract: 00'27"].

- 30) This question was answered well, and most candidates understood that the recorded extract represented an example of New Orleans / Dixieland collective improvisation.
- 31) This question was also answered well. Most candidates were able to identify the frontline instruments accurately, and many were able to give at least one feature of the music played by each named instrument.

- 32) Answers to this question tended to be less accurate in terms of detail, with many responses inaccurately referring to the music played by the tuba as a walking bass. Most candidates were able to mention the use of comping in the piano and banjo, and attentive listeners also referred to the use of occasional fills at cadence points in the tuba bass.
- 33) Most candidates identified the trumpet (or the soloist) and were able to describe relevant features of the music rather than the performing techniques employed by Armstrong. Many responses demonstrated awareness of the basic ABA¹ structure of the solo, although only a few candidates were able to show how the return of “A” material differed from its original statement. A common error here was the suggestion that a guitar solo followed the recorded extract.
- 34) Most candidates were aware that the music was recorded in 1927, with many responses giving the specific date on which the recording was made.

Section C Question choice by candidates in this section covered all three questions, although **Question 37** (comparing the use of wind instruments in two prescribed works) was answered least successfully, usually as a result of a poor choice of works to compare made by the candidate.

Strong answers must focus on the question set and demonstrate thorough and detailed knowledge of the music studied, while at a lower level of achievement the writing must disclose a basic understanding of context together with some accurate supporting references to the prescribed repertoire studied throughout the course in order to reach the appropriate standard at AS level.

- 35) Examiners expected candidates to be able to demonstrate an awareness of the musical context in their answers to this question, and were expecting some of the writing to disclose knowledge of a typical Baroque / Vivaldi concerto first movement. In too many cases the writing digressed into a summary of Vivaldi’s life and career. While this information has a link to Vivaldi’s production of numerous solo concertos (for the very competent instrumentalists in his charge at the Ospedale della Pietà), it needs to be kept in perspective, and the thrust of the writing in this question should have been designed to demonstrate how Vivaldi’s use of both soloist and orchestra conformed to the expectation of the period.
- 36) Most candidates were able to write confidently about aspects of Louis Armstrong’s *Alligator Crawl*, but revealed less sure knowledge of Davis & Evans’ arrangement of Gershwin’s *It ain’t necessarily so*. Some candidates attempted to relate the size of ensembles to developments in recording technology, but disappointingly there was little detail on how the arrangement of *It ain’t necessarily so* made use of its instrumental forces. The best answers focused on the use of solo techniques and of New Orleans style polyphony, with some comment on the use of the orchestra and instrumental timbre in the bridge sections of *It ain’t necessarily so*.

- 37)** This question was rarely well answered, and candidates frequently made a poor choice of works to discuss, revealing detailed knowledge of one of the works, but only a passing acquaintance with the other. This often led to an imbalance within the essay as a whole. Candidates usually knew about the instruments involved in the ensemble under discussion, but often did not comment effectively on their use. Haydn and Beethoven in particular were referred to in terms of sweeping generalisations, with little specific detail from the music offered as supporting evidence. Vivaldi and the jazz repertoire tended to fare a little better, with some essays offering more detailed descriptions of solos by Parker, Armstrong and Dodds.

G356 Historical and Analytical Studies in Music

General Comments

All candidates demonstrated some musical understanding in Section A and were able to show some knowledge in their answers to Section B, but as might be expected only one term into the A2 year, most candidates had yet to acquire all the skills necessary for success across both sections of the paper.

Section A required candidates to discuss various aspects of Ireland's setting, and all candidates demonstrated some ability to engage with the music. In order to do well, candidates need to ensure they address the specific question, writing concisely and to the point. Careful listening, backed up by close scrutiny of the score, is essential. Attempting to answer the questions merely by looking rather than listening is unlikely to prove successful.

In **Section B** candidates are required to answer two essay questions. Most were able to write with some success, but often essays were brief and/or superficial showing a lack of sufficient understanding of the actual music. In order to access the high mark bands, candidates need to ensure that they focus their response. At this level depth of knowledge is tested, so the ability to filter information to confine discussion to relevant detailed examples from the music is an essential skill.

The two Areas of Study, *Interpretation* and *Tonality*, are the over-arching features of this component and, if they are to access the higher mark bands, it is vital that candidates acquire knowledge and skills in these areas, together with the ability to apply correct technical terminology.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

- Q1(a) All candidates gave some appropriate responses, with use of timpani and brass with a link to the mood being mentioned by most. Development of the motif was often noticed, but few showed mastery of appropriate technical vocabulary in their response.
- Q1(b) Answers often centred on the first few bars of the required passage, thus limiting the response. The best candidates considered the whole section and were able to comment in detail on the augmentation and *pizzicato* found in bars 28 to 41.
- Q2 Marks were awarded for examples of how the choral textures interpret the text in the passage. While there were some detailed answers, the term *textures* was often misunderstood or disregarded and candidates found difficulty in applying appropriate terminology. There was often confusion between *unison/monophonic* and *homophonic* and between *contrapuntal* and *canon*.
- Q3 Most were able to recognise the pedal note and some noticed the chromatic nature of the harmony, but correct identification of chords or key was rare. Questions such as this focus directly on one of the Areas of Study and candidates need to gain the skills necessary to be confident in this area.
- Q4 Most candidates were able to mention some features of the music. To do well, candidates need to focus on the aspects of the music required by the specific question rather than detailing everything they heard. There was some confusion between *pulse/tempo* and *rhythm*.

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- Q5 There were many opportunities for discussion here. Most candidates could identify appropriate examples of word painting, but were sometimes unable to explain fully. Only the first three examples cited were marked, as indicated in the question.
- Q6 There were some good responses to this question. Precise examples from this short passage were needed.
- Q7 Answers needed to compare the use of choir and orchestra in the extract and the chosen work to gain high marks. Some candidates disregarded the word *choral* in the question and wrote about solo songs, which could not be credited.

Section B**Topic 1**

- Q8 Detailed discussion of aspects of vocal and instrumental writing in at least four songs was required in order to access the highest mark bands.
- Q9 Discussion of the harmonic and tonal processes used by Dowland and Schumann, together with relevant examples from the music, was needed. Detailed references were essential to gain high marks.
- Q10 This question focused on the effectiveness of the accompaniment. Answers which merely described the instrumentation were unable to access the higher mark bands.

Topic 2

- Q11 Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge of brief moments in the work. To gain high marks answers needed to discuss the music in detail. Understanding of the structure of the whole work and individual movements was often very superficial and/or confused.
- Q12 This question required candidates to focus on texture and timbre. Most were able to make some relevant points about *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*, but had only superficial knowledge of their chosen item of related repertoire. Some chose to discuss works which were not examples of *Programme Music* and which had little or no descriptive element, thus limiting the response they were able to give.
- Q13 Most candidates chose to discuss *Symphonie fantastique* in their response. Discussion of the chosen item of related repertoire was often limited to superficial comments on the storyline with little relevance to the question. Those who linked detailed examples of the use of harmony and tonality to interpretation of the subject matter (*expressive use*) were able to gain high marks.

Topic 3

- Q14 There were some good responses to this question. The best answers discussed examples of how Herrmann's use of timbre and texture enhanced the dialogue and action. Some candidates confined their response to discussion of instrumentation without clear reference to its expressive use.
- Q15 Detailed examples of the expressive use of harmony and tonality in two film scores were essential to gain high marks. Most candidates had some understanding of *The Hours*, but often lacked relevant knowledge of their other chosen score.

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- Q16 This question elicited responses on a number of films, including *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *King Kong* and *Gone with the Wind*. There were some thorough answers, but some restricted themselves to superficial discussion of the instrumentation.

Topic 4

- Q17 Most candidates were able to make some appropriate comments. Discussion of the harmonic and tonal processes used by Byrd, together with relevant examples from the music, was needed. Detailed references were essential to gain high marks.
- Q18 There was a wealth of material available for discussion in this question. Answers were often restricted to discussion of the Evangelist in the Bach and to general comments about the voice in *Stimmung*. Detailed references explaining the expressive use of the voice in both works were needed.
- Q19 There were some successful answers here, mostly discussing works by Stockhausen and Pärt. Some responses made only superficial reference to effectiveness. Answers needed to focus closely on the required features to gain high marks.

Topic 5

- Q20 Candidates showed some knowledge of the music, but essays were rarely able to go beyond basic descriptive accounts of brief moments in the score and were often limited to superficial mention of appearances of the tritone. Candidates needed to have detailed understanding of the expressive use of harmony and tonality in order to achieve high marks.
- Q21 There were some detailed responses here. The best answers discussed a range of features with relevant examples from the music of both composers.
- Q22 Most candidates chose to discuss an opera by Verdi in their answer to this question. There were some detailed responses that demonstrated real engagement with the music.

Topic 6

- Q23 Candidates were able to give some detail of three tracks from *A Night at the Opera*, but relevant knowledge was often superficial. Specific examples of the expressive use of harmony and tonality were essential to access the higher mark bands.
- Q24 Most candidates showed some understanding of the music of The Beatles, but detailed knowledge of the music of another appropriate band was necessary to fulfil the demands of the question.
- Q25 Most candidates chose to discuss the music of Norah Jones and Amy Winehouse. There were many descriptions of the instrumentation in the various tracks. Candidates who were able to give detailed examples of how the accompaniment interpreted the lyrics accessed the full range of marks.

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