



GCE

Music

Advanced GCE A2 **H542**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS **H142**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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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.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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G351 Performing Music 1

General Comments:

The period of examinations for performing ran from the end of February to the beginning of May, and the visiting Examiners' panel is grateful for the help received from centres in planning and facilitating Examiner visits during that period. Timetabling of recitals and organising ensembles and accompanists was approached with care, as was the provision in advance of copies of the music performed and details of recital programmes. As in previous years, the panel heard a wide range of music in performance, ranging from Arne to Bacharach, Adele to Britten, with instruments and voices of all sorts, including pipes, natural horns, harps and countertenors.

Administratively, the following points need to be remembered:

- Centres are asked to complete the VAF (visit arrangement form) offering at least three possible examining days for examiners to choose from.
- Copies of the music to be performed, with grades indicated, should be sent to the examiner at least one week before the examination
- A timetable for the visit, (allowing up to 40 minutes per candidate and sufficient time for stage management/tuning) should also be sent to the examiner at least one week prior to the examinations
- Centres should provide accompanists/backing tracks as needed

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A/C: Recital/Further Performing

The Visiting Examiners' panel relish the opportunity to hear young musicians performing live in this most communicative of art forms. Centres' appreciation of what this element of the qualification provides was again apparent from this year's visits. Candidates' performances in a "live" setting reflect what occurs in a Centre's calendar of concerts, workshops, gigs and recitals.

There were one or two overlong recitals for both sections A and C this year (the maximum is 8 minutes for section A and 4 minutes for section C), in some cases with fatigue playing a role in the outcome. Examiners will not curtail a performance, but these timings should be kept in mind when programming a day's examinations.

Improvisation is acceptable where the stimulus (lead sheet, chord chart) is provided. Candidates presenting recitals of arrangements on drum kit or guitar should ensure that the complete musical texture is present i.e., not offering accompaniments without solo lines. Where backing tracks are used, attention to balance is an important and integral part of the recital.

In Section C Duets, it is vital that the music presented allows duet skills to be assessed – alternating solos does not fully achieve this, and the candidate's part "should be clearly distinguishable from that of any other performer" (Specification p 12).

There were some compositions for Section C option 3 which were for solo instrument only, whereas the requirement is for "at least one other different instrument" to the candidate's own (Specification p12) and this is reflected in the mark-scheme; a fully-notated score must also be given to the examiner before the performance.

Section B: Discussion

The Discussion usually lasts about 5-10 minutes at this level, and is an opportunity for the candidate – in conversation with the examiner – to explain performing choices and preparation in their section A performance, which will have concluded just before. This year, stronger candidates were able to go beyond dynamics and *tempo* and justify choices made with regard to a wide range of musical parameters – for example, timbre, specific techniques, ornamentation and historical context. Some candidates did refer to listening relevant to their repertoire (which is assessed at A2) but it is the *candidate's* judgement and decision-making that are central to the AS Discussion. Some reflection on the effectiveness of these judgements in performance often brings the Discussion to a close.

G352 Music Composing 1

General Comments:

The amount of work and preparation undertaken by teachers and candidates for this unit is always appreciated. In order for candidates to achieve the best marks to suit their individual abilities, the choice of exercises and the decisions regarding the chosen genre for Section B, need to be made at a relatively early point in the course.

The presentation of the work for G352 was generally clear and accurate. The requirements of the work to be included in this coursework unit were understood by the majority of candidates. Centres were contacted regarding any incomplete items of paperwork, and these were forwarded, without delay to the moderators. Moderators were grateful for the clear co-operation of Centres when there were queries regarding the submissions. There were fewer clerical errors evident in the addition of marks and transference of marks to the front cover of the CCS308. Most CDs that accompanied the work of Section B worked accurately. The majority of submissions were received by the deadline date.

Moderators rely on accurate comments that support the centre marks. Some centres did not include any comments on the CCS308 - these comments are especially important when candidates do not include any draft copies of their exercises for Section A.

This year, the submissions demonstrated an understanding and inclusion of most of the required range of language in Section A, but too often the inclusion of exercises that limited this recognition were used. There was some control of the necessary techniques, but many candidates, who were awarded marks in the top band of assessment, were not able to demonstrate the security needed here.

In Section B, the most successful candidates chose their own instruments in Medium or ones with which they were familiar. The least successful candidates had not undertaken the required preparatory listening that would have helped them to understand their chosen genres and, more especially, be able to demonstrate the development of their compositions/arrangements through careful handling of thematic, rhythmic and harmonic materials. The standard of scores and recordings was generally much better.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A - The Language of Western Tonal Harmony

Centre assessment of this section was often too generous. However, it was pleasing to see some Centres re-assess their own interpretations of the assessment criteria from the previous session, and marked more accurately this year.

Unfortunately, some Centres are still marking by means of the candidates' progress throughout the course. Preliminary exercises, that are essential at the beginning of the course, do not need to be included as part of the final six exercises in the portfolio. It is envisaged that the more successful candidates will submit their best work which fulfils more of the requirements of the specification. Centres do not need to use the same exercises for all candidates. Some submissions included all chorale/hymn tune exercises, which limits the candidates' recognition of harmonic pace and textural continuation. The inclusion of folk songs should be limited, especially if they are worked as the only minor exercise in the submission - too often they are more modal in concept. Centres should be reminded that it is a specification requirement that all exercises name the title and composer, together with the date of completion of the exercise.

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More candidates included draft copies of their exercises. It is very useful, in this coursework unit, to see the amount of teacher guidance that has been given. The more successful candidates were able to improve their work as a result of this guidance, rather than the teacher giving direct solutions to problem areas.

In Harmonic Language, many candidates were able to handle a variety of cadences and cadential progressions. Most were able to include the Ic-V-I progression, but there were often missed opportunities for the use of V7 and ii7. Some candidates were able to demonstrate a secure use of language that included diminished chords together with suspensions (not always used appropriately) but a consistent use of the language required for this unit would have been appropriate. The misuse of chords iii and vii was evident, often used inappropriately when a modulation had not been recognised. There were very few examples of passing 6/4s in the submissions.

Most two-part exercises included chord labelling. When using guitar chords, it is more important that the modulations are clearly identified on the exercises. Candidates should be encouraged to identify the required chords and progressions prior to adding the bass line. The less successful candidates completed these exercises by ear, and the chord labelling clearly demonstrated a lack of understanding of the implied harmony.

Centre assessment of Technique was more accurate. The more successful candidates were able to continue textures that had been included in the opening incipit material. The Moderators were disappointed to see exercises that comprised of the melody only. Some candidates were able to continue an appropriate texture, but the less successful candidates struggled to maintain continuity here. Modulations were often identified and many candidates were able to treat these with confidence. A better understanding of inversions would have made bass line shaping more effective in forming an appropriate linear relationship with the melody. An understanding of voice leading was the weakest area in this section.

Notation was handled well and there were more hand-written exercises submitted this year. Mislabelling of chords and their inversions should be accounted for in this section.

The exercises that were completed under controlled conditions were variable, both in the choice of exercises and their completion. The work of the more successful candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the harmonic implications together with an ability to include and control the required techniques. Some of the less successful candidates were not able to complete the exercise in the required time and struggled with the handling of techniques, particularly when working in open score.

Section B - Instrumental Techniques

There were some excellent submissions in this section and it was encouraging to find that a few more candidates had chosen the arrangement option. Centre assessment of this section was generally more accurate. As previously mentioned, the most successful work was found when candidates chose their own, or familiar instruments, in Medium. The less successful candidates often chose too many instruments or a combination of instruments that did not work together, generally with balance issues. The commentaries were often very detailed and the best work included a clear brief together with some reflection of the work. Some commentaries were over-long with a bar-by-bar detailed analysis of the composition/arrangement and many unnecessary screenshots of the work itself. The best work included a broad range of relevant listening that had clearly influenced the candidates, and had enabled them to feel secure in the manipulation and development of their own materials.

More candidates were including instrument-specific techniques that were relevant to their choice of Medium. The less successful candidates could not demonstrate a real understanding of the

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individual instruments or the way in which they were combined texturally. Moderators found that the handling of techniques was an area that caused problems. Too many compositions relied on repetition and doubling and did not demonstrate the ability to extend phrases through harmonic and rhythmic contrasts. Some candidates submitted compositions that were too short in duration and they were not able to demonstrate an understanding of the required techniques.

More Centres submitted both live and sequenced recordings. Some of the live recordings were able to demonstrate a vivid aural communication of the composers' intentions. Moderators appreciated the time and effort made in these live recordings. Scores were generally of a better standard. The more successful candidates included relevant and consistent performance directions - these are essential when submitting sequenced recordings. Most of the CDs worked well - audio-formatted discs are still preferable to Data discs.

In conclusion, the work submitted for this unit has been more accurately assessed by Centres. Some improvements could be made regarding the choice of exercises for Section A that allow a more consistent inclusion of the requirements of the specification. The work in Section B demonstrates the musical interests of the candidates that is clearly reflected in their own performances.

G353 Introduction to Historical Study in Music

General Comments:

The overall performance by candidates this year was very positive, with no evidence to suggest that a change in prescribed repertoire for Section B had disadvantaged candidates. The issue of consistent performance across all three sections of the unit remains a problem for many candidates, especially when performance in Section A (a good indicator of general aural perception) is not matched by an equally strong performance in Section B (where the music can be studied in detail prior to the examination itself). Once again candidates who knew the prescribed works well were able to achieve high marks, whereas those who could not comment beyond surface details were unable to access the higher mark levels in the questions that demanded more extended responses.

In Section C most candidates took advantage of the open choice of prescribed repertoire to write about music they knew, focussing mainly on relevant detail. Those who expected a repetition of previous sessions' questions may have been disappointed, but all the aspects covered in this year's Section C questions are highlighted clearly in the summary of this section of the paper in the specification, so the approach taken by Examiners should not have been unexpected by Centres or by candidates.

Careful and detailed study of the orchestral scores and repeated attentive listening to the prescribed repertoire is essential if candidates are to be well prepared to tackle the demands of the paper. Attempts to cram study of the prescribed repertoire into a short period immediately prior to the examination is unlikely to provide candidates with the depth of understanding or personal familiarity with the music they need in order to be able to answer the questions to the standard of detail expected at GCE Advanced Subsidiary level.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Extract 1A FRANCESCO BARSANTI, *Sonata V for flute and through bass*, Minuet, bars 1-16, bars 49-64 & bars 83-98. Ensemble Elektra, (2011), Downloaded from iTunes / Magnatune.com, track 8, 00'00" – 00'53", 02'25" – 03'14" & 04'00" – 04'57" [Total length of recorded extracts: 02'44"]

- 1 Many candidates gave "flute" as their answer, but this was not sufficiently precise to receive credit. Responses needed to make it clear that candidates had perceived from their listening that the sound was produced by a wooden flute rather than by a modern (metal) orchestral flute. In addition to the recorder, Examiners accepted the responses "wooden flute" and "Baroque flute".
- 2 Very few candidates were unable to identify accurately a note in the passage that was ornamented in the recorded performance. A few scripts indicated notes that were beyond bar 8.
- 3 Bass line dictation has often proved very demanding to candidates, but recent trends of improvement in this area have been maintained. Almost all candidates were able to provide a reasonable outline of the melodic contour, and the most common mistakes centred around the upward move of a perfect 4th (bar 5 to bar 6), then a downward step to the note E₁ at the start of bar 7.

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- 4 Most candidates recognised the imperfect cadence from bar 7 to bar 8.
- 5 Centres are advised against suggesting to candidates that extracts will always modulate to the dominant key: many candidates appeared to have been caught out by the unexpected move to g minor at bar 9 to bar 10, and most candidates gave “dominant” as their response, even though the printed melody line in the skeleton score should have made it very clear that the music at this point was not in C major.
- 6 Study undertaken in relation to Western Tonal Harmony for Unit G352 should have caused candidates to become familiar with the four terms listed as options in this question, but surprisingly few candidates identified the harmonic function of the specified note as an appoggiatura. It is vital that Centres help candidates to understand the need for integrated learning in this specification: knowledge acquired in the study of other units should always be seen as transferable to the written paper.
- 7 The descending sequence was recognised by most candidates.
- 8 Almost all candidates identified the use of a harpsichord in the recording, and a few scripts offered clavichord as an alternative. Some candidates suggested (inaccurately) that the chords were provided by a lute.
- 9 Most able candidates were able to place all five chords accurately, but there was a degree of confusion over the relative positions of V7b and V7d in the minds of many candidates. Examiners were surprised at the number of scripts that did not place chord Ib immediately after V7d. The melodic line printed in the skeleton score should have provided candidates with helpful guidance relating to their choice of chords, particularly when linked to work in relation to standard progressions in their study of Western Tonal Harmony for Unit G352.
- 10 Most candidates recognised the binary structure of the passage.
- 11 There has been a pleasing degree of improvement in the accuracy of candidates’ melodic dictation over recent years and the trend has been continued this session, with many candidates producing entirely accurate answers to this year’s demanding dictation passage. Common slips usually centred on the incorrect pitching of the quaver B^b at the start of bar 22, or the relative positioning of the pitches in bar 23. Candidates who understood that the notes at beats two and three of bar 23 were based on a tonic triad generally produced entirely accurate responses.
- 12 This question proved a good differentiator of ability: perceptive listeners were able to draw upon specific detail in their answers, not only in relation to the instrumentation but also in terms of performing techniques used (for example, contrasting the ‘cello *arco* in **Passage 1i** with *pizzicato* in **Passage 1ii**). Less able candidates tended to digress and included references to the melodic line rather than focusing on the nature of the accompaniment.
- 13 Most candidates were able to locate points of variation in the repeat of the melody, but many were less precise when describing ways in which the line was changed. Able candidates identified specific details such as trills (repeat of bar 41), appoggiaturas (bar 44) and ascending scales (bar 46), but Examiners saw many imprecise terms such as “run” or “slide” to describe details of the decoration. The specification makes it clear that at this level candidates are expected to use subject-specific terminology in their responses.
- 14 Many candidates recognised the use of an ascending arpeggio in the repeat of bar 48. Examiners also credited references to use of a broken chord at this point.

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- Extract 1B** **MALCOLM ARNOLD, *English Dance, Set 2 no 1* (1951), bars 1-37¹ & 84³-101¹. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Malcolm Arnold (1979), Lyrita Recorded Edition, SRCD.201 (1990), track 5, 00'00" - 00'50" & 02'09" – 02'34" [Total length of recorded extracts: 01'05"]**
- 15 (a)** Almost all candidates identified the side drum correctly, although Examiners saw several "snare drum" responses (which also received credit).
- (b)** Very few candidates managed to complete the rhythm with complete accuracy (including the decorative ruffs), although most candidates managed to notate some part of the pattern accurately, usually in bar 5 rather than bar 6.
- (c)** Perhaps not surprisingly, the most common response to this question was "roll". Centres need to ensure that candidates are familiar with standard percussion decoration (such as the ruffs used in this extract), in addition to the techniques used for orchestral string, woodwind and brass instruments.
- 16** This question was not answered well: most candidates were not precise in their identification of instruments. "Flute" and "glockenspiel" were the two most common responses, whereas the performance featured a piccolo and a celesta playing the theme.
- 17 (a)** Most candidates were able to identify a point of ornamentation in the printed melody, although a few answers indicated notes beyond the specified passage (bar 4 to bar 12).
- (b)** Only a few explanations of the ornamentation did not agree with the note circled in answer to Question **17(a)**. A number of responses ("trill", "mordent", "turn") failed to describe the ornamentation accurately.
- 18** In order to gain maximum marks in this question, candidates needed to do more than simply identify the instruments heard. The best answers were able to refer to specific detail such as a flutes moving in parallel 3rds and the tuba bass line playing tonic and dominant notes every half-bar.
- 19** The two cadences were identified accurately by most candidates.
- 20** As in **Extract 1A**, this was quite a challenging melody for dictation, but most candidates were able to provide a reasonable sense of melodic contour in their answers. The most common slip made by candidates who produced almost-correct answers was the omission of accidentals to naturalise the quaver As in bar 29. Candidates who understood that the pitches in bar 28 all came from a g minor chord found the latter part of the melody relatively easy to complete.
- 21** There were some good answers here, although many responses failed to address the aspect of harmony and tonality. Most candidates were able to comment on the tonality of the main melody, with a few recognising the effect of dissonance in disguising the key. Very few answers identified c minor as the key of the B section, and the presence of A \flat in the melodic line clearly confused many candidates at this point.
- 22** Most candidates gained a mark by recognising the ternary structure of the passage, but some found it difficult to provide an accurate second point of comment. Popular responses included reference to the use of an introduction and recognition of melodic repetition within the A and/or B sections.

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- 23 There were some good summaries of the music in response to this question. Most candidates were able to discuss the accompanying music for woodwind and strings (particularly the rapid ascending and descending scale passages in the violins), while some perceptive candidates accurately explained the rôle of the timpani and tambourine in the music.

Section B

- Extract 2 **MOZART, *Concerto no.4 in E^b for horn & orchestra, K.495*, 3rd movement, bars 84 to 109¹.**

Extract 2A: Barry Tuckwell, London Symphony Orchestra / Maag (1959), Decca Originals 478 2659 (2011), track 11, 01'26" – 01'53" [Length of extract: 00'27"]

Extract 2B: Timothy Brown, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment / Kuijken (1989) Virgin Classics VC 7 90845-2 (1990), track 6, 01'25" – 01'50" [Length of extract: 00'25"]

- 24 This question was answered well. Common mistakes were the omission of flats in front of the last quaver of bar 13 (D) and the last note of bar 14 (G). Some candidates produced an accurate transcription of the part but at an octave too high.
- 25 Most candidates were able to comment in some way on harmony and tonality, although there were a few who wrote about irrelevant aspects of the music. The best answers were able to discuss the modulatory nature of the passage, identifying keys in the sequence or commenting on specific chords and/or key centres. An encouraging number of candidates gained marks in the higher bands.
- 26 Centres should have been able to predict this question: a similar question had been asked in relation to the Vivaldi bassoon concerto and (further back) to the Mozart clarinet concerto. Consequently, Examiners were surprised that this question was not answered more successfully by candidates. There were some discussions of the natural horn and its limitations without referring to supporting detail in the writing. Obvious features of the horn writing in the extract (lyrical melodic lines, use of broken-chord figuration) were not mentioned by many candidates.
- 27 There were very few poor answers to this question. Many candidates were able to discuss the obvious differences between the recorded performances. Most were aware of period performances and able to compare a modern and period performance with general observations based on their knowledge and listening. A few candidates incorrectly believed that a period performance must be an older recording. The best answers identified points of specific detail in their comparisons, backed up by bar numbers to demonstrate acute aural perception. Centres are encouraged to advise candidates to make effective use of the valuable 15 minutes' preparatory listening time to compare the sound of the two versions of **Extract 2** provided on the CD.
- 28 Candidates who knew the music of the prescribed score fared well in this question. Most answers mentioned the return of the "A" theme in the tonic key, but in many cases there was considerable uncertainty about the music of the section that linked the printed extract to the return of the main rondo theme.

Extract 3 **MILES DAVIS QUINTET, 'Round Midnight' (1956), from 'Round about Midnight', Columbia Legacy Edition 519957-2 (2005), disk 1, track 1, 01'36" – 02'44".**
[Length of recorded extract: 01'08"]

- 29** Most candidates referred to Davis' use of a harmon mute but were unable to suggest further features of the music (such as the rhythmic flexibility, narrow pitch range and close recording) that are characteristic of his performances.
- 30** Many candidates were able to comment on detail in the accompaniment, often making specific observations. Some responses attempted to provide generic detail (commonly referring to a walking bass) that was not always relevant to the extract being discussed. A few answers referred to irrelevant detail in Davis' playing, often duplicating material used to answer **Question 29**.
- 31** This question was answered well; most candidates recognised the interval of an octave in the piano link.
- 32** Most candidates were able to refer to at least one or two specific details in the music that followed the recorded extract. Perceptive listeners noted the drummer's change to sticks (from brushes) while some candidates struggling to find additional comments to make glossed over obvious features such as the louder dynamic level and the increase in tempo.
- 33** Most candidates were aware of Monk as the composer of the original melody, although spellings of Thelonius varied considerably.

Section C

- 34** This was the most popular question choice this session. The background to Handel's Water Music was well known, with much historical detail of the barges on the Thames and the implications for musical resources. Some of the musical detail was convincing and relevant, with the best answers able to discuss the individual movements and place them in a relevant context. Most answers dealt with Handel first and then went on to their second choice, usually Mozart or Beethoven. Many of these were fairly successful, but sometimes the writing lacked specific detail on the music, e.g. mentioning the difficulty of rehearsing and performing the Beethoven score in the context of the cold performance venue and a lack of rehearsal time rather than identifying challenges in the music itself. Attempts to discuss the performing conditions for jazz works sometimes focused on the recording techniques of the time, but some candidates managed to refer to live performance with some appropriate detail.
- 35** Most candidates who chose this option were aware of at least some of the social and financial pressures facing jazz musicians. There were some competent discussions of the opportunities for musicians and of restrictive barriers of the time, and many candidates referred to the financial circumstances and the need to perform in order to make a living. There was often some perceptive historical detail, such as the effect of the Second World War on big bands and the recording industry in general. Less successful answers tended to lack specific detail or digress into histories of the development of jazz and/or recording technology.

- 36** Only a few candidates chose to answer this question, but Examiners saw many good, detailed responses that focused on specific aspects of timbre and sonority. The jazz works in particular provided three completely contrasting sound worlds for comparison, while there were a number of successful attempts that discussed timbre and sonority within the prescribed orchestral scores. Once again, candidates who knew the music well were able to draw upon a range of relevant detail in order to produce writing that demonstrated thorough understanding and first-hand familiarity with the music.

G354 Performing Music 2 (Interpretation)

General Comments:

This now well-established unit engendered successful performing during this year's examination period. Centres are to be congratulated on their effective preparation for, and organisation of the examining days, and OCR extends its thanks and appreciation for the care taken to make sure the days run smoothly for both candidates and Examiners.

In the vast majority of cases, the required administration prior to the examination was carried out but the following points should be borne in mind:

- Centres are asked to complete the VAF (visit arrangement form) offering at least three possible examining days for examiners to choose from.
- Copies of the music to be performed, with grades indicated, should be sent to the examiner at least one week before the examination
- A timetable for the examining, allowing up to 40 minutes per candidate and sufficient time for stage management should also be sent to the examiner at least one week before the visit.
- Centres should provide accompanists
- Time should be included at the start of the day for the examiner to read the VVPFs

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Recital

It is always a privilege to listen to candidates performing recitals that are often the culmination of many years of practice and preparation, not only technically, but also in terms of communication. Live performing is the essence of music and the opportunity this section of the qualification provides for candidates to prepare for and communicate musical performance to an audience (even if it is just the Examiner) is at the very heart of this subject. Centres' appreciation that this element of the qualification provides was again apparent from this year's visits.

As in past years, there was true excellence in this area, candidates achieving extremely highly. There was a vast array of instruments offered, though less woodwind and brass than in previous years, and more vocal recitals.

Some practical points that need to be remembered include:

- Music offered should be of at least the equivalent of grade 6 level (of conservatoire awarding bodies) in order to access the full range of marks. It is not in candidates' interest to perform music that is too difficult for them though.
- The music offered should be of a particular "focus", meaning it should be stylistically homogenous. This usually equates with music being by the same or contemporary composers/artists. It is the music itself that needs to be focused, not the genre. Thus, a focus of "Preludes and Fugues" that includes items by Bach, Clara Schumann and Shostakovich is not acceptable, whereas a recital of "Preludes and Fugues" by either Bach, or Clara Schumann or Shostakovich would be. There were examples of unfocused recitals, which resulted in the full range of marks not being accessible.

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- Recitals should be presented either on one solo instrument (plus very closely related instruments – e.g. oboe/*cor anglais*, different recorders), or as a member of an ensemble where the candidate's part is not doubled, or as an accompanist. Recitals should not mix these roles, and should also not be presented on different instruments (e.g. snare drum, xylophone and timpani), though self-accompanied recitals are acceptable where appropriate.
- Improvisation is acceptable where the stimulus is provided.
- Candidates presenting recitals of arrangements on drum kit or guitar should ensure that the complete musical texture is present i.e., not offering accompaniments without solo lines.
- Where backing tracks are used, attention to balance is an important and integral part of the recital.

Section B: Viva Voce

As with the recital, there were some excellent offerings in this section, candidates often demonstrating vast knowledge and enthusiasm for their chosen focus area. Though it is not mandatory, very many candidates prepared and presented a VVPF (*viva voce* preparation form) and this is a very useful *aide memoire* for both candidate and Examiner, providing a helpful starting point for the discussion.

As mentioned above, the music presented needs to have a “focus” and this constitutes the starting point for the *viva voce*. There are four areas of questioning that centres and candidates should be prepared for:

- Candidates will be asked to discuss the music they have performed in terms of its characteristic features. This does not constitute biographical detail, but more the salient characteristics of the music itself, though some contextual knowledge will be relevant. This is an area that would benefit from greater preparation through relevant research. Standard, seminal books should be read. Whilst Internet sites can be useful, they should be judiciously used, as some provide scant information of a dubious nature. This area of the *viva voce* is the one found most challenging by candidates.
- Candidates will be asked to discuss the comparative listening they have undertaken. It should be noted that the listening should be of performances given on the instrument performed by the candidate in their recital. This is particularly pertinent to bear in mind where arrangements have been performed. Also, candidates should be encouraged and helped to choose valuable performances to listen to. This is particularly true of performances on You Tube. Whilst professional performances can be accessed here, so too can amateur ones and the latter can be of far less value for discussing technical and interpretative issues as well as balance and the general sound world. In some such cases, details of the artist, nationality and dates of performance are not actually given. Choosing these performances to discuss is not in the candidates' best interest. Candidates should be prepared to discuss features of style, which include more than dynamics and tempo. Features of phrasing, articulation, tone production, balance, nationality, and timbre and sound world should be considered too.
- Following on from their comparative discussions of performances, candidates will explain and justify their own performance interpretations as heard in their recital. This area can engender interesting debate about views on performance practice and the reasons for choices made by candidates. It gets to the very core of individual interpretation and there were excellent discussions when candidates were prepared.

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- Lastly, candidates are invited to assess their performance in terms of the interpretative choices made. This is an opportunity for self-reflection, and engendered some very interesting responses.

G355 Composing 2

General Comments:

This Report will provide guidance to teachers who are preparing candidates for future examinations and draw attention to pertinent issues from moderation this session.

Moderators thank centres for the diligence and care in presenting the portfolios of their candidates' composing coursework for moderation.

In completing the CCS many teachers used front cover boxes correctly, indicating the option chosen for each of Section A and B.

Most teachers provided helpful comments in support of the marks awarded; just occasionally comments and the mark bands chosen did not match. There was a clear correlation between the accuracy of Centre assessment and the thoughtful consideration of the assessment criteria in relation to the evidence in the work.

Many candidates presented their work in an accessible, clearly labelled way including identification on all documents including the CD and commentary for Section B.

Section A Stylistic Techniques

Guidance given in the Principal Moderator Report to Centres 2014 is reproduced at the end of this report. It provides comprehensive guidance on the potential scope of each of the eight stylistic options. This guidance has been helpful to many centres as evidenced in the increasingly appropriate nature of the exercises selected for candidates to work.

It is important to provide a range of exercises that will allow candidates to acquire the necessary range of skills and knowledge in order to access the top bands of marks.

In a coursework unit evidence of the teaching and learning process should be apparent in the exercises through annotation of the work.

Key points

- Each exercise should be dated and the source material and composer identified.
- A simple CD recording of exercises in Minimalism, Serial or Popular song techniques can facilitate assessment for teacher-assessors and Moderators alike. Moderators would like to thank those centres demonstrating this good practice.
- In chorale harmonisations a complete incipit of a full phrase provides a clear stylistic exemplar to the candidate of flowing bass line, idiomatic rhythmic features, suspensions and clear textural guidance.
- Candidates should be mindful of the horizontal flow of the music and not simply work from beat to beat.
- Exercises in popular song must use original instrumentation in the same way as is a requirement in the other stylistic options.
- Although the requirement for inclusion of a given part throughout in the serial and minimalism exercises is treated with more flexibility due to the nature of these styles, it is essential, nevertheless to use the instruments of original works. The composers cited in the specification must be those from whom the exercise models are drawn and the exercises should not be presented as 'mini-compositions'.

Centre assessment

As in previous years, chorale harmonisations were the most popular choice. Centre assessment was most accurate where teachers were fully aware of the specific technical requirements and stylistic features of Bach's harmonisations as opposed to those of more generalised SATB chorale textures.

The exercise completed under timed conditions is an important indicator of how well the candidate can work independently. Centre assessment did not always sufficiently take the evidence of this exercise into account when making their final judgements.

The exercise is best completed towards the end of the course and should be of a standard that is neither easier nor more challenging than that of the level of the coursework exercises at this point.

Section B: Composition

Moderators saw a vast range of invention and creativity within the three parameters offered to candidates.

Centres seemed to find the assessment of compositions to be more straightforward than Section A and were frequently accurate in their judgements.

Candidates should be encouraged to provide titles for their compositions.

Commentaries that detail relevant listening, the composing process and reflection should be included in every portfolio irrespective of the option chosen. These need not be unduly lengthy and may reflect individual listening as well as that connected to their study in other units. There were many examples of interesting and exciting music that had proved inspirational for candidates.

Key points

Vocal Composition

- Words or lyrics can be repeated in different ways and instrumental sections may form an important part of the structure of a text setting overall. Some vocal compositions were a little short.
- Most vocal compositions were recorded using live voice(s) thereby giving a realistic communication of the intentions of the composer.
- Effective vocal composition paid attention to the speech rhythms, the deeper meaning of the chosen words often allowing for sophisticated word painting with careful attention to text underlay.

Programme Music and Music for Film / TV

Some confusion continues for those candidates that choose a film storyline as stimulus for a programmatic composition. Conversely some candidates choosing the film option compose such generalised responses that the outcome might more accurately be described as programme music.

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Key differentiation between the two can be seen in the application of the assessment criteria under Technique:

- In **Programme Music** the candidate is rewarded for the interpretation of the stimulus and the use of techniques to develop ideas within an unfolding programmatic context.
- In **Music for Film / TV** the candidate is credited for the placing and working of ideas at appropriate timings within a visual medium.

There is clearly a range of possibilities in terms of outcomes. Candidates should nevertheless demonstrate a level of detail and nuance commensurate with a second year of compositional study, appreciating the holistic narrative forms of programmatic music in contrast to the more fragmentary, action-driven sound world of music that connects with a visual stimulus.

Use of Medium

- Teachers might usefully counsel some candidates to 'walk before they can run' in regard to the use of large orchestral forces.
- Few candidates had the skills to work with large ensembles although a small number of outstanding scores were seen.

Notation and Recording

- Sizing of scores should be carefully considered: they should be readable, particularly when large orchestras are employed.
- Key points of a programme or action in a film might usefully be included as boxed text on the score.
- Audio CD recordings are stipulated and computer dependent discs are to be avoided.

Production Commentary

- When there is no score, it is important that **additional** commentary information is provided either as a separate document or together with the listening / process documentary and brief.
- Some candidates failed to provide sufficient detail about technical recording processes and were often assessed rather generously in the light of this.

Concluding comments

Moderators listened to some outstanding live recordings and carefully edited sequenced recordings allowing the candidates' composing intentions to be communicated vividly. The skills required to expedite rehearsals of compositions and the technological understanding that feeds into accomplished editing of sequenced scores are both of clear value to the composing process in general.

Centres are to be congratulated for the support they give their candidates in these dimensions.

GUIDANCE for SECTION A, Stylistic techniques options.

The following points under each of the option headings are important traits and stylistic 'finger-prints' that are relevant to the nature of the coursework tasks undertaken.

Two-part counterpoint of the late 16th century

- Representative composers: Byrd, Lassus, Morley, Palestrina.
- Idiomatic understanding of individual part writing, rhythmic interlinking of parts, directional movement between parts and the intervallic relationship between parts.
- Imitation is a crucial technique for this style.
- All standard considerations of text setting and underlay should be understood, especially word painting where appropriate.

Two-part Baroque counterpoint

- Representative composers: Bach, Handel, Purcell.
- Understanding the harmonic function of linear parts; idiomatic cadences.
- The construction of idiomatic bass lines but also some facility writing an upper melodic part to a given bass line.
- Flow, independence of rhythms, sequences, voice-leading; modulation.
- More able candidates will complete some genuinely contrapuntal examples towards the end of the course; they will demonstrate understanding of transient modulation or more complex harmonic language such as the use of the diminished 7th.

Chorale harmonisations in the style of J. S. Bach

- All exercises should be unedited chorales of J. S. Bach.
- Idiomatic chord progressions, recognition of essential modulation at pause chords
- Harmonic rhythm – options for treating minims.
- Appropriate balance in the use of chord inversions with limited use of 6-4 chord.
- Use of various forms of chord ii (or IV sometimes) as part of cadential formulae.
- Vocal textures: characteristics of SATB lines; range / spacing / texture / consecutives; voice leading; idiomatic resolution of final cadences (falling leading note).
- More able candidates will be able to use suspensions correctly; they may be able to modulate to more distant keys and understand Bach's use of transient modulation; Tierce de Picardie is a stylish feature; occasionally, preserving a vocal line may be more important than observing the technical 'rule'.

String quartets in the Classical style

- Exercises should be drawn mainly from the works of Haydn and Mozart to ensure variety of speed, metre and figuration (avoid exclusive use of minuet extracts).
- Strong idiomatic cadences; use of Ic; half-close cadences.
- Identification of passing / non-harmony notes; modulation.
- Use of medium: range and possibilities of instruments should be known including literacy with alto clef.
- String quartet textures: instruments in pairs / directional bass line / avoiding viola / 'cello cross; consecutives avoided.
- More able candidates will extend the range of language in their exercises to include Neapolitan / Augmented 6th and Diminished 7th chords; they may work with more demanding textural starting points and establish more independence where appropriate in the 2nd violin part.

Keyboard accompaniment in early Romantic style

- Most Centres will use Lieder (Schubert, Schumann) but instrumental exercises are also acceptable. Exercises from a single composer alone are unlikely to provide sufficient range of accompaniment figurations.
- Essentially tonal, candidates will need to demonstrate an understanding of chromatic harmonies such as Augmented 6th, Neapolitan 6th, Diminished 7th and secondary dominants to have full access to marks under Language.
- Important aspects of technique include: Understanding of text and appropriate response, voice leading, continuation of texture, understanding of modulation.
- Piano writing should be idiomatic with good spacing; accompaniment patterns should show range and variety across the submission.
- More able candidates will be confident in their use of chromatic features and include the writing of some linking and postlude piano passages.

Popular Song

- Of utmost importance is the selection of exercises that can be classified as representing a single broadly unified style: Songs of the Beatles OR 1930's Broadway Song (Gershwin, Porter et al.,) OR Songs of Abba OR 1970's soul are some examples.
- Idiomatic instrumentation is essential in order to maximise marks – understanding of appropriate figurations for guitar / drum kit / piano, as appropriate, should be well evidenced.
- Exercises should be selected so as to demonstrate a sufficient range of harmonic and technical understanding; words for vocal parts should always be included.
- More able candidates will use a wide range of language within the chosen style and will be confident in their use of more advanced chords, modality and modulations.
- More advanced work will include creative relationships between vocals and instrumental parts with opportunities for brief instrumental sections.

Serial Technique

- The works of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg will form the core of analytical study in seeking to understand and assimilate the many technical aspects of serialism.
- The construction of the original row and its importance in regard to intervals and pitch patterns should be understood; uses of the row variants and any transpositions should be idiomatic.
- Staff notated row shapes are more helpful than letter name matrices.
- The use of an authentic row by (with a short incipit complete in all parts) will form the basis of most exercises.
- Other exercises might include a given rhythmic part with a self-composed row; an exercise in idiomatic orchestration using a piano from a work such as Schoenberg's Piano Suite Op. 25.
- Characteristic textures and rhythmic styles; pointillism, imitation and canonic writing.
- Submissions should always include annotation of serial workings and even a brief commentary as to the choice of rows used. The candidate is thereby able to demonstrate their understanding, in the same way as those working chorales, for example, would include chord symbols to indicate harmonic understanding.
- More able candidates will demonstrate an awareness of Klangfarbenmelodie, Hauptstimme and Nebenstimme.

Minimalism

- Exercises must be taken from the music of representative composers of the 'Early New York minimalists: Riley, Glass, Reich with close adherence to the original instrumentation.
- Research and listening will enable students to grasp a sense of the various techniques minimalism presents. Minimalism is less a mechanical system than music almost always envisaged for an 'acoustic instrumental world'; indeed, many of the rhythmic and phasing effects become 'lost' when worked on a computer.
- The notion of a 'given part' may be more leniently interpreted in this option: depending on the focus of an individual exercise it could be a chord sequence / a set of motifs / a loop for phasing plus additional instructions etc..
- Students may wish to experiment with the pre-recording of previously performed instrumental tracks after the manner of Steve Reich's numerous 'Counterpoint' pieces. A work such as 'Electric Counterpoint' provides exemplar material of pulsing contrasted with transforming motifs, and the way in which two very different textural ideas work their way to a conclusion.
- Variety of textural styles can be demonstrated through incipits based on such contrasting incipits as may be found in Glass's Piano Solos or his String Quartets.

G356 Historical and Analytical Studies in Music

General Comments:

Almost all candidates demonstrated some musical knowledge and understanding in their answers to both sections of the Paper. While there were some detailed responses, others were rather too general and unfocused. The skills of selecting appropriate knowledge, applying correct technical vocabulary, and answering the specific question are necessary in order to gain high marks.

Section A required candidates to discuss various aspects of Vaughan Williams' *O, Clap Your Hands* and all candidates demonstrated some ability to engage with the music. There were good responses to questions concerning melody, accompaniment, motifs and text setting. Some misreading of clefs and key signatures occurred and the application of appropriate vocabulary proved challenging for a number of candidates. While some candidates were able to discuss harmony and tonality in some depth, with many recognising B flat as the tonal centre, some did not engage with the modality of the music. In order to do well, candidates need to ensure that they address the specific question, writing concisely and to the point. Careful listening, backed up by close scrutiny of the score, is essential.

In most questions in this section, marks are awarded for each relevant comment and it is appropriate for candidates to write in note form rather than in extended prose. On the rare occasion where it is necessary to continue on extra sheets, candidates should indicate clearly that this occurs.

Section B

Most candidates were able to show some knowledge of the works they had studied, while the very best demonstrated deeper understanding and genuine engagement with the music. Candidates often wrote too generally without focusing on every aspect of the specific question. Where precise numbers of songs/scenes/movements/extended passages, or specific aspects such as vocal writing or harmony and tonality, are required by the question, it is vital that candidates select appropriate examples in their answer. Some candidates discussed only very brief moments from many different parts of the work(s), while others simply wrote all they knew irrespective of the specific aspect required. At this level depth of knowledge is tested, so the ability to filter information to confine discussion to relevant, clearly referenced, detailed examples from the music is an essential skill.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

- Q.1 There were some detailed, accurate answers and most candidates recognised the fanfare-like trumpet and the repetition of this motif in the soprano. Some described the music without reference to the setting of mood. Candidates needed to describe the music by giving specific examples.
- Q.2(a) Most candidates were able to identify the octave writing at the start of the passage, although there was some confusion over clefs, resulting in chordal writing being suggested. The homophonic writing of the second phrase was not always accurately described and some answers made no reference to text setting.

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- Q.2(b) Most candidates gave some appropriate response, though often chords, for example the A flat major chord in bar 20, were incorrectly identified as keys or modulations. Only the best candidates understood the modal nature of the music and recognised the parallel movement of chords. Some only focused on the harmony of the voices, ignoring the accompaniment.
- Q.3 There were some detailed answers. Many candidates were able to produce convincing links between specific features of the text and musical details of the instrumental accompaniment, although there were some rather wordy responses. Others referred only to aspects of the accompaniment without any explanation of how these features contributed to the setting of the text. These answers could not be credited.
- Q.4 This question was well answered with most candidates giving some appropriate response, although correct terminology, especially in terms of texture, was not always used.
- Q.5 Most candidates commented on the pedal points and the B flat ending, although only some noted the modality. Some named individual chords, but only the best showed that they had a full understanding of the overall harmonic picture. Few recognised the oscillation, and resulting dissonance, of B flat and A flat harmonies between voices and instruments. As in Q.2(b), many candidates considered only the instruments or only the voices when analysing the harmony, thus not noticing the connections between them.
- Q.6 Almost all candidates were able to mention some places where the opening motif reappears during the piece, but answers needed to give precise examples of its varied treatment – eg transposition, augmentation, inversion, rhythmic changes, canonic writing – in order to gain high marks.
- Q.7 In order to gain marks candidates needed to focus on the choral writing of a choral work and compare it with the extract. Answers which discussed other types of work, such as solo songs or operas, were not credited. Some candidates did not restrict their answer to choral writing, often discussing features of instrumentation and tonality. Specific relevant details are needed if high marks are to be achieved.

Section B**Topic 1**

- Q.8 Most candidates were able to make some comments on the piano and vocal writing in at least three songs, although references to the expressive interaction of these elements were often superficial. Detailed examples were necessary to gain high marks.
- Q.9 Most candidates were able to make some appropriate references, although discussions of Maxwell Davies were sometimes restricted to a list of vocal techniques without full understanding of their rôle and effect. Judith Weir or Benjamin Britten was often chosen as the other composer.
- Q.10 The music of Dowland was discussed with some success by most candidates, although relevant knowledge of other composers was often rather limited. Specific examples from the music of at least two composers were necessary in order to gain high marks.

Topic 2

- Q.11 Most candidates demonstrated some appropriate knowledge of particular moments in the work, but many wrote all they knew rather than focusing on the specific aspects required by the question. Better answers showed a close familiarity with the music and were able to relate examples of the expressive use of melody and rhythm to the programmatic elements of the music.

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- Q.12 There was much potential material to discuss for this question. Most candidates were able to cite appropriate examples of timbre in some detail, although knowledge of texture was often more restricted. The best answers demonstrated full security of detail in the music referenced.
- Q.13 Vivaldi featured in most answers to this question, often with Couperin or Biber. While there were some good responses, many answers were often inaccurate in detail. Most candidates were able to identify keys. In order to achieve high marks, candidates needed to demonstrate secure understanding of the harmonic language of the music of both chosen composers.

Topic 3

- Q.14 Most candidates were able to mention some features of Glass's minimalist approach, although some focused too much on discussion of the storyline rather than the music. Detailed references to the music from at least three scenes were necessary to gain high marks.
- Q.15 There were some successful comparisons here with the two items of prescribed repertoire being chosen. Most candidates were able to make some comment on each composer's approach to harmony and tonality, but detailed examples from the music of both composers needed to be compared to access the full mark range.
- Q.16 This question elicited responses on film scores by several composers including Korngold, Steiner and Waxman. There were some thorough answers, but some restricted themselves to superficial comments on motifs. References to more than two film scores, or to music written after 1950, could not be credited.

Topic 4

- Q.17 Most candidates were able to show relevant knowledge, although some answers were restricted to generalised comments which did not clearly identify the movements discussed. The best responses were focused and demonstrated close familiarity with appropriate music. Some candidates did not restrict their answer to movements for solo voice as required.
- Q.18 There was a wealth of material available for discussion in this question. Answers were often restricted to discussion of texture in the *Mass for Four Voices* and to general comments about the voice in *Stimmung*. Detailed references explaining the expressive use of voices in both works were needed.
- Q.19 There was a range of works chosen for discussion in this question including a Bach solo cantata and Handel's *Zadok the Priest*. Detailed illustrations from an appropriate repertoire were required to gain high marks. References to music that was not from the Baroque period could not be credited.

Topic 5

- Q.20 There were some detailed answers to this question with candidates showing good understanding of how the music and drama are integrated by Wagner, although sometimes answers became rather too narrative at the expense of musical detail. A number of candidates cited brief moments from the work, often referring only to *leitmotifs*, rather than focusing on the requirements of the specific question. Answers needed to refer in detail to at least two extended passages to access the full mark range.
- Q.21 Most candidates were able to demonstrate some appropriate knowledge of the music of the two composers, although answers were often more detailed on Purcell than Bernstein. Other candidates recounted general facts without showing that they actually knew the music sufficiently well to be able to focus on the word-setting techniques. In

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order to gain high marks candidates needed to know the works in sufficient depth to be able to draw upon relevant detail in response to the specific question.

- Q.22 Most candidates chose *Dido and Aeneas* and were able to demonstrate some relevant knowledge. Understanding of the other work chosen for discussion, usually by Blow or Handel, was often superficial and limited to knowledge of a few brief moments in the music. Candidates needed to have detailed understanding of the expressive use of harmony and tonality in both works discussed in order to achieve high marks.

Topic 6

- Q.23 Some candidates demonstrated good understanding of tonality and could identify some specific chord patterns, but many responses were limited to the naming of keys with no link to *expressive use*. Few were able to give convincing examples of the expressive use of melody, often focusing more on discussion of the lyrics rather than the music. A number of candidates did not centre their response on the aspects required by the specific question. It was necessary to discuss detailed relevant examples from at least three tracks to achieve a high mark.
- Q.24 There were some successful responses to this question. 10cc was a popular choice for discussion alongside Queen. Good answers illustrated the effectiveness of the vocal writing in some detail, while others lacked sufficient focus with candidates simply writing all they knew about their chosen tracks. Some answers cited music which was not from the 1970s. Such references could not be credited.
- Q.25 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 voice and accompaniment were integrated expressively in the music of both chosen singer-songwriters accessed the full range of marks.

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