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Examiners' Report

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Preface

Congratulations to all candidates who were successful in the 2006 GCE Music examinations - and to teachers for all their hard work, not least in providing the paperwork and recordings for the performance papers. The general standard was broadly similar to that of 2005. It was encouraging to note improved performance in Papers 31, 41 and 42, but a pity that there was decline in some other papers, notably in Papers 32, 61 and 62.

This report is the single most important form of communication between examiners and centres, and is essential reading. **But please also consult the Edexcel website (www.edexcel.org.uk) regularly**, for example for updates on prescribed works.

The main part of this report consists of comment on candidates' performance in individual papers. But here first are three important sections on recordings, terminology, and administration of coursework.

Recordings

Good recordings help candidates by presenting their work in the best possible light. The following remarks have been compiled particularly for the benefit of those with limited expertise in the area of recording.

Condenser microphones are excellent for recording live ensembles; but if they are too expensive to buy it may be possible to borrow a couple for the final recordings, possibly from a local radio or theatre. A good stereo microphone connected to a minidisk recorder is often perfectly adequate.

In most concert halls a pair of microphones (a 'crossed pair'), or a single stereo one, will be positioned above the front stalls, and if possible a corresponding arrangement should be sought in the classroom. Classrooms are not ideal recording spaces because there tend to be many acoustic reflections but these can be eliminated with a little ingenuity (hung blankets or display boards). It is important to get a feel for the acoustics of the music room - but not at the last minute when staff and students are under pressure to record coursework. In some schools trials and tests could be packaged as a lesson in acoustics and recording earlier in the year for a Key Stage 3 class.

Use the level meters to ensure that the signal is neither too soft nor too loud, both at the stage of recording the performance and if it is subsequently transferred to tape. The meter indicator should hover around the 0dB Mark, with a little 'red' showing. Always check that the recording has been successful and that both left and right channels are audible. One of the commonest problems with recordings of computer-based compositions is a flat, uniform mix. It takes only a few seconds to open the mixer displays and add some subtlety, thus ensuring a good balance in which the important parts (or tracks) emerge clearly.

If using cassette tapes, the best results will be obtained from new tapes, rather than from those on which previous recordings have been made.

List of terms commonly used in questions for Papers 31, 32, 61 and 62

Forces: the instruments and/or voices used.

Timbre: the characteristic sound quality of an instrument or voice. We can tell an oboe from a flute when both play the same pitch.

Harmony: the sounding together of different pitches, most commonly to produce recognisable chords. In a discussion of harmony, important terms may include diatonic, chromatic and functional. (Harmony is not a synonym for accompanying instruments and textures.)

Melody: a discussion of melody may well deal with the ranges of voices or instruments, phrase-lengths, repetitions of phrases, melodic shapes (e.g. arch-shaped), conjunct and/or disjunct movement, sequence, continuity or fragmentation. Word-painting as such is irrelevant.

Rhythm: a discussion of rhythm may well focus on the use of recurring patterns, dotted rhythms, equal note-lengths, syncopation, hemiola and metrical organisation.

Structure (or Form): commonly-used structures are binary, ternary, rondo, sonata, 12-bar blues, verse and refrain, ground bass, strophic, variation, fugue, etc.

Texture: texture refers to the relationship between the various lines or strands in a composition, or sometimes more simply to the number of parts in use. Important terms are monophonic, two-part, three-part or four-part; contrapuntal (free or imitative, fugal or canonic); heterophony; antiphony; homophony; melody-dominated homophony. An organum-like use of parallelism (as in some works by Debussy) could also be referred to under texture. Candidates will be credited for distinguishing different types of texture, the number of voices/parts involved, whether melody lines transfer from one part to another etc. Expressions such as 'thick' and 'thin' are too vague to receive credit.

Tonality: often broadly synonymous with key. Important vocabulary will include functional/non-functional/modal; modulation. It is important to be able to identify keys and comment on their use, including the relationship between one key and another. (Tonality is not a synonym for sound quality/timbre.)

Terms mainly applicable to Paper 62 include:

Handling of voices/instruments: most obviously how voices or instruments are exploited in terms of range and technical difficulty. A discussion of the 'handling of voices/instruments' will extend to consideration of texture (for example, an antiphonal texture will result from a particular method of 'handling' instruments or voices).

Idiomatic writing: this overlaps with the preceding to some extent. Strictly it concerns writing for particular voices and instruments with close and special regard to the ranges and capabilities of these voices and instruments. Idiomatic writing for the piano, for example, will always be playable even if very difficult, and will bring out the best qualities of the instrument.

Administration of coursework, especially in Paper 21

It is sometimes difficult for teachers to know how best to help students complete coursework tasks without laying themselves open to suggestions of malpractice. In all cases examiners not only rely upon, but appreciate, teachers' professionalism. Here are some hints, addressed directly to teachers. Please refer also to the report on Paper 21.

You will often find it best to frame remarks as questions (for example, 'Do you think this piece lasts for a minute as the question requires?').

You may give general guidance on how fully or otherwise the requirements of the task have been met. This will take different forms according to the type of exercise. With A(ii), for example, you may need to comment on an excessive use of straight repetition and/or failure to create any contrast, on failure sufficiently to exploit the instrument, or on impracticality. With B(i), you might, when looking at a draft, ask 'Have you checked that there are no consecutives?' (What you must not then do is point to specific cases, and/or suggest solutions.) In some circumstances the candidate might be asked if he or she feels able to exploit a wider harmonic vocabulary. In B(ii) a reference to the inclusion of all necessary accidentals might well be useful.

Always check that each task has been completed. For example, has the candidate left a bar blank in A(i), or written less than a minute's worth in D(ii)? As marks are awarded for presentation, you may refer to the accuracy and neatness of the work, preferably in general terms. One way of tackling notational problems is to invent short practice exercises in which points such as how to beam quavers correctly can be addressed without your having to refer directly to specific situations in a candidate's actual examination submission. With exercises such as B(ii) and C(ii), you may point out to a candidate that the instrument(s) to be used have not been specified - without of course suggesting what instrument(s) would be suitable. In options where performance directions (tempo markings, dynamics and articulation) are necessary, you can again make helpful but generalised observations.

Candidates must not collaborate on coursework tasks. You may choose to allow access to the Paper 21 question paper only under controlled conditions in the classroom. Where candidates do take the paper outside the classroom, you must be sure that no collusion is likely to take place. Advise students that they will have to sign a declaration before their Paper 21 scripts are submitted, and that you have the right to refuse a countersignature if you doubt the authenticity of the work submitted. However you manage the working of Paper 21, you must monitor students' progress regularly, and before submission must look in detail at each script before agreeing to countersign it as authentic.

Performance (6701/11 6701/12)

The examiners wish to thank candidates and teachers for their efforts in preparing the performances, recordings and paperwork associated with this unit. The examiners also acknowledge the vital role played by instrumental and vocal teachers in preparing candidates for this examination.

Paper 11 was assessed externally; Paper 12 was assessed by the centre and moderated by the examiner appointed to mark Paper 11. The assessment criteria were those published in the 2006 Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations and coursework (ICE).

Paper 11: Solo Performance

It is very pleasing to be able to report an increase in the number of outstanding performances, showing an excellent technical command of the instrument/voice and a convincing sense of style. The numbers of candidates achieving very low raw marks in the 1-7 mark band was far smaller this year. The mean mark for this paper remained virtually the same as in 2005.

An extremely wide range of musical instruments and styles/genres was offered for assessment. In addition to work played on traditional instruments, there was some outstanding work in rock/pop/jazz genres. Few E (Easier) level submissions were offered this year, and more S (Standard) level submissions were in evidence, but the majority of candidates continue to submit work at the 'more difficult' (MD) level. This was not always to the candidates' advantage. Teachers and candidates are reminded that the standard required for examination at this level is Grade 5, and that the full range of marks is available to those who present pieces at this level. Pieces of Grade 6 standard and above qualify for the MD scaling, but no additional credit is available to candidates offering works of Grade 7 or 8 standard. The work of the few candidates who offered pieces at Grades 1-3 was assessed according to the mark scheme, but final marks were reduced by the application of scaling.

Many candidates overstretched themselves by playing pieces that were too demanding technically or musically, and this resulted in lower marks for both accuracy and interpretation than might otherwise have been the case. Candidates should choose pieces which they can play convincingly under examination conditions; offering a second instrument is not recommended unless candidates are equally proficient on both instruments.

The majority of candidates were able to fulfil the 5-6 minute playing time requirement set for this examination. However, a number of candidates presented **short submissions**. One raw mark was deducted for a slightly short submission; a reduction of one difficulty level was made for a very short submission. Some performances were much too long, and examiners were instructed to stop listening after eight minutes. Pauses between pieces, announcements, and tuning are not included in the playing time, but where candidates offered two or more related movements from a larger work, examiners were instructed to allow the pauses between these movements. Where candidates offered more than one piece, each piece was assessed individually and generally an average raw mark was calculated. If pieces were of significantly disparate lengths and were awarded widely differing marks, examiners used a formula to reflect the relative length and quality.

As in previous years, teachers' estimates of difficulty levels were usually correct, but occasionally required adjustment or even completion by examiners. The difficulty levels booklet used by examiners is available on the Edexcel website, and centres are encouraged to refer to it extensively. Only a small number of centres had marked their candidates' Paper 11 work in error.

Centres are reminded that candidates at AS level are not required to perform the entire submission on a single occasion - they may perform their work on different occasions and may re-record it if they so wish. Some candidates had recorded up to four pieces one after the other and the quality of their performance deteriorated as they tired. Whilst it is recognised that centres have individual preferences as to how to manage their candidates' recordings, it is recommended that as many performances as possible are recorded by each candidate as the course proceeds, thus avoiding additional pressure and anxiety in the weeks preceding the coursework submission date. This will be of particular help to nervous candidates.

Centres are reminded that it is solo performance which is examined in Paper 11 and moderated in Paper 12, even though ensemble performances are listed in the log. Examiners reported that a significant number of candidates offered ensemble work for assessment in Paper 12 - this is unacceptable. In order to make an adequate assessment of any performance, it is vital that the individual contribution of each candidate is clearly audible and a score provided. The work of some candidates was impossible to assess effectively. Enough solo material is now available in jazz styles (e.g. Associated Board Jazz Syllabus material) and rock styles (e.g. Rock School) for students to be able to submit **solo** performances.

Centres are reminded that examiners reserve the right to refuse to assess work containing foul language or offensive lyrics.

Pieces with a written accompaniment must be presented with the accompaniment, a requirement that is still overlooked in a few cases. Most of the accompanying was very good this year - examiners reported a decrease in the number of performances that were hindered by insensitive and unreliable accompanying. Centres must ensure that candidates are supported by competent and sensitive accompanists and that adequate rehearsal time is made available.

Centres are reminded that a **score must be provided** for all performances. Examiners reported a significant increase in the number of missing/incomplete scores this year. Some centres supplied a reference recording instead of a notated score - although this is permitted at GCSE level, it is **not** acceptable at AS level. Deviations from the score in jazz/rock and musical theatre numbers were generally accepted where deemed to be stylistically convincing. Some scores were annotated with helpful information regarding divergences between the printed music and the candidates' performance. However, some unacceptable scores in tab were submitted - these were often incomplete, and clearly downloaded from the net as an afterthought. The use of backing tracks continued to be popular, but candidates need to be made aware that balance and tuning, as well as ensemble with the backing, will form part of the assessment.

Accurate intonation is a vital component of any performance in any style. It is vital that candidates tune their instruments effectively before they record their work, and that they maintain accurate intonation throughout their performances. Examiners noted that, as in previous years a significant number of performances were compromised by poor intonation, and this adversely affected the mark awarded for accuracy.

Paper 12: Performing During the Course

The method of moderation for Paper 12 involves the re-marking of the recorded solo. If the moderator finds a disparity of marking, this numerical difference is then applied to the mark for the whole coursework log. The accuracy of the centre's marking of the recorded solo is therefore of the highest importance. Sometimes the centre's component marks (accuracy and interpretation) did not add up to the chosen holistic raw mark for the recorded solo. If an arithmetical error is discovered by the moderator, the holistic raw mark will be taken as the intended total mark for the recorded solo. Teacher-examiners are advised to base their assessment on the recording of the solo rather than on the live performance, using the published assessment criteria to arrive at a mark that matches the quality of the candidate's performance.

A wide range of marks was awarded in the moderation of the recorded solo. As in Paper 11, the moderators heard some truly outstanding and impressive performances which fully justified the high marks awarded by the centres. However, examiners reported that a large number of centres awarded unjustifiably high marks to candidates whose work did not merit these marks. Some candidates reached similar standards in the recorded solo to those achieved in Paper 11; others evidently found the recording occasion for Paper 12 more relaxed and were able to perform to a slightly higher standard.

Most candidates presented a recording of a solo piece for moderation, but some centres had wrongly allowed candidates to present an ensemble piece as the recorded item for moderation. Many candidates presented a short item for moderation, and this was perfectly acceptable, as there is no stipulated duration for the recorded solo in Paper 12. Centres are reminded that the overall duration requirement of the entire submission of four coursework pieces is 5-6 minutes. A number of long solo performances were submitted for Paper 12 - moderators were advised to stop listening after five minutes. A small number of centres unnecessarily submitted two recordings for moderation. The recorded solo must be listed as item 1 in the log; occasionally a different piece from item 1 was recorded for moderation. Logged performances for Paper 12 may not be duplicated from Paper 11, or *vice versa*.

The syllabus stipulates that the coursework log must include a performance of a solo (the recorded solo), **one of the student's own compositions** and an ensemble. As stated in the ICE document, the full mark range was not available to candidates who did not comply with the specification requirements. Most candidates were able to offer four pieces of coursework, although the item most frequently omitted from the log was the performance of the candidate's original composition. Deductions are made if the coursework log was incomplete. Teacher-examiners are requested not to apply their own deductions (to either marks or scaling) if a candidate has not fulfilled all of the syllabus requirements.

Although the coursework log must include a performance of one of the candidate's original compositions, there is no requirement for this piece to be offered as the recorded solo. Although some compositions represented ideal vehicles for both technical and musical expression, many were inadequate for these purposes and there was frequently a significant mismatch between the printed score and its realisation.

Coursework logs were not always detailed or complete - many omitted to specify whether a piece listed was a solo or an ensemble. Sometimes pieces lacked composers' names and the description of the make-up of an ensemble lacked detail, thus making it difficult for the moderator to establish the candidate's precise role. Individual difficulty levels were also occasionally omitted. Centres are asked to check that all the information provided on the form is complete and accurate prior to the despatch of the work to the moderator.

Some centres had taken immense care to complete the marking and commentaries on Paper 12. The best commentaries consisted of balanced, objective accounts which clearly justified the teacher-examiner's choices of marks for both the recorded solo and the folio as a whole. However, there was still a tendency for comments to focus on a candidate's commitment to the centre rather than on the quality of the performances listed in the log. Sometimes no commentaries were given; other accounts were minimal or rather generalised.

Moderators reported that there was a tendency for teachers to operate a restricted mark range using only the top two mark bands, whereas the recorded evidence suggested greater differentiation. A significant number of the recorded solos were marked either leniently or very leniently, with the consequence that the final coursework marks were often reduced in the moderation process.

Administration (Papers 11 and 12)

Recordings

Although the majority of recordings were good or excellent, examiners were seriously concerned about the poor quality of taped recordings. In these instances, little attention had been given to matters such as recording balance, microphone placement, or sound levels, and poor-quality equipment was sometimes used. In some cases the candidates were barely audible or even inaudible because of low recording levels or poor balance (musical and or technical) between soloist and accompaniment. Tapes and discs should be checked on completion of the recording to ensure that the work is accessible and present in its entirety. Examiners reported some problems with missing or incomplete recordings and unplayable mini-disks. Back-up recordings should be made, and retained by centres in the event of loss or technical difficulties.

Centres are asked to provide recordings in one format only - tape, CD or MD. The use of long-play MD is not acceptable. If using CD or MD it would be appreciated if each piece (and announcement) were recorded on a separate track. Sometimes it was difficult to locate work as it had been recorded in a different order from that listed on the MAS1, or track marks or announcements were missing. However, many centres made the examiner's task easier by labelling work clearly and announcing centre, candidate and paper names and numbers for each submission, as well as sometimes providing a **detailed track list**.

Paperwork

Whilst some centres had completed all the required documentation meticulously, examiners reported that a large number of centres had to be contacted this year, in order to recover missing music, recordings or other information that had not been supplied as part of the original submission. These difficulties added to the examiners' workload and contributed to delays in the assessment process. A checklist is provided on the back of the MAS1 form to help centres compile each candidate's submission.

Centres are reminded of the following:

- MAS1 form: the most recent version should be used, as indicated in the ICE document. Photocopied forms are acceptable, but these should be presented in A3 format folded into A4. The sample form printed in the Teachers' Guide should **not** be used as a template. All shaded areas should be completed.
- Difficulty Levels: these must appear as E, S, or MD unless work of lower than Grade 4 standard has been offered. For Paper 12, centres must decide on an average difficulty level for the four coursework performances. **Split difficulty levels (for example E/S or S/MD) should not be used.** The ICE document should be consulted for the correct scaling chart.
- Paper 11 attendance registers: the top two copies are sent with the candidates' work. Fractional raw marks on Paper 12 must not be used.
- Paper 12 OPTEMS: final half marks from Paper 12 should be rounded up to the next whole number. Only the *yellow* copy is sent with the work to the moderator.
- Candidate and teacher-examiner signatures must appear on page 4 of the MAS1. External examiners' marks cannot be submitted to Edexcel without authentication of the candidates' work.
- Photocopies of all items recorded for Papers 11 and 12 (solo parts only in the case of, for example, a movement from a flute sonata) must be sent as part of the submission. Lyrics of songs should not be submitted without at least some notation.
- Improvisations must be supplied with a stimulus, chart, or description of working methods. A computer-generated score produced after the performance is not acceptable.
- Sequencing is acceptable provided that the candidate performs the final track live, at the correct speed, and with no further editing.

Compositional Techniques (6702/21)

There was a slight rise in the mean mark from 74.5 in 2005 to 75.3 (out of 120). This is welcome, and reflects some careful teaching and good work by candidates. It was probably brought about more by an improvement in the marks of the middle range of candidates than by those at the top, as many examiners reported fewer really excellent submissions. However, there were indeed some scripts that gave great pleasure to markers, revealing on the part of their composers that elusive combination of security of technique with genuinely musical flair. There seemed also to be a higher number of scripts this year in which the candidate gained a high mark for one question but a disappointingly low mark for the other, as though time had run out in the process of preparation.

Last year's report referred to the need for those candidates undertaking any of the 'modern' options, particularly Minimalism, 32-bar Pop Song and Serialism, to have a secure grasp of the fundamentals of harmonic and contrapuntal progression. This year, more than ever it seems, it is necessary to point to the distressingly inadequate knowledge that many weaker candidates appear to have of basic musical notation - and indeed to the lapses of considerable numbers of better candidates. Those who write music in any shape or form, and for whatever purpose, must seek to convey their intentions to those who will read or play it with the highest possible degree of clarity. Among the many notational shortcomings were bars with incorrect numbers of beats, and at times appeared an almost anarchic use of incorrect enharmonics.

Infringements of the rubrics on the front page of the question paper were widespread. These included failure to complete the authentication form, without which a script will not be marked, and the absence of signatures on computer-generated scores. Such scores were often not tied in any way to the main question paper, with the risk of subsequent loss, however carefully the many processes of marking, checking and filing scripts are carried out. Where a recording is included, this must be fully labelled with the centre number, candidate's name and number, and, if appropriate, track number.

There appeared to be an even higher number of cases this year than previously where the supervision and administration of Paper 21 had not been carried out entirely satisfactorily. **Please see again the preface to this report on the matter of supervising and administering Paper 21.** In several centres all or many candidates appeared to be using the same template for computer-generated answers. When these contained errors in the copying of the given material, it was immediately obvious that submissions from different candidates shared the same provenance. (Of course these errors were also disadvantageous for all the candidates equally.) It is stressed once again that candidates who wish to use a computer must copy all the given material exactly for the questions that they answer, and they must do this themselves.

In a smaller number of cases candidates - and this is a matter taken very seriously - appeared to have colluded in producing their answers. All of these cases, together with the cases mentioned above, have been or will be raised with the centres concerned by Edexcel.

Finally, on a more general note, it is increasingly important to remember that knowledge of basic harmonic principles is an essential part of a musician's equipment. This has implications for all those who seek to analyse scores, and to listen or to perform with greater understanding. It is certainly fundamental for

composers, however far removed their styles and ambitions may be from traditional practice. It is to be hoped that those who worked hard to prepare for the Paper this year enjoyed the experience, and that those who move on to Paper 51 next year will gain even further satisfaction from their studies.

Topic A(i): Baroque Counterpoint

The question, adapted from a movement by Corelli, gave candidates ample opportunity to show what they could do, both in terms of technique and style. On the whole, the majority of candidates managed the realisation of the figuring with some basic skill, though some forgot that sevenths are dissonances and need both to be prepared and resolved suitably. Comparatively few candidates seemed able to create convincing melodic lines, with a clear sense of direction. Some used rests in unsuitable places, for example on the fourth of a 4-3 progression. Sparing use of rests may result in an enhanced stylistic quality but considerable judgment needs to be exercised as to where rests are appropriate.

Topic A(ii): Minimalism

The stimulus gave candidates plenty of material to work on but many fell at the first hurdle - the correct copying of the given material. Those who used computers, probably the majority, often showed little control over the technology at their disposal. The mistakes began with notes in the stimulus being altered enharmonically, often with the result that the clear harmonic structure of the four bars was disguised. The usual 'cutting and pasting' techniques stood out very awkwardly, especially in transposed passages where accidentals needed to be changed (but were not). Many candidates also decided to change the beaming of the given material of bars 3 and 4, so turning the 3+3+2 pattern, which reflected the melodic shape, into a featureless 4/4 time. There were further notational weaknesses in many submissions, where minims and even semibreves were used to cut across 9/8 time signatures. When such notes appeared in the middle of a three-quaver group, the results were very hard to read fluently. Candidates should regard knowledge of correct beaming and grouping as part of basic musical literacy.

Topic B(i): Chorale Cadences

Some 80% of all Paper 21 candidates worked this question. The range of achievement was very wide indeed, though perhaps there were fewer submissions reaching the top category this year. The main stumbling block appeared to be the fourth cadence, where use of a conventional 6/4-5/3 progression did not work because the soprano part moved up from B flat (where it would have been the fourth in the second inversion chord) to C. A large number of candidates gained high marks for the first cadence, where a II7b-V-I sequence worked very well. However, even here, few candidates saw the possibility of a G minor chord on the last beat of bar one, where there was then an opportunity to take G-F quavers in the bass, so creating a very shapely bass line. The marking scheme was changed slightly this year to give candidates more opportunity to earn marks for Style. The number of passing notes allowed for this purpose was increased from five to six, as were marks for good bass line from one to two. It was disappointing that so few candidates approached the maximum number of style marks, though there were many different ways of achieving these.

Topic B(ii): 32-Bar Pop Song

Though some candidates earned high marks for realisation of the given chords, there were quite a lot who came unstuck in bars where accidentals were needed, in particular the F naturals required where the sequence used some form of B flat major, F major or D minor harmony. There were many problems with voice leading and some strange confusions over enharmonics again here, which served to obscure rather than clarify a candidate's intentions. Indeed the general standard of notation was probably lower

for this than for any other question. Those who use computers should remember that they must include all the given material, including the chord symbols. They should also show that they understand the shape of this most basic of forms by numbering the bars correctly - the "middle eight" bars were frequently labelled 11 to 18. Many candidates seemed unable to progress much beyond the realisation and a tepid reflection of the given rhythmic material. For good marks, candidates are required to show some ability to create a pleasing, and suitably stylistic, melodic and rhythmic line.

Topic C(i): Renaissance Counterpoint

There were a few good workings but the majority of candidates seemed to find difficulty in realising all the potential for imitation here, even in the case of the first passage where the opening of the point was given. Some candidates seemed to have problems with recognising minim and semibreve rests and, as a consequence, left unfilled beats. There were also two very clear opportunities for suspensions at the two main cadences, but these were taken only by a small number of candidates.

Topic C(ii): Serialism

This option appeared to more popular this year, and on the whole there was quite a high level of competence in the handling of the note row and its various permutations. Many candidates also recognised that there were marks to be gained quite easily for using a suitably wide range and an appropriate number of the larger intervals. Beyond that, many candidates had difficulty in producing convincing rhythmic patterns and in controlling the line so that it had a clear sense of shape and direction. It cannot be over-emphasised that the object of the exercise is to create music which is to be heard and performed. It usually stood out clearly when a candidate was writing for an instrument or voice with which they were familiar but all candidates should find a way of listening to their own work as it progresses.

Topic D(i): Extended Instrumental and Vocal Techniques

There was a very wide range of achievement including some excellent work. But unfortunately a few candidates ignored the stimulus entirely and some failed to show any indication of using extended techniques.

Topic D(ii): Electro-Acoustic Music

There was some imaginative work, but the general run of answers was rather disappointing. Some candidates misinterpreted the listed effects (e.g. 'pitch shifting' as modulation, 'reversing' as retrograding), and a large number failed to indicate the effect used or mentioned an effect that was not listed in the question. Many of those who used 'looping' produced pieces that were almost completely devoid of variety, in some cases relying on 'cut and paste' methods without any exploitation of the effect at all.

Composition (6702/22)

The examiners felt that last year's standard was maintained, the mean mark being 36 (out of 60) compared with 35.9 in 2005. There was a shift in the popularity of the various topics. Popular Song consolidated its position as first choice at 23%, with Variations at 17% and Film and TV music at 16%. Romantic Miniatures dropped back to its 2004 position in fourth place at 10% (from second place at 19% in 2005) and the other topics remained relatively stable: Neo-classicism (9%), Post-modernism (8%), Music Theatre (8%), Fusions (5%) and Club Dance (4%). Candidates' responses were therefore split fairly evenly between traditional 'art' styles of work (45%) and popular and media 'studio'-produced work (55%).

The widest spread of marks occurred in Popular Song and in Film and TV, both topics having means (34.5 and 35 respectively) which were slightly lower than for the paper as a whole. Neo-classicism tended to be chosen by the stronger candidates, and this was reflected in its higher mean of 38. Several examiners commented on the tendency of some centres to prescribe the same topic for all their candidates, and although this allowed some to show their strengths - and obviously streamlined the teaching - it evidently left some candidates struggling with tasks to which they were not suited.

The Variations topic was undertaken by a wide range of candidates, and submissions ranged, both in style and approach, from jazz to serialism and from conventional themes and variations to ground bass pieces and extended rhapsodies. Generally, candidates who composed longer themes tended to do better, as these allowed more scope for development. Romantic Miniatures were often composed by confident performers who had written creative studies for their instruments and gained very high marks for resources.

Neo-classicism was usually attempted only by candidates who felt secure with a chromatic (and, in some cases, serial) harmonic idiom - indeed there was a further increase this year in the number of serial compositions, which were also submitted under the Post-modernism topic. Examiners recognised that there is no topic into which such compositions clearly and easily fall, for the topics are not 'watertight' and can accommodate a range of work. Minimalism is still the most common type of post-modern composition, and examiners felt the standard has been steadily improving over the last few years. There has also been a steady improvement in the quality of serial compositions, and it is likely that such improvements in minimalism and serialism are the result of good teaching for Paper 21. One key to success in both these fields of composition is inventive and varied rhythm - unfortunately musical ideas were sometimes inclined to be a little stiff and dull.

There were more responses to the Popular Song topic this year (up 3% on 2005); the standard was very variable, ranging from 11/60 to full marks. It is important that a popular song contains a strong and identifiable lead line - a rap, a series of riffs or instrumental solos or a lyrical melody. The weaker songs were often little more than backing tracks with strummed chords, and felt very unfinished. Some of the weakest scores were received under the Popular Song topic - in some cases the 'score' consisted only of a page of lyrics. Although examiners were able to assess the quality of the recording, it was found that recordings too were not always clear enough to make out all the individual parts. Songs were better structured this year with memorable choruses and middle sections (due perhaps to the study of the 32-bar song option in the techniques paper). Most Music Theatre submissions continued to

be ballad-type show songs (often an Act II lost-love solo) although there was an increase in incidental music and music for dance.

There was a small rise in the number of Fusions and Club Dance submissions. Fusions combined many styles, although most were instrumentals with a Latin American influence. Club dance pieces were generally very sophisticated, the candidates demonstrating a confident grasp of technology; they were submitted for the most part as track diagrams printed off the computer screen. This is acceptable, although some accompanying notes, identifying the samples and processes used, would be helpful. Examiners expressed concern about the lyrics of some of the raps. Whilst it is understood that this topic will attract lyrics which fall into the 'parental advisory' category, it was felt that a small minority of candidates had taken advantage of the examiner's broadmindedness by overstepping the mark by a considerable margin. Centres offering work in this style are asked to maintain a check on what their candidates are doing and to raise any questions about the suitability of the content with the GCE Music Assessment Team.

The quality of Film and TV submissions was felt to have improved - the mean mark rose this year, although it is still slightly below average. As with the Popular Song topic, there was a very wide range of marks, the most successful candidates producing vivid work which employed harmony and timbre to evoke screen images. What is required in each piece is a convincing and satisfying emotional journey rather than something structured rigidly along 'classical' lines or a series of melodramatic sound effects. The examples in the Anthology provide a good guide. This year the most popular film topics were war and suspense, although a great many had a nautical theme inspired by *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Titanic*.

As in previous years, many marks were lost because of poor presentation. Nearly all scores are now produced using computer software, yet most lack performance detail. Some candidates justify this by claiming that most of Bach's scores, for example, were similarly bare of editorial markings. But the mark scheme is quite clear: the more detail that is provided, the more marks will be earned. Some candidates failed to submit scores at all, the centre claiming that a score was not appropriate for their particular style of music - for example work which was based on improvised or semi-improvised material or which had an aleatoric element. Attention is drawn to the specification which allows a wide range of presentation formats ranging from stave notation to flow charts and graphics. It is worth bearing in mind that composers like Cage and Stockhausen, even at their most radical and improvisatory, managed to produce scores for their works.

Very few scores attracted more than 7 marks out of the possible 10. Recordings rarely did better, most being basic, functional CDs recorded straight off the computer but lacking a refined sense of balance. The best showed evidence of care during which the candidate had made an effort to improve the quality of the recording before making the master copy.

There was an increase this year in the number of under-length pieces. The specification requirement is three minutes, yet a significant number of submissions barely made two minutes. In some cases this applied to all candidates in a centre, suggesting that it was the centre that had not fully understood the requirements. A submission will fail to gain high marks under the Ideas criterion if it is under length.

Of the other criteria, Structure and Resources were the ones most commonly selected by the examiners. Many candidates tried to create structural cohesion by cutting, pasting and repeating passages on the computer screen, usually in four-bar

blocks, and this resulted in a general lack of variety. There was also a reliance on MIDI timbres. Many candidates continue to use these imaginatively to create sequenced compositions, but when parts for orchestral instruments are input using a keyboard the result is often unidiomatic writing for wind and strings. It is always best, if at all possible, to hear compositions played by real instruments (or at the very least to try writing *something* for real instruments at some stage during the course) so that these misjudgements can be identified and corrected.

As in previous years, Harmony was the criterion most commonly avoided by examiners when making their assessments because it was often the weakest feature. It is always better to acquire a small vocabulary and to use it well than to attempt pages of flawed part-writing and misjudged counterpoint. It is also worth bearing in mind that, if a candidate is not confident with harmonic procedures, there are many marks to be earned through rhythmic interest and elegant melodic writing.

There were no major problems with the dispatch of work, but there was a worrying increase in the number of unplayable or unsuitable recording formats. Whilst the examiners recognise that technology has moved on since the start of this specification the format options which are identified in it - CD, minidisk or cassette - are still flexible enough to accommodate everyone's work. This year work was submitted in a wide variety of formats including wav. and midi files, Sibelius scores on floppy disk (but not in hard copy) and film music as a soundtrack on a DVD or Quicktime file. Occasionally CDs and minidisks were completely blank, or were damaged in the post through poor packaging. Centres are asked to follow the specification requirements and to check recordings before sending them to the examiner.

Listening (6703/31)

Many candidates tackled this year's paper with confidence, and some very high marks were awarded. The use of correct musical language continued to improve, and the best candidates made perceptive insights about the music they heard.

Question 1 was generally well answered. In (a)(i) surprisingly few candidates identified the sound of the cello, the most popular wrong answer being 'violin', and similarly few identified the countertenor/male alto in (b)(i). Responses to (a)(ii) were encouraging and, usually, accurate: very few candidates used vague terms like 'thin'. Almost all candidates identified the harpsichord in (b)(ii). Part (b)(iii) drew some perceptive responses from the most able candidates, whose descriptions were admirably precise.

Question 2 was very well answered, with (e) often including many relevant points. The poorest responses to (e) were often the longest, many candidates writing what they imagined to be correct answers, and occasionally contradicting themselves. In addition, some candidates let themselves down in this section with unclear responses: examiners could not be sure which excerpt was being referred to, or exactly what was meant when terminology was misapplied. A surprising number of candidates did not identify the trombone in (d)(i), the most popular answers being trumpet or saxophone. On the whole, other parts of this question produced excellent responses.

Question 3 Option A was attempted by a minority of candidates and generally with considerable success, most achieving 9/12 or above. The rhythms caused greater problems than the pitches this year. Whilst attempted by most candidates, Option B produced the weakest responses on this year's paper: marks of 8 or above were rare. Given that dictation becomes a compulsory part of the third question in Paper 61, centres should be encouraged to teach towards Option A if they feel their candidates can manage it. Very few candidates attempted both options and in almost every case they achieved the higher mark for Option A.

In Question 3 Option B most thought that the voice (part (a)(i)) was a tenor and few described the vocal range (part (b)) in the detail required, using vague terms like 'limited', 'moderate', 'small', 'medium', and so on. Part (c) was very poorly answered, with a range of responses which often did not fit the music being heard. Several candidates scored some marks here by identifying the flute, the dotted rhythms, or the compound time signature, but very few achieved full marks. Many candidates misread (c) and thought that the excerpt was an actual piece of Irish folk music; this led to a variety of inappropriate responses in (d)(ii) and (iii) in particular. For example, the most popular response to (d)(iii) was 'in a pub'. Most placed the music in the correct century, but the choice of composers was often bizarre.

It is excellent to be able to report that responses to Question 4 were much stronger this year. The weakest candidates were still unable to differentiate between major and minor tonality, and even some moderate candidates appeared to be guessing at keys and cadences (some even using responses not offered to them on the paper). The strongest candidates did very well on Question 4 - if they lost any marks it was usually in (c).

Musical Understanding (Anthology) (6703/32)

It is a pity to have to begin a negative note, but there was a slight falling-off in the standard this year in most areas of the paper, and examiners reported that there were few really high marks. There was also an increase in the number of 'unbalanced' scripts, i.e. with a good response to one question paired with a weak attempt at the other.

Poor presentation and hand-writing continued to give cause for concern, and in spite of the question-setters' attempts in section (d) to direct candidates as clearly as possible to focus on specific aspects of the music, many answers were still marred by irrelevance. Indeed it appeared that many candidates were hazy about the meanings of standard musical terms, and for this reason a list of appropriate terminology has again been given in the preface to this report. It goes without saying that the indiscriminate listing of anything and everything that comes to mind will almost certainly be subject to penalty on grounds of irrelevance. Some candidates earned relatively few marks simply because they did not proceed much beyond a consideration of the opening bars of prescribed works.

Relatively few rubric infringements were reported, other than where some candidates answered all parts of sections (a) and (b) - or the very occasional attempt to answer the whole paper. Responses to sections (a), (b) and (c) still sometimes suffered from long-windedness. Candidates should attempt to answer these questions as succinctly as possible.

In general, weaker answers to section (a) were typified more by incompleteness and tautology ('an inverted pedal is a pedal that has been inverted') than total error. Some section (b) responses drew on the wrong Area of Study, or else were incomplete (omitting bar numbers or failing to designate the parts involved). Responses to question (c) as ever provided the most revealing indications of a candidate's musical understanding, showing clearly whether he or she was able to proceed beyond the more superficial aspects of the score (e.g. whether there was an understanding of textural or harmonic aspects rather than dynamic indications).

Question 1: Music for Large Ensemble

In (a) definitions of 'ritornello' frequently lacked reference to different keys. A definition of 'imitation' challenged most candidates - in (b) some offered instances of simple repetition, for example from Haydn and Berlioz. 'Tremolo' was often equated with trill or vibrato. Answers to (c) rarely earned full marks. In (ii) contrasts were often incomplete, like not always being compared with like (e.g. where the solo viola's part in one section was compared with the orchestral violas' part in the other). In (iv) 'hemiola' was frequently given instead of rhythmic augmentation.

In (d), the full range of marks was covered. There were, however, very many weak answers, usually involving digression into textural issues, notably the location of melody as opposed to its nature. Performance circumstances were rarely given in any detail for either work. Tonality was too often equated with timbre. There was evidence of a considerable amount of unapplied book-learning - e.g. the keys of the ritornelli in the Bach were correctly listed, but not located (and therefore not creditworthy).

Question 2: 20th-century Art Music

Definitions of 'retrograde inversion' and 'inverted pedal' were often tautologous. In the case of 'inverted pedal', the need for harmonic change was rarely mentioned. An example of 'retrograde inversion' was rarely successfully located. In section (c), subsections (i), (ii) and (iv) were usually well answered. Subsection (iii) revealed serious shortcomings regarding the exact location of the prime order in bar 6 and the use of *Klangfarbenmelodie*. Relatively few other comparative observations regarding the two passages were offered.

In (d), remarks on texture were frequently sketchy, and there were too many listings of time signatures without amplifying comment.

Question 3: Music for Small Ensemble

'Appoggiatura' was frequently misunderstood to mean acciaccatura, and the dissonant aspect ignored. Examples included anything in small print, even groups of two notes. 'Recapitulation' was sometimes applied to non-sonata form movements. In (c), the transposition was rarely correct, and there was a lack of focus in the responses to (ii) and (iv).

In (d), the melodic writing and textures of each work were reasonably well described, but though most candidates remarked on the more idiomatic nature of Corelli's instrumental writing, there was little further investigation of the more technical aspects of his violin writing.

Question 4: Keyboard Music

'Circle of fifths' was rarely defined in full. 'Parallelism' was usually explained only with some difficulty. The most frequent wrong choices in the multiple choice section in (c) were 'baroque' and 'sonata form'. Subsection (ii) caused difficulties to those candidates who did not resort to appropriate terminology, while the response to (iii) was disappointing in that many candidates merely counted up the notes in each chord.

In section (d), structural aspects were usually better handled than melodic.

Question 5: Sacred Vocal Music

Some candidates incorrectly assumed that any incidence of the figuring '7' in the Bach cantata would automatically provide an example of a 'dominant 7th'. 'Gymel' was sometimes equated with crossing of parts, though the example was almost invariably correctly located. Definitions of 'stretto' sometimes lacked reference to the overlap involved, and locations could be vague. In (c)(i), there were few references to heterophony, though the other two textural elements were usually spotted. In (iii) canon was frequently given as a harmonic device, and though the pedal was usually noted, few mentioned the cadence. There were very few full and correct answers to part (v) - often instead much talk of Nelson's exploits, some posthumous.

Section (d) answers unusually heavily from digression, usually involving textures and structures. There was a distressing lack of detailed knowledge of the performing circumstances of this music (e.g. the not-infrequent response: 'in a church').

Question 6: Secular Vocal Music

In section (a) 'sequence' was very often correctly defined, though the locations sometimes failed to show immediate repetition. 'Tonic pedal' usually lacked the clause concerning the change of harmony. 'Turn' was usually correct, though some candidates confused it with mordent. In (c)(ii), the answer 'baroque' was given surprisingly frequently. Illogically, some selected both 'melismatic' and 'syllabic'. In (iv), the first dissonance was not usually given. There were some good answers in section (d).

Question 7: Music for Film and Television

In (a), 'bitonality' was usually correctly described, though not always correctly located. Explanations of 'syncopation' were frequently incomplete ('off-beat'), and were often located with a part coming in after a rest, whether or not the stress had been displaced. Although the term 'monophonic' was understood in most cases, definitions were not always adequately expressed, e.g. 'a single instrument plays' (true of a flute or oboe, but what of a piano or organ?). In (c), the most frequent incorrect answers given in (i) were 'twelve-note' and 'periodic phrases'. In (ii), comparisons of the two passages were unfocused, and often went no further than instrumentation differences. Subsections (iii) and (iv) were well answered overall.

In (d), tonality in Bernstein was generally not tackled in any detail, especially the bitonal aspects. Remarks on rhythm were generally better, though some candidates referred to 'dotted rhythms' in ET when they clearly meant repeated staccato quavers.

Question 8: Popular Music and Jazz

'Stride bass' was sometimes confused with 'walking bass'. Where candidates did understand this term, they frequently showed considerable difficulty in explaining the concept. The remaining terms in (a) were usually well explained and safely located, though some candidates gave any note, or group of notes, in small print for 'acciaccatura'. In section (c), 'major' was often given in response to the first question, and 'ternary' to the second. Subsection (iii) elicited mainly weak, insubstantial remarks, while (iv) produced few correct answers: some errors apparently arose from a misreading of clefs.

Section (d) answers were frequently marred by extensive digression, usually regarding structure, chords and rhythm. More than in most areas of study, candidates seemed to fall back on reciting everything they knew about the prescribed pieces.

Question 9: World Music

This remained the least popular option. Sections (a) and (b) posed few problems. Section (c) was well answered, apart from the question on phrase structure. There were some good responses to section (d).

Advice for future Paper 32 candidates:

- know the necessary terms (e.g. texture: see the preface to this report)
- read each question carefully, and do exactly what it asks for
- back up points you make with appropriate examples
- when preparing for the exam, try to ensure that you can cope well with both areas of study you are doing

Composition (6704/41)

27% of Unit 4 candidates opted for composition this year. The slight rise in the mean mark from 69.8 (out of 120) in 2005 to 72.2 suggests that only candidates who feel confident with composition are continuing with it into A2. Another factor in the rise in the mean mark was a significant increase in the number of quality film scores. Indeed the mean mark out of 60 for Film and TV music pieces rose from 31 to 34.3. Interestingly, this was matched by an improvement in this Area of Study in Paper 62, suggesting that candidates were better prepared all round in their film music studies.

As previously, it was common for candidates to do significantly better in one of their two pieces than in the other - so that although some achieved full marks for one piece, full marks for the whole portfolio were very rare. There were unfortunate instances of candidates submitting second pieces apparently composed in haste as little more than 'fillers', and these inevitably attracted few marks. Centres are reminded again that each piece is marked out of 60, and that there is no provision for weighting marks in favour of the more substantial piece of the two.

There was a shift in the popularity of composition topics. Film and TV music, already the most popular, now accounts for 27% of submissions (a sharp rise from 22% last year). Popular Song rose from 18% to 20% and Romantic Miniatures dropped dramatically from 14% to 7%. Variations remained stable at 13% as did the others: Post-modernism (11%), Neo-classicism (8%), Fusions (6%), Music Theatre (3%) and Club Dance (3%). Common topic pairings were: Film and TV music with Popular Song; Popular Song with Club Dance or Fusions; Variations with Romantic Miniatures, and Neo-classicism with Post-modernism. A number of centres failed to indicate on the authentication form which of the two topics had been carried forward from the previous year's AS paper. Also, a number of candidates submitted very similar pieces under different topics, for example two love songs, one as a popular song and the other as a fusion or music theatre song. There is no requirement to compose in different styles, but candidates are expected to demonstrate a credible attempt to address two different topics.

There was a continuing increase in the number of jazz submissions and also of work based on ideas drawn from the post-war *avant garde*, for example looped ostinati in the manner of Terry Riley's *In C* and graphic scores with instructions for the players to improvise. These ideas were not always fully realised, often being presented with sketchy scores and vague instructions. A study of works from this period will show how much thought went into them and that there is a difference between a simple idea and one which lacks sophistication. In the case of jazz scores a chord chart, similar to those published in the so-called 'fake' or 'real' books, is acceptable, but candidates are reminded that there is a difference between a composition which is sufficiently well documented to be reproduced and a spontaneous jam session. It might be worth studying the work of jazz composers like Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus.

Serial compositions were also more in evidence, and many were imaginative and creative, although some were linked to unlikely topics. Although there is no reason why, for example, serialism cannot be applied to film music (Carl Stalling composed some serial scores for the Tom and Jerry cartoons and Elisabeth Lutyens composed serial scores for the Hammer horror films in the 1960s), such a linkage does need thinking through.

Many remarks in the report for Paper 22 apply also to Paper 41, particularly with regard to the assessment criteria (although remember that here there are only four criteria, each marked out of 15). Presentation continues to be the criterion under which most marks are lost, usually quite unnecessarily. Many scores, though neatly printed and well laid out, lack details such as phrasing, articulation marks, bowing and slurs. Some candidates include generalised phrasing - phrase marks which cover whole four- and eight-bar melodic cycles but do not actually indicate how the music is to be interpreted - whilst others start with good intentions, only for the detail to fizzle out after a few pages. Recordings, too, were often mediocre. In the case of popular music, most composers should expect to spend a considerable amount of time before they record their compositions making sure that microphones are placed correctly and even more time in post-production, reviewing and refining the master.

Film and TV music is now the firm favourite amongst the topics. The standard of work has improved considerably over the last few years and there were some excellent compositions. Many candidates adopted an action, adventure or suspense theme and the most successful employed instrumental colour, rhythm and harmony to create an appropriate set of moods for the listener. Libraries (suites of related extracts designed to cover most scenes in a particular film or documentary) have also grown in popularity. The best examples contain lots of variety whilst the weakest tend to be a set of bland variations on a title theme. Some candidates entered pieces under the Film and TV music topic which appeared to be quite unsuitable: romantic miniatures or short serial studies. There is indeed a place in film for *diegetic* (or featured) music - that is, music intended to be part of the action, for example the string quartets in *Titanic* that entertain the passengers with serenades and dances. However, in most cases candidates who composed film music romantic miniatures or short serial pieces offered no explanations of the intentions of the music, and examiners were left to conclude that they had simply ticked the wrong box.

The Popular Song topic attracted a wide range of candidates and a wide range of styles from heavy metal rock and techno (also submitted under Club Dance) to ballads, folk and jazz. It was not always evident that candidates had studied the genre but, rather, had simply attempted pastiches of the work of their favourite artists. Occasionally these pastiches were well focused and convincing, with some outstanding offerings in the style of the Red Hot Chilli Peppers and Joe Satriani, but all too often songs were dominated by clichés and rambling solos. Scores were frequently unsatisfactory. The importance of a good recording cannot be stressed enough - when presentation is compromised the examiner has very little upon which to base an assessment.

Despite the predominance of film and popular music, it was candidates offering Neo-classicism, Post-modernism and other examples of twentieth century 'art' music who tended to do best, achieving above average marks and seldom less than 80/120. The Neo-classicism topic was a convenient pigeon-hole for the many examples of tonal pastiche and style studies which were often attempted by candidates with a strong grasp of classical harmony and counterpoint.

Music Theatre and Fusions have continued to be minority topics although both have widened in scope. In previous years most music theatre pieces were love ballads, whereas in 2006 it was common to find examples of music for dance, computer games and internet performance. Candidates attempting fusions occasionally faltered because the elements they had chosen were too diverse or demanding for a convincing and satisfying end result.

The written commentaries were generally clear and helpful. No marks are awarded for them, but such commentaries are a requirement of the specification. Some candidates satisfied the requirement only minimally by providing a page of scribbled notes. A written commentary in fact provides a candidate with a valuable opportunity to draw the examiner's attention to the features and merits of a composition. There can, for example, be information about instrumentation: is the piece scored for real or synthesised instruments? Candidates offering film and TV music, fusions and music theatre pieces should explain the underlying ideas of the music. Examiners are, however, rarely convinced by candidates who write in justification of a score which is completely bare of editorial detail by claiming that it is an *Urtext*.

Administratively things generally ran smoothly. Some centres still sent Paper 42 recitals to the Paper 41 composition examiner and *vice versa*, or forgot to inform Edexcel when candidates switched from one option to the other at the last minute. Several CDs arrived damaged this year - work must always be packed carefully. It is also helpful if centres with several candidates provide a list with track numbers on a separate sheet. Examiners appreciate that this means extra work for centres, but if track numbers are written only on a CD, tape or minidisk this has to be frequently ejected from the machine each time the details for an item need to be read.

Recital (6704/42)

Examiners would like to thank candidates and their teachers for many excellent and exciting recitals. It was very pleasing to see an improvement in the overall standard, with the mean mark rising from 17.3 in 2005 to 17.6. A small increase in the percentage of candidates achieving 22 marks and above (23%) was coupled with fewer candidates receiving marks in single figures (6%). There was a more significant, and very encouraging, increase in candidates in the top two holistic bands (19 and over) - 45% as opposed to 42% in 2005. Although it is possible to achieve high marks with standard level (Grade 6) material, the majority of candidates continue to perform at MD level (Grade 7 and above) and gain additional marks through scaling.

Vocal recitals continued to rise in popularity, being 23% of all submissions (22% in 2005 and 20% in 2004). Some additional comments on the marking of these is included later in this report. 13% of vocal recitals were broadly classical (and 10% popular) although the majority tended to include music from a wide variety of styles. A small rise in the number of string players (13%) was counterbalanced by a drop in pianists (17%). Woodwind players accounted for 23% (flute 9%, clarinet 7%, saxophone 5%, oboe 1% and bassoon 1%), with brass 8%, and guitarists 8%. The remaining 8% included drum kit, orchestral percussion, organ, harp, accordion, recorder, bagpipes, and candidates offering two or more dissimilar instruments.

The highest mark band was achieved by candidates on all of the standard instruments, although the proportion was significantly higher for violinists, cellists, oboists and bassoonists, and lower for flautists, clarinettists, popular singers and electric guitarists. At the opposite end of the mark spectrum, a higher proportion of electric guitarists and trumpeters received marks lower than 10, and a smaller proportion of flautists, classical singers and cellists.

Programmes which were well-planned, thoughtful and imaginative gained extra credit (+1), whilst those which the examiner considered to be a haphazard assortment of unrelated pieces attracted a deduction (-1) if the programme notes made no attempt to explain the link between the pieces and the order of performance. (It was not acceptable merely to state that these are the candidate's favourite works, or that the pieces cover as wide a range of styles as is possible in a 20-minute recital.) A chronological programme that demonstrated the development of the instrument through the last three or four centuries was perfectly acceptable, but did not in itself gain the extra mark unless the candidate was able to show aspects of this development clearly in the notes. Candidates with a larger repertoire who planned their recitals early in the year were inevitably likely to perform better than those who left the choice of programme, and practising, until close to the May deadline.

Administrative aspects of the recital paper continued to improve, and examiners were pleased to report fewer poor recordings, less problematic accompanying, fewer short recitals and less editing. Many teachers and candidates had taken advantage of the difficulty level guide on Edexcel's website, with a resulting and welcome improvement in the assessment of difficulty levels. Improved technology has supported the work in most centres with the majority of submissions now on CD with clearly labelled tracks and a good balance between soloist and accompaniment. There was little evidence of centres' using cassette tapes (although these are still acceptable), rewritable CDs or minidisks in long-play mode.

Less happily, in a few cases there appeared to be an approach to overall performance time which was hardly in the spirit of the specification - with unduly

lengthy applause and much retuning between movements just to reach the minimum length. One candidate took the full 20 minutes to perform just the first movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto. The full range of marks was not available to these candidates. In a small minority of centres, recitals had been edited (either blatantly or surreptitiously); in all these cases the candidate's work was reported as a specification infringement. There were still examples of candidates performing to no discernible audience. Some centres continued, incorrectly, to submit Papers 42 and 52 on the same CD, often without adequate labelling, which caused significant and quite unacceptable administrative problems. Careful labelling of each disc and its inlay, is essential to keep candidates' work secure.

Two performance problems (noted also in previous years) applied primarily to candidates performing in rock styles. First was the issue of ensemble performance. The specification requires that the candidate should have the 'dominant solo role throughout the performance'. In recitals where this was not the case, the examiner was unable to award any marks. Candidates are at liberty to play with a backing track or with a supporting band, but it is essential that the performance is a solo one and not a band performance with some solos. Secondly, some candidates (more than in 2005) downloaded scores of their songs after the recital had been recorded. Frequently these scores bore little relation to the music performed, except for the title. Not only was the musical detail inadequate, but also the structure of the performance was often significantly different. In these instances, the candidate could score little credit for accuracy. Candidates must understand that they are required to submit an accurate score, in notation, tab or chord chart, and that this needs to be planned for in very good time. It is not acceptable to provide a sample recording in lieu of a score. In improvised performances, a lead sheet, or detailed stimulus is necessary, and an account of the structure desirable.

There were many examples of high quality singing this year, and there was much evidence of excellent vocal training. However, as the number of vocal recitals increased to over 750 there were also more instances of poor technique. The following guidelines are offered to help candidates prepare better in future years:

Accuracy marks are awarded for control of pitch, intonation, rhythm, tempo and language (quality of vowels, clarity of consonants and authenticity of foreign languages). In popular styles, the bending of notes for colouristic effect is acceptable, but intonation and pitch must be well-focused for a high mark. Some rhythmic freedom may be appropriate if this enhances the delivery of the text, but consistent shortening of longer notes, especially at ends of phrases, is not acceptable.

Interpretation marks are awarded for quality and consistency of tone across all registers. Many candidates compromise their performances by choosing songs which lie out of their comfortable range, or where the sound becomes harsh or forced above a certain pitch. Judicious transposition to present the voice to best effect is encouraged in these instances. Breath control is an essential factor (as with woodwind and brass players), and phrases should be sustained with a firm support. Candidates who consistently breathe in the middle of phrases (a common example being "Can't help - breath - lovin' that man"), or where ends of phrases sag or disappear completely will not receive high interpretation marks. Dynamic variety is important, even if nothing is actually written in the score. Variety between and within phrases is an essential ingredient of an interesting performance, and a feel for the direction of each phrase should be evident. Although an 18-year-old voice may not have a wide dynamic range, candidates should be able to sustain and control a good piano sound. Communication and projection are taken into account: confident

and authoritative performances are well rewarded if accuracy and interpretation are strong. Candidates should be dissuaded from copying the examples of poor vocal technique increasingly evident in recordings in the public domain.

Compositional Techniques (6705/51)

For Paper 51, candidates who had to complete two topics for Paper 21 at AS level now choose one in which to specialise at A2. Bach Chorales continued to be the favourite option by quite a long way though perhaps not as much as when the present specification was introduced. From a very sizeable sample processed at the time of writing this report, it appeared that about 57.5% of candidates chose the Chorale, 12.5% Baroque Counterpoint, 14.5% the Pop Song and 9.3% Serialism. Only 4% presented Minimalism, and very few chose Renaissance Counterpoint, Extended Techniques and Electro-Acoustic music.

The mean mark remained at a very similar level to last year – 34.5 (out of 60) as against 34.7. But as with Paper 21, it appears welcome improvements in the work of middle-range candidates were offset by a reduction in the number producing work of excellent or outstanding quality.

Examiners frequently expressed concern over weaknesses in notation. These included bars with incorrect numbers of beats, especially in B(ii) and C(ii), much enharmonic confusion, particularly in A(ii) and B(ii), and carelessness over direction of stems, grouping and beaming. Among the small number of candidates who chose to offer C(i), there were several who seemed unable to distinguish between minim and semibreve rests and who, as a result, failed to complete the required number of beats. It is surprising and regrettable that these problems are still evident at this level.

For all that, among more than 4000 submissions there were a few which displayed both an admirable grasp of the chosen technique and evidence of real musicianship. Generally the best examples were from those who attempted B(i) or C(ii).

Topic A(i): Baroque Counterpoint

The passage set, from a sonata by Handel (Op. 1 No. 2), gave candidates an excellent opportunity to show what they could do with a characteristic baroque walking bass line. Handel's own solo part provides an object lesson in phrase structure, melodic interest and the well-judged use of rests. There were a few good answers but, alas, the usual shortcomings were much in evidence – confusion over the proper treatment of dissonance and inability to create shapely and well-directed melodic lines. Candidates who do not encounter much music of this kind in their performing experience should make a special point of studying suitable scores to see how late Baroque composers convey a clear sense of purpose in their music. It would also be of great benefit to many candidates, both for A(i) and C(i), to attempt some preliminary exercises in 'species' counterpoint, so long as these are focused on a definite historical period and style.

Candidates who chose to produce computer-generated scores for A(i) must have spent a significant part of the exam in setting up the given material, including the figuring. It is open to doubt as to how wise this was, especially in the many cases where marks were lost because of mistakes in copying that material.

Topic A(ii): Minimalism

The stimulus presented candidates with ample material for development. There were clear melodic shapes, both diatonic and whole-tone, the latter colouring the harmonic character also, and syncopated rhythmic figures. Some candidates grasped these possibilities with aplomb, though many ran into difficulties with the chromatic elements of the given material, especially when they chose to pad out their work with 'cut and paste' passages. Transposition up a tone of the A, B, C sharp, D sharp motif routinely became B, C, D sharp, E sharp. Was this really what candidates intended?

Topic B(i): Bach Chorale

The passage set was adapted from the chorale 'Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'', on which Bach based some of his most adventurous chorale preludes for organ. The commonest errors arose mainly from misuse of the 6/4 chord. None of the cadences lent itself to approach by means of the well-tried Ic-V progression. Study should be made of the way in which Bach does use 6/4s, both in passing and at cadences. In particular, the fourth in such a chord should be regarded as a dissonance, and therefore needs careful treatment both in approach and resolution, and should never be doubled. The question gave opportunities for cadences in A minor and D major, the latter offering scope for use of II⁷b-V-I. Candidates who spotted this often found difficulty in selecting a suitable chord with which to lead into it - B minor was the best, though not the only, possibility.

Topic B(ii): 32-Bar Pop Song

Devising a suitable chord scheme for the second-time bars and the middle eight is a considerable test of harmonic grasp and not all candidates were able to combine enterprise with logic in this respect. Realisations often relied too much on arpeggio figures which made little sense in the longer melodic perspective. Candidates should convey clearer ideas of the 'stylistic feel' intended, relating this both to the tempo they prescribe and to the character of their music. They should note too that for tempo a mere number, or a number followed by 'bpm', is unlikely to be sufficient. The time signature of the stimulus was given as cut time, so the indication '120 bpm', for example, implied a very rapid tempo often at odds with the quoted stylistic feel.

Topic C(i): Renaissance Counterpoint

On the whole, candidates who attempted this question scored well for technique ('Harmony, Melody'). However, it was surprising how many failed to identify the appropriate pitches for imitative entries, or to realise how far the given points could be taken. In a small minority of cases, there were examples of unstylish rhythms or unsuitable word underlay. Mention has already been made of submissions which included uncompleted beats, presumably owing to confusion over minim and semibreve rests.

Topic C(ii): Serialism

Marks for Resources (i.e. the basic use of the note row in its various forms) were mainly high, and there seemed overall to be fewer instances this year of eccentric uses of the row. It is not recommended that candidates depart from the basic principle that (apart from an immediate repetition) any note, once used, should not be heard again until all pitches have been used in one of the preordained orders. Those who nevertheless decide to use some form of rotation should take particular care to label and number notes, perhaps supplying in addition a brief explanation in words. Many candidates, while showing some basic competence in the handling of the technique, seem unable to exert full control over the vertical aspects of their music or to devise suitably varied and inventive rhythmic structures.

Topic D(i): Extended Instrumental and Vocal Techniques

Presentation tended to be a problem for candidates who chose this option. They should remember that it is the score which is marked, not the recording even if that is provided. In submissions for prepared piano, there was much vagueness about which notes, or even registers, were to be 'prepared'. In such cases, the results were often very random.

Topic D(ii): Electro-Acoustic Music

Results here were on the whole disappointing. Candidates need to be reminded that their submissions are essentially assessed as music, so mere bravura in recording does not necessarily earn high marks.

Performing during the course (6705/52)

The recorded solo performances showed a very wide variety of performing styles and abilities across the full range of instruments, and the logged ensembles were a testament to the wealth of musical activity available in centres. Many candidates demonstrated an ability to perform across a vast spectrum of repertoire, often logging ambitious orchestral works alongside choral items and rock band performances. There were almost no instances of candidates being unable to fulfil the requirements of four performances, and it was clear that many candidates had been able to select from a much larger list of pieces. There is no time requirement for the solo, but the piece should be long enough for the candidate to demonstrate good musical interpretation, but not so long that mistakes creep in. Moderators will only listen to the first five minutes of the solo performance.

The standards of performance of the recorded solo were similar to those in 2005. There were many excellent performances, but moderators commented once again that many candidates were either too ambitious in choice of material (mistakenly believing that they would impress with a sketchy performance of a very showy piece), or had not taken enough care to practise fully. A secure performance (14-15 out of 25) must be quite literally 'secure', with no significant weaknesses; a successful interpretation must start with a faithful adherence to the musical details given by the composer, such as dynamics, articulation and tempo markings.

Some candidates failed to supply an adequate written score of the recorded solo. An 'adequate written score' should be either a fully notated one, or a chord chart or lead sheet, or the stimulus for an improvisation. A score downloaded from another artist's website after the recording has been made may be - but may well not be - an accurate version of what the candidate actually played. A sample recording from another artist is not acceptable. To be able to receive full credit, candidates should perform compositions in full, and not in simplified versions. Improvised performances are judged on the quality of the improvisation (as detailed in the marking grids for improvised performances) and also the technical and musical quality of the performance, including aspects of tone quality and dynamic control.

The commentaries and marking by teacher-examiners remained variable, with many giving unrealistic assessments. Comments made in previous reports still apply, and it is worth reiterating that teachers should listen to the recordings and mark these rather than the live performances as objectively as possible in relation to the marking grids. It is through the marking of the recorded solo that the paper is moderated: unrealistically high marking here may significantly jeopardise the marks awarded for the paper as a whole. There continues to be a significant minority of centres where candidates' marks are adjusted by 10 marks or more.

The averaging of the four logged marks was more successfully accomplished this year. However, the details of the logged ensembles remained sketchy. In order that the moderator can award the correct marks it is essential that full information is provided. In particular, it is necessary to know whether a complete work has been performed, or just a single movement, in order to clarify the difficulty level. Moderators would be glad if teacher-examiners could include more information in their commentaries to support their assessment of difficulty levels. Where a candidate offers four performances with two at S level and two at MD, it is the relative lengths of the performances which determine whether the overall difficulty level should be S or MD.

Recording quality continued to improve, although there were still cases where the candidate's part was overwhelmed by the accompaniment. There were instances of concerto movements with school orchestra where the positioning of the microphone rendered the soloist's part almost inaudible. Poor-quality and inadequately-tuned pianos were sometimes noted. Candidates are encouraged to listen to the recordings of their performances before signing the declaration on the back of the MA52 form.

Some centres incorrectly submitted the Paper 42 recitals on the same CD as the 52 recorded solo, causing significant administrative difficulties. But moderators were very grateful for the considerable care and attention that the great majority of teachers and candidates had given to the complicated and time-consuming procedures for this paper.

Listening (6706/61)

Some candidates tackled the paper with considerable confidence and accuracy, and there were some high overall marks, although unfortunately the mean mark was slightly lower than in 2005.

Question 1 (a) proved difficult for a number of candidates. Very few spotted the piano trio texture, fewer gave the correct date, and even fewer a credible composer. Part (b) however was generally well answered, although a minority of candidates thought that this excerpt came from a musical. Answers to (c) were usually entirely correct or entirely incorrect. The most popular incorrect answer was to identify this as a minimalist piece, to give a composer like Glass, and to date the music in the 1960s, 70s or 80s.

Question 2 was very well answered. Parts (a) and (b) were confidently tackled by most candidates, and the contextual questions in (d) produced a better response than in recent years. There were some excellent responses to (c). Some candidates, however, let themselves down by being too vague or imprecise. For example, it is not enough just to describe excerpt B as homophonic, whereas 'homophonic at the start' was acceptable. Far too many candidates incorrectly used 'call and response' as a synonym for 'imitation'.

Some candidates did not leave enough time to complete Question 3. If this is not already being done, centres are urged to provide candidates with opportunities for practising the time management of this paper in advance of the examination. Several scripts were blank for large parts of this question, and accordingly lost a significant number of marks.

In Question 3 there was a fairly even spread of choices between parts (a), (b) and (c). The weakest responses came in (a), the strongest in (b); many capable candidates missed the accidentals in (c). Candidates can - indeed should - work in pencil to give them the best chance of providing clear answers in these questions. More candidates this year unnecessarily attempted all three parts (a), (b) and (c); as always, examiners marked all three and took the highest two into the total - almost always (b) and (c). Part (d) was answered very poorly, few candidates even recognising the two perfect cadences in (i). Hardly any identified the obvious Neapolitan 6th chord or VIIb. Responses to (e) (i) were often excellent but marks were lost, as in 2 (c), by being imprecise. Too many candidates appeared to be writing pre-taught phrases in the hope of gaining marks; for example, 'there are ornaments at the cadences' ignored the fact that there were ornaments throughout the performance. Just over half the candidates identified the music as coming from a trio sonata (in part (ii)), significantly more selected an appropriate year in (iv), but very few recognised the Italian Baroque style for a credible composer in (iii).

Musical Understanding (Anthology) (6706/62)

Although the complete range of marks was awarded for this paper, there was an overall falling-off in standard, with significantly fewer excellent responses. It seems that many candidates found it difficult to maintain a consistently high standard throughout, there being many unbalanced responses with sometimes quite marked variations from one question to another. There is no evidence to suggest that the change in special focus works and continuity and change topics posed particular difficulties. Problems seemed to arise more from a simple lack of preparation for the demands of the paper and misunderstandings of musical terminology. In this connection, students are referred to the list of terms included in the preface to this report. Candidates should also ensure that they are able to comment on relevant aspects throughout the work, and not just its opening bars. Many marks were lost because of a failure to follow the trail to the very end.

It is pleasing, however, to be able to report a marked improvement in responses to questions on Music for Film and Television, and also some improvement in harmonic analysis in general.

There were just a few rubric infringements (e.g. some candidates answered all three parts of Section A questions). Most candidates answered Section B in continuous prose as required.

The following remarks are intended to offer a brief and constructive summary of the response of this year's candidature.

Section A

Question 1: Music for Large Ensemble

(a) There were some excellent responses, though many candidates failed to source the motifs adequately. It is not enough to refer to motif x and y, and expect the reader to know where they originate.

(b) There was usually some awareness that the motifs of bars 1-20 were present in the later passage, but not many candidates demonstrated a full understanding of the extent to which Wagner re-used his opening material. Few referred to the use of the same harmonic progressions and the removal of rests.

(c) Most candidates got off to a good start with the first two bars. Weaker candidates failed to cope with what followed, and far too many seemed to think that Wagner used the 'Tristan' chord in this passage.

Question 2: 20th-century Art Music

(a) There were some good answers, but many required a more thorough approach.

(b) This question was often well answered, provided that the temptation to describe textures was resisted.

(c) There was often a good understanding of how Reich constructed the work.

Question 3: Music for Small Ensemble

- (a) Thoroughgoing answers were rare, there being a marked absence of detail showing the extent to which Brahms varied the material of bars 13-15.
- (b) There were many excellent responses.
- (c) There were some good answers, but also evidence of a tendency to fall back on memorised analysis from student guides (e.g. Theme D, Theme E), without further explanation.

Question 4: Keyboard Music

- (a) There were some very good, full responses.
- (b) This was usually the least well answered of the three sections: candidates seemed to find it difficult to describe the differences between the two sections in detail.
- (c) There was a fair response, but most candidates needed to be more precise in describing the component parts of the texture and the way Schumann varied his essentially homophonic approach.

Question 5: Sacred Vocal Music

- (a) There were some excellent answers, showing a sound knowledge of the harmonic peculiarities of this part of the work.
- (b) Most candidates needed to pursue the contrasts more tenaciously. Oddly, few persisted to the end of the second passage where some of the most obvious metrical contrasts are to be found.
- (c) There were some fair attempts, but many candidates failed to provide sufficient detail.

Question 6: Secular Vocal Music

- (a) The response was generally sound, though more could usually have been said about the variety of texture in Dowland's work.
- (b) There were some promising responses, although it would often have been possible to write in more detail about the melody, e.g. the intervals employed.
- (c) Responses to this question were often full and correct.

Question 7: Music for Film and Television

- (a) Answers ranged from basic attempts at motif-spotting to answers showing a full awareness of the extent to which Goldsmith applied serialist methods.
- (b) Through lack of tenacity, few achieved full marks. There was too much straight quotation of time signatures without amplifying comment.
- (c) The response was generally good, though weaker answers sometimes suffered from a failure to compare like with like.

Question 8: Popular Music and Jazz

- (a) There was sometimes too much reading-off of time signatures without further explanation, but overall there was evidence of a good understanding of Ellington's approach.
- (b) This question was usually approached competently, though often without sufficient detail for high marks. A very few thought Black and Tan was in D flat major. Some tended to be distracted by purely harmonic considerations.
- (c) Few obtained full marks because finer points were ignored.

Question 9: World Music

- (a) Candidates seem to have coped best with the rhythms in 'Se quema'.
- (b) Most answers were on the right lines but lacked sufficient detail for high marks.
- (c) This was generally better answered than (a) or (b), showing awareness of the function of the music.

Section B

Question 10: Music for Large Ensemble

- (a) This option was the more popular. As with (b), the less strong candidates failed to distinguish between harmony and tonality. There were, however, some very good responses; less convincing answers frequently veered off to discuss the workings of sonata form and modulation.
- (b) There were not many outstanding responses. Few candidates ventured beyond Tippett's second subject when describing tonal procedures, thereby missing rich pickings.

Question 11: 20th-century Art Music

- (a) Many essays were on the right lines, but in some less well organised efforts, there was a tendency to get bogged down in spotting homophonic passages in the Stravinsky without making any further distinctions (e.g. numbers of parts, whether chordal or a form of melody-dominated homophony, and so on).
- (b) This question was generally well tackled; but some candidates again fell back on the listing of time signatures without further comment, and only a few discussed the issue of micro-macrocosmic schemes in Cage's Sonatas.

Question 12: Music for Small Ensemble

Both questions were well tackled in the main.

Question 13: Keyboard Music

- (a) Responses to this question were generally competent, if somewhat unfocused at times. In less satisfactory answers, there was a tendency to discuss tonality and structure.
- (b) This question was often well answered with evidence of a clear understanding of how the two composers' melodic styles differed.

Question 14: Sacred Vocal Music

- (a) Most candidates clearly set out on the right lines, but few ventured beyond the opening bars of the Stravinsky, and thus found it difficult to obtain very high marks.
- (b) There were many fundamentally sound answers, though the Haydn was often tackled with more conviction than the Bach, and in most cases more attention could usefully have been paid to tonality.

Question 15: Secular Vocal Music

- (a) Most responses were surprisingly sketchy, given the wealth of material available, especially in the Monteverdi.
- (b) There were many competent, but few outstanding, responses.

Question 16: Music for Film and Television

In both cases, the weaker candidates tended to answer in terms of lists of instruments, with little emphasis on textures and the function or role of individual instruments. There was some particularly ineffectual writing about the Auric score, though many candidates wrote with some conviction about Bernstein.

Question 17: Popular Music and Jazz

- (a) A full range of ability was evident here. Some gave full and accurate accounts of the varying approaches to be found in these three works. But others wrote about anything other than harmony, while others again simply read chord indications off the score without drawing any further conclusions.
- (b) This question produced a disappointing response. Rather worryingly, there seemed to be little understanding of what melody entails.

Question 18: World Music

Too few pieces of work were seen for any trends to be discerned.

Advice to future Paper 62 candidates: please refer to the closing remarks on Paper 32 above.

Grade Boundaries

6701

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	38	34	30	26	22
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6702

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	180	133	120	107	94	82
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6703

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	105	69	62	55	48	41
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

6704 (option 1)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	72	64	56	48	40
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6704 (option 2)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	76	68	60	52	44
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6705

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	85	66	58	51	44	37
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6706

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	120	81	70	59	49	39
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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