

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Music (8501/9501)

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Preface

Congratulations to candidates who were successful in the 2008 GCE Music examinations and thanks to teachers for their hard work, not least in providing all the paperwork and recordings for the performance and composition papers. The overall standard was broadly similar to that of 2007.

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, in particular for details of the new specification, which will be examined for the first time at AS in 2009 and at A2 in 2010. Make sure you visit <http://www.edexcel.com/gce2008/music/music/8MU01/Pages/as.aspx> if you have not already done so! You will find there not only the specification itself, but sample question papers and other vital support materials.

As in former years, the bulk of this report is devoted to comments by the principal examiners on candidates' performance in the various papers. But first we repeat from former years three important sections on recordings, terminology, and administration of coursework. These are applicable for the A2 examination in 2009, and also for any candidates retaking AS Music in 2009.

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 candidates 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. But please note that cassette tapes will not be allowable for the new specification.

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 for any candidates retaking Paper 21 in 2009

It is sometimes difficult for teachers to know how best to help candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates' progress regularly, and before submission must look in detail at each script before agreeing to countersign it as authentic.

6701/11 & 12 Performing

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 is assessed externally; Paper 12 is assessed by the centre and moderated by the examiner appointed to mark Paper 11. The assessment criteria were those published in the 2008 Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations (ICE).

6701/11: Solo Performance

An extremely wide range of musical instruments and styles/genres was offered for assessment. In addition to work played on traditional instruments, examiners reported an increase in the number of performances submitted in rock and pop idioms. Very few E (Easier) level submissions were offered this year, and more S (Standard) level submissions were in evidence, but the majority of candidates submitted work at the 'more difficult' (MD) level. This was not always to the candidates' advantage. The standard required for examination at this level is Grade 5 and the full range of marks was available to those who presented pieces at this level. Pieces of Grade 6 standard and above qualified for the MD scaling, but no additional credit was 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 are advised to 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. Nevertheless, a significant number of first class performances were presented, showing an excellent technical command of the instrument/voice and a convincing sense of style. The number of candidates achieving very low raw marks in the 1-7 mark band decreased again this year and the mean mark for this paper remained similar to that of 2007.

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** this year; one raw mark was deducted for a small shortfall, and a reduction of one difficulty level was made for a very short submission. Pauses between pieces, announcements, and tuning were 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.

The majority of candidates performed more than one piece for Paper 11. 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 (www.edexcel.org.uk) and centres are encouraged to refer to it extensively. Only a very small number of centres had marked their candidates' Paper 11 work in error.

Some candidates submitted ensemble performances instead of recorded solos. These were accepted and assessed only when it was possible to hear the contribution of the candidate clearly.

Pieces with a written accompaniment **must** be presented with the **accompaniment**, a requirement that was 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.

A **score must be provided** for all performances. Usually this will be in full notation, but lead sheets, chord charts and tab are acceptable so long as they give enough details of pitch, rhythm and expression for a proper assessment to be made; a suitable stimulus should be provided for an improvised performance. Some centres continue to supply a reference recording instead of a notated score. Although this is permitted at GCSE level, it is **not** acceptable at AS/A2 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 were submitted. These were often handwritten, incomplete or downloaded from the net as an afterthought. In such cases examiners asked for replacement scores and most centres were able to provide these.

The use of backing tracks continues 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.

Candidates are reminded that 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.

6701/ 12: Performing During the Course

The method of moderation for Paper 12 involved the re-marking of the recorded solo. If the moderator found a disparity of marking, this numerical difference was then applied to the mark for the whole coursework log. The accuracy of the centre's marking of the recorded solo was 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 was discovered by the moderator, the holistic raw mark was taken as the intended total mark for the recorded solo.

A wide range of marks were awarded in the moderation of the recorded solo. There were many truly outstanding and impressive performances which fully justified the high marks awarded by centres. However, moderators reported that a large number of centres continue to award unjustifiably high marks to candidates whose work does 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.

The specification stipulates that the coursework log must include a performance of a solo (the recorded solo), a composition 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 were made if the coursework log was incomplete. Some teacher-examiners wrongly applied their own deductions (to either marks or scaling) if their candidates did not fulfil all of the specification requirements.

Coursework logs were not always detailed or complete - many logs 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.

Some centres took 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 choice of mark 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 (6701/11 and 12)

Recordings

While the recording quality of most submissions was good or excellent, examiners reported a sharp increase in the number of missing, incomplete or damaged recordings, particularly on CD. In some instances, little attention had been given to matters such as recording balance, microphone placement, or sound levels, and poor-quality equipment was sometimes used. Occasionally 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. 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. The use of long-play MD is not acceptable, and **cassettes will not be accepted for Unit 1 of the new specification in 2009**. 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

The distribution of OPTEMS forms was delayed this year, so centres were offered an extension of one week to complete their paperwork and submit work. Whilst some centres had completed all the required documentation meticulously, examiners reported that a record number of centres had to be contacted in order to recover missing music, recordings or other information that had not been supplied as part of the original submission. Most teacher-examiners responded very quickly to email/telephone messages.

Very few centres presented the four separate pages of the MAS1 as a folded A3 sheet.

Centres are reminded of the following:

- The most recent version of the mark sheet should be downloaded from the Edexcel website. Photocopied forms should be presented in A3 format folded into A4. All shaded areas should be completed.
- **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.
- **OPTEMS:** final half marks 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 the mark sheet. External examiners' marks cannot be submitted to Edexcel without authentication of the candidates' work.

- **Photocopies of all items recorded** 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.
- If **compositions** are submitted for assessment centres are advised to check that there is no mismatch between the printed score and its realisation.
- **Sequencing**: this is acceptable providing that the candidate performs the final track live, at the correct speed, and with no further editing.

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6702/21 Composition Techniques

Examiners would like to thank those centres that have managed to prepare candidates for and to administer it successfully. It has over the years been pleasing to see good work in all sections of the Paper, though the more traditional questions have continued to attract a higher proportion of the candidates who are able to obtain good marks. Answers to the more 'modern' questions have, on the whole, improved steadily. Candidates this year mostly scored more than half marks and many reached 40 or more for 32-Bar Popular Song. Likewise, there were many marks at a similar level for Serialism. In both cases, these marks were bolstered by mainly correct realisation of harmony or application of the tone-row, but all too often failed to reach higher levels because the levels of creativity and musicality did not match the technical resource shown. The smaller numbers who attempted Minimalism had much less to 'hang on to' as their pieces unfolded, so had to aim to score a higher proportion of their marks for controlled creativity. This was often too daunting a challenge, especially for those who found it difficult to copy the given material accurately.

It was disappointing that in the final full year of this Paper, many of the regulations concerning its administration were not adhered to. In particular, quite large numbers of scripts arrived late, sometimes two or three weeks late. The instructions to candidates printed clearly on the front page of the question paper were all too frequently disregarded, especially where computer-generated or otherwise loose sheets were involved. The failure to attach these to the question booklet indicated a remarkable degree of trust in the ability of the many people who handle a script at various stages of the assessment process to keep them all together.

A significant number of scripts were again submitted without the authentication form being fully completed. Behind this seeming formality lies the whole question of trust and integrity without which the Paper can have little credibility. A small number of instances of collusion were referred to the Compliance Department within Edexcel. A larger number of scripts caused some concern on the part of examiners, who noted an unlikely degree of similarity between the submissions of candidates from some centres.

It is probable that a higher proportion of submissions, even for the traditional questions, are now computer-generated than when this Paper was introduced. Previous Examiners' Reports have drawn attention to the need for candidates to have full mastery of the computer if they are to do themselves justice musically. All too often, this has not been the case and answers have been significantly poorer for the problems which this method of presentation has thrown up. In many cases, this has affected more than just the presentation mark, as for example when a candidate has made mistakes in copying the figuring in Baroque Counterpoint or has omitted the figuring entirely. In Minimalism answers, many of those who have been pleased to avail themselves of the 'cutting-and-pasting' facilities provided with many software programmes have been unable to use these wisely or correctly, and transposition by computer has frequently produced problems, particularly with regard to accidentals.

In 2008, the proportions of candidates choosing the various options remained much the same as in recent years. The figures, based on just over sixty percent of the total number of scripts, were Baroque Counterpoint 25.1%, Minimalism 4.91%, Bach Chorale Cadences 36.08%, 32-Bar Popular Song 12.95%, Renaissance Counterpoint

0.87%, Serialism 18.15%, Extended Vocal and Instrumental Techniques 0.90% and Electro-Acoustic Music 1.13%.

Ai Baroque Counterpoint

The majority of candidates were stronger on technique than on Style, though most attempted to use figures from the given material in their realisations. The passage in bars 12-13 involving a string of sevenths produced difficulties for many candidates who seemed to be unaware of the need to prepare and resolve these correctly. Any attempt to realise these beats with a seventh in the solo part on every beat was of course doomed to failure but there were many possible ways of treating this passage.

More consideration needed to be given to the range of the added line, particularly in relation to the chosen solo instrument, and to developing a sense of purpose and direction. Some candidates failed to match the rhythmic character of the given material. A surprising number of candidates sacrificed two marks by failing to indicate the instrument for which they were writing, even though the four possible ones were listed on the question paper.

Aii Minimalism

The stimulus provided much material for the exposition of minimalist techniques. However, even where candidates succeeded in creating a full-length piece of some merit, relatively few showed much awareness of the possible minimalist techniques that might have been employed or achieved success in doing so. Many submissions suffered from having far too little tonal variety and when transposition was attempted it was sometimes made ridiculous by uncritical or inept use of the facilities of the computer. Copying of the given material was often careless, sometimes betraying an inadequate appreciation of the rhythmic character of these four bars.

Bi Bach Chorale Cadences

The biggest problem encountered by many candidates was the need to create suitable joins with the given material, particularly with the phrases that followed the first two cadences. Use of a plagal cadence in D major in bar 3 made the join to the fourth beat much easier and was rewarded by an extra style mark where it was correctly handled. It was common to find at least three technical errors at bar 4 beat 3, where the expected B minor chord needed to have alto on F sharp and tenor on D to progress smoothly to beat 4.

There were also many technical errors repeated in the fourth cadence, where all too few candidates realised that Ic was impossible at bar 8 beat 1 because of the approach in the soprano part. Most candidates were found bar 6 more accessible, where their carefully honed I17b-Va-Ia progressions in A major fitted perfectly. However, fewer were successful at bar 5 beat 4, where the soprano D needed to be treated as an accented passing note.

Bii 32-Bar Popular Song

It is pleasing to record that the general level of technical accomplishment seemed a little higher this year and many candidates scored well for Resources. Melody was usually more successful than rhythmic creativity, with reasonable range and some use of passing notes but little of interest in the rhythmic patterns beyond the repetition of the syncopated figure of the first eight bars. A few candidates continue to lose marks by not naming the instrument for which they are writing or by not indicating speed or stylistic feel. It is not enough to put down a metronome marking without making clear whether this applies to crotchets or minims. An indication of 120bpm, with the given time signature, implied 120 minims to the minute, a tempo that would have made some submissions inappropriately fast.

Ci Renaissance Counterpoint

A small change in the Mark Scheme this year allowed for fewer marks for resources and introduced a new component in the style mark specifically for handling of imitation. Imitation has always been considered as part of the style assessment but now, quite reasonably, has an identifiable place of its own in the assessment. It was rare to find a script where imitation was taken to its fullest extent at both points where the opportunity existed. Many candidates missed some necessary accidentals and also the possibilities for suspensions at the cadences.

Cii Serialism

Candidates tended to score well for the relatively mechanical application of the rows but less well for the various stylistic components of the assessment. The strongest submissions had obviously been devised to be played as pieces of music, with a good overall shape, the use of a wide range (though not wide intervals to excess) and carefully controlled melodic lines which had a sense of direction and climax. The most common technical errors were forgetting to cancel a preceding sharp or flat with a natural later in the bar. With hand-written answers, presentation was greatly enhanced by leaving a blank stave between each line of music, making the appearance much less cramped.

Di Extended Vocal and Instrumental Techniques

Candidates who presented a piece for prepared piano did not always state how this was to be done. Failure to describe this, or even to mention 'prepared piano', even where this was obvious from a recording, inevitably lost some marks. The assumption that prepared piano must mean the John Cage piano as used in the Anthology is not well-founded. It is to be hoped that, in preparing the piano for the piece, some account would be taken of the stimulus on which the piece is to be based.

Dii Electro-Acoustic Music

The marks showed some welcome improvement on previous years and a few candidates received marks of 50 or more. There were, however, still some problems. In many cases, the ostinato was repeated without change and in a few cases it was not possible to detect the ostinato because the effect had been applied to it throughout. There was still a tendency to 'over-work a reasonable idea'. Drum tracks were less ubiquitous. As in previous years, envelope shaping, sampling and filtering produced the more interesting pieces. A number of those that used looping for their effect produced pieces that were almost devoid of variety. Recordings were mainly

good but scores were more variable. Some of the screen captures were very blurred and difficult to decipher.

6702/22 Composition

The overall standard of the paper was the same as in 2007, with only a small change in the mean mark.

The choice of composition topics shifted slightly. Popular song was chosen by 25% of candidates with film music coming second in popularity at 20%. There was a small rise in the number of candidates offering variations (up from 11% in 2007 to 15%), moving romantic miniatures into fourth place at 12%. Club dance submissions accounted for 5% - a return to this figure after a surprise jump to 11% last year. There was also a drop in the number of fusions and a small increase in music theatre items from 3 to 5%.

There was, as ever, a wide range of marks, although in most of the topics these tended to be bunched in the middle mark bands. The widest spread occurred in the most popular topics and numbers achieving highly in popular song and film music - that is, gaining marks in the 'excellent' descriptor at over 50/60 - showed an increase with an impressive 6% gaining marks over 50. At the other end of the scale, there were submissions with marks in the low teens where work was under-length, poorly presented or compromised by technical insecurities.

The best examples of film music were those where the candidate had a clear idea of the visual images and had employed musical elements effectively to express them in the form of a convincing emotional journey. It is not necessary to possess a sophisticated harmonic vocabulary (although, obviously, this will help) and much can be achieved with rhythm and timbre. However, a succession of sound effects is best avoided.

The most successful popular songs gained high marks through having a strong melodic or rhythmic focus. A clear structure with contrasting ideas also helps and this can be articulated by the use of an introduction, middle or coda. Attention to structure helped those candidates who offered instrumentals and who would otherwise have produced a rambling improvisation based on a 'head'. At the lower end of the range of marks there was, as in previous years, a disappointing number of songs which consisted of little more than a backing track with no discernible lead line.

Candidates opting for romantic miniatures and neo classicism performed rather better than average, with 10% and 13% respectively gaining marks over 50. Overall, marks for these submissions were bunched rather higher than for other topics, an indication that they tend to be chosen by the stronger candidates.

Stylistically pieces ranged from Baroque counterpoint to those employing twentieth century techniques such as serialism. There were examples of sonatas, passacaglias and inventions as well as romantic character pieces written for the candidate's own instrument and showing a command of its techniques and idioms. Interestingly there were fewer submissions this year that were made up of several short items and candidates generally opted for extended one-movement forms.

Thus the two principal trends in this paper were maintained; a growth in the popularity of popular song and film scores and a widening in the spread of their marks, coupled with the year-on-year raising of achievement in the more traditional topics.

Poor presentation continues to be the most common cause of loss of marks and few candidates gain more than 6/10 under this criterion, the principal reason being lack of detail in the score or recording. Most scores are now produced using Sibelius and most of these, although they are neatly laid out and printed, lack any form of performance detail, omitting phrasing, articulation marks and, in some cases, dynamics and tempo indications. Many recordings are similarly very basic, having been simply burnt straight onto a CD once the composition was finished with no attempt to blend or balance the parts.

Under length work also led to a loss of marks. In only a few instances, was this obviously due to the candidate running out of time and producing an unfinished piece. Most commonly the work was well-formed but very short, suggesting that the specification had not been thoroughly understood and followed. Perhaps these candidates assumed that the length requirement was as open-ended as it tends to be for GCSE, which is not the case. The length requirement is three minutes and, to answer a frequently asked question, 'What about short romantic miniatures and Webernesque serial pieces?' the solution is to submit a suite, so as to make up the full three minutes.

Many examiners reported that a GCSE-like approach was also evident in the profusion of basic ternary structures and the use of cut and paste to assemble compositions on the computer screen. Many young composers find the sequencing capabilities of computers an aid to their efforts but they need to be reminded that, when a passage is pasted, it is repeated exactly and that excessive use of this feature can lead to very repetitive work. Similarly, when part writing is attempted through indiscriminately adding tracks, the result will be less than convincing harmonically. Given the relatively high proportion of candidates opting for the Bach chorale in paper 21 it is a matter of curiosity that so few seem to apply the principles of part writing they have learnt in this paper to their compositions.

There were few administrative problems this year. There was a slight rise in the number of late submissions although, thankfully, packaging was better this year and there were very few cases of broken or damaged CDs.

There were some quite surprising questions raised on the Ask the Expert site. A number of teachers enquired about the coursework deadline in May when there was only a week to go and several appeared to be unaware of the ICE document (Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations) which is issued online in the first half of the spring term. With the increasing frequency of online communications centres are urged to visit the website regularly. This will be even more important in the next academic year when the new 2009 GCE starts and when many of the course materials, including coursework briefs and tasks, will be posted on the website.

6703/31 Listening

Many candidates tackled this year's paper with confidence and there were some very high marks recorded. The use of correct musical language continues to improve, and the strongest candidates made perceptive insights about the music they heard, although occasionally candidates gave confusing, or even contradictory, answers which had an impact on their overall mark.

Question 1 was generally well answered in terms of timbre, but less well so in terms of texture. Most candidates recognised the two percussion instruments in the introduction of 1 a) although some thought the timpani were a bass drum. 1 a) ii) was one of the weakest sections on the paper. Candidates were clearly struggling to find appropriate generic textural 'tags' to write down rather than describing what they actually heard. Answers were often confusing when a simple description of what was happening in the music would have achieved high marks. In 1 b) the instruments were generally well recognised, but some candidates had problems realising that the wind instrument was a horn. There were some bizarre answers here which once again sparked examiners into thinking about how often candidates might hear the real sound of instruments rather than digitally processed ones. The multi-choice textural elements of 1 b) were quite well answered on the whole.

Question 2 displayed a limited ability to recognise vocal types. 'Castrato' appeared in very many scripts. In all other respects the early sections of this question were quite well answered. Parts e) and f) were the downfall of many who were unable to separate melody from accompaniment. This has been a problem in responses from previous years. By focusing the candidates on a specific area of the music their responses were weaker than we would have hoped.

Question 3, Option A was attempted by a minority of candidates and generally with considerable success, most achieving at least 6 and many more than 10. The minority of candidates choosing Option A seems to be shrinking. Reports from examiners would suggest that it is now less than 10%, and almost all do better than those doing Option B. The number of candidates attempting both options is small, and they usually do both poorly, with Option A the better of the two. The rhythmic aspects of this year's question were particularly well answered.

Whilst attempted by most candidates, Question 3, Option B produced some of the weakest responses on this year's paper. Whilst some candidates did well, others were clearly struggling. Most particularly the recognition of ornaments and the description of texture, once again, proved problematic. Very few candidates were able to suggest a suitable composer and fewer managed an appropriate original performance venue.

We are delighted to report that once again responses to **Question 4** were much stronger this year. The weakest candidates are still unable to differentiate between major and minor tonality, and even some moderate candidates appear to be guessing keys and cadences; but the strongest candidates did very well on this question, compared to previous years. Several candidates gained full marks on this question this year.

Overall, this year's candidates produced a good level of appropriate responses to the music they heard.

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6703/32 Music Understanding (Anthology)

Examiners are pleased to report that there has been an improvement in the overall quality of work inspected this year, although poor presentation and hand-writing continue to give cause for concern.

Relatively few rubric infringements were reported, the commonest being the answering of all parts of sections (a) and (b), giving a location in (b) from a different area of study, and (very rarely) answering all questions on the paper.

Candidates still tend to write over-extended answers in the first three sections of each question, and offer irrelevant information in sections (c) and (d).

Question Analysis

- 1 a/b:** Definitions of monophonic and quintuplet were usually correct. Tonic pedal was more frequently fully defined than in the past, though many candidates still stopped short at "long, held note". Some gave dominant pedals as locations, or else passages without harmonic change. There were very few successful attempts to define and locate unaccented passing-note.
- c)i:** The most frequent incorrect choices were symphonic poem and atonal.
- ii:** There were relatively few completely correct answers. Many problems arose from accidentals.
- iii/iv:** Answers to these questions were usually on the right lines.
- d)** There were many excellent responses; less successful answers were usually typified by lack of detail on Debussy.
- 2 a/b:** Chord cluster was usually correctly defined, but frequently incorrectly located. Definitions of dominant pedal, like tonic pedal in Question 1, were sometimes incomplete, and incorrect locations featured tonic pedals and drones in the Shostakovich. Phrasing was usually correct, but heterophony was rarely attempted and infrequently located.
- c)i:** Candidates generally commented on DSCH, but few mentioned citations from other works.
- ii:** There was a tendency to dwell on purely biographical matters here.
- iii/iv:** Answers to these sections were surprisingly weak and lacking in detail.
- d)** Weaker responses were usually typified by a failure to comment on the effects of preparation on timbre in Cage, and the way the texture accumulated in Reich.
- 3a/b:** Homophonic and modulation were the terms most frequently and successfully defined and located; subject and suspension were rarely fully defined, although locations were generally correct.
- c)** Most sections were correctly answered, apart from (v) where candidates struggled to give melodic features.
- d)** Candidates seemed to find it easier to cope with the harmonic style and textures of Gabrieli than with those of Haydn. There were few attempts to describe variations in the density of Haydn's homophony, i.e. three-part or four part, which parts were involved etc.
- 4a/b:** The only term to cause difficulty was conjunct, which was confused with disjunct and, more surprisingly, consonance. Dominant sevenths were not always correctly located.

- c) **i/iii and iv** were often correct.
 In **(ii)** there were frequent confusions regarding antiphonal, imitation and homophony, and relatively few found more than one “tearful” aspect to the music in **(v)**.
- d) Textures were usually tackled better than tonality, especially in the case of the Shostakovich fugue. There seemed to be a widely held notion that because Shostakovich’s work was “neo-Baroque” it must have been meant for domestic performance.
- 5a/b:** Most terms were successfully defined and located, except for retrograde inversion, which was often only partly described.
- c) Some had problems describing the type of work in **(i)** and in locating San Marco.
 There was frequently a good response to **(ii)**, though some offered imitation and tierce de picardie as Baroque characteristics.
- (iii) and (iv)** were usually well answered.
- (d)** Responses on Tavener were usually more detailed and better controlled than those on Stravinsky, perhaps reflecting difficulties in coping with a large-scale work in full score.
- 6a/b:** Antiphony and cadential 6/4 were usually correctly defined, though the 6/4 was not always located. Melodic diminished 4th was rarely successfully defined, though often traced correctly to Dowland; tierce de picardie was perhaps correctly defined by a larger number of candidates than in previous years, though many still neglect to specify tonic major.
- c/i: Few were aware of the original performance circumstances. The remaining sections were generally more securely answered though many struggled to find sufficient differences in **(ii)** to gain full marks.
- (d)** There were many excellent responses.
- 7a/b:** Septuplet was well defined and easily located; sequence, even when defined correctly, was rarely located. Definitions of trills were often inexact, though the device was easily found; vocalisation was sometimes simply described as “use of voices”.
- c) Responses to **(i)** were surprisingly weak (typical answers were use of voices and 5/4 time signature). Candidates tended to focus on superficial details in **(ii)**; **(iii)** was usually correct, though answers to **(iv)** betrayed problems in score reading (typical analyses of the last chord stated that it contained B, F# and A).
- d) Metres were rarely described in full, although other elements of the question were better tackled.
- 8a/b:** Terms were successfully defined and located in the main, with the exception of syncopation, which was rarely defined in full, and often linked to dotted rhythms.
- c) The first three questions posed no difficulties. Answers to **(iv)** were usually incomplete, and few noticed the change in register for **(v)**.
- d) Many good, full responses.
- 9a/b:** Terms were successfully defined and located in the main.
- c) Pitches were correctly given, but candidates generally struggled to specify characteristic features of this extract.
- d) Answers tended to lack sufficient detail for high marks.

There were many very pleasing papers this year, and teachers and candidates are to be congratulated on their work on this part of the specification.

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6704/41 Composition

There have been no significant changes since last year. The proportion opting for the composition portfolio in preference to the recital fell to 23%. However, the growth in stronger submissions has been sustained, suggesting that, increasingly, this paper is attracting those who feel especially confident with composition.

As with most years, there was a small shift in the balance of topics that were chosen. Film and TV (20%) and popular song (17% - down by 4%) continue to be the most popular followed by romantic miniatures (14%) and variations (13% - up by 5%). Compared with paper 22 the proportion of candidates choosing film music and popular song is slightly lower and is balanced by slightly higher numbers opting for the more traditional topics.

The most popular pairings were popular song with film music and romantic miniatures paired either with variations or neo classicism although examiners reported portfolios in which the topics were enterprisingly diverse, such as club dance coupled with romantic miniatures. There were also several reported instances of candidates offering two pieces in the same topic which represented an infringement. Whilst it is possible to offer two pieces in the same style it is expected that each involves an approach to a *different* topic.

Marks were bunched slightly higher than in paper 22, with fewer marks at the lower end. As in previous years, neo classicism and romantic miniatures tend to be the topics of choice of the more able who have clearly studied and mastered a range of forms and techniques. Here, the candidates tend to achieve rather better, with a greater proportion of the marks being 45-plus per piece.

There was an increase in music theatre submissions (from 3% in 2007 to 6% in 2008) and these were undertaken by stronger candidates who had a feel for the stage. Post modernism, however, showed a rather higher proportion of weaker pieces, many of them being the candidate's second effort, and this had evidently been put together at the last minute using rather basic looped ostinati on a computer with rather disappointing results.

There were many excellent examples of music for film and TV, well documented and based on a carefully thought-through story board. Pre-planning with regard to the narrative and the moods that need to be evoked is of the essence if a composition in this topic is to be successful. The weaker examples suffered through being over-ambitious - where the instrumental forces were too many and complex for the candidate to handle, or where the story board had too many twists and turns to be accommodated in the time frame.

The popular song topic included jazz and big band compositions as well as guitar-based indie rock songs and piano-based ballads. There is a greater tendency for GCE music candidates to employ orchestral instruments in their arrangement than might be found in a music technology submission where there is understandably a greater emphasis on amplified instruments and studio techniques. Nonetheless, examiners commented on the poor quality of many recordings, especially in cases where the score was untidy or lacking important detail.

Variations, romantic miniatures and neo-classicism were the three topics that gained the highest marks. There was a wide range of forms and styles and most displayed technical assurance and a mature ability to handle melodic, harmonic and textural

devices. Variations, in particular, were imaginative this year - breaking away from the theme and variations formula and employing fantasia and passacaglia structures.

Music theatre was also approached creatively. Many submissions were recorded live and although this gave a sense of the dramatic action, the sound quality was often rather unclear.

Written commentaries were of a high standard and included much useful information for the examiner. However, one aspect of the composition portfolio that shows little evidence of progress beyond AS standards is presentation. As with paper 22, undetailed scores lost many marks and most candidates achieved a mark in the 5-7 descriptor ('a score with some mistakes such as consistently omitted phrasing, articulation marks'). Candidates are reminded that the A2 mark scheme, with only four criteria of 15 marks each, is much less forgiving than the AS one. For example, half marks for a score at AS would result in a loss of 5 marks, but for a score placed in the equivalent A2 descriptor the loss could be 8 or more marks.

There were few instances of under-length work. There is some flexibility in the balance of the two portfolio pieces, for which a total of six minutes is required, but this is not a six minute 'allowance'. Both pieces are assessed separately, each being marked out of 60 and there is no provision in the mark scheme for weighting a substantial piece in favour of a more slender one.

It is worth remembering that the coherence criterion covers structure as well as harmony. Here, 'harmony' might refer variously to chord progression and part writing, to the realisation of a popular chord sequence, the security of serial techniques or the consistency of non-functional harmony. Unlike AS composition, where the examiner can choose criteria which best advantage the candidate, a weak effort in this musical element may lead to a loss of marks. Structure was generally well handled. A number of candidates evidently felt that at A2 a longer piece was required, and might attract more marks. This was seldom the case, although there were several examples of extended sonata and rondo forms that were very creditworthy.

Administratively the main problems in this paper are caused by candidates switching to the recital option late in the year, or by centres sending the work to the wrong examiner. Packaging was better than last year, but centres should note that a packet containing paper 41 submissions tends to be bulkier and heavier than a paper 22 one and is more likely to sustain damage in the post if not packed carefully.

6704/42 Recital

The standards of performance on the recital paper this year were very similar to those achieved in 2007. 77% of the candidates opted for this paper (a small increase on 2007) and the mean mark fell very slightly from 18.0 to 17.9 (out of 25). The proportion of candidates scoring marks in each of the main holistic bands was also almost exactly the same as in the previous year:

1-9	Work not reaching an acceptable standard	5%
10-12	Basic accuracy and obvious stylistic characteristics	10%
13-15	Solid work, but limited maturity	18%
16-18	Secure work despite occasional weaknesses	18%
19-21	Well prepared work with few flaws	22%
22-25	First class work	27%

It is worth bearing in mind that the majority of recitals are of music at the more difficult level (grade seven and above), so candidates' raw marks are generally one holistic band lower than those given above, and within each recital individual pieces or movements can be awarded significantly different marks. Examiners work out a final raw mark based on the average of all the raw marks for the various pieces, proportionate to the lengths of each piece.

The range of instruments chosen for the recital option is unchanged from 2007, as follows:

Singers	24%
Classical programmes	16%
Popular programmes	8%
Woodwind	22%
Flute	9%
Saxophone	6%
Clarinet	5%
Oboe/Bassoon	2%
Strings	12%
Violin	7%
Violoncello	3%
Viola/Double Bass	2%
Brass	6%
Trumpet	4%
Horn/Trombone/Tuba	2%
Piano	17%
Electric Guitar	8%
Drum kit/Orchestral percussion	4%
Others (including two or more different instruments)	7%

The whole range of marks was achieved by singers and instrumentalists of all families, and there was no discernible imbalance of results between them, except for a slight tendency for the more specialist instruments to gain a higher proportion of marks in the top category (most notably oboists, bassoonists, French horns, orchestral percussionists and organists).

Examiners were pleased to report that a good number of candidates (15%) were awarded one extra mark for creating an especially imaginative programme and writing effective programme notes which drew links between the pieces. On the other hand 13% of candidates lost a mark either for very sketchy notes which did little more than restate the titles of the pieces and their composers, or for playing a programme consisting of an assortment of unrelated pieces. It is worth noting that whilst the majority of candidates tend to present programmes in chronological order which outline the development of instrumental and musical styles over the centuries, this recital option does allow for candidates to explore a particular area of the repertoire which interests them.

The administration of the paper continues to improve and teachers are to be thanked for the very great care taken to ensure that photocopies of the music are included (in the correct order), that difficulty levels have been correctly assessed (from the Edexcel Difficulty Level book on the website), that the recordings are clearly labelled with audible announcements before each candidate's performance, and that the CDs are carefully packaged. Where difficulties arose, centres were contacted by the examiner and replacements found. The quality of recordings improves year by year and the best performances were notable for the care which had been taken to ensure that all aspects of the recital had been considered (the best acoustic, good positioning of the microphone, reliable and sensitive accompanying, well-tuned piano etc.) Sadly, there are still some examples of candidates giving these basic and important points too little consideration and the results suggest a lack of thorough preparation.

Two points which have been addressed in previous reports, but which still tend to concern some centres, are reiterated. Firstly ensemble performances - candidates are required to perform a solo recital which, for the purposes of this specification, means that they must have 'the dominant solo role throughout the performance'. Lead and bass guitarists and rock drummers mostly achieve this by presenting music from the Rock School syllabuses which have been designed for examination purposes (candidates can play either with a backing track or a live backing band). However, it is perfectly acceptable to choose from a wider range of material so long as the candidate is taking the solo role and clearly leading the interpretation of the performance. Where the performance was an ensemble (e.g. a guitarist playing a rhythm part with some solos or a drummer backing a rock or big band) marks could not be awarded.

Secondly the matter of scores. It is a requirement that candidates should provide a suitable score of the music performed to enable the examiner to assess the accuracy of the performance. A score must be provided for all performances. Usually this will be in full notation, but lead sheets and tab are acceptable so long as they give enough details of pitch, rhythm and expression for a proper assessment to be made. It is not acceptable to present another recording of the piece in lieu of a score. If scores are downloaded it is imperative that candidates check that the music provided follows the same structure as their performance - it is perfectly acceptable for the score to be amended to show exactly what intended. Solos may, of course, be improvised in which case it is advisable for candidates to inspect the improvisation marking grids to check that they are meeting the required criteria. The stimulus for the improvisation should be included with the rest of the printed music.

Examiners very much enjoyed listening to a wide variety of stimulating performances during the summer marking session, and candidates and their teachers are to be

commended for their work on this paper, a good proportion of which was of an excellent standard.

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6705/51 Compositional Techniques

The examination proceeded smoothly and thanks are due to centres which made available the facilities for this. The results were spread widely, with 76% of candidates achieving a pass, a few with excellent marks. Equally, there were a small number of very weak submissions with marks below 10 out of 60. The strongest candidates seemed most likely to have chosen the Bach Chorale question, though there were isolated examples of scores of 50 or more with most of the other options on the Paper.

The remarks made concerning computer-generated submissions in the introductory paragraphs of the Paper 21 Report need to be repeated here, the more so in the case of those candidates undertaking questions Ai or Ci, where a large proportion of the time available for the examination would need to be spent in copying the given material. Particularly in the case of the Baroque Counterpoint exercise, this is in itself a demanding task, with much potential for error in the presentation of the figuring and consequent loss of marks.

The proportions of candidates choosing the various options on the Paper were rather different from Paper 21, where of course two questions are required to be answered. The largest number still undertake the Bach Chorale (57.83%), with Popular Song (14.43%), Baroque Counterpoint (12.11%) and Serialism (10.85%) also attracting significant numbers. The remaining four options taken together are chosen by less than 5% of all candidates.

Ai Baroque Counterpoint

The set passage, adapted from a sonata movement by Albinoni, gave candidates ample opportunity to display their ability to create an interesting solo line within the style. However, the several modulations to minor keys and the chromatic passage at the end required a degree of care over accidentals that was not always apparent. The six given bars of the solo part gave a clear indication of the intended rhythmic character and some candidates needed to pay closer attention to this.

The usual technical errors were found to a greater or lesser extent in most scripts. However, it is worth drawing attention to the need for a full understanding of dissonance treatment within this style. Passing dissonances, whether accented or unaccented, must be approached and quitted by step. Any other kind of dissonance, mainly suspensions, must be appropriately prepared. Candidates should recognise that the fifth in a 6/5 chord is a dissonance (the seventh of the harmony) and needs treatment accordingly, both in its preparation and resolution. Not all candidates realised that a single accidental, whether on its own or underneath for example the figures 6/5, applies to the third above the given bass note. In stylistic consideration, attention should be paid to the range of the added part, which should usually include a number of notes within the fifth above the treble staff. Balance should be preserved between conjunct and disjunct movement, with a suitable number of carefully placed leaps, including octaves, breaking the mostly stepwise movement. A surprising number of candidates failed to specify which of the four listed instruments they were writing for, and hence lost two marks.

Aii Minimalism

Few candidates seemed to have an adequate appreciation of the main features of the given material. These included the harmonic elements of bars 1-2, then of bars 3-4, the syncopated rhythmic pattern of bar 1, shifted to a semiquaver later in bar 2, and the overlapping arpeggios, based on a seventh, in bars 3-4. In a small number of scripts, candidates made something of each of these different elements, even attempting to combine one or more of them in some way. Such initiatives, even if a little crudely handled, were rewarded in the marking.

A number of scripts had sections that appeared to have nothing whatsoever to do with the given material, in some cases not even remotely connected with minimalist techniques. Though the question invites the introduction of new ideas, it is reasonable to expect that these will grow logically out of the preceding sections. In a few cases, it seemed possible that candidates were making use of material that may have existed in some form or other before the examination. The marking scheme makes clear that 'sheer unstructured diversity' will not be highly rewarded and candidates should be aware of this.

Bi Bach Chorale

Though the chorale tune ('Vater unser' adapted) was not in the version used here modal, some candidates seemed very confused over tonality, especially in the third phrase where false relations abounded owing to the omission of necessary accidentals. The question required a series of clearcut cadences in the tonic or in keys related to D minor - perfect at bar 2, imperfect at bar 4 (though perfect in the relative major was also workable), perfect in A minor at bar 6 (though Ic was not possible on the first beat of bar 6 because of the non-resolution of what would be the fourth), perfect in F major at bar 8 and perfect at bar 10. Bach's usual practice is to modulate as early in the phrase as possible and this should have given a clear steer to candidates, though in the fourth phrase account would need to be taken of the passing modulation to C major en route for F.

Technical skills encompassed a very wide range from the strongest to the weakest, with a large majority showing some reasonable competence. Second inversion chords remain a problem for many candidates, with little understanding of how Bach uses these. Few candidates approached full marks for Style, even though there were many different ways of earning the maximum of 20 marks. In particular, bass lines were rarely rewarded though there were up to 4 marks available for shapely, purposeful and rhythmically fluid lines. Equally, there were few examples of chords beyond the ordinary, for example, secondary or diminished sevenths, or of the appropriate use of chromaticism.

Bii 32-Bar Popular Song

The realisation of the chosen harmonic patterns was generally reasonably competent, though there were some exceptions. However, candidates often needed a fuller understanding of the harmonic possibilities in order to create an effective and innovative scheme. Use of cycles of fifths (or V-I in sequence) was fairly prevalent, but there are many other ways of building logical but interesting progressions. Range is an important consideration here, always bearing in mind the chosen instrument,

and candidates should aim to introduce new ideas into the melodic and rhythmic patterns of the middle eight bars in a controlled and coherent way.

Ci Renaissance Counterpoint

There was a further small increase in the number of candidates choosing this question this year, though the numbers remain very low. The small change in the marking scheme for the same question in Paper 21 applied here also. Most candidates managed to find some of the imitative possibilities but few saw that an entry on A on the fourth beat of bar 15 gave them not only a good point but also a very stylish suspension on the first beat of the following bar. Candidates should remember to distinguish carefully between semibreve and minim rests in order to be clear about the number of beats that they are required to cover.

Cii Serialism

The rising number of entries here seemed to be matched by a steady increase in the technical grasp, and many candidates scored the maximum, or close to it, for resources, i.e. the use of the note rows. Many fewer, however, were as convincing in melodic and rhythmic purpose and innovation. In a few cases, the attempt to be rhythmically arresting resulted in absurd combinations of syncopated patterns using semiquavers and demisemiquavers, not infrequently failing to add up to the appropriate number of beats in the bar. Candidates should attempt to steer a middle course between undue rhythmic complexity, unlikely of itself to convey much musical interest, and an over-adherence to the rhythmic figures of the given material. Those preparing to answer this question should if possible gain insight into the artistic possibilities of the technique by playing examples of serial music, either solo or in combination with other performers. Such practical experience would greatly enhance the musical ear and the understanding of what works.

Di Extended Vocal and Instrumental Techniques

There were only two submissions this year. The better of these used a prepared piano with clear direction regarding the preparation. However, candidates should remember that the marking scheme for this question calls for enterprising use of the stimulus.

Dii Electro-Acoustic Music

There were some interesting answers, but few which gained more than half marks for ideas for which some integration between the ostinato and the added material is required. Candidates often needed to pay closer attention to the ending. Many submissions just stopped when the required 60 seconds was reached, thus not gaining marks for this element of their submission. Though the majority of the marks for this question are awarded on the basis of the musicality or otherwise of the piece, the recording is an important part of the presentation. These were usually good and were only marked down significantly if the ostinato was drowned out by other tracks. The score is also important and these were often less satisfactory. Printed out musical scores, together with some graphic details and a short commentary, gained the highest marks. Candidates should remember to state clearly the effects being used.

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6705/52 Performance

The recorded solo performances showed a very wide range 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.

The standards of performance of the recorded solo were similar to those in 2007. There were many excellent performances, but all moderators commented once again that many candidates are either too ambitious about their choice of material or do not take enough care to practise fully. A secure performance (14-15 out of 25) must be secure with no significant weaknesses, and a successful interpretation must start with a faithful adherence to the musical details given by the composer, such as dynamics, articulation and tempo markings. Frequently moderators disagreed with the high marks awarded by teacher-examiners because the candidate had been cavalier with one or more of these details. 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.

Some candidates failed to supply an adequate written score of the recorded solo. This should be either a fully notated score, 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 or may not be an accurate version of what the candidate actually played. A sample recording from another artist is not acceptable. Candidates should perform the composition in full, and not a simplified version in order to receive full credit. Improvised performances are judged on the quality of the improvisation (as detailed in the marking grids for improvised performances - page 45 of the specification) and also the technical and musical quality of the performance, including aspects of tone quality and dynamic control.

Ensemble performances are not accepted for the recorded solo and teachers, and their candidates, are advised to refer to the Paper 42 Recital report for further guidance on this point.

The commentaries and marking by teacher-examiners remain variable, with many still 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 as objectively as possible in relation to the marking grids rather than the live performances. It is in the marking of the recorded solo that the moderation of the paper is effected. Unrealistically high marking here significantly jeopardises the marks awarded to the candidates on the paper as a whole. There continues to be a significant minority of centres where candidates' marks are adjusted by 10 marks or more. Where the logged, usually ensemble, performances have been awarded a higher mark than the recorded solo the reasons should be clearly stated in the commentary. Also 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 of more supporting evidence in the commentaries for the

assessment of the difficulty levels. Where a candidate offers four performances, two of which are at S level and two at MD, then it will be the relative lengths of the four performances which determines whether the overall difficulty level should be S or MD.

Recording quality continues to improve, and examiners were pleased that the majority of submissions were presented on CDs which can be played back on all types of machine. There were some concerns that not all performances were performances in the accepted sense. There should be a discernible audience present and applause is expected to be heard, although the minimum requirement is for the teacher-examiner and one other person to be present. Poor quality pianos, and the tuning of pianos, were an issue in some centres, and candidates are encouraged to listen to the recordings of their performances before signing the declaration on the back of the MA52 form. Moderators are, however, very grateful for the considerable care and attention that teachers in centres give to the complicated and time-consuming procedures for submissions on this paper.

6706/61 Listening

Question 1 (a) was generally well answered. Part (b) was less well answered, and part (c) was poorly answered, although many spotted Brahms as the composer. Question 1 was felt by examiners to be one of the weakest sections on the paper, even though the genres were very accessible and the excerpts very typical. Several examiners wondered how much extended listening was being undertaken by candidates.

Responses to **Question 2** were disappointing. In part (a) few achieved four out of four, some struggling with (i) and (iv). Most achieved three out of four in (b) with 'bassoon' being the most popular wrong answer. Part (c) was well answered. Parts (d) and (e) were very successfully answered by many candidates, and examiners particularly commented on the musical perception and appropriate use of terminology from most candidates this year, although discussion of melody alone proved problematic, as in Paper 31. In (f) most found an appropriate composer, 1770s was the most popular but not entirely accurate decade; the genre of work was often less than well identified.

There was greater evidence that some candidates were not leaving enough time to complete **Question 3**. Several scripts were blank for large parts of this question, losing a significant number of marks, and these scripts could only achieve low marks.

In **Question 3** very few attempted all of the first three sections, of which only two are required. Part (a) was better completed than previously, (b) was well done by most, the semiquavers at the end of the first bar causing the greatest problems. Part (c) was mainly well done, although 4.5 was a frequent mark, with candidates missing the C# and D. There were mixed responses to (d), with few of them really good. Part (e) was very well tackled, and most candidates had some success in describing important aspects of the music they were hearing. In (f) most candidates found some if not all of the appropriate contextual answers.

In general, this year's paper appears to have been tackled by candidates with confidence and accuracy, producing some high overall marks at the top end and allowing all candidates to show some breadth of knowledge.

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6706/62 Analysing

It is pleasing to be able to report that the improvement observed last year has been maintained, with many more candidates gaining marks in the higher ranges. Though there are still issues to be addressed with regard to presentation and planning of work (irrelevance is still a frequently recurring fault in essays), there were clear indications that candidates were well prepared for questions on the new special focus works and continuity and change topics prescribed this year.

Candidates still tend to write at excessive length in Section A (where note form answers are acceptable), but in the main, answered Section B questions in continuous prose, as required. There were very few rubric infringements, the commonest being the answering of all three parts of Section A questions.

Some remarks follow regarding performance on specific questions.

Section A

Question 1: Music for Large Ensemble

There were many excellent responses to section (a), but (b) elicited a fairly weak response, with few candidates able to distinguish between the component themes and motifs. There was a generally good response in section (c), although some answers were marred by inappropriate terminology (e.g. held note instead of pedal).

Question 2: 20th century Art Music

There were many full, if somewhat randomly expressed answers to section (a). Identification of keys, when attempted, was not always secure. Responses to section (b) were often lacking in sufficient detail for high marks, many candidates being distracted by non-melodic details (Alberti basses etc.). There were many excellent responses to Section (c).

Question 3: Music for Small Ensemble

Weaker answers to (a) were not so much wrong as lacking in detail. Few earned full marks in section (b), many candidates frequently failing to comment on the specifically Baroque textural features. Responses to (c) were generally disappointing, there being insufficient focus on melody lines as such.

Question 4: Keyboard Music

Question (a) allowed candidates to demonstrate a generally sound understanding of Sarabande conventions and the extent to which the two composers drew on characteristic rhythmic patterns in these two works. Section (b) drew the weakest response in this Area of Study, with many candidates keener to write about tonality than harmony. A wide range of ability was revealed in section (c); there were many excellent answers, but also many surprisingly weak ones.

Question 5: Sacred Vocal Music

Options (a) and (b) were generally successfully approached, but in section (c) description of dissonances in *Locus iste* posed significant problems, with few able to identify suspensions. Some candidates were also under the impression that the four-part homophonic sections of *The Lamb* were completely consonant.

Question 6: Secular Vocal Music

In section (a) few candidates showed a sufficiently well-grounded understanding of the historical context to answer the question. There were many good, detailed responses to both sections (b) and (c).

Question 7: Music for Film and Television

There were few adequate responses to section (a), with relatively few candidates able to proceed further than added note chords and the false relation.

In (b), surprisingly few managed to state the obvious differences of key (but then a significant number of candidates think that the absence of a key signature in *Passport to Pimlico* indicates that the extract is atonal or in C major throughout). As often with this type of enquiry, the answers tend to be random in nature.

Responses to option (c) revealed that most candidates understood the basic differences in approach, but that not so many were inclined to offer systematic substantiation, thereby failing to earn any more marks.

Question 8: Popular Music and Jazz

There were some very good responses to both sections (a) and (b), although some responses to (b) were marred by absence of precise locations. Even in the more successful cases, tonality was rarely discussed.

Section (c) elicited a rather patchy response, with a significant number of candidates seemingly unaware of the differences in "difficulty level".

Question 9: World Music

Sections (a) and (b) met with some very good, knowledgeable responses. Plenty of information was given in (c) regarding the performance forces, but sometimes not enough on the role of the performers within the ensemble.

Section B

Question 10: Music for Large Ensemble

Many candidates were clearly well prepared for option (a), and were able to substantiate their points in considerable detail. Responses to (b) were very disappointing, with little tonal analysis, and even some haziness about which chords in the two works were unresolved.

Question 11: 20th century Art Music

(a) was usually less well managed than (b), with surprisingly little information offered on Shostakovich's approach to melodic writing.

Question 12: Music for Small Ensemble

In both sections, the earlier works often received the more comprehensive and confident treatment. Many candidates seemed overwhelmed at the wealth of textural detail on offer in Beethoven and Brahms.

Question 13: Keyboard Music

Option (a) was well managed, but organisation of responses to question (b) was often clumsy, with many candidates experiencing difficulty in controlling the information at their command. In the event, the Shostakovich tended to receive less attention, especially regarding tonal centres in the fugue.

Question 14: Sacred Vocal Music

(a) was by far the more popular option, and was generally better managed than (b), though some candidates tended to ignore the basic line of enquiry suggested by the wording of the question. In (b), discussions of *Symphony of Psalms* were either very incomplete or random (or both), with few candidates going as far into the movement as the slow passage from b. 163.

Question 15: Secular Vocal Music

There were few systematic answers to option (a), but (b) was much better managed.

Question 16: Music for Film and Television

(a) *On the Waterfront* was typically better described than *Titanic*, as in the latter case candidates often went no further than identify the main themes, without commenting in sufficient detail on their origins or the way they were developed. For many, the first 30 bars seemed irrelevant. Answers to (b) usually suffered from a lack of system, persistence and detail.

Question 17: Popular Music and Jazz

There were good answers to both of the options, though in (b) there was a tendency for descriptions of texture in *West End Blues* to be more detailed than those of the other two works.

Question 18: World Music

There were very few responses, but some successful answers to both options were seen.

It was a pleasure to read many of the responses this year, and teachers and their candidates are to be congratulated on their efforts.

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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	131	118	106	94	82
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6703

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	105	73	65	58	51	44
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

6704/41

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

6704/42

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	67	59	52	45	38
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6706

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	120	86	75	64	53	43
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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