

# MUSIC

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**Paper 0978/12**  
**Listening**

## **Key messages**

Questions asking for a comparison of similar passages were often not well answered; candidates may benefit from further practice in identifying similarities and differences.

## **General comments**

Many candidates exhibited considerable confusion in the set world focus, writing about choro as if it were samba. As in previous years, many candidates need to spend much more time listening to and learning about their set work, as they gained very low marks in this section compared to the others. Answers to these questions are expected to be more detailed and show evidence of having spent time not only learning factual details about the work, but being aurally familiar with it.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Music A1**

#### **Question 1**

This was very well answered; most candidates correctly identified the melodic shape as an ascending interval followed by a descending scale.

#### **Question 2**

Recitative was the correct answer, but aria was a common incorrect option.

#### **Question 3**

Most candidates correctly identified the voice as a bass.

#### **Question 4**

Most candidates gave a suitable tempo marking, usually andante or moderato.

#### **Question 5**

There were many different ways to gain credit and candidates answered very well. The most common correct observations were that the music was faster, loud, and that the chorus represented 'our voices'. Some candidates wrote that the passage was in a major key; although this is a technique that might often be used for a passage with words like this, the first phrase was in fact in a minor key.

#### **Question 6**

Monteverdi was a common wrong answer.

## Music A2

### Question 7

Some candidates correctly identified the recorder.

### Question 8

The imperfect cadence was well identified.

### Question 9

Only a small number of candidates identified that the rhythm was dotted; most described non-existent changes of all types.

### Question 10

Some candidates correctly identified sonata, but concerto was a common wrong option.

### Question 11

(a) This question was answered more confidently, with most candidates gaining at least some credit. The most common observations were the presence of harpsichord, the ornamentation and the terraced dynamics.

(b) The majority of candidates identified Handel as the composer.

## Music B1

### Question 12

(a) Most candidates correctly named the sarangi.

(b) The majority of candidates observed that the sound was produced by bowing strings.

### Question 13

(a) The majority of candidates knew that the music came from India.

(b) Most candidates gained some credit; the most common correct observations were about texture (melody and drone), the tabla, and the use of improvisation. Answers about rhythm were often vague.

## Music B2

### Question 14

The dizi was well identified.

### Question 15

Answers here were fairly strong; many candidates identified the heterophonic texture but fewer observed the doubling in octaves. Melody and accompaniment was the most common wrong answer, and some candidates' answers did not describe texture at all.

### Question 16

Most candidates correctly commented on the tempo (a slow/moderate opening followed by a much faster second part); not all answered the question fully, but those who did also comment on the metre usually correctly observed that it was quadruple/duple.

**Question 17**

The majority of candidates knew that the music came from China.

**Music B3**

**Question 18**

Identification of instruments and their role during the printed passage was relatively weak. Some candidates identified the cavaquinho, but bandolim was a frequent wrong answer. A number of candidates' answers suggested that they had completed the table as if it were referring to the whole extract as a whole, rather than just the printed melody as the question asked. It was clear that many candidates did not know the names of any instruments from this topic.

**Question 19**

Many candidates commented that the structure was ABACA and therefore a rondo.

**Question 20**

Answers here were generally weak; the most common correct observations were the use of continuous semiquavers and the 2/4 time signature. Many answers implied that the candidates could not confidently distinguish the differences between choro and samba.

**Question 21**

Many candidates answered correctly, but others were clearly guessing, with comments like the 'road of choro' appearing often.

**Music C1**

**Question 22**

Responses varied between completely correct and no attempt to complete the melody.

**Question 23**

- (a) This was very well answered, with the majority of candidates correctly identifying the brass family.
- (b) Answers here were also strong, with most candidates suggesting staccato.

**Question 24**

Many candidates correctly identified the dominant modulation.

**Question 25**

This question was less well answered; very few candidates commented on the change of instrument from clarinet to oboe, although some observed that the same melody was repeated at a lower pitch.

**Question 26**

This was well answered; most candidates correctly named the interval as a perfect fourth.

**Question 27**

- (a) This was well answered in general, although a number of candidates incorrectly commented that neo-classical music was written immediately after the classical era.
- (b) The most common correct points referred to the regular phrase lengths, sudden changes in dynamics, mood or character, and the extended passages of diatonic melody and harmony which contrasted with some dissonant passages

### Question 28

The correct option, Poulenc, was chosen by most candidates.

### Music D1

#### Question 29

Answers here were usually lacking in sufficient detail, even though there were many points that candidates could gain credit for. The most common correct observation was that the opening was tutti, but candidates rarely commented on any differences after bar 6.

#### Question 30

- (a) Most candidates named the oboe.
- (b) Some candidates gave the correct answer, Adagio, but many stated the time signature rather than the tempo marking.

#### Question 31

- (a) There were very few correct answers here. Most candidates named a section of sonata form, but rarely the transition.
- (b) Again, this was not well answered; even where candidates had identified the section correctly in **part (a)**, their responses to **part (b)** rarely directly answered the question, which was about why, not how, the music was different.

#### Question 32

Most candidates correctly identified that the music was first performed in Vienna.

### Music D2

#### Question 33

The transposition was generally quite accurate.

#### Question 34

- (a) This was fairly well answered, although more candidates identified the perfect cadence correctly than the key, which was A flat major.
- (b) A few candidates correctly identified the submediant relationship; the most common wrong answer was subdominant, but many answers were not key relationships at all.

#### Question 35

Descriptions of the accompaniment were generally vague; the most common correct observations were about the triplet semiquavers, or the fortissimo orchestra entry towards the end.

### Music D3

#### Question 36

- (a) Most candidates correctly identified that the theme represented the Guild of Mastersingers.
- (b) Despite the strong answers to **part (a)**, most candidates were not able to explain the relationship of the theme to music which had been heard earlier in sufficient detail to gain any credit.
- (c) Answers were again rather vague; where candidates did gain credit it was usually for identifying the countermelody, but further detail was rare.

**Question 37**

Many candidates correctly identified the ascending sequence.

**Question 38**

Many candidates demonstrated some knowledge of the concept of ‘unending melody’ and gained at least some credit, but some struggled to relate it to the music in the extract. The most common correct observation was about the avoidance of cadences.

**Music D4**

**Question 39**

Most candidates gained at least some credit here, usually for recognition of the ascending sequence, although the cello accompaniment was rarely described.

**Question 40**

The transposition was generally quite accurate.

**Question 41**

There were some good answers here; most candidates were able to describe the use of the Derision motif and the Apprentices’ theme in a contrapuntal texture, although it was rare to find sufficient detail to gain full marks.

**Question 42**

Most candidates correctly identified the development section.

# MUSIC

**Paper 0978/02**  
**Performing**

## **Key messages**

It is essential to meet the minimum performing time in order for candidates to fully demonstrate the skills in which they are being assessed. Performances which are too short do not provide sufficient evidence for candidates to access the higher mark bands.

Candidates should give consideration to the need for appropriate variety in their performance, even if the printed music does not include expression markings

## **General comments**

A very wide range of performances were submitted. The majority of comments that have been made previously in these reports still apply, so most of the information here has been stated before.

The problem with short performances still continues. The minimum performing time is four minutes in total, but a number of candidates' performances did not reach this. Centres are reminded that candidates may add a second solo and/or ensemble piece to ensure they meet the syllabus requirements (which must be on the same instrument/voice as the first piece in each category). Centres and candidates are advised to time the proposed repertoire at an early stage so that there is sufficient opportunity to learn any extra pieces needed. Failing to meet the minimum time limits access to the highest marks; centres should be mindful to check performing length when awarding marks, as short performances were rarely noted in the comments box with marks awarded appropriately.

Although candidates may record their pieces as many times as they (or the centre) wish, the final recording must be a complete 'take' and must not be edited in any way. Vocal performances may be amplified if appropriate to the style, but should not be enhanced in any other way.

## **Solos**

Most solo repertoire was well chosen and appropriate to the candidate. The best performances were outstanding in technique and interpretation, but others were more hesitant. Centres are reminded that if a piece is intended to be accompanied, then it should be.

The weakest area of the solo performances was usually sensitivity to phrasing and expression; candidates should be encouraged to think about giving a complete performance which brings the music to life, not just 'getting through' the notes. This is particularly important for pieces which may not include printed performance directions. This applies not only to repertoire in older (particularly baroque) styles but also to much modern popular music, particularly when it has been taken from online sources. The lack of dynamic markings in a piece does not mean that a candidate should not perform with appropriate dynamic variety. Likewise, candidates should consider if a drum part marked fortissimo throughout is actually effective in a solo performing context. The onus is on the candidate to demonstrate the skills being assessed – if a piece does not afford the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to perform with phrasing and expression, then other repertoire may be more appropriate.

## **Ensembles**

The majority of candidates submitted appropriate ensemble performances which met the syllabus requirements and demonstrated clear ensemble skills. There were many examples, however, where candidates performed ensemble parts which were significantly less demanding than their solos, limiting the marks they could achieve compared to their ability. Unfortunately, some of the more serious problems which

are listed here every year still persist; here is a reminder of the types of performance which are regularly submitted but are not acceptable as ensembles:

**Solos:** pieces described as ‘ensembles’ but which consist of only one performer, or the candidate playing a melody instrument accompanied by piano. The syllabus does not allow a second solo performance (whether or not on a second instrument) instead of an ensemble.

**Accompanied solos:** pieces in which there are more than two performers, but the candidate’s part is still clearly a solo. Examples often include solo songs in which drums and/or bass have been added in addition to the piano accompaniment; this is still a solo song for the singer. More extreme examples include candidates playing a piano solo (often from a graded piano syllabus) to which drums and/or bass had been added. This does not change the fact that the candidate is still clearly playing solo repertoire.

**Vocal ‘duets’** (usually from musical theatre repertoire): pieces where the vocal parts consist of solo passages alternating between two solo singers – if the candidate hardly ever sings at the same time as the other singer, they cannot be demonstrating ensemble skills. An appropriate vocal duet should allow the candidate to demonstrate the ability to maintain an independent part singing in harmony with one or more other singers.

**Pieces with backing track:** these must not be included in an ensemble performance – ensembles must only include live performers.

## Assessment

Centres have been given individual advice where appropriate via their feedback forms, and are reminded that there are marked examples of performances in the Coursework Handbook on the School Support Hub, which help to explain the expected standards.

The most common issues with marking are similar to previous sessions and are summarised again here:

With regard to marks for the range of technical and musical skills demonstrated, it is important to understand that this is not simply the difficulty of the music itself. The key word here is demonstrated – if the candidate struggles to perform the piece then they will not have demonstrated the same range of skills as a different candidate who performs the same piece with style and confidence.

Marks for choice and control of tempo were usually accurate, although some of the tempi chosen by candidates were on the slow side compared with the composers’ intentions. Marking for ensemble coordination was often very lenient. Centres should consider not only rhythmic coordination, but all the other factors which contribute to a good ensemble performance, for example balance between parts and matching of phrasing and articulation.

The category ‘sensitivity to phrasing and expression’ was often assessed extremely leniently. Centres must consider factors such as control and contrast of dynamics, phrasing (in both instrumental and vocal performances) and articulation. The crucial question in the syllabus ‘To what extent are they able to bring the music to life in their performances?’ needs to be considered when awarding a mark here. Choice of repertoire is important, as candidates need to have the opportunity to demonstrate expressive qualities. Marks for technical control were generally accurate, although problems with intonation, tone quality and breath control were often overlooked for singers.

The Moderators encountered a number of cases of inappropriate internal moderation; to clarify, internal moderation must only be applied in large centres where different teachers have marked the work of more than one teaching group independently. If this is the case, internal moderation should be used to ensure the application of a common standard – for example, if one teacher has marked too leniently, their marks should be brought into line with the other teacher by making an appropriate reduction. If internal moderation is used and does lead to a change in marks, it is important that the working mark sheets are annotated so that the process is clear. Internal moderation should not be used by a second person to check the marking of a teacher who has already marked the work of all of the candidates themselves.

## Presentation of coursework

Most coursework was carefully presented with well labelled materials; however, please do not send an individual CD or USB per candidate. Please also limit the excessive use of plastic document wallets, as these can hinder the moderation process when over-used (particularly in small centres where organising the

materials is less complicated). Paper clipping (not stapling) working mark sheets to sheet music is usually all that is needed. Please note the following advice:

- The work must be submitted as an audio recording on CD or USB.
- Videoed performances should not be sent.
- CDs should be sent with a separate track listing, which should not be written on the CD itself.
- Tracks on USBs should be accurately labelled.
- If USBs are divided into folders, a folder per candidate is more helpful than a 'solo' folder and an 'ensemble' folder.
- Copies of the sheet music should be sent, with the sole exception of music which has been improvised (in which case please include any lead sheets etc.). Please label each set of sheet music with the candidate's name.
- Please be consistent when using either the candidate's 'official' or 'known as' name.
- Please do not staple the mark sheets to the sheet music.
- Send the performing coursework separately from the composing.

# MUSIC

**Paper 0978/03**  
**Composing**

## **Key messages**

- Candidates must submit two compositions, both of which are their own, individual work in every respect.
- No credit may be given for any compositional ideas that are not created by the candidate.
- Candidates should be encouraged to compose pieces which allow them to fulfil the whole range of the assessment criteria.
- Care should be taken to ensure that marks are correctly added and correctly transcribed onto the form submitted to Cambridge.
- Recordings must be checked before submission to ensure that the whole of every piece is recorded.
- Recordings must be presented in a format that does not require particular software for playback: if necessary they must be converted (e.g. to MP3) before they are submitted.
- There must be announcements on each recording, giving the candidate's name and number and the title of the piece that is to follow.
- In centres with several candidates, individual CDs for each candidate must not be submitted. Recordings must be assembled onto a single CD, in candidate number order, with each piece on a separate track and with each candidate's Piece 1 immediately followed by the same candidate's Piece 2. There must be spoken announcements to identify each piece. The same process should be followed if the recordings are submitted on a memory stick.
- A track list should be provided on a sheet of paper separate from the CD or memory stick.
- Internal moderation must not be carried out unless there is more than one teacher involved in the internal assessment.

## **General comments**

The usual wide range of ability was demonstrated in the compositions submitted this year, with a few candidates working at a level beyond the normal expectations of IGCSE. Where achievement was less secure, it was often because insufficient attention had been paid to the full range of skills required by the Assessment Criteria, or because the full meaning of the descriptors had not been taken into account. As always, some centres still awarded high marks to work of very modest attainment.

The standard of administration by centres was mainly good. There were, however, several instances of incorrect addition of marks and inaccurate transcription of marks from one form to another. Missing documentation and assessment materials, including Working Mark Sheets, Computer Mark Sheets, recordings and even scores, made the moderation of some centres' submissions very difficult indeed. Several centres did not comply with the requirement that recordings must not require particular software for playback. If necessary, files must be converted (e.g. to MP3) before submission.

## **Assessment**

The internal assessment of candidates' work was usually consistent, but in several centres it was very lenient indeed, with marks in the highest bands being awarded to work of very modest attainment. There were very few instances where the internal marks were too low.

It has been pointed out previously that internal moderation of a centre's marks must not be carried out unless more than one teacher has been involved in teaching the course and in the assessment. In such cases, the teachers concerned need to be certain that they are applying the same standard, which is the sole purpose of internal moderation. If marks are changed during this process, the changes must be shown on the individual Working Mark Sheets as well as on the Summary Mark Sheet, so that the Moderator can see exactly which marks have been changed (whether it was the mark for Ideas, or Structure, or Compositional Technique, etc.).

If there is a single teaching group with a single teacher, there is no need for internal moderation. A few centres seem to be using this process as a mechanism for changing the total mark without reference to the assessment criteria, which is not permitted.

There are still centres where internal moderation is carried out when it should not be, or where marks are changed for no clear reason.

## Compositions

As usual, there was a very wide range of styles in the submitted compositions. The best were accomplished compositions, reflecting a commendably high level of inventiveness and understanding. A large number of candidates used quite simple structures, with a tendency to use the 'copy-and-paste' facility on the computer rather too readily. This year there were several pieces in which candidates had tried to use minimalist techniques. These were only rarely successful. More often the technique was applied too mechanically, often producing a formulaic result that was not very musical.

A simple structure such as Ternary Form can sometimes be very effective, especially if the sections link together smoothly with some kind of relationship between the A and B sections, and if the return of the A section is varied appropriately, rather than being indicated simply with a DC marking. Even the simplest of ternary forms, however, ought to be given more marks than a very short piece in a single section. There were several of these, some as short as 16 bars or even less, and in some cases these pieces had been given marks as high as 9 for their Structure. Pieces in a single section, which allows no scope for linking passages, varied repeats or other structural devices, need to be rewarded with a mark in the lower bands of the mark scheme.

It is important that candidates try to ensure that contrasting material (e.g. the middle section of a Ternary Form piece) is not so contrasting that it sounds like an entirely different piece. The most successful compositions were those in which there was some relationship between the main thematic material and the contrasting section(s).

In some centres it appeared that candidates had not made their own decisions about what to compose, but had been given tasks to complete, set by the teacher. While this approach may be appropriate in the early stages of the course, it should not be used in the pieces that candidates submit for assessment because it often results in unduly formulaic pieces. When candidates choose for themselves what to compose, they are usually much better motivated to produce good work and this is without question the best way for them to demonstrate the full extent of their creativity.

Candidates' ability to use chords and to harmonise their melodic ideas is assessed under Compositional Technique. Some compositions demonstrated very effective use of harmony, but many were quite limited in this respect. There were many examples of root position chords spaced too closely at too low a pitch (e.g. in piano parts), a general lack of inversions, or the layering of instrumental parts with too little attention to the resulting harmony. Several candidates had difficulty in the use of cadences at the ends of phrases or sections.

Pre-recorded loops (from applications such as Garage Band) should not be used. Candidates must acknowledge the source of any materials in their compositions that they did not compose themselves. This includes any borrowed themes used for sets of variations. Centres are reminded that it is only the candidate's compositional input into such pieces that can be rewarded.

A candidate's two compositions must use different instrumental or vocal forces. If they do not, the mark for Use of Medium in Piece 2 must be 0. This requirement was not always observed. In some cases, candidates had written one piece for flute and piano (for example), with the second piece for oboe and piano – but with very generic parts for the flute and oboe, which made them indistinguishable from each other. Another example concerns a Piece 1 for solo piano and a Piece 2 also for piano, but with the bass notes doubled by a cello. These combinations do not satisfy the spirit of the Syllabus, the point of which is to ensure that candidates submit two pieces that are genuinely contrasting.

Even if the recording is going to use synthesised sounds, care must be taken to ensure that instrumental parts are within the range of acoustic instruments, and that they are playable on the instruments chosen. Parts which go beyond the range of an instrument (e.g. flute parts going lower than Middle C), or which are impossibly fast and complex for a human player (several piano parts fell into this category) should not be given high marks under Use of Medium.

## Notation and Presentation

Computer generated scores were in the majority; there were very few handwritten scores. In order to understand how to use a notation program on the computer, candidates do need to know how to write their music down by hand, so there is nothing against submitting handwritten scores. There were, however, very few handwritten scores this year.

Computer generated scores also need to be presented carefully. Several candidates have trouble with rests, especially if they play in the music in real time, where (for example) staccato crotchets are often represented as semiquavers followed by a succession of rests. The default settings used by the program do not always produce the correct result, and this needs to be checked.

Default settings can also produce an illogical order of instruments in a score. A piece for flute, cello and piano, for example, should have the flute part at the top of the score, then the cello part, and the piano should be below the cello. But in an orchestral score, the woodwind are at the top, with the strings at the bottom, and a piano would be somewhere in the middle, usually near the percussion. So it is not uncommon to find this orchestral order of instruments used (by default) even when it is not appropriate – the flute at the top, the piano next, and the cello at the bottom.

These two aspects of computer-generated scores (incorrect rests and an inappropriate order of instruments) are two issues that could easily be corrected if the score was carefully edited. It is disappointing to report that there was little evidence to suggest that this editing had been done at all, except in a minority of cases.

Computer generated scores were often accurate in terms of pitch, but several lacked the full range of phrasing, expression marks, articulation or dynamics that the music required. To gain a mark in the highest bands, scores should not lack such important markings.

Whenever possible, even if they find it hard, candidates must try to notate their music. If they are writing a song, they should notate at least the voice part. The lyrics alone, with a few chord symbols, are not sufficient.

Some candidates submitted screen shots of the computer program they had used to create their pieces. In the very rare circumstances where this may be appropriate, such screen shots must always be accompanied by a detailed explanation of what it represents, how it should be read and how it relates to the submitted recording.

The rule that should be followed is that if a piece is capable of being notated conventionally, using staff notation, that is how it should be presented. The Syllabus makes provision for other forms of notation to be used, but only in cases where it would not be possible to use staff notation (some forms of electro-acoustic music, for example). It does not mean that an alternative notation can be used if a candidate has not acquired the skills of using staff notation. That is something that should be taught during the course, because it is an essential life skill for any musician and should never be neglected.

## Recorded Performances

Most of the recordings submitted were of synthesised performances, often simply the computer playback of the Sibelius or Finale score. The best recordings were almost always of live performances. Centres are encouraged to submit live recordings whenever possible, since (a) they are more instructive to candidates and (b) they convey the spirit of a composition much more effectively than a synthesiser can ever do.

Recordings of songs suffer much more than instrumental pieces if the performance is synthesised. There were several examples this year of songs where the recording was synthesised and where the number of notes in the melody did not even vaguely correspond to the number of words or syllables in the lyrics. An attempt to perform live (especially at an earlier stage in the course) could have provided an extremely valuable opportunity for teaching about this significant aspect of song writing, and this could have helped the candidates concerned to gain higher marks.

## Recordings

More centres submitted recordings on memory sticks than in previous years. As with CDs, however, centres must ensure that the recordings do not require specific software for playback. Recordings submitted on a memory stick must be playable through a standard media player accessible from either Windows or Apple

Mac computers. If necessary, any recordings which require particular software for playback are converted (e.g. to MP3) before they are submitted.

All recordings must be checked before submission, to ensure that there are no missing parts and that all the recordings are complete. This was not always the case this year.

In centres where there are several candidates, the recordings must be compiled onto a single CD, if a CD is to be submitted. Separate CDs for each individual candidate should never be submitted. There should be recorded announcements to identify each candidate's compositions, and the recordings should be compiled in the order of candidate numbers, with both pieces for each candidate following on from each other. Any other arrangement makes the moderation process more time-consuming and far less efficient. A separate track list, whether the submission is on CD or memory stick, is a great help to the Moderators.

### **Teacher Comments on the Working Mark Sheets**

The space on the WMS for comments in support of the marks awarded can be very helpful in giving an indication of the thought processes used when marking compositions within the centre. In some centres, however, the comments were either very bland and generalised, or entirely missing. In some cases, the comments were simply copied and pasted from the Assessment Criteria; this is not at all helpful and should not be done.