

MUSIC

Paper 9483/11
Listening

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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<p>Paper 9483/12 Listening</p>
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Key messages

A more secure grasp of the typical features of Baroque instrumental music would allow candidates to answer **Question 2** more confidently and accurately.

Essays in **Section B** should not refer to track timings, as Examiners do not have the recordings that the candidates use.

Essays in **Section C** should answer the question by drawing on specific pieces of music as evidence, giving detail of the musical features of these works.

General comments

The strongest responses in **Section A** demonstrated detailed knowledge of the Baroque set work, with the ability to apply this knowledge to unfamiliar repertoire. Some candidates chose not to answer one or more questions in **Section A**.

The strongest answers in **Section B** demonstrated an ability to draw on specific musical features of the set work(s) to answer the question, giving a clear and detailed account of the music, leaving the Examiners in no doubt as to which part of the work was being described.

In **Section C** the strongest responses answered the question by drawing on a wide range of repertoire and describing the musical features of these pieces. Examiners encountered many essays where specific musical examples were not given, or only the title and composer of the work, with no musical detail. Some responses were rather short, and others spent a great deal of time giving the background to a particular style or genre, which was not required by the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify this as the Hornpipe from Handel's *Water Music*.
- (b) A relatively small number of candidates gave the correct answer of 3/2, with answers such as 6/8 and 3/4 frequently seen.
- (c) A relatively small number of candidates correctly stated that the instrument in the extract other than the oboes is the bassoon.
- (d) This had very few candidates gaining both marks available. Incorrect answers sometimes suggested that another movement would be heard.

Question 2

- (a) Answers to this question were very variable, with some candidates gaining both marks (for pedal and repetition) and some getting 0, often by suggesting things that are not devices.
- (b)(i) Candidates often gained a mark for perfect, fewer gained the mark for A major.
- (ii) About half the candidates knew that the relationship of the key to the tonic was the dominant.
- (c) A small number of candidates correctly identified the harmonic device as a suspension.
- (d) Marks were most often awarded for the slow tempo, quadruple metre and dotted rhythms, with very few answers referencing the imperfect cadence at the end. A few candidates wrote about bar 20 onwards, which was not specified in the question.
- (e) This was often well-answered, with many candidates gaining all six marks available. Many candidates noted that it was fugal, began with a monophonic texture with the flute and violin 1 doubling and the subject was then passed around the instruments. Three correct observations together with three correct bar number references ensured the full six marks for many candidates.

Question 3

- (a) A relatively large number of responses did not refer to articulation at all, or only very briefly. There appeared to be some confusion with ornamentation. Answers which did include reference to articulation were usually able to note the Performance A was more detached/Performance B was more legato, but many did not manage to go beyond this.
- (b) The strongest answers to this question worked through the suggested musical features, comparing the two extracts and using the evidence to suggest which performance was most historically informed. Occasionally some candidates made incorrect statements (such as the pitch of Performance B was lower) or missed out the crucial letter when naming a performance (e.g. Performance is faster). One or two candidates seemed to think that the two performances were two different pieces, suggesting changes in tonality.

Section B

Question 4

This was the most popular of the **Section B** essay questions. However, many answers simply named instruments playing the different themes at their first appearance, rather than giving more detailed information and also exploring how the instrumentation then changed later in the work. For example, mention of 'low brass; for the Sultan's theme was often not followed up by naming the specific instruments.

Many answers referred to more than two movements, but no credit could be awarded for this as the question specifically stated that answers should refer to passages from any two movements.

Question 5

Candidates choosing to answer this question did not usually achieve quite as highly as those answering **Question 4**. Melody is possibly a slightly more difficult concept, particularly in the Debussy, where some struggled to see the shape of the chord outline as a melody. References to the Grieg were more convincing, though as in **Question 4**, answers often referred to more than two movements.

Section C

Question 6

About a quarter of candidates chose to answer this question, explaining how contrast can be achieved in vocal music. Examples included different styles of singing (growling versus 'real' singing), using different parts of the voice (head versus chest), different voice types, changes in dynamics and different textures. Many candidates described differences between separate pieces of music rather than in one piece. Pop examples and songs from musical were frequently chosen genres, together with examples from world music.

Question 7

Overall this was the most popular question in this section. Many candidates chose to use 'Happy Birthday' and national anthems as part of their answers and some drew on genres studied for IGCSE. Weddings and funerals were popular ceremonies for discussion. Candidates frequently named pieces of music but did not then go on to describe the musical features of the chosen piece which made it suitable for a particular occasion (e.g. instrumentation, tempo etc.).

Question 8

This was the least popular option in this section and unfortunately there was sometimes confusion between the concepts of beat or pulse and tempo. Irregular metres were also frequently mentioned. Some answers made sensible references to dance, which usually requires a regular beat.

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<p>Paper 9483/13 Listening</p>

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<p>Paper 9483/02 Practical Music</p>
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Key messages

- Element 1 repertoire should demonstrate contrast of technique and style, at a level which is appropriate for the candidate's stage of musicianship. This is particularly significant in Assessment Criterion **D** (Interpretation and Aural Awareness).
- Element 2 compositions must also demonstrate contrast, along with a clear sense of purpose, occasion, and audience.
- Element 2 written statements should include information about listening influences and their incorporation into the finished pieces.

General comments

In Element 1, Moderators saw a wide range of instruments. Voice and piano were the most popular disciplines, but there were also excellent performances from wind players, guitarists and percussionists, often performing to an invited audience. Whilst not essential, the presence of attentive listeners does help some candidates to 'raise their game', particularly in assessment Criterion **D**. The majority knew their music well (most marks for assessment criterion A were in the top 2 levels) and performed with confidence. There is no need to perform from memory, but vocalists should use a stand sparingly – singers are expected to communicate visually as well as aurally. Music stands should never obscure the instruments or the candidate: when filming performances, teachers should ensure that the camera angle is appropriate. Pianists are best recorded from a distance, so that the pedals are visible; drummers should ensure that the full range of kit is in shot, including bass drum and foot pedals, and in ensembles, the camera should focus largely on the candidate. This may mean that, in a group performance involving several candidates, the performance should be filmed more than once, or by more than one camera. Linked with this is the need to rehearse properly with the accompanist or backing CD, preferably in the designated performance space. This should include a test recording to ensure that the candidate is not drowned out by an over-loud accompaniment.

Most working mark sheets were carefully filled in, with very few arithmetical errors. Most assessors now use the text box to inform the mark awarded, and these notes are read very carefully by moderators. Teachers are advised to use the assessment criteria in the syllabus rather than just relying on the edited version on the working mark sheet, as the bullet points above each set of descriptors details precisely how candidates should be credited. It is also important that candidates fully understand the assessment criteria and how these relate to their performance. It can be good practice to encourage candidates to self-assess (perhaps after a mock examination) and a discussion of the points raised after this exercise can reap considerable benefits before the final assessment.

Candidates usually did well in Assessment Criterion **A** (Fluency and Accuracy). When deciding on an appropriate mark, teachers should bear in mind that a performance can be fluent, whilst not entirely accurate (and vice-versa) and that a 'slip' is different from a 'mistake'. Candidates can make one or two small slips and still make it into Level 5. In Assessment Criterion **B** (Technical Control) assessors should consider the variety of techniques presented as well as security of control and the range of skills appropriate to the instrument. However, there is no 'added value' in performing music that is virtuoso standard, and it may be that a piece of moderate difficulty, where the candidate's technical ability is not unduly stretched, may actually yield higher marks. The range of technical skills varies from instrument to instrument, so this is the criterion where a good view of the candidate is most essential.

In Assessment Criterion **C** (Realisation of performance markings and/or performance conventions), candidates sometimes did less well. Adjustments were often made to marks because candidates did not pay enough attention to the composer's markings, or to the conventions associated with the style. Teachers should encourage their candidates to be thorough in their attention to expressive detail, and to make sure

that this rigour comes through on the recording. When marking, assessors should consider both the indications written into the score by the composer and the specific conventions associated with the style of the music. Baroque music may not have many markings on the score, but that does not mean that candidates should produce a monochromatic performance. Similarly, jazz or rock musicians are expected to shape their performances to the conventions of the chosen piece, and this includes effective improvisation, if appropriate. Although listening skills are not directly tested in this part of the component, candidates should be encouraged to engage with recordings of professional performances – an approach that can also be beneficial to understanding in Assessment Criterion **D**. Assessors and moderators are looking for a synoptic understanding of the programme in this criterion, and musical communication is key. The descriptors consistently focus on contrast, coherence and to what extent the performance *convinces*.

Candidates composed in many genres – everything from counterpoint to choral music (in one example, both), and there were a significant number of live performances, often with candidate input. Although many candidates choose to write for large resources (particularly true for film of gaming music), composing for specific musicians – with a live recording in mind – can also be an effective creative stimulus. The first port of call for the moderator is the compulsory written statement, which we read before listening to the submission. Whilst these do not have to be long (300 words maximum for each piece), they should cite relevant listening influences. Sometimes candidates write too much analysis of the piece, or in the meaning of lyrics – do steer them away from this approach. Candidates should be encouraged to assimilate – and learn from – a range of styles and structures before they commence their own composition work. This does not have to result in a pastiche, but targeted listening can be an effective catalyst for young composers, as well as providing exemplars of appropriate techniques, textures and structures that they can carry forward into their own work. A clear relationship between the written statement and the composition outcome should be a primary aim.

Timings for the two compositions are necessarily quite short, so some structures are more appropriate than others. Binary or ternary form yes; sonata or variation form possibly not. Again, knowledge of the bullet points in the assessment criteria can be helpful for candidates: listening, initial ideas and harmonic language are assessed in **A**, whilst the development of these initial ideas is credited in Criterion **B**. Some compositions started well, and then flagged in the middle, or at the end, because of a lack of understanding of how ideas can be refined or developed. Others would have benefited from changes in texture – for example, a duet for voice and drum, where the drum patterns largely shadowed the voice, did not score highly in Assessment Criterion **C** (Use of Medium and Texture), and some preparatory listening would have been particularly beneficial here.

In Assessment Criterion **D**, the recording and score (or detailed notes) have equal weighting. Most candidates use a score-writing program – do stress to candidates that dynamics and expression are an organic part of the compositional process (their effectiveness is actually assessed in Criterion **C**) rather than something to be added (or not) at the very end of the composition process. Do encourage candidates to take the time to mix their recordings properly – it is important to ensure that key instruments are not drowned out at crucial moments. It is fine for teachers to discuss issues of balance, expression, and notation with candidates prior to submission, and assessors should take the final mix into consideration (if appropriate) in Assessment Criterion **D** (Communication). Candidates who do not submit a music score should cover points of this nature in their detailed account of the compositional origins and processes. There were some excellent examples in this format, with vivid commentaries on the work and a highly creative approach to music technology. Track timings are always helpful and screen shots of the program at significant moments can be useful too.

Administrative Points

Assessors are advised to check the following before sending their work:

- Please include a signed Cover Sheet with each candidate's work.
- Please sign and date the Working Mark Sheets and CASF form, and check that the marks match.
- Please check that all the Element 1 scores are included, and that Element 2 scores are complete, and in the right order.
- Please check the overall audibility of recordings – one or two candidates were difficult to moderate for this reason.
- Please retain copies of all paperwork and recordings until the end of the examination period.

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<p>Paper 9483/03 Extended Performance</p>

Key messages

- The Research Report and the Performance should reflect a consistent stylistic focus.
- The Research Report must contain a comparison of **one** piece in the performance, accompanied by relevant audio extracts, not complete recordings.
- The Research Report should contain references for every source mentioned in the report, with due regard for academic conventions.

General comments

The overall standard of work this year was very good, and there were some outstanding performances across a very wide range of instruments and voices. Most genres of music were represented, including jazz, pop, classical, rock, music theatre and world music. Most candidates seemed relaxed in front of the camera, and, whilst there is no syllabus requirement to announce the repertoire, many did, acknowledging accompanists and other musicians and treating the examination very much as a recital.

It is important that the Extended Performance has a consistent stylistic focus. There were many well-chosen themes, including classical French music for saxophone, the songs of Vaughan Williams, early 70's rock music and 7/8 pieces for drum kit. More amorphous themes – for example those based around 'Love', but containing music in several different styles, or those where no focus is evident, may do relatively well in assessment **criteria B, C and D**, but not necessarily as well in **A and E**, where the criteria mention style and focus. Teachers should ensure that candidates are familiar with syllabus requirements and to advise if the performance appears to lack cohesion. The bullet points above the assessment criteria are particularly helpful in this regard.

The research report has now largely 'bedded in' and many candidates produced excellent pieces of work which showed enthusiasm, rigour, and independent learning. However, there were still a significant number of candidates who had missed the point of the exercise, and simply wrote programme notes for their chosen repertoire, or focused entirely on their practice regime in the run-up to the examination. Research reports of this nature cannot access the higher mark bands in Assessment

Criterion A. Candidates **must** compare two performances of **one** of the pieces in the performance and inform this with separate audio extracts. Examiners do not listen to complete tracks, nor search online for the recordings cited in the report. Creating audio excerpts takes time, and candidates should be made aware of this at an early stage in the teaching process. Candidates who are playing an entire work, for example a sonata, may find that limiting their comparison to one movement enables them to write in more depth.

The first bullet point informing assessment **criterion E** states that candidates are credited for *making interpretative connections between research elements and performing outcomes*. If the stylistic focus is too wide, then it is difficult to access the higher mark bands in this criterion. Although examiners acknowledge that some repertoire recordings are easier to find than others, it is best if the performances compared are by professional musicians. If this is not possible, then candidates should be selective about what they choose. It is worth spending time at the outset finding the right performances – indeed many candidates write about this. An early – but essential – part of the teaching process is working with performers to ensure that their chosen recordings afford the best comparison.

The best examples of research reports offered discrete (and clearly labelled) audio extracts to illustrate their judgements (and sometimes score excerpts too). The research undertaken in the preparatory journal was used to inform the comparison and then linked clearly to the candidate's own performance. The content of the comparison will inevitably vary, but a good starting point is the basic elements of music, i.e. melody, rhythm, tempo, phrasing, articulation, etc. The report can then home in on more specific and relevant interpretative details. Candidates do not have to be directly influenced by a particular interpretation but should adopt an objective approach to their listening. However, many wrote thoughtfully about what the report had taught them, including ways in which their own performing had been influenced by the process. There were some excellent bibliographies containing not just online encyclopaedias, but interviews, newspaper articles and programme notes. It was good to see an increasing number of candidates actively quoting from their sources and using standard academic referencing, including footnotes, to inform their work.

Most candidates were very well prepared for their instrumental or vocal performance and the overall level of achievement was higher than in previous series. Nearly all recordings took place in a school environment, often with an audience, and for the majority, the enthusiastic applause at the end was well justified. Candidates who record at home (often pianists) should be advised to place the camera at a distance so both the hands and the pedals are visible. It was good to see candidates tuning up, taking time to set amplifier levels, or reconfiguring a drum kit to suit an item, and candidates should not be shy about doing this on camera. Most performers played or sang music that was well within their capabilities, and there were fewer examples of candidates losing marks in assessment **criteria B** and **C** because their programme was too technically challenging for their ability.

There were some submissions where a more rigorous approach to performance markings and conventions would have resulted in higher marks in **criteria D** and **E**. Teachers are advised to build a mock performance into the Scheme of Work and allow time to watch the recording with candidates (preferably with the score) and advise on points of expression and interpretation where necessary. If there are few markings on the score, then examiners are looking for an informed performance that is in keeping with the genre, period and style of the music. There is no requirement to perform from memory, but singers who use a stand should practise looking up – staring fixedly at the copy and never making (virtual) eye contact with the audience can particularly impede 'performing with understanding' in Assessment **criterion E**.

Administrative Points

- Please use the checklist on page 36 of the syllabus when preparing submissions for despatch. Centres are contacted if essential items are omitted, including copies of the music performed. Please include a signed Cover Sheet for each candidate and include details of the work submitted for 9483/04 or /05 as appropriate. Centres are reminded that there should not be any duplication of work across components.
- Please include a list of pieces for each candidate.
- Although not in the checklist, a copy of the Attendance Register is very useful.
- Please check that all files will open, play, and are relevant to the examination.
- Please check that the music copies are in the same order as the actual performance.
- Please send all components in separate envelopes, not on the same USB or DVD

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<p>Paper 9483/04 Extended Composition</p>

Key messages

- Detailed completion of the Cover Sheet is essential to document authenticity and to evidence a clear range of valid study across the options chosen.
- Never combine elements from different components on a single USB or CD.
- Do not include written materials from different components together in the same package.
- Clearly labelled audio tracks and their sources / production / performance detail is essential in a research document.

General comments

Composers should take every opportunity to discuss early drafts of their work to their teachers and peer group. Their responses and arising discussion can be extremely helpful to candidates' reflective process and documenting these sessions will form part of the research journal as the work progresses.

It is essential that candidates have access to teacher advice and guidance at every stage of the work. It is particularly important when candidates are in the preliminary stages of considering parameters for their extended composing and for the associated research required.

Administrative points

Centres must ensure the current Cover Sheet is used and correctly filled in.

Many centres submit audio recordings for their candidates on a single USB but there are dangers if a candidate does not take final responsibility for the compilation of their audio evidence for submission. Too often, the USB folders are empty or incomplete, even when the candidate refers to the tracks in their Research report.

The composition audio and the supporting audio extracts can be included on a single USB / CD and it is generally safer to submit audio materials *per candidate*.

Comments on specific aspects of the submissions

Research report

Examiners saw a large range of presentation and achievement in the research report.

Successful candidates were those that had understood the 'journal' principle outlined in the syllabus and who kept detailed notes and records of listening. By carefully addressing each of the assessment criteria stipulations in turn, they were able to access the full range of marks available.

Some reports were little more than general 'commentaries' from candidates who did not seem to appreciate the need to evidence the scope of their supporting explorations.

Given the highly individual nature of composing work, the approach to research was also unique and the following points would not necessarily apply to all candidates.

General observations include the following:

- Presenting findings in table-format is acceptable but candidates must take care not to ‘short-cut’ the need for detailed analysis. Simply pointing out that a particular piece is an example of ‘lyrical guitar’ use, is insufficient. Further explanation in answer to the question, ‘how?’ is required.
- Most candidates have now understood the need to provide edited audio tracks to specifically point to an analytical feature mentioned. Some candidates also understood the need to occasionally include a whole song track, for example, to provide a wider context.
- Inclusion of complete symphonic movements or substantial, longer extracts are not required.
- A few candidates mistakenly included edited audio extracts of their own composition. This is unnecessary – bar number references will suffice.
- The requirement to discuss the *process* of composing is rather different to describing the finished composing product.
- If there are no listening references beyond the mention of a few names and no significant analysis of listening, candidates cannot access the full range of marks. They should be fully aware that the Research report represents 20 per cent of the overall marks for this component.
- Breadth of listening is important. Researching music in animation settings, one candidate mentioned the scores for just two films. Both were very interesting, iconic scores, but at this level a greater range of listening is required.
- Many candidates continue to omit evidence of reflective thinking in their Research report. At the very least, candidates should consider describing their understanding of the relative challenges and successes throughout their composing work.

Shaping of ideas; structure and Working with ideas; compositional techniques

Successful composers considered a wide range of ideas from the outset including rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and texture-based materials.

Weaker submissions relied heavily on layering and texturing as the only means of presenting materials and had insufficient skills to develop or modify melodic or harmonic ideas. In the use of harmony there was a heavy reliance on pedal and pattern. These can be very useful devices in film and gaming scores, for example, but at A level candidates need to demonstrate a more varied knowledge and understanding of harmonic language.

In their Research report, one candidate wrote, ‘... it quickly became apparent that I had no idea how to write a good harmony’. This honest admission presents evidence of a clear opportunity to present some study of harmony as a relevant part of the research. Candidates often chose to explore a particular genre or style such as jazz, early classical, popular song, or modernist language such as minimalism or serialism. Any of these might require significant study of harmonic materials so as to gain knowledge and understanding of their characteristics, in turn ensuring effective use in their own compositions.

Composing a piece of music of at least six minutes duration was challenging for many candidates. Techniques of extension of ideas is an important skill to develop. Many candidates who wrote in a tonal idiom, for example, remained in the same key for the entire composition. Modulation and its potential usage is an important technique to master and utilise.

A standard solo song in a popular style may be successfully extended with the use of an instrumental section but submissions might also take the form of a pair of contrasting songs on a common or complimentary theme, using the same resources.

Use of medium and texture

A full range of possibilities was presented, some very successfully.

Some general observations:

- Candidates are more successful when they work with smaller forces than with large orchestral ensembles.
- Working with large forces requires considerable understanding of orchestration. Weaker submissions tended to over-double internal parts and lack strong bass lines. The balance between treble and bass voices was often far too ‘top-heavy’.
- Candidates who understood the idiomatic qualities of instruments (often consulting performers as part of their research) wrote more skilfully and convincingly in both solo and ensemble writing.

Communication

The presentation of composing work was generally acceptable, though recordings often need further editing to correct balance and detail. Greater understanding of the use of programmes to provide more vivid accounts of their composing intentions, is a valid use of research time.

Candidates can improve the presentation of scores or commentary in place of a score in the following ways:

- Page 1 of a score must always indicate the full resources used, but subsequent pages can make use of 'hide staves' to give a professional presentation and avoid excessive display of empty bars.
- Rhythm grouping in music notation should always be according to correct theoretical conventions.
- Generalised phrasing should be avoided unless its use is essential and clear. Accurate detail of bowing for strings or articulation for wind instruments, for example, will often provide clear evidence that a candidate understands the essential idiomatic possibilities of instruments.
- If a commentary in place of a score is submitted (for electro-acoustic compositions, for example) this must always be a separate document to the research report.

Recordings

Candidates can improve their recordings by learning about expressive control and final mix-down techniques available as part of the software programme chosen.

Final comments

Examiners continue to require full transparency in terms of explanations about automated processes, the use of 'borrowed' materials and samples, application of the candidate's own creative and manipulation skills whether by traditional means or those using music technology in relation to generation of sounds and construction of ideas. Assembling a range of materials is one aspect of composing skill, whatever the source of those materials.

An examiner seeks to tease out those creative skills and aspects of compositional understanding that are to be credited within the assessment criteria. The syllabus is focussed on the principle of human creativity. The use of Artificial Intelligence is not appropriate in this component.

Any ambiguity in the presentation of material, information and explanations risks a candidate not receiving appropriate credit for their work.

MUSIC

<p>Paper 9483/05 Investigating Music</p>
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Key messages

- Ensure that candidates chose a research question centred on an Investigation of Music
- Discuss the syllabus and assessment criteria in detail with candidates at the start so that they fully understand the requirements and weighting of credit for listening, analysis, reflective thinking, etc.
- Check and re-check submissions to ensure references tie-in with track lists or reference detail.
- Check that audio materials play as required on USB or CD and that everything required is included.

General comments

Many centres are now completing the correct Cover sheet, providing examiners with a comprehensive view of the range of a candidate's work across the chosen options.

Centres are reminded that each component is a discreet area of study; materials and audio should never be mixed with other components.

The safest way to ensure that each candidate submits all the work intended for their Investigation, is to give that responsibility fully to the candidate. Each session, examiners see incomplete work where centre compilations of audio extracts for all candidates, for example, do not seem to include everything that an individual candidate references in their essays.

Comments on specific aspects of the submission

The Research journal approach

The syllabus outlines a method of approaching the research task that is designed to help candidates to organise themselves. By using a 'journal' candidates can regularly document their findings and keep details of books, recordings, websites, etc.

It may take time to decide upon an area for Investigation and refinement of the title or research question might continue for several months into the work as new discoveries and directions are explored.

When candidates come to write the reflective statement, the journal approach will prove an invaluable reminder when commenting and reflecting on the *process* of the Investigation.

It was clear in the submissions this session that there was a significant correlation between the quality of outcome and the degree and method of organisation.

Choice of research title / question

It is expected that candidates will want to start from a personal place of curiosity and enthusiasm. They can be encouraged to widen their musical horizons and allow an incremental approach that might take them to some quite unexpected places from a relatively comfortable starting point.

Teachers can make suggestions or ask questions of candidates to stimulate their critical thinking capacities. Many candidates focussed on a composer or a body of work. Film, gaming and anime soundtracks were popular choices for investigation. A more nuanced approach, for example, tracked the development of the role of string bass in Jazz since 1920, covering a range of contrasting music and performers.

There were several strong Investigations tied to the music of popular genres. Others successfully incorporated an ethnomusicological approach to music of different traditions.

Accessing scholarly sources / source material

With so much material available on the internet, candidates may need guidance on how to test and verify the authenticity and reputable nature of the information they access. Teachers are often able to guide their students to well-known 'experts' in their field, and particularly those authors or reviewers who are respected for their understanding of a composer, for example, or their writing about historical and contextual perspectives. Teachers may also offer useful advice about established performers / conductors / vocalists, to investigate.

Candidates who use Encyclopaedia Britannica, Grove Dictionary or Wikipedia as an almost exclusive reference source are not accessing a wide enough range of specialist materials. Candidates should also be cautious about using undergraduate / post graduate essays they may find online believing them to be 'scholarly'.

Successful candidates access a variety of sources including journals, recordings and their liner notes, online workshops, published materials, interviews, etc.

Listening

Attention is drawn to the third bullet point of the assessment criteria outline for 'Listening'. Supporting recorded extracts are mandatory for the Investigation. Successful submissions included a balance of whole tracks where overview and context was needed, and edited tracks to focus on and illustrate specific analysis.

Communication and substantiation of judgements

Candidates must take care to use referencing conventions clearly when quoting or paraphrasing from publications of the work of others. This may include the use of quotation marks or indented paragraphs for longer extracts.

The strongest writing ensured a good balance of the findings of other commentators together with the coherent expression of the candidate's own independent judgements.

The Reflective statement

The reflective statement is an additional mandatory piece of writing of up to 500 words. The word count should not include additional bibliographical details, for example.

Candidates who worked methodically and kept records of their research investigation and finding, of their listening and analysis of music, were best able to write honestly and accurately about the research *process*, reflecting on the challenges, successes and potential detours in the process. They talked convincingly about refinement of the research question and coherently summarised their conclusions.