

Examiners' Report
June 2018

GCE Music 9MU0 03

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Introduction

In this paper, candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements, language and context, in relation to the music they have studied through the set works and also unfamiliar music.

In terms of assessment, Section A of the paper comprised Questions (Q) 1-4 and was worth 50 marks. Q1-Q3 were based on excerpts from set works from three of the areas of study with an audio track and skeleton score. Q4 consisted of an aural dictation exercise of pitch and rhythm. Section B, worth 50 marks in total, comprised an essay question based on a piece of unfamiliar music, worth 20 marks and an essay focussing on a set work, worth 30 marks.

In the listening questions, examiners were looking for good aural skills applied to the music of the excerpts. This included knowledge of chords, keys, cadences, intervals and musical devices. Candidates were also required to write more fully and describe particular elements, for example the melody or rhythm, of a specific passage or the entire excerpt.

Q5 tested the ability of candidates to write about an unfamiliar piece of music that was related to one of the areas of study. An audio track was provided but no skeleton or illustrative score.

Q6 required candidates to write an essay from a choice of three options, each from a different area of study, based on a set work. Candidates were presented with three musical elements on which to focus. No audio given but an illustrative excerpt of several pages of the score was provided in a resource booklet.

For both Q5 and Q6, candidates needed to produce a well-structured essay with fluent use of musical vocabulary in relation to specific music elements. Essays should have had links with the context and referred to a wide variety of examples of other relevant pieces of music, which should have been embedded throughout the essay, in order to justify their points.

Many candidates approached this new paper with confidence and had identified well with the set works and the skills being tested. It was evident that teachers had understood the new requirements of the specification and that candidates had been well-prepared. This report will review each question and will highlight areas of success and aspects teachers and candidates may like to consider for future improvement.

One area to highlight is the importance of time management, which is entirely in the hands of the candidate for this exam. Quite frequently, there were scripts where candidates had approached Section A thoroughly, but Section B suffered from insufficient time, with short or insubstantial essays. It is essential that candidates approach the exam with a clear structure of how long to spend on each question and adhere strictly to this plan. It is advisable to practise writing timed essays as part of exam preparation, and to ensure that handwriting is legible and does not deteriorate when under pressure.

Question 1 (a)

Many candidates identified the recording technique of fade-in. It was important to note that the question asked for the recording technique, so candidates should have given one answer only, rather than presenting alternatives.

Question 1 (b)

In this multiple-choice question, candidates were required to identify three correct features from a list of eight. This required a good understanding of technical vocabulary and application of knowledge of the main musical features and devices used in the set work, in conjunction with candidates' aural skills.

Question 1 (c)

Candidates often find comparison questions challenging and answers to this question sometimes lacked clarity and focus. Ideally, they should present their similarity first and subsequently a difference, as heard in bars 10 to 15 (the mark scheme did, however, also give credit for correct observations made in bars 5 to 9).

Many responses for the similarity were the use of backing vocals/close harmony or syncopation. Differences in bars 10-15 included: descending melody, longer solo and narrower range.

Some answers lacked precision, giving responses such as different melody, different rhythm or different lyrics, which were too vague – at this level – to gain credit.

This is a concise and coherent answer, where the candidate takes responsibility for organising their answer.

(c) Compare the vocal parts in bars 10 to 15 with bars 5 to 9 by giving **one** similarity and **one** difference.

(2)

Similarity: the use of backing vocals at the end of phrases

Difference: the vocal phrase ascends (5-9) and descends (10-15)



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Examiner Comments

Similarity: Backing vocals [1]

Difference: Bars 5-9 ascends/bars 10-15 descends [1]

2 marks



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Examiner Tip

Allocate one answer line for the similarity and one for the difference, starting with the similarity first.

Answer in a concise manner.

In this response, the candidate needs to be more precise in detailing how the rhythm was different.

(c) Compare the vocal parts in bars 10 to 15 with bars 5 to 9 by giving **one** similarity and **one** difference.

(2)

Different rhythms

They end the same way by ascending



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Similarity: ascends at end [1]

1 mark

Question 1 (d)

Many candidates identified dissonance successfully and some were able to specify the exact nature of the dissonance. Very few managed to name the chord as dominant (7th).

Candidates are encouraged to learn aspects of the harmony used in their set works, in greater detail.

This is a typical 2-mark answer.

(d) Describe the harmony in bars 10 to 13.

(2)

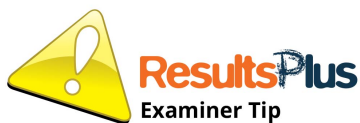
It's dissonant harmony and is very repetitive as the same chord is used in all 3 bars. It ~~alternates~~ ^{alternates} between 2 notes



Dissonant [1]

Same chord [1]

2 marks



When writing about the harmony try to identify specific chords, especially when focussing on a small passage with use of one chord

Unfortunately, there were no points for credit in this response.

It is important that candidates observe the number of marks available to guide the number of musical points they should make and keep their language as technical as possible. In this case, they should have used the word 'dissonance' rather than 'clash'.

(d) Describe the harmony in bars 10 to 13.

(2)

There is very little harmony between the voices ~~but~~ and the voice also doesn't harmonise with the piano, it kind of clashes.



0 marks

Question 1 (e) (i)

Most candidates identified 'verse' correctly.

Question 1 (e) (ii)

Many candidates identified the bridge/middle eight correctly, but some misunderstood the structure of this song and identified the chorus.

Question 1 (f)

Candidates generally answered this question well, with repeated notes, conjunct, descending and syncopation being some of the most popular musical features for credit. Other candidates were able to access more detailed rhythmic points on the mark scheme.

It is important that candidates approach questions with a command word of "describe" with clear use of technical vocabulary and make the number of points that are indicated by the number of available marks.

This candidate makes four good points from the mark scheme, covering a range of melodic and rhythmic features.

Terminology such as syllabic and melismatic would be appropriate to a question about the text-setting, rather than melody.

(f) Describe the melody and rhythm from bars 27 to 34.

(4)

Melody is conjunct with a small vocal range, and the melody is syncopated so it sounds swung. Melody is mainly syllabic with occasional melisma e.g. on 'mind'. The melody notes are sung quite detached.



Conjunct [1]

Small vocal range [1]

Syncopated [1]

Swung [1]

4 marks

Students should be encouraged to write in sentences when the question requires them to describe elements of the music.

This student deviates from the elements of melody and rhythm with a point about harmony and texture, which does not gain credit.

(f) Describe the melody and rhythm from bars 27 to 34.

(4)

added 7th ~~chord~~ ^{chord} in bass

syncopation

imitation



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Syncopation [1]

1 mark



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Be familiar with terminology associated with particular music elements

Read the question carefully and respond to what is being asked

Question 2 (a)

Most candidates were able to identify two percussion instruments used in this piece. It was important that they used the precise name of the instrument as indicated in the score, rather than a similar-sounding instrument.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were required to describe the music of the cuatro solo. This question was well-answered, with popular responses being repetition, triadic, syncopation.

It is important that candidates approach 'describing' questions with use of technical vocabulary and make the number of points as indicated by the number of available marks.

This is a good full marks answer, which identifies the main features.

(b) Describe the cuatro solo from bars 5 to 15.

(3)

Improvised version of the vocal melody that enters at 15. It is highly syncopated. Starts ~~congruent~~ with a rising 4th interval. Mostly quavers



Improvised [1]

Syncopated [1]

Rising 4th interval [1]

3 marks

(b) Describe the cuatro solo from bars 5 to 15.

(3)

plays the upcoming vocal line with some embellishes,
uses multi-stopping + a disjunct melody. Dotted
rhythms and Syncopation



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Syncopation [1]

1 mark

Question 2 (c)

Candidates found this question challenging and a wide selection of incorrect responses was seen.

It required knowledge of a limited number of chords used in this piece and being able to apply both that knowledge and aural skills to the chord progression in the two bars. The 7th chord needed to be written as dominant 7th, rather than only dominant: precision is always required in chord-identification questions.

Question 2 (d)

Most candidates identified the name of the section as Son. Although alternatives were accepted in the mark scheme and given credit, please note that the authentic name is most preferable.

Question 2 (e)

This question was generally well-answered, and many candidates were able to identify the faster tempo, the call-and-response of the pregon and coro, using repetition and similar features. Fewer candidates, however, focussed on the harmony or precise melodic features.

This is a full answer, which makes five valid musical points.

(e) Describe **four** musical changes in this new section starting at bar 39.

(4)

The music has increased in tempo. It was a bolero and now it is a son. The clave rhythm has changed to 3-2. There is now a call-and-response with backing singers. The melody chords alternate between 2 chords, which change every bar.



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Examiner Comments

Increase in tempo [1]

Clave rhythm has changed = new percussion pattern [1]

Call and response [1]

Backing singers [1]

Chords change every bar [1]

4 marks (max)

This response starts well but loses focus and lacks technical points.

On the second line the correct answers were call and response or pregon and coro.

(e) Describe **four** musical changes in this new section starting at bar 39.

(4)

The music gets fast in tempo. Also backing vocals enter, seemingly answering the main vocals questions. The shaker gets louder as well as the other percussive instruments - more prominent.



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Examiner Comments

Fast in tempo [1]

Backing vocals [1]

2 marks

Question 2 (f)

This was a conclusive style of question, which brought together the main stylistic features of Cuban music. Candidates needed to present their answers with clarity, in order to give the three most salient features.

This is a very good response which includes some of the most important features of Cuban music.

(f) Explain **three** ways in which this piece is typical of Cuban music.

It mixes both Spanish and African influences, with the percussive call and response from Africa and guitar from Spain. It contains a Bolero and Son. The Clave rhythm.

(Total for Question 2 = 15 marks)



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Examiner Comments

Spanish and African influences [1]

Call and response [1]

Bolero and son [1]

Clave rhythm [1]

3 marks (max)



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Prepare clear examples of stylistic features of the musical period or genre, for each set work.

(f) Explain **three** ways in which this piece is typical of Cuban music.

(3)

It is very repetitive

It's lyrics tell a story

It displays African influence in the percussion and rhythm and Spanish/European by its use of functional harmony and as it's sung in Portuguese.

(Total for Question 2 = 15 marks)



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Examiner Comments

African and Spanish influence [1]

Functional harmony [1]

2 marks

Question 3 (a)

A significant number of candidates recognised that the interval was a perfect fourth but some answers lacked precision. Candidates should be reminded that they should describe the musical quality of the interval, as well as its numerical value.

Question 3 (b)

Many candidates were able to identify the cello line as being a descending scale.

(b) Describe the music played by the cello in bar 4 to bar 6 beat 2.

(2)

Descending chromatic bassline with legato slurs played in pairs of repeated notes with semiquaver values



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Examiner Comments

Descending [1]

Chromatic [1]

Repeated notes [1]

2 marks (max)

(b) Describe the music played by the cello in bar 4 to bar 6 beat 2.

(2)

imitation of the violin part
sequence



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

An incorrect observation about the texture and too small a melodic motif to be a sequence.

0 marks

Question 3 (c)

Most candidates identified the perfect cadence.

Question 3 (d)

A significant number of candidates recognised the descending sequence and wrote about the conjunct movement. However, very few mentioned the wide leap, which occurred at the end of each phrase.

This was a typical response, gaining full marks.

(d) Describe the melody in bar 15 beat 4 to bar 19 beat 3.

(2)

There's a descending sequence, ~~for the first~~ ^{it alternates the first two} ~~of an~~ ^{notes} ~~part~~ before a short descending end part.



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Examiner Comments

Descending [1]

Sequence [1]

2 marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Always specify whether the sequence is ascending or descending

In this melody the selection of pitches is not presented as a scale – it forms a sequence.

The candidate writes about rhythmic features, but only melody is required here.

(d) Describe the melody in bar 15 beat 4 to bar 19 beat 3.

(2)

a repetitive melody moving down the scale
a makes use of a rapid pace moving between semi
quavers



Moving down = descending [1]

1 mark

Question 3 (e)

Nearly all candidates recognised the distinctive sound of the circle of 5ths.

Question 3 (f)

There were mixed responses to this question, with some confusion over the textures used. Candidates did not always describe the opening with sufficient detail, explaining how the monophonic start imitatively became two parts and then three parts, to create a contrapuntal texture.

Some candidates described the opening, incorrectly, as being a canon. It is important that candidates remember to write about the number of parts in texture questions, in addition to using texture vocabulary.

This was a full answer describing the build-up of texture from the start of the excerpt.

(f) Describe the texture in this excerpt.

(3)

The excerpt begins with monophonic violin, then a second solo violin enters. At bar 4 the cello joins in creating a 3-part texture. It is overall polyphonic with textures like dialogue at 16 between the violins and cello.



Begins monophonic [1]

Second solo violin = 2 part [1]

3 part [1]

Polyphonic [1]

3 marks (max)

This response lacks the use of technical vocabulary and descriptions are rather vague.

(f) Describe the texture in this excerpt.

(3)

Starts off with 2-part texture where 2 violins play unaccompanied. Then the texture builds as more instruments enter. When instruments drop out the texture becomes less.



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Examiner Comments

2 part [1]

1 mark

Question 3 (g)

There were mixed responses to this 2-mark question in which candidates were required to describe the tonality.

Some candidates noted that it was functional or modulated to related keys. However, many candidates wrote D minor and this did not gain credit in the mark scheme because this information was present in the title at the start of the question.

Many candidates wrote about the circle of 5ths, but that was in relation to the harmony and not tonality. Very few noted the modulation to A minor/dominant.

(g) Describe the use of tonality in this excerpt.

(2)

The tonality is functional with the use of a closely related key system to modulate



Functional [1]

Closely related keys [1]

2 marks



For questions about tonality try to name specific keys. Please note that if the tonic is specified in the title, no credit will be given if this is restated.

(g) Describe the use of tonality in this excerpt.

(2)

Very functional, use of perfect cadences and circles of fifths helps to establish tonality.



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Examiner Comments

Functional [1]

No marks are available for perfect cadences or circle of fifths, which were features of the harmony.

0 marks

Question 4

Many candidates attempted the aural dictation with good success, and being able to operate the recording themselves for this question, in particular, was of great benefit.

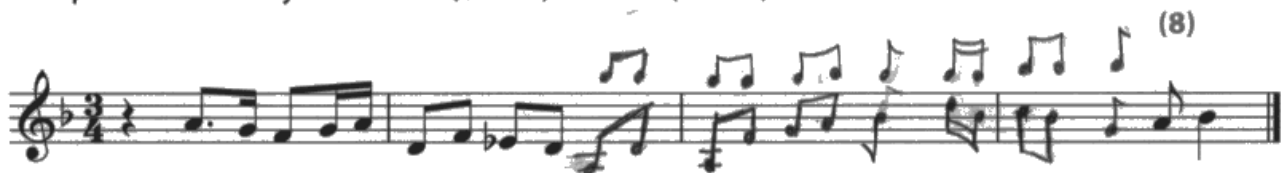
Rhythms were often completed with success, although it was important that candidates checked that the number of beats in the bar added up correctly. Pitches presented a greater challenge and some areas of difficulty included omitting the accidentals, chromatic/semitone movement, the ascending arpeggio in bar 3 and the fall of a 7th in bar 4.

Do not spend a lot of time listening to the dictation question multiple times at the expense of leaving time for the essay questions. There are 8 marks for dictation and 50 marks for the essays.

Practise working with different types of intervals to help with pitch dictation.

4 Listen to Track 4 of the CD.

Complete the melody from bar 2 (beat 3) to bar 4 (beat 2).



This candidate has carefully planned the rhythms above the staff with accuracy but finds the pitches challenging at the start and middle of the excerpt.

They are, however, able to connect with reasonable success to the given ending, with 4 correct pitches near to the end and one error caused by the fall of the 7th.

12 correct rhythms

5 correct pitches

6 marks



Plan your time – leave enough for the essay questions

Question 5

This question required candidates to use their aural skills to identify musical features of an unfamiliar piece. Candidates had to draw upon their knowledge and understanding of a particular genre, in this case instrumental music, and relate their observations to the question. They were required to justify their points with examples from other relevant works from their own wider listening. There were some examples of excellent essays offered in response to this question.

The best examples were presented in a clearly-structured and coherent manner, often organising the features into paragraphs that focussed on a musical element. Candidates were able to write fluently about the piece, with a strong grasp of technical musical vocabulary and covering a large number of elements.

Some candidates began with an introductory paragraph placing the work in context. They identified that it was programme music from the late Romantic period and perhaps suggested a possible composer and date, before embarking upon the musical detail. The most successful essays explained the effect of the musical feature and linked that to an example of wider listening in order to justify their point. These essays demonstrated a wide and interesting variety of wider listening, which went beyond the set works in the anthology and presented a genuine understanding of the related piece.

Where essays were placed in the Level 1 or 2 bands, it was usually because musical observations were not explained, or linked to the question, or pieces of wider listening were not used to support points made. In some essays, there were no, or very few, links to other music or an over-reliance on the set works to illustrate points made. These essays were often short or lacking in musical content.

Candidates who approached the essay by giving an account in chronological order often had less success because they did not bring out the most salient features of the piece and fell into a pattern of repetition. It was not necessary for candidates to link musical features to timings on the audio track.

Please note that wider listening should refer to a specific piece of music, rather than a loose reference to a composer. Wider listening can only gain credit in relation to a correct musical feature. The linked, wider listening piece can be used to demonstrate both similarities and differences.

Some candidates took the wording of the question, the life of the heroic character, to imply film music, and whilst wider listening references may come from any style or area of study, this often resulted in a narrow choice of wider listening with over-reliance on a small number of film soundtracks.

It is essential that candidates allow sufficient time to plan and write their Q5 essay because some were short, lacking content, or an orderly structure.

This is a fluently-written and well-structured essay, making a good number of musical observations with competent use of musical vocabulary.

Links to wider listening were effective and showed a broad range of repertoire, which went beyond the anthology of set works.

Seemingly programmatic music, this piece perfectly depicts scenes from the life of a heroic character. The large scale orchestra/symphony rocket this piece into romantic or 20th music alongside the likes of Berlioz (Symphonie Fantastique) or even Smetana (La Vltah). The dynamic range as a result is loud, ~~is~~ brave and courageous, just like a hero.

Added instruments to the orchestra add glimmers of magic to the music, such as the ~~the~~ ringing glockenspiel and full brass and percussion sections. This broad range of colour in timbre ^{and} numbers helps establish the 'mighty power' this hero possesses. Similarly in Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique (Urbal), Saint Saens' Organ Symphony and Cesar Franck's D minor Symphony, added instruments develop that extra colour needed to present such thematic material than that of the Classical and Baroque periods. The pieces mentioned include

added harps and even a piano in the Schema of the St. Sain's

Many 'hurried' notes and flourishes can be heard in the wind and ~~see~~ strings at the ~~the~~ start, ^(pizz too) racing with the excitement of the hero. Furthermore, a string melody arises, full of stately, dotted rhythms to celebrate the hero's life. With this melody, the *tacitura* rises, making use of the full extend of the instrument, similarly to any Tchaikovsky Symphony.

The propulsion from string triplets then allow the brass to take the lead, ~~is~~ often sticking to the cheery key of E major. The fast tempo paired with this tonality depict happy, exciting scenes, worthy of celebration. Although the harmony ~~is~~ is not functional ^{very chromatic,} and strays through G and C major, it always seems to work back the E major, before drifting into a suspected D major towards the end, following the slower, romantic style ~~is~~ violin solo - similar to Elgar's Polonia.

As the melody is often presented in homophony alongside instruments, the impact of sound is massive, making the hero's life bold and 'full'. The 'French' style, accompaniment of the strings, reminiscent of Lavel's Rapsodie Espagnole (gliss) showing a perhaps more tender, romantic side to this character.



Correct observations include:

Programmatic music, large scale orchestra, loud dynamics, use of glockenspiel and brass, fast notes, dotted rhythms, triplets, fast tempo, E major, modulations, chromatic harmony, violin solo.

A good range of the music elements is covered, explained and their effect linked to the question. Musical vocabulary is used well, however, there are some omissions. A good range of relevant wider listening works is selected to justify points.

16 marks

Level 4:



Structure your essay clearly and perhaps using the elements

Links to other works should be relevant and wide-ranging

Question 6

This question required candidates to show their knowledge of three elements of one of the set works. Candidates were being tested on their use of musical vocabulary, their ability to make links to the context in which the piece was created and making connections with other relevant pieces of music. Links needed to be embedded fluently throughout the essay in order to justify candidates' points. A wide range of appropriately selected examples of wider listening was required, in order to demonstrate examples of similarities or, indeed, differences.

There were some examples of very good essays for Q6. The best were clearly structured and coherent, often organising the features into paragraphs that focussed on each musical element. Candidates were able to write fluently about the piece with a strong grasp of technical musical vocabulary across the three elements and were able to explain the effect of a musical feature. Musical features were linked to an example of wider listening in order to justify their point. These essays demonstrated a wide and interesting variety of wider listening that went beyond the set works in the anthology. Further, they demonstrated a genuine understanding of the connections that they were making between the set work and the other work.

Where essays were placed in the Level 1 or 2 bands, it was usually because musical observations were not explained, or pieces of wider listening were not used to support points made. These essays were often short or lacking in musical content. In some essays, there were no, or very few, links to other music or an over-reliance on the set works to illustrate points made. It is important that candidates refer to the piece rather than making a loose reference to a composer, and show a sense of understanding of the comparison rather than only a superficial or tenuous link.

Please note that candidates do not gain credit for referring to bar numbers. Some candidates over-relied on the illustrative pages of the score in the resource book resulting in only writing about the first section of the piece and musical features from the latter part being entirely neglected.

Question 6 (a)

Candidates often wrote well about the melody and showed an understanding of the modal, pentatonic and folk influences but frequently, too much time was spent writing about the text setting of melismatic and syllabic features and word-painting. Sonority was considered reasonably well, and instrumental techniques received comment.

Many candidates omitted the most basic information, such as the voice type and instruments, for which the song was scored. Texture was generally least well explored and sometimes, only melody and accompaniment and homophonic chordal textures, were noted.

It is important that candidates only write about the elements that are required by the question, rather than becoming distracted by other aspects of the music. Candidates should aim to show a wide range of repertoire for comparison and go beyond the two other songs from this song cycle.

This is an example of a Level 4 essay in the top region of the 19-24 mark band.

The candidate produces a well-written essay with competent use of musical vocabulary and showing a good understanding of the work.

The effect of most musical features is explained with clarity. Context is shown in an introductory paragraph.

Relevant works are used to justify musical points and are embedded fluently throughout the essay.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was one of the most important English composers of the 20th Century, particularly known for his song-writing and expert word-setting. He was interested in English folk song and wanted to preserve it, as well as having an interest in Impressionism after studying with French composer Ravel in Paris. 'On Wenlock Edge' is a song cycle of six songs setting poems from A.E. Housman's 'A Shropshire Lad'. The first song, 'On Wenlock Edge', tells the story of a man watching the storm on Wenlock Edge. He realises the Romans faced the same storms, so they faced the same struggles. Modern sufferings will soon be over, as those of the Romans now are.

Vaughan Williams uses melody effectively to set the words of 'On Wenlock Edge' and reflect the song's mood. The opening rising and falling conjunct melody in the accompaniment as well as the ascending violin motif of octaves at bar 5 help to create the impression of the storm. The opening vocal melody, beginning on an anacrusis, is simple and mostly conjunct except the 4th leap on the words 'Wenlock Edge'. This melody is based around five pitches of a pentatonic scale (D, F, G, A, C). The pentatonic scale is ~~is a~~ a feature of impressionism - for example, Ravel's 'Laidronnette' from Mother Goose uses the pentatonic scale to evoke

the Far East. In 'On Wenlock Edge', Vaughan Williams use of a simple pentatonic melody helps to give a folk-like feel. ^{similar to songs like 'Quillets', 'The Crinoid', 'Petal', 'Now Sleeps'} The vocal melody becomes more chromatic at bar 13, where it descends chromatically to bar 15. This creates a sense of unease and tension, reflecting the storm and the singer's troubled thoughts. At ^{the intro to} verse 3, the piano plays eerie ^{trills and} hemidemisemiquaver flourishes that could represent the gusts of wind of the storm. A new motif enters at bar 3 in the strings. This is a chromatic ascending and descending syncopated idea - the chromaticism here creates an uneasy, dark mood as well as the low vocal tessitura.* Similarly, in Schubert's 'Der Doppelgänger' chromatic melodies and a low vocal range evoke the troubled thoughts of the singer and the dark mood.

Sonority is one of the most interesting features of 'On Wenlock Edge'. Vaughan Williams uses a range of vocal timbres to reflect the lyrics. The tenor voice begins with a mid-range melody, reaching its highest note (G) in bar 13 at the climax of verse 1. As mentioned earlier, in verse 3 the vocal ~~texture~~ ^{tessitura} is ~~more~~ lower, creating a dark mood. The last ~~song~~ sung words, 'ashes under Uricon', contain a disjunct 7th leap and finish on a high, eerie tessitura as the storm settles. Other songs that use a range of vocal timbres include Schubert's 'Erlkönig' where the tenor vocalist must evoke 4 separate characters, such as the son crying out for help. Vaughan Williams also uses a range of instrumental techniques. The tremolando upper strings help create a stormy, dramatic mood whilst the pizz cello helps emphasise important beats. From bar 3, the strings play extended trills which further help

to reflect the gales of the Storm. This is enhanced by the sextuplet flourishes in the right hand of the piano. At the beginning of the final verse, the strings are played *sul ponticello* which creates an icy, far-away sound which is effective in representing the storm. Many composers use instrumental techniques to meet various purposes, for example the demisemiquaver flourishes ^{at the end of} Debussy's 'Pagodes' represent the shimmering textures of the Javanese gamelan.

Finally, texture is effectively used in 'On Wenlock Edge'. At the start, the ^{upper} strings play in parallel motion, which emphasises the stormy feel. Parallel movement is a common textural feature found in Impressionist works such as Debussy's 'Submerged Cathedral'. When the voice comes in, the texture is melody dominated homophony to help emphasise the vocal melody. In bar 7 the cellos and left hand of the piano double the voice two octaves lower. This again emphasises the importance of this melody, making it stand out.

Whilst the piece starts with all of the instruments creating a full texture, there are moments where the texture reduces. At the lead up to verse 3, only the 'rumbling' of the piano can be heard with its trills and hemidemisemiquavers. This texture reduction adds to the eerie, tense mood. At the very end, the strings drop out until the texture is reduced to bare octaves in the piano playing the dominant to tonic. This fading texture could represent the storm dying down, and is a stark contrast to the beginning. Many composers have used varied textures to create contrasting moods, as far back as Mozart where in the Queen of the Night's recitative and aria in 'die Zauberflöte', the texture is full at first

to create a dramatic, grand entrance for the queen, then it reduces for the recitative to emphasise her words

[* This chromatic rise and fall idea is brought back at the end where it is played in descending sequence.]

Overall, Vaughan Williams clearly uses melody, texture and sonority to great effect to reflect the lyrics and mood of 'On Wenlock Edge'.



Some of the AO3 indicative content features include:

Melody: Pentatonic, folk, chromatic, descending sequence

Sonority: hemidemisemiquaver flourishes, tenor voice, tremolo strings, pizzicato cello, extended trills, sextuplet piano flourishes

Texture: parallel, melody-dominated homophony, doubled octaves

There is a good range of wider listening pieces, including music by Ravel, Schubert, and Debussy. There are some very effective explanations of the musical features but this is not always consistent.

23 marks

Level 4



Ensure that musical elements are covered as evenly as possible

Remember to:

- explain the effect of each musical feature
- make a link to another piece to draw a comparison

Question 6 (b)

This was the most popular of the Q6 choices and candidates seemed to enjoy writing about the distinctive musical features of the soundtrack to *Psycho*. There were some well-written essays, but there were many examples that discussed other musical elements such as sonority and rhythm – which were not required in the question – or other movements. Often, candidates became distracted by the storyline of the film. Wider listening was sometimes rather limited.

Candidates tended to show most knowledge of the harmony and the different types of dissonance that Hermann used. Texture was covered reasonably well, but melody less so.

It was common to see essays where candidates took each movement individually. This was not such a successful strategy because it led to repetition and not selecting the salient features of this collection of musical cues from the soundtrack.


This is an example of a Level 3 essay in the top region of the 13-18 mark band.

The candidate produces a clear response with satisfactory use of musical vocabulary, although deviating from the three elements in the question, at times.

There were some omissions of important musical features. The effect of some musical features was explained; however, this not always consistent.

Context was shown in an introductory paragraph. Relevant works were used to illustrate, but not justify, musical points, and some examples were more effective than others.

Bernard Herrmann composed the music for Alfred Hitchcock's film Psycho. The film tells the story of Marion, who runs away after stealing money and finds herself staying at Bates Motel, owned by Norman Bates. However, Norman Bates is psychologically unstable since his mother died and consequently murders Marion by stabbing her while she's in the shower. Prelude is played in the opening of the film, ~~for the murder~~ The murder (as the title suggests) is played during the murder scene. Originally, Hitchcock did not intend to use music during this scene, but Herrmann composed some anyway, making Hitchcock later realise he was wrong at first. The Toys is played when Marion's sister Lila comes searching for her, and whilst exploring Norman Bates's house finds the toy room. Herrmann has also composed the music for many other Hitchcock films, including Vertigo and North by Northwest. ~~Hitchcock's~~ Psycho was unimmediately successful, breaking box office records, and Hitchcock credits 33% of its success to Herrmann's score.

In the Prelude, 3 melodic themes are introduced. Theme A makes use of scurrying triplets, followed by a triadic descent. Theme B is chordal, - a dissonant chord is played with a ~~staccato~~ staccato  rhythm. The first 3 notes remain on the same repeated pitches. This use of unison strings playing a repeated chord is similar to the accompaniment in Under Ice by Kate Bush. Theme C is contrasting, and perhaps the only melody that could be considered technically film-music line. It uses an ascending then descending stepwise chromatic pattern with longer note values than the other 2, making it more lyrical. This theme is named in the score as the 'Psycho theme'. These 3 themes alternate throughout, and later in the cue get fragmented so shorter sections are played, ~~then~~ for example only the 2nd

half of theme B is used later on. This use of themes throughout the score is similar to Rachel Portman's use of 4 melodic themes in The Duchess opening ~~and back~~ ^{more strings} *

This cue begins on a clashing, dissonant chord, known as the 'Hitchcock chord'. It creates a foreboding mood for the storyline to come.

This dissonant chord, played in unison by the strings, is repeated and detached by rests, similar to in Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring. The texture at the beginning is homorhythmic until theme A begins, and throughout the piece uses melody dominated homophony.

* and Max Steiner's Score for King Kong.

The Murder is the only cue to use unmuted strings, which increases its dramatic effect. It begins monophonically, and the texture gradually builds from the top downwards until all the parts are playing, when it becomes monophonic and builds again. At the very end, there's a rest in all the parts before a final homorhythmic unison chord, as Manon falls dead.

The piece begins melody of the start uses very high registers of the instruments, beginning with the highest (violin 1) and parts join in becoming lower.

The first violin plays an E dotted half minim, then the second which is sustained, as the 2nd joins in and so on. The intervals between these notes are augmented octaves and inverted major 7ths. Then this is

repeated, but using glissando slides on the notes. This creates the effect of a bird screeching, which could possibly represent Nolan's interest in bird watching, although there's no evidence this was intended.

Later on in this cue, the texture becomes thicker with the parts playing together. They play faster 'scurrying' quavers, which could be compared to the fast strings in the Flight of The Bumblebee.

In the top, the cello, viola and violin play E and F pedals throughout. The two E pedals are played one arco and one pizzicato, and the F is played in unison on the viola, creating an interval. This creates an interval of a minor 9th, giving a dissonant sound and a sense of danger. The cricket pulse created by this pedal is similar to the use of strings in Eleanor Rigby by The Beatles. The clashing of these notes means the tonal centre of this piece is unclear. The melody comes from the upper strings, again in a high register. Through the whole cue, they play a descending chromatic line, using long note values, giving it a slow harmonic rhythm.

Overall, Hermann's use of harmony is dissonant and chromatic, with minor intervals to create a foreboding mood. He uses thematic development in the cues, and the textures are largely melody dominated homophony, with use of pedals, and homorhythms.



Some of the AO3 indicative content features include:

Melody – themes, repetition, stepwise chromatic

Harmony – discord, Hitchcock chord, pedal, slow harmonic rhythm

Texture – unison, homorhythmic, melody-dominated homophony, build up, high register

Whilst some correct musical points are made, there is a general lack of explanation, which only occurs sometimes.

Wider listening links are included as an illustration but not a justification.

17 marks

Level 3



Remember to give a clear explanation of each musical point

Question 6 (c)

This was the least-popular of the Q6 essay choices, but candidates often wrote well on the musical features.

Candidates often showed secure knowledge of the distinctive structure and how the sonority had been achieved and the effect of this. They wrote reasonably well about rhythm, but not always capturing all of the rhythmic characteristics with complete understanding. Wider listening links were occasionally imaginative and showed understanding of the style but were not always convincing. Sometimes, they were neglected for areas such as structure.

This is an example of a Level 3 essay at the low end of the 13-18 mark band.

The candidate produces a clear response with satisfactory use of musical vocabulary although there are omissions of important musical features.

The effect of some musical features is explained. However, this not always consistent, and often lacks detail and substance.

Quite a variety of relevant works are used to illustrate basic musical points. However, some examples are more effective than others.

John Cage draws on global influences for his pieces 'Three Dances for Two Prepared Pianos', including Indonesian gamelan, like Debussy's 'Pagodes', and African music.

The use of rhythm reflects the African influences on the piece. Syncopation is used throughout, straight from bass 1 on piano 2, and ostinatos are favoured, in comparison to long flowing melody lines. Bernard Herrmann also does this in his score to 'Psycho'. At the time that this piece was composed, composers were breaking away from conventions set by Bach in Bach's era, Bach was famous for his ability to build ^{extensive} long melodic lines, and were instead exploring ~~new~~ ~~ways~~ ~~to~~ ~~express~~ other features of music. Schoenberg took this to an extreme with his atonal 'Peripatie' and John Cage was not far behind. Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' uses many of the same rhythmic features as Cage, including repetitive ostinati, cross-rhythms

and accents. Both works were composed for the ballet and so, $\frac{3}{4}$ in the case of 'Angus of Spring', provide^a strong pulse to allow for easy choreography. The phrasing of parts from bar one indicates the 3 against 2 clave rhythm that Cage has taken from African drum pieces such as Koko's 'Yivi'.

Cage structures the work according to numerical devices. Each section of the piece is further divided into 9 subsections of bar lengths: 2-5-2-2-6-2-2-7-2. This is reminiscent of ~~George Omeihl~~ George Omeihl does a similar thing in his large scale work 'God music', basing it around patterns, and Emily Howard is a composer who has written many pieces built on mathematical concepts such as Pythagoras' Theorem and the Fibonacci Sequence. This use of alternative structures is fuelled, similar to the absence of extended melodies, by a will to progress and push music to the extreme of what is accepted. A piece that fully embraces this concept is Cage's own '4'33"' in which no instrument is played and instead music is created by the sounds ~~around~~ of the environment.

As shown by Cage's '4'33"', he wanted to push sonority to a place no one had before. In order to do this, he 'prepared' two pianos with various nuts, sponges and screws in between the strings inside. This created a timbre reminiscent to the Indonesian gamelan mentioned earlier. Similar to both Stockhausen's 'Gesang der Jülinge' and the Beatles 'I Want to Tell You' this creates a soundscape designed to heighten the ballet on the stage. Extremes of dynamics are marked throughout from 'pp' to 'ff', ~~with~~ sometimes with crescendos and diminuendos between and other times to provide a stark contrast. Ballet is used to convey emotion, hence the extremes of dynamics, just like Opera and these stark contrasts are also evident in Mozart's 'Queen of The Night' aria from 'die Zauberflöte', in which they convey the Queen's distress.

John Cage pushes sonority to an extreme in this work and draws on global influence to construct an original blend of sounds through rhythm and structure too. This piece ^{should be considered to be} ~~was~~ at the forefront of pioneering



Some of the AO3 indicative content features includes:

Rhythm – syncopation, ostinato, cross-rhythms, accents

Structure – 9 sections, 2-5-2 etc

Sonority – Gamelan and African influences, objects, extremes of dynamics

Some musical features are cited but musical vocabulary for Structure is lacking and explanations are not always provided.

There is quite a range of wider listening, some effective examples but others that are unconvincing.

14 marks

Level 3



Check that sufficient musical points are made across the three elements to show use of musical vocabulary

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Manage your time effectively for the exam. Create a time schedule and keep closely to it, leaving enough time for Q5 and Q6. Practise writing essays under timed conditions and ensure that handwriting is legible and clear enough to be read by the examiner.
- Listen to the set works as often as possible, in order to become very familiar with them.
- Learn the key features of each set work, including common musical devices.
- Know the context of each set work, including the date of composition, and be able to describe characteristics in relation to the period in which they were written, or the genre to which they belong.
- Practise aural skills on a regular basis: pitch and rhythm dictation, identifying intervals, chords, keys and cadences.
- Listen widely to related repertoire for each Area of Study and set work.
- Give specific examples of wider listening in the essays, naming a piece, rather than just a composer, and being able to justify the connection.
- Develop essay writing skills to produce a well-structured piece of writing with wider listening examples embedded fluently throughout.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

