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Edexcel

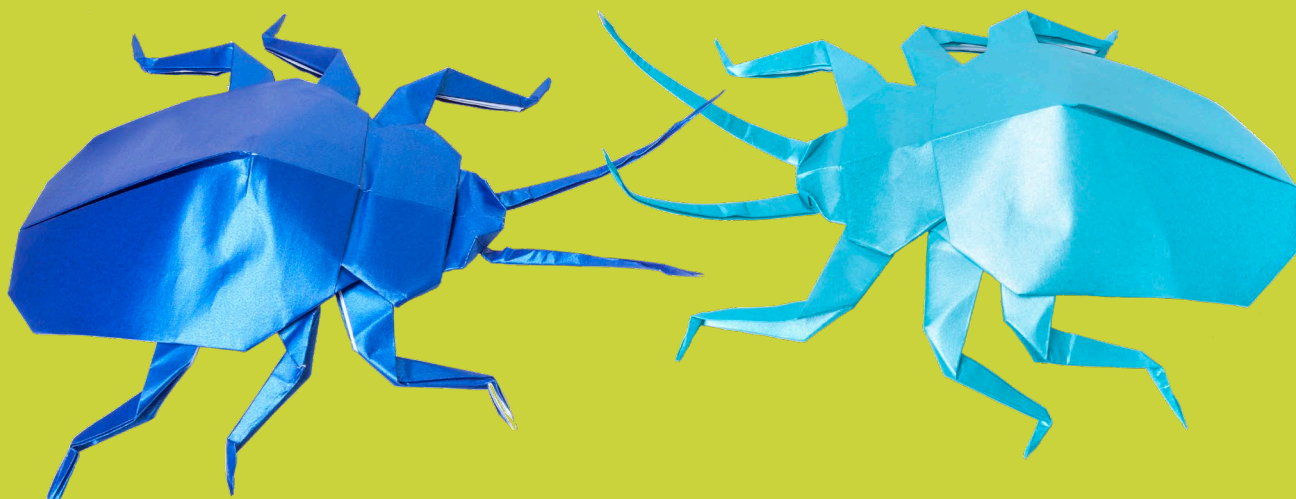
A level Music

Series: Summer 2019

Exemplar: Component 3 Question 6a

Mark: 30/30

NB: updates were made in April 2021 and these are highlighted in yellow



Set works: Instrumental Music

Introduction

The following exemplar response is sourced from a candidate who completed the 2019 examination series. To support teachers in developing a greater understanding of the assessment process associated with Question 6, our senior examining team have compiled a detailed explanation of the assessment process that they apply to each level based candidate response.

This presentation includes the following:

- [The question](#)
- [The mark scheme](#)
- [An indicative content list](#)
- [General Level Based Mark Scheme Guidance](#)
- [The full candidate response](#)
- [A summary of the examiner commentary](#)
- [Detailed step by step analysis of the assessment process](#)

Question

Discuss Clara Wieck-Schumann's use of structure, tonality and harmony in Piano Trio in G minor, Op.17: movement 1.

Relate your discussion to other relevant works. These may include set works and other music.

Candidate Response

Clara Schumann was a prolific German Romantic composer, pianist, and teacher. Known as “Queen of the Piano” she toured Europe as a child prodigy. Clara was wife of the renowned composer Robert Schumann and a lifelong friend of Johannes Brahms, both of whom had a large impact on her compositional style. Clara Schumann wrote a range of piano pieces which included her Piano Concerto in A minor, Three Romances for Violin and Piano and lieder. Her Piano Trio in G minor, composed in 1846, is one of her most celebrated works. The Piano Trio as a genre had been established by earlier Classical composers such as Mozart and Haydn, the latter composing the Gypsy Piano Trio which incorporated lively Hungarian folk tunes.¹ Structurally this work conforms to the standard sonata form, a typical structure of Classical and Romantic first movements of symphonies, sonatas and chamber music such as string quartets and piano trios. We can see the formal structure of sonata form followed in pieces such as Beethoven’s Symphony No.5 1st movement. This can be contrasted with the Berlioz’s looser approach to Sonata form in Symphonie Fantastique 1st movement with an extensive slow introduction before the loose sonata form starts with the lack of a formal recapitulation section.² The exposition of the Piano Trio introduces a lyrical 1st subject in G minor which is later adapted and manipulated in the dramatic development section. ³ We hear an assertive dotted pattern in the bridge passage, modulating towards Bb major, the key of the contrasting and more lively 2nd subject. The same structure, key relationship and contrasting thematic material can be seen in Mozart’s Symphony No.40, 1st movement where the exposition features a dramatic 1st subject in G minor with insistent alternating pitches and a legato descending scale for a calmer 2nd subject in Bb major.⁴ After introducing the tonic key in the 1st subject and the relative major in the 2nd subject Clara Schumann modulates through the related Eb major to the key of D major, creating additional interest and uncertainty, because this key is not closely related to G minor on the circle of

fifths. This idea of exploring unrelated keys was foreign to Classical composers such as Haydn, for example in his String Quartet in Eb The Joke 4th movement the music is restricted to closely related keys. In this way we see C Schumann exploring more interesting tonalities. [5](#) During the development section motifs from the subjects are explored as the music modulates through a series of keys such as Eb, F minor and C minor demonstrating an unsettled atmosphere. Similarly, in Schubert's Piano Trio in Bb 1st movement, after statements of the main theme in the strings and piano we travel through many keys giving a similar sense of excitement and forwards motion. [6](#) In the recapitulation of Clara Schumann's, the 2nd subject is heard in the bright key of G major, the tonic major, creating an optimistic feeling, though returning to G minor for the coda.. Beethoven does something similar in his Symphony No. 5 in C minor 1st movement, where the second subject returns in the tonic major, C major, to create a more positive and triumphant mood. [7](#) Although Clara Schumann experiments with some adventurous modulations, her approach towards tonality is fairly conservative compared with the frenzy of keys in Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique 1st movement introduction which is in the tonic of C minor but passes through the keys of Db major, Ab major and E major, to name just a few. [8](#)

In terms of harmony, Piano Trio in G minor uses functional harmony with frequent perfect cadences to confirm modulations, this is similar to Vivaldi's Concerto in D minor, 2nd movement where there are frequent perfect cadences as the subject moves through rapid passing modulations. In the Piano Trio we also hear the typical Classical cadence of the cadential 6-4 leading into the bridge passage which grounds the tonic key. This is similar to Mozart's Piano Sonata in Bb major K.333 1st movement which features an extended cadential 6-4 over several bars to create an even longer and more emphatic perfect cadence. [9](#) We hear dominant pedals at the end of the exposition and development section used to anticipate a transition. This technique has been used throughout the Baroque and Classical era and is

also demonstrated effectively in Vivaldi's Concerto in D minor 2nd movement which nears the end with a long sustained dominant pedal. [10](#) Clara Schumann incorporates various chromatic chords at moments of suspense showing her embracing more adventurous harmonies. In the piano statement of the first subject we hear a French augmented 6th chord, with this characteristic sounding chord creating added drama in the opening. For example the Augmented 6th chord where the cello has a descending chromatic line and is used similarly in Mozart's Magic Flute Quintet in Papageno's chromatic melody. Later in the 2nd subject there is a diminished 7th chord with its minor 3rd intervals giving a sound of suspense and this can also be heard in Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique 1st movement towards the end of the introduction to generate tension. She also uses a Neapolitan 6th chords, a flattened supertonic chord and it was interesting to see this used in Baroque music by Vivaldi in Concerto in D minor, 3rd movement at a tense moment of chromaticism. [11](#)

To conclude, Clara Schumann combines a traditional approach to structure and tonality, as dictated by sonata form, hinting only occasionally at more daring remote keys. However, her range of chromatic chords is more Romantically adventurous, supported by a strong basis of functional harmony. Her Piano Trio exemplifies the transition from the conservative Classical style to the exuberant passionate outbursts found in works of later Romantic composers. [12](#)

Examiner commentary

This is a very clearly structured and fluently written essay, presenting an evaluative argument of the three musical elements in question. Use of musical vocabulary is excellent, being used with accuracy, and significantly the most salient features of each element are identified. Relevant examples of other music are used throughout the essay to justify the musical features. Connections are made with specific reference to the piece, movement and composer and show knowledge of that piece. Essays of full marks are possible to achieve but are rare and the very best work allows for full differentiation. All work in Level 5 will be excellent and of A* quality.

Examiner Analysis

1 This whole paragraph successfully and accurately places the music in its context, historically, culturally and socially. It contains more detail than is required for even full marks. For example, the second sentence could be omitted, as could the discussion here of the 'Gypsy' trio, and the relevant contextual points relevant to this piece would still have been made effectively. ([return to candidate response](#))

2 This point is very well made. The most salient point about the structure of this piece is recognised and introduced first (sonata form). This feature is placed in a context (higher level pieces of work will integrate context throughout rather than solely in an introductory paragraph). This context is illustrated by reference to Beethoven's Symphony No.5, whilst the standard treatment of sonata form here is then contrasted with the treatment of sonata form in another set work (Berlioz Symphonie fantastique). Had the candidate just written their first phrase this point would have been made at level one. Just the first sentence would have moved the point to level two. Illustrating the point with the **other music** of Beethoven brings this point to level three. Introducing a contrasting treatment of sonata form from a composer of a similar era (Berlioz) broadens the discussion and provides a clear justification for the word 'standard' to describe the form initially, by pointing out that such standard treatment is by no means inevitable in 1846. This effective use of **other music** for justification moves this point to level five. ([return to candidate response](#))

3 Words like 'lyrical' and 'dramatic' in this sentence are not wasted adjectives but are precise explanations of the effect of the music on the listener. They make the sentence mean more than if they were omitted, showing a clear understanding of the way the music is working. This

explanation of the effect of an element, the response it provokes in the listener, is important.

[\(return to candidate response\)](#)

4 The use of the Mozart **other music** here is good. Introducing this work as **other music** is relevant, so simply mentioning its first movement would make the reference a level three illustration. Going into detail about Mozart's similar but different treatment of the elements of sonata form is what lifts the standard of this work, enhanced once again by clear and relevant explanations of the effect of the music: 'dramatic', 'insistent', 'calmer'. This **other music** comes from the previous Edexcel GCSE specification set works. Candidates should be encouraged to recall pieces that they have studied at GCSE or have encountered outside the A level course. Centres can use old set works from GCSE and A Level as resources for **other music**.

[\(return to candidate response\)](#)

5. The musical detail in the first sentence of this paragraph, relating to the set work and its effect, is a level two observation. Had the explanation "creating additional interest and uncertainty" not been present this would have been level one. The following use of **other music** in a negative way attempts to place the set work in its musical, social and historical context by showing differing approaches to tonality. This point is not ideally made, in that it overstates both the distance of D major from G minor and goes on to make a broad general statement about Classical composers' approach to tonality that is not entirely accurate. This is the weakest passage in this essay, where the attempt to explain and justify the point being made has not been entirely successful. [\(return to candidate response\)](#)

6. Again, a very relevant, salient point is made about the set work, the effect of the music is explained, and this is justified by precise reference to a work of other music. ([return to candidate response](#))

7. Using a single piece of other music to justify more than one point, as with Beethoven's Symphony No.5 in this essay, is perfectly acceptable. Examiners expect the best work to use a range of other music pieces ('relevant works' in the mark scheme) but a new piece is not needed for every point. This candidate always specifies the movement rather than just the name of a large work, which is good. ([return to candidate response](#))

8. The candidate here is able to name several keys because the other music referenced is another set work that they have studied. This level of detail, naming three keys, would not be required to get the highest mark, although further justifying the point by naming at least one is good. The comparison of the approach to tonality in these two set works is very relevant. ([return to candidate response](#))

9. The first other music piece here is another set work and it effectively places the functional harmony used by Schumann in the Western Classical Tradition. The second other music piece could just have effectively been drawn from another set work (Mozart "The Magic Flute") and the point would have been equally well made. ([return to candidate response](#))

10. Other music here is used more illustratively. Whilst access to the highest marks would expect points about the set works to be justified by other music this is not always possible or expected with every point made and sufficient justification has been shown throughout this essay. ([return to candidate response](#))

11. Set works are successfully used as other music here to support the points made about chromatic harmony. The points are justified because the effect of the chord is explained: “drama”, “suspense”, “tension”. The explanations take the use of other music beyond the illustrative with the candidate showing their knowledge of how the composer used harmony in the linked piece. ([return to candidate response](#))

12 An effective summary of the points raised in each paragraph neatly and succinctly concludes the essay.

Mark Scheme

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows limited awareness of contextual factors (AO3) Makes little reference to texts with limited organisation of ideas. Some basic musical vocabulary used with errors/inconsistency (AO4) Little attempt to link to other relevant works (AO4)
Level 2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general links between the music and the historical, social and cultural context in which it was created and developed (AO3) Makes general points, identifying some musical elements with general explanation of effects. Musical vocabulary is used but with some errors/inconsistency (AO4) Attempts are made to refer to other works, with some errors/inconsistency (AO4)
Level 3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops relevant links between the music and the historical, social and cultural context in which it was created and developed (AO3) Offers a clear response using relevant musical examples. Satisfactory use of musical vocabulary (AO4) Relevant works are used to illustrate basic points (AO4)
Level 4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes detailed links between the music and the historical, social and cultural context in which it was created and developed (AO3) Constructs a controlled argument with fluently embedded musical examples. Competent use of musical vocabulary (AO4) Relevant works are used to justify points (AO4)
Level 5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophisticated links between the music and the historical, social and cultural context in which it was created and developed (AO3) Presents a critical evaluative argument with sustained musical examples. Excellent use of musical vocabulary (AO4) Relevant works are used to justify salient points (AO4)

Indicative Content List

Question Number	Indicative content	Mark
6(a)	<p>AO3 (10 marks) / AO4 (20 marks)</p> <p>Candidates must demonstrate a greater emphasis on analysis/evaluation/making judgements (AO4).</p> <p>(AO3) Musical elements such as:</p> <p>Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonata form • Exposition section with repeat • 1st subject (group), Transition section/Bridge passage, 2nd subject (group) • Codetta • Development section • Recapitulation • Coda <p>AO4: Explanation of the effect of the element. Discussion of approaches to structure by Clara Schumann and other composers.</p> <p>Tonality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonality is generally dictated by sonata form and modulates to related keys • 2nd subject in in Bb major / relative major • Development section modulates through C minor, Eb major, F minor and G minor • Dominant preparation for recapitulation • Recapitulation 1st subject in G minor / tonic. 2nd subject in G major / tonic major • Brief passing modulations to D major in the exposition and B major in the recapitulation • Coda returns to G minor • Pedal notes • Modulations are prepared by perfect cadences <p>AO4: Explanation of the effect of the element. Discussion of approaches to tonality by Clara Schumann and other composers.</p> <p>Harmony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional harmony with use of chords I and V and regular cadences • Chords mainly in root and 1st inversion • Cadences include Perfect, Imperfect, Plagal, Ic-V-I, cadential 6/4 • Chromatic harmony • Neapolitan 6th • Diminished 7th • (French) Augmented 6th • Secondary dominants • Dissonance, suspensions, appoggiaturas, dissonant extensions e.g. dominant minor 9th • Circle of 5^{ths} • Tonic pedal • Dominant pedal <p>AO4: Explanation of the effect of the element. Discussion of approaches to harmony by Clara Schumann and other composers.</p>	(30)

Marking guidance for levels-based mark schemes

The following marking instructions are produced for examiners to follow, and outline what rules they apply to award marks in a levels based mark scheme.

How to award marks

The indicative content provides examples of how students will meet each skill assessed in the question. The levels descriptors and indicative content reflect the relative weighting of each skill within each mark band.

Finding the right level

The first stage is to decide which level the answer should be placed in. To do this, use a 'best-fit' approach, deciding which level most closely describes the quality of the answer. Answers can display characteristics from more than one level, and where this happens markers must use the guidance below and their professional judgement to decide which level is most appropriate.

Placing a mark within a level

After a level has been decided on, the next stage is to decide on the mark within the level. The instructions below tell you how to reward responses within a level. However, where a level has specific guidance about how to place an answer within a level, always follow that guidance. Statements relating to the treatment of students who do not fully meet the requirements of the question are also shown in the indicative content section of each levels-based mark scheme. These statements should be considered alongside the levels descriptors.

Markers should be prepared to use the full range of marks available in a level and not restrict marks to the middle. Markers should start at the middle of the level (or the upper-middle mark if there is an even number of marks) and then move the mark up or down to find the best mark. To do this, they should take into account how far the answer meets the requirements of the level:

- If it meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for answers that are as good as can realistically be expected within that level
- If it only barely meets the requirements of the level, markers should consider awarding marks at the bottom of the level. The bottom mark in the level is used for answers that are the weakest that can be expected within that level
- The middle marks of the level are used for answers that have a reasonable match to the descriptor. This might represent a balance between some characteristics of the level that are fully met and others that are only barely met.