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| <p>Paper 9483/11 Listening</p> |
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Key messages

In preparing for this Listening paper candidates should develop their skills in aural perception, and learn how to apply these skills when answering questions on both prepared and unprepared musical extracts.

Listening skills alone are not sufficient. Important too are the knowledge of the Set Works and the understanding of the compositional techniques which they employ. In **Section A**, knowledge of performance practices in historically informed performances should also be acquired.

When writing essays on Set Works in **Section B**, candidates should prepare a clear method of identifying to where in the scores they are referring, when illustrating an observation. Track timings should be avoided, as these vary between recorded performances. Rehearsal marks in scores also differ between printed editions. Bar numbers though are unambiguous, as are references such as ‘the start of the allegro section’ or ‘at the change of key’. Even better are more detailed references such as ‘when the theme returns in the minor key over a dominant pedal in the basses and timpani’, which not only give the exact location but also show an understanding of what is happening there. Essays which are structured chronologically through the work(s) can help to present a more coherent view or argument.

General comments

In **Section A** there was clear evidence from many candidates of the benefits of a familiarity with the Set Works, and a knowledge of compositional techniques and performance practices in the Baroque. Candidates lacking this familiarity often missed out on marks in **Question 1**, which is on a prepared work. Similarly in **Questions 2** and **3** there was evidence that knowledge and understanding gained from studying the Set Works resulted in credit gained when answering questions on an unfamiliar piece.

In **Section B** it was clear that those candidates who were able to give successful and more convincing answers were those who had acquired a knowledge and understanding of a number of extended passages from a set work, together with a real familiarity with these passages, from which they were able to give detailed illustrations. Weaker responses were too often content to spend time explaining details of the narrative of the *1812 Overture* or *The Third Sonata for Strings*, or on the text of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, rather than explaining how the music responded to, and helped to describe, these scenes and events.

Many candidates demonstrated a good range of knowledge and experience in their answers in **Section C**. In general, candidates seemed well prepared for this part of the examination. Many candidates tackled the questions with obvious enthusiasm, often writing at considerable length.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The *Allegro* tempo marking was correctly identified by most candidates.
- (b) Despite the clear aural evidence in almost every bar of this passage, very few candidates identified the suspensions between the concertino violins.

- (c) Only a small number of responses received credit here. The Teachers' Guide gives a detailed description of these bars.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates gave 'E flat' as their answer. A few, hearing the minor mode, gave C minor. These responses were no doubt prompted by the key signature of three flats. Only a few answers correctly named the scale as F minor. The Teachers' Guide describes the Baroque convention regarding minor key signatures. The question was worded so as to direct candidates to focus on the scale whose notes were contained in bars 1 – 2.
- (b) A good number of candidates were able to hear the diminished 7th here for two marks, with many more receiving 1 mark for answers containing either 'diminished' or 7th.
- (c) The clear dominant-tonic in the basso continuo and the B naturals in the violins led many to correctly identify C minor.
- (d) This was well done by most candidates. Popular answers for three marks were 'suspensions' and – descending sequence'. More than a few also gave 'circle of fifths'.
- (e) This was well done by a large number of candidates. A small number of responses revealed a misunderstanding of the musical term 'texture', otherwise nearly all gained some credit here, with many receiving full marks.

There were many ways to achieve full marks. A correct description of the order of entries, with bar numbers, was sufficient. Many however were able to go on to describe the entries as subject or answer or fugal, or could describe the intervallic displacement of the subject.

Question 2

- (a) Most answers concentrated on articulation, giving little attention to ornamentation. The generally more legato playing in Performance A was observed by very many. A few answers were able to give more detailed descriptions of the different bowing techniques in the performances. Some answers observed that Performance A was generally more ornamented, as well as identifying Performance B's decoration in the closing bars.
- (b) Popular answers here included Performance B's faster tempo, and the more frequent dynamic interest in Performance A, supported by bar number references. Few answers commented on how appropriately or otherwise the two performances interpreted *andante*. Many though correctly described the two interpretations of the final bars, with Performance B slowing more significantly, having a hiatus before the final note and sustaining the final chord. Opinion was divided on pitch: some correctly observed that both performances were at the same pitch, but others thought one was at a lower pitch, leading to a conclusion that it was more historically informed. The use of continuo organ in both performances was spotted by very few, but a good number did correctly observe the greater resonance in Performance A's overall sound.

Section B

Question 4

This was the more popular choice in this Section.

Candidates were of course free to take either view, and opinion was more or less equally divided on whether or not Barber's use of text led to a more effective communication of time and place.

Overall, the Tchaikovsky was better known, with candidates being able to give at least some supported explanations of the compositional techniques employed in the *Overture*. The use of borrowed themes to establish the two opposing sides in the war was explained by many, with better answers being able to give more insightful explanations of the mood and plight of the Russian people, as conveyed by Tchaikovsky's treatment of the themes. Details of the use of orchestration and dynamics contributed to the better explanations of the eventual defeat of the French, and the Russian victory celebrations.

The descriptions and observations on the Barber were often less successful. Too many answers focused on the text alone, its meaning and the scenes and events it describes. Relatively few went on to explain how the music responded to the text. Better answers were though able to give details of how the music enhanced the meaning and mood of the text, through word painting, instrumentation, melody, harmony and vocal setting. They were also able to describe the quite lengthy introduction to the urban life section, where instrumental writing alone, with melodic and harmonic imagery, sets the change of mood and pace before the entry of the voice.

Question 5

Answers here sometimes tended towards generalisations, citing the use of indigenous sources, with few detailed references to support the points being made. Many did not attempt to explain the overall structure of the piece beyond its two movements, though they were more confident in detailing aspects of the instrumental writing. Some specific details of structure were included in better responses, with the reappearance of playing techniques such as *col legno* and the aleatoric passages describing wildlife. These better answers were also able to explain the bigger picture of the structure with references to passages with different tempi, time signatures and thematic material, as well as the two-bar link passages.

Many answers made reference to the viola and cello melodies which introduce the first and second movements respectively, and were able to comment on the use of rhythmic patterns from didgeridu music, as well as the Kepler motif and the Baudin theme.

Section C

Question 6

There were relatively few responses to this question, and of these some unfortunately showed a misunderstanding of 'traditions' in this context. Rather than addressing musical 'styles and traditions' as indicated in the rubric, some answers discussed the role of music within a nation's or community's traditions and customs. Better responses covered a range of musical traditions, with conventional structures within jazz and pop being explained in some detail. Mostly, these essays included references to specific pieces and artists.

Question 7

Good answers here were able to refer to a range of styles and traditions where music conveys a story or narrative. These included opera, ballet and song, as well as scores for both the large and small screen. From world music, the story-telling element and pictorial suggestion in Gamelan and Chinese instrumental music were explained. Surprisingly, perhaps, there were few references to Western programmatic music. Weaker answers addressed only the story-telling conveyed in song lyrics, with little reference to how musical techniques and features reflected or enhanced these words.

Question 8

Candidates were able to give well-informed answers detailing how musicians have used technology to create and share music during the pandemic. From virtual concerts to file-sharing by collaborating composers, from the online availability of sound samples and examples of world music to sing-along activity on social media platforms, there were many very successful responses to this question, usually very well referenced with illustrations of music and artists.

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

In preparing for this Listening paper candidates should develop their skills in aural perception, and learn how to apply these skills when answering questions on both prepared and unprepared musical extracts.

Listening skills alone are not sufficient. Important too are the knowledge of the Set Works and the understanding of the compositional techniques which they employ. In **Section A**, knowledge of performance practices in historically informed performances should also be acquired.

When writing essays on Set Works in **Section B**, candidates should prepare a clear method of identifying to where in the scores they are referring, when illustrating an observation. Track timings should be avoided, as these vary between recorded performances. Rehearsal marks in scores also differ between printed editions. Bar numbers though are unambiguous, as are references such as ‘the start of the allegro section’ or ‘at the change of key’. Even better are more detailed references such as ‘when the theme returns in the minor key over a dominant pedal in the basses and timpani’, which not only give the exact location but also show an understanding of what is happening there. Essays which are structured chronologically through the work(s) can help to present a more coherent view or argument.

General comments

In **Section A** there was clear evidence from many candidates of the benefits of a familiarity with the Set Works, and a knowledge of compositional techniques and performance practices in the Baroque. Candidates lacking this familiarity often missed out on marks in **Question 1**, which is on a prepared work. Similarly in **Questions 2** and **3** there was evidence that knowledge and understanding gained from studying the Set Works resulted in credit gained when answering questions on an unfamiliar piece.

In **Section B** it was clear that those candidates who were able to give successful and more convincing answers were those who had acquired a knowledge and understanding of a number of extended passages from a set work, together with a real familiarity with these passages, from which they were able to give detailed illustrations. Weaker responses were too often content to spend time explaining details of the narrative of the *1812 Overture* or *The Third Sonata for Strings*, or on the text of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, rather than explaining how the music responded to, and helped to describe, these scenes and events.

Many candidates demonstrated a good range of knowledge and experience in their answers in **Section C**. In general, candidates seemed well prepared for this section. Many candidates tackled the questions with obvious enthusiasm, often writing at considerable length.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates correctly identified the time signature of this passage as either 4/2 or (more commonly) 4/4.
- (b) A large number of candidates were clearly very familiar with this set work, and were able to give more than the required two features of the preceding passage. These included homophony, chords

separated by rests, 3/4 time, key of G minor, imperfect ending, fast tempo and the fact that it is a short six-bar introduction.

- (c) Again, this was well done, with most candidates receiving both marks for answers including suspensions, chromaticism, dissonances, minor key and the closing *tierce de Picardie*.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates gained one mark at least here for 'g minor' with a good number also gaining the second mark for the qualification 'harmonic'. Some incorrect responses seem to have been confused by the key signature. The Teachers' Guide gives an explanation of the Baroque convention regarding minor key signatures.
- (b) This was not so well answered. About half of the candidates correctly identified B flat major, but of these many went on to identify the relationship with the tonic as 'subdominant'. Again, the single flat key signature seems to have led to some confusion over the tonic of this music.
- (c) Nearly all candidates received both marks here.
- (d) Many candidates gave 'pedal' for one mark, with most of these gaining the second mark for 'dominant' or 'on D'. 'Drone' was not an acceptable response.
- (e) Nearly all candidates received some credit here, with very many achieving full marks. Just three correctly identified appearances of the cello theme, supported by bar references, were all that was necessary for six marks. Many answers however gave much more detail than this, beginning by explaining that the theme was used as a countersubject, and explaining the intervallic displacement of the tonic and dominant entries. Some candidates also identified the use of motifs derived from the theme.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates explained the overall distinction between the two performances, with Performance A having more varied articulation and being generally more legato than Performance B. However, the details of the distinction were more nuanced, with both performances showing both detached and more smooth playing. Better answers were able to identify examples of these finer details of comparison, with some giving very detailed accounts of the bowing techniques used.
- (b) Nearly all candidates observed that Performance B was the faster, and that Performance A was performed at a higher pitch. The use of continuo organ in Performance A was noted by many. Although the use of theorbo in Performance A was heard by only a few, many more correctly observed the generally heavier sound of this continuo. A pleasing number were able to draw from these observations the conclusion that Performance B is closer to expectations of an historically informed interpretation. A good number of answers noted that neither performance included any obvious ornamentation, as well as commenting on the generally more resonant sound of Performance B.

Section B

Question 4

Although the less popular of the questions in this Section, this was generally quite well answered by many.

In the Barber, the return of the opening section material was mentioned by everyone, though the structure was often simplified to ternary rather than rondo in these explanations. The link of this repeated musical material to the return in the text of reminiscence and nostalgia was well understood. On a smaller scale, examples of the use of repetition were illustrated by references to the three-note cell, the repeated rocking motif in the opening section and examples of instrumental melodies imitating the singer.

The question also asked for a brief description of the use of repetition in the Sculthorpe. Here better answers were able to show a knowledge of the Kepler motif, the aleatoric passages and the Baudin theme. Repeated use of performance techniques such as *pizzicato*, *col legno* and *glissandi* were also explained.

Question 5

Answers here showed a much less consistent ability to link the knowledge of the two works to the specific aspect of the question.

There were many candidates who were able to show in some detail how both Tchaikovsky and Barber were able to convey both time and place in their works, but who were not able to show an understanding of how this was achieved through the use of harmony.

Better answers were able to discuss the use of both major and minor tonality for the appearances of the borrowed themes in the *1812 Overture*. More specific details such as the dominant pedal which underpins the Russian military theme, and the tonic pedal used with 'By the gates' were given. The best answers were able to observe the late-nineteenth-century harmonic vocabulary in the Tchaikovsky, with examples including the functional chorale-like harmony of the opening 'Lord preserve thy people', and the use of dominant and diminished sevenths at dramatic moments in the narrative.

More confident descriptions of the use of harmony in the Barber were able to describe the opening ambiguity with the open F sharp fifths, the use of modal writing and the pentatonic scale with their consequent harmonic language, and the generally more chromatic and dissonant writing in the chaotic urban life section.

Section C

Question 6

A number of answers referred to the origins of pop as beginning in the era of Rock and Roll in the 1950s, ignoring its earlier roots in jazz, Blues and to some extent Music Theatre. But apart from this, the question was generally well answered, mostly with a plentiful supply of references to numbers and artists.

The evolution of jazz was well covered from its roots in African-American music, through New Orleans, Dixieland, Bebop, Cool Jazz and through to modern jazz.

Some of the areas covered in answers included: the journey of pop from Elvis Presley and Little Richard, the rise of the singer/songwriter, super groups and heavy metal, punk, boy bands, girl bands, EDM and rap, and up to the present with K-Pop.

Question 7

Answers here took one of two different interpretations of the question.

Some explained, with varying degrees of detail and supporting references, how music leads performers to interact. Call and response, contrapuntal writing, genres which feature improvisation, repetition and imitation, as well as other features of texture in ensemble performance were all covered. Illustrations were taken from tribal music, gamelan, jazz and Indian music. Vocal harmonising in many genres was explained.

Other responses however chose to explain how performers interact, rather than how musical features can create interaction. Eye contact, bodily movement, improvised cues and reliance on a leader or conductor were all discussed. These visual and aural cues are evident in all styles and traditions, and better answers were able to give a range of detailed examples. These included such cueing as a movement of the head or the instrument, or the taking of a breath to indicate the start of a piece or an entry. Some explained how, in jazz and pop, cues from the drummer can indicate when an improvised solo should end and the head should return. Trilling at the end of a cadenza combined with eye contact between soloist and conductor was mentioned.

Overall, this question prompted many good answers, including some that were very wide-ranging and clearly articulated.

Question 8

This question too prompted some detailed and knowledgeable answers. However, the requirement for the discussion of 'a range of scales' was not always met.

The Western tonal system of major and minor scales, the Blues and pentatonic scales were all mentioned by many candidates.

There were also some very detailed accounts of scales from the Far East as well as Indian raags.

Modes were mentioned, and in some cases explained in some detail, with examples cited not only from the age of plainsong, but also from more recent music, both pop and classical.

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| <p>Paper 9483/13 Listening</p> |
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Key messages

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General comments

In **Section A** there was clear evidence from many candidates of the benefits of a familiarity with the Set Works, and a knowledge of compositional techniques and performance practices in the Baroque. Candidates who were less familiar, often missed out on marks in **Question 1**, which is on a prepared work. Similarly, in **Questions 2** and **3** there was evidence that knowledge and understanding gained from studying the Set Works resulted in credit gained when answering questions on an unfamiliar piece.

In **Section B** it was clear that those candidates who were able to give successful and more convincing answers were those who had acquired a knowledge and understanding of a number of extended passages from a Set Work, together with a real familiarity with these passages, from which they were able to give detailed illustrations. Weaker responses were too often content to spend time explaining details of the narrative of the *1812 Overture* or *The Third Sonata for Strings*, or on the text of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, rather than explaining how the music responded to, and helped to describe these scenes and events.

Candidates demonstrated an appropriate range of knowledge and experience in their answers for **Section C**. Successful candidates had prepared well for these matters on Connecting Music, and tackled the questions with obvious enthusiasm and often at considerable and informed length.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates knew that the extract was from the gigue, though other answers such as bourrée and gavotte were seen, a few candidates omitted this question.
- (b) A mark was often awarded for the (moderately) fast tempo, less often a second mark for reference to the compound time. Credit was also awarded for starting with an anacrusis/on the last beat of the bar.

- (c) This question was not well answered. A few candidates noted that the trumpets play at the start and/or double the rest of the ensemble, but very few candidates gained both marks available. Many answers were too vague to be awarded credit.

Question 2

- (a) One mark was most frequently awarded for mention of the fact that the cellos (mostly) play in thirds. Some candidates gained both marks, for also mentioning that cello I plays first, cello II joins in imitation or that this is after one bar.
- (b) This was not well answered, with very few candidates gaining both marks available for tonic pedal. A few candidates gained one mark for pedal, but many candidates suggested other devices, some which were not harmonic. No credit was awarded for 'drone'.
- (c) This question was really looking for a description demonstrating knowledge of typical Baroque devices (descending sequence over a circle of fifths, alternating between the solo cellos and tutti). However, credit was awarded for more general answers, such as the use of imitation and the many repeated notes.
- (d) Though the candidates both hear and see the music for this question, slightly fewer than half correctly identified the cadence as perfect.
- (e) A significant number of candidates did achieve all six marks available for this question, by clearly describing the relationship between the cellos and the orchestra and giving clear bar number references. Some answers did attempt to describe the music but did not refer to the relationship between the solo cellos and orchestra, so could not be awarded credit.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to note that Performance B is (much) faster than Performance A and some went on to evaluate the two different interpretations of Allegro for a second mark. As in **Question 2(e)**, candidates who were most successful in this question described a change in tempo (e.g. a *ritenuto*) and gave a specific bar reference. No credit was awarded for mention of features other than tempo.
- (b) Again, the highest-achieving answers referred to a particular feature (such as ornamentation) and gave a bar number reference. As is clear from the mark scheme, in order to achieve the higher mark band, candidates need to use the evidence they have presented (they may wish to refer to instrumentation, ornamentation, pitch, articulation, dynamics or the overall sound) to evaluate the authenticity of each performance.

Section B

Question 4

The vast majority of candidates chose to answer this question in **section B**, comparing how Barber and Tchaikovsky use music to describe scenes and events in the two works. The examples from the Barber were scene and word painting, with the best answers giving a clear reference and then describing the music at that point. A chronological walk through the Tchaikovsky worked for this question, drawing mostly on the presentation of the different themes, including reference to instrumentation, dynamics, melody, harmony, tempo, texture and tonality. As is clear from the mark scheme, the responses achieving the highest mark band suggested that candidates had a detailed knowledge of both works, were able to select, describe and analyse pertinent examples and make a comparison between how the two composers describe scenes and events.

Question 5

Very few candidates chose to answer this question and answers were slightly weaker than those for question 4. All the candidates chose the Tchaikovsky as one of their two works, with the extreme contrasts in dynamics suggesting time and place. Answers on the Barber obviously made reference to the lyrics, helping candidates to clearly indicate which part of the work they were describing. Responses which described the Sculthorpe were usually less successful, as there was sometimes a lack of clarity as to which part of the work was being discussed.

Section C

Question 6

This question was a popular choice with a wide range of styles and traditions selected as evidence. However, answers which referred to solo repertoire (such as a Beethoven piano sonata) could not receive credit. The most successful answers chose a musical element (such as tempo) and gave examples of ensemble music where this was used to create contrast (e.g. Indian and Japanese Gagaku music), before going on to discuss another element in different styles and traditions.

Question 7

This was the least popular essay. Pop songs were an obvious choice, though a frequent issue was that although the lyrics were discussed in detail there was little mention of music. Some answers interpreted the question in a rather different way and looked at how text such as a title, programmatic poem or paragraph or even dynamic and tempo markings were used effectively. These were often reasonably successful, drawing on a wide range of repertoire.

Question 8

This was the most frequently answered essay. Answers in the higher mark bands suggested several ways in which music has been used differently from intended and gave specific examples. Answers included reference to samples used in other songs, cover versions, previously composed music used in films and the use of music in therapy, at weddings etc. Answers which took a more philosophical approach and tried to look at the earliest origins of music and how it was intended either to praise God or for socialising and dancing and how this has changed were less successful.

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

- In Element 1, candidates should play or sing music that is well within their technical capabilities. Musicality is more important than difficulty.
- In Element 2, candidates should take time to mix their recordings, with due consideration to the status of their chosen instruments at significant points in the piece.
- Teachers should make candidates aware of the assessment criteria from an early stage in the course and discuss with them how these can be best addressed in both Elements.
- Do a sound check before recording Element 1. Some backing tracks and accompaniments were rather loud, making subtleties in candidate performances hard to hear.

General comments

Moderators saw some truly outstanding work in both Elements and there was evidence that most candidates had produced submissions which were a true reflection of their ability, aided by a supportive and skilled team of teachers, accompanists and technicians. The number of assessors now making informed comments in the boxes on the Working Mark Sheets has increased, and these justifications for the marks awarded are read very carefully.

In Element 1, most performances were recorded on one occasion, although it is fine to tackle this piece by piece when the candidate is ready, if appropriate. A very wide range of genres was presented. The candidature this series included a high proportion of pianists and vocalists, but all families of instruments were represented, with an increased number of submissions in World Music traditions. Candidates were mostly relaxed in front of the camera: it is up to the centre and the candidate whether an audience is present. Moderators are looking for confidence and a sense of engagement with the music, and schools are free to address this in any way which helps the candidates.

Marking in Element 1 was mostly fairly accurate on the part of teachers. Teachers should however bear the following points in mind:

- Repertoire presented should demonstrate awareness of contrast, with a range of technical and expressive demands. It is not appropriate to only play one piece.
- Ensemble performances are encouraged, but the individual contribution of the candidate must be aurally and visually identifiable. For this reason, Choral or band or other performances where there are several performers to a part are **not** accepted for this Component.
- The candidate's face, instrument, hands and feet (if appropriate) should be in shot at all times. This means that performances filmed from a distance – e.g. from the very back of a hall – may not be suitable for submission.
- The programme should be 6–10 minutes in length: any shorter and it is unlikely that a wide enough range of skills will be demonstrated. If it looks like the performance will exceed 10 minutes, then do omit repeats or edit long passages of (for example) orchestral exposition in the accompaniment.
- Singers performing in very small rooms do not generally need amplification or excessive application of reverb; indeed the latter may hide some subtleties of expression and dynamics.
- Candidates do not have to perform from memory. However, singers are advised not to be too rooted to the stand – one or two candidates did not look up from their music for the entire performance, which impeded interpretation and aural awareness.
- Some candidates played music that was so technically challenging for them that some aspects of the music – dynamics, expression, tempo etc. – were compromised. It is **always** better to choose a programme where the full range of the candidate's musicianship can be demonstrated, not just their ability to play lots of notes.

- If a candidate does not perform to the best of their ability for any reason, it is fine to record another performance – this is a moderated Component, not an examined one.

The standard of work produced in Element 2 was mostly of a good standard, with some very creative submissions. It is good to see that many candidates are approaching composition with enthusiasm and creativity and can work in a wide range of styles. However, for a variety of reasons, there were many more instances of marks needing adjustment in Element 2 than in Element 1.

Some candidates produced compositions that had little evidence of a convincing structure, with ideas that were neither distinctive nor well-developed. To help to address such issues, it is recommended that teachers intervene and advise alternative approaches if the work is heading in an unhelpful direction. Making candidates aware of the assessment criteria for Composing can be beneficial and will enable fruitful discussions on such matters as melody, harmony, structure and texture in a supportive and productive environment. Sometimes assessors awarded high marks in Assessment Criterion D (Communication) simply because the piece had been produced and recorded using music technology. It is important to consider the successful use of expression and dynamics and whether the recording consistently reflects the status and idiom of the chosen instruments before awarding marks in the top band of D.

Other points which may assist candidates and assessors are listed below.

- Listening to – and evaluating the music of – established composers is a very effective starting point in Composing.
- The compulsory Written Statement (which informs Assessment Criterion A) should be viewed as an ongoing, rather than summative, document. The best examples explained the context and purpose of the piece and went on to explain any relevant listening influences. It is not necessary for candidates to provide a theoretical analysis of the piece.
- Compositions should be written for at least two instruments.
- If the candidate provides a detailed account of the process of composition instead of a score, and then submits a live performance, the written work must include detailed information about how the performers were briefed.
- If candidates write music that is unidiomatic for the chosen instruments – for example, flute parts out of range; piano parts with lots of dense-textured, close position triads at the bottom of the register, or songs which have an inappropriate alignment between lyrics and melody, teachers should suggest alternative approaches as part of the normal teaching process.
- Some candidates indicated in the written statement that the compositions they submitted were the only two they had ever written. It may be helpful to initially set some small composing tasks – perhaps focusing on the various elements of music – before moving on to the assessed work. It may even be helpful to try some group compositions at this stage, although these are not appropriate for submission at the end of the course.
- If candidates write a piece of music for piano and another instrument, they should be encouraged to think of the keyboard as more than just an accompanimental tool. It may be appropriate to suggest that they first listen to some pieces where the piano has a more creative role.

Finally, a few administrative points are listed below in case they are helpful to centres who are relatively new to the syllabus.

- When assessing work, use the descriptors to find the right band of marks first, then move up or down within the band as appropriate. There is more information about this on Page 26 of the syllabus.
- Please ensure that copies of the music the candidate is performing are included for Element 1. These will usually be requested if they are missing from the submission.
- The Element 2 Written Statement is compulsory and will be requested if not included in the submission.
- If you have 6 candidates or fewer, send all work. If the cohort is larger, choose 6 candidates across the range, including the highest and lowest-marked candidates. If the lowest-marked candidate is anomalous in some way (for example, they have only submitted one Element) then send the candidate above in the ranking too. Large centres do not have to send all their work.
- USBs will usually store the work of several candidates. It is fine to submit the work of all candidates on one or two USBs.
- Please name all files carefully, whether on USB or DVD.
- Check that all files have uploaded correctly before sending work, and retain copies just in case.

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| <p>Paper 9483/03 Extended Performance</p> |
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Key messages

- The material chosen for performance should reflect a single, well-defined musical focus.
- The Research Report must include a comparison of performances of one item from the programme.
- The Research Report should be informed by relevant audio extracts, not tracks of complete performances.

General comments

The overall standard of work was good, with almost all candidates achieving at least a satisfactory level in both performing and written work. The most popular instruments presented for assessment were Voice and Piano, but performances were heard from all the orchestral families, rock, pop and jazz instruments were very well represented, and there were several outstanding examples of World Music. In general, where appropriate, submissions featured expert accompanying and/or supportive backing tracks. In most cases, it was clear that great care had been taken with the organisation of recordings, and the effort on the part of centres is recognised and appreciated.

The theme of the performance should always be a musical one that connects the repertoire in a defined style or genre. For some candidates, this was a complete work such as a sonata or a concerto. Others focused on a particular genre of rock music, an aspect of Music Theatre or a more generic theme such as 'Dance'. Some amorphous or non-musical themes can be problematic. 'Love' was a popular choice but sometimes heralded a diverse collection of songs with no discernible *musical* connection. Where candidates offered, for example, 'Landmarks in Piano Repertoire', this should ideally comprise a performance of ground-breaking pieces in the history of the instrument (with possible explanation in the report), rather than just a collection of pieces that might have been presented for a grade examination. Non-musical themes such as 'Self-healing' or 'Wedding Dinner Programme' should be avoided unless the chosen music has a clear stylistic connection – in which case, a musical theme is usually more appropriate. In Assessment Criterion D (Realisation or performance markings and/or performance conventions) candidates are credited for their understanding of the conventions within the chosen performing focus: it is hard to access the upper mark bands here if the repertoire is not cohesive. Similarly, in Assessment Criterion E, candidates are credited for making interpretative connections between their research and the performing outcome. If the style or genre is too diverse, this may impact on this mark

The Research Report, informed by the preparatory journal, should be a formal, academic document with a bibliography which documents all the research sources. There were many excellent examples of this, but below is a summary of the issues which arose with some less successful submissions.

- The preparatory journal and Research Journal go hand in hand with preparation for the performance. Some reports gave the impression of being very rushed and last-minute, perhaps even written after the performance.
- Online interviews, CD liners and TV programmes can all be useful research tools. Some bibliographies were limited to Wikipedia and YouTube links to the comparison performances. Teachers should encourage their candidates to be imaginative and wide-ranging in their research.
- Candidates **must** compare two performances of **one** piece or movement that they have included in their Extended Performance programme. If this is not done, this limits scope to demonstrate the requirements within Assessment Criterion A and it may affect the marks awarded in D and E too.
- It is not necessary for candidates to compare **all** the pieces or movements performed. In more successful submissions, candidates tended to concentrate on a thorough comparison of **one** chosen piece or movement, rather than making multiple comparisons in a more superficial way.

- Teachers should check that the performances chosen for comparison are appropriate. Professional performances enable a candidate to focus on interpretative detail rather than the accuracy of the account.
- Information about the development of the programme can be helpful but is not as essential as the comparison.
- There is no need to include a lengthy theoretical analysis of the chosen piece. Candidates are advised to concentrate on expressive and interpretative differences between performances.
- Lengthy accounts of the candidate's practice regime are not necessary: it is better to concentrate on how the chosen performances have influenced the candidate's interpretative choices.
- Singers should avoid lengthy analyses of lyrics but focus instead on the expressive qualities of the music.
- It is a syllabus requirement that the Report is informed by brief audio excerpts recorded onto a USB or CD. The complete recording should not be provided – just the relevant excerpts. It is also not sufficient to provide links to YouTube or other equivalent platforms.
- The audio excerpts should be clearly linked to the text of the report. Most good submissions did this with track numbers in brackets, or by use of footnotes. A separate track list as an appendix at the end of the report is not appropriate. Candidates are advised to check that track numbers match the excerpts before submission.
- Some candidates included score extracts to inform the comparison. If appropriate for the musical genre, these can often make a point more efficiently than long pieces of text.
- Candidates should reflect on how the research/comparison process has impacted on their own performance. This can be a separate section in the report, but there were some very effective examples where the reflective comments were woven into the text.
- Candidates should be given regular opportunities to discuss their ongoing research with the teacher.
- It may be helpful to give candidates a checklist of the types of points they should be covering in the comparison. This might include *Tempo, Dynamics, Articulation, Key, Timbre, Expression, Diction* etc. The checklist can be adjusted depending on the chosen instrument or style.

Most candidates coped well with 15+ minutes of performing. Centres are reminded that the performance should be recorded in one continuous take, and that the candidate should be visible and musically identifiable. Ensemble performances are encouraged, but only if the candidate is not doubled by another performer. Choral groups with multiple singers to a part are not appropriate for this component.

Candidates generally do best when they are not performing at the absolute limit of their technical capability. Centres are advised to consult the assessment criteria when helping candidates to choose repertoire. Often, those who are technically over-challenged by the music tend to perform less well under Assessment Criteria D and E as well as C (Technical Control).

Performances were generally recorded in appropriate venues, often with an audience. It is not necessary to perform from memory (although many candidates do), but singers should particularly ensure that they are not absolutely rooted to their copies. Examiners saw several submissions where vocalists did not once look up from the music or project their voices beyond the stand, which nearly always impacted on the mark awarded in Assessment Criterion E.

Finally, a few administrative points:

- Centres should carry out a sound check before the performance is recorded. Some candidates could not be heard clearly due to excessively loud accompanists and backing tracks.
- Centres should ensure that the candidate's instrument, hands, face and feet (if appropriate) are visible on the recording.
- It is important to check that the USB or DVD has captured the whole performance, and that the sound is of good quality.
- If the repertoire demands it, performances should *always* be accompanied by a suitable instrument or backing track – the Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* (for example) is not a monophonic work. Accompaniments must be audible to the examiner – it is not appropriate for the candidate to listen to the accompaniment through headphones. These matters are relevant to Assessment Criteria D and E.
- It is essential to send copies of the music performed. It is not sufficient just to send lyric sheets for singers. Without scores, it is impossible to accurately assess performance within Criterion B (Fluency and Accuracy). Music will be requested if not included in the submission.
- Centres must include a cover sheet for each submission, signed by both teacher and candidate.

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- It is advisable to allow time to check that the Research Report audio excerpts are included in the DVD or USB, in the right order, and are correctly named.
- Work for Components 02, 04 or 05 must not be included in the package for the Component 03 submission. A different package must be sent for each of the different components.
- It is recommended that the recorded materials are packed securely to avoid being damaged in transit. Centres should retain a back-up copy just in case it is needed.

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| <p>Paper 9483/04 Extended Composition</p> |
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Key messages

- Centres should ensure the submission of work includes a fully completed cover sheet (latest version).
- Written material or audio for the Extended Composition should not be combined with any other component.
- Although personal interest can be an important starting point for any of the extended options, candidates should also be encouraged to explore less familiar sound worlds, genres, traditions and ideas to stimulate their musical imagination and creativity.
- Candidates should be reminded of the importance of the ongoing research journal approach, as outlined as a requirement in the syllabus documents.

General comments

Many candidates demonstrated that the quality of the final compositional product relied on the quality of the preparation and research. On-going reflective practice enabled stronger candidates to critically appraise their work and to adapt accordingly throughout the process.

Candidates must print out their research report, score (or score commentary if the music cannot be notated using staff notation), track list and fully completed cover sheet. The research report must be accompanied by relevant recorded extracts. Internet links may reference the source of extracts but will not be considered a valid replacement for actual audio extracts in the assessment process. The inclusion of audio extracts is essential to help the reader gain a full understanding of the research pathway. Some candidates were very confident and skilled in their ability to provide edited audio clips and centres had provided good opportunities for candidates to learn and share these technical skills.

Many candidates included appendix material, for example, on CD or USB storage, in addition to audio tracks. This is optional and not a requirement but can be helpful in avoiding unnecessary printing of reference scores, for example.

There was some lack of clarity in the labelling of work and audio tracks with essential identification detail were often missing.

Comments of specific tasks

A Research report

There were many strong academic accounts of research work, incorporating critical thinking and reflective skills. Many candidates were able to talk about the way their intentions had perhaps changed and importantly, to explain why and how they had been successful in moving in a different direction.

Some candidates were unable to maximise their marks because they did not evidence a wide enough range of music or sources.

Some candidates presented a detailed analysis of their own composition rather than understanding that the purpose of the research report is to explain the outcomes of their analysis of the work of other composers and to evaluate the relevance of their findings to their own composing process.

The strongest reports showed:

- attention to detail in the application of full research protocols when referencing audio and score material, including composer and performer information

- manuscript examples containing clefs, key signatures, etc., thereby providing clarity for the reader
- precise audio clips indicating the points being made
- the value of a mix of general overview and identification of passages where more in-depth analysis was beneficial
- an ability to observe a range of techniques in selected compositions, such as rhythmic invention, the way ideas are developed, learning about final mix-down processes in recording, etc., and to connect these insights with decisions made in the context of their own composing.

Some candidates incorporated a headed section of their report: Reflection. Others incorporated reflective comments throughout the report. This is an important assessment objective not to be overlooked.

B Shaping of ideas; structure

The range of ideas presented was varied, and many candidates were able to shape ideas and confidently reshape and refine the materials as their creative work progressed.

Candidates were frequently inventive in the range of structures they used to present their ideas. Successful candidates variously used both established forms and were also keen to consider more personalised structures, organically derived from materials.

Although improvisation can be a legitimate and very useful means to experiment with ideas in the initial stages of composing, the submission of improvisation as composition cannot demonstrate the range of skills expected in the Extended Composition.

Some candidates were interested in the sounds and possibilities of technology software but produced material which was not sufficiently focused. Stronger responses evidenced further compositional interventions.

Compositions consisting of parts are allowed. This might include movements of a suite or a small group of art/contemporary/traditional songs. However, the parts must show a clear connection and together form a coherent whole piece.

This component evaluates the work of a single candidate. Group compositions are not permitted.

Some candidates successfully incorporated a small amount of borrowed material from the work of another composer and this was usually supported by reference to composers using an approach that they had studied. Candidate intentions must always be fully explained and composers credited for their work in the research report. Candidates should understand they will be credited for the creative way in which such borrowed materials are used in their pieces but cannot receive credit for the borrowed materials themselves.

C Working with ideas; the use of compositional techniques

A composition of 6 – 8 minutes is a substantial piece of work. Some submissions were very short or repetitive without variation or growth. At this level, candidates are expected to be able to provide suitable contrasting materials and to develop and extend their ideas. Study of the Set Works gave many candidates insight into the nature of a longer compositional work, but it is important that candidates extend their listening to new areas to support their understanding of how to develop a longer piece of composition.

Many candidates, perhaps inspired by game music or various genres of electronic music, used minimalist techniques. Not all were successful in developing the ostinato textures and a more detailed study of the works of some well-known composers using these techniques would have been instructive.

D Use of medium and texture

Most candidates chose and handled their resources with confidence and understanding of the idiomatic qualities and practical possibilities. Difficulties arose when candidates were unfamiliar with, for example, writing for guitar or drum kit. Some candidates lacked sufficient understanding of idiomatic textures to write effective accompaniment parts for piano. Candidates who were able to recognise the further learning they needed to support their creative objectives, prepared themselves successfully through their research.

E Communication

Candidates demonstrated skill in music literacy in the provision of a detailed score to accompany the recording. Stronger candidates understood the conventions of score layout with all instruments and voices identified and named on the first page of the score. The hierarchy of layout should be used with groupings and pitch conventions followed.

In cases where the music cannot be notated by conventional means, a commentary independent of the research report must be provided in place of the score. Several candidates were successful in this, explaining, for example, compositions written in an electro-acoustic style. They made selective use of screen shots, gave details of software and sound choices, and discussed, for example, final mixing methods, explaining the techniques used to ensure expressive communication. The use of graphic scores was often useful to aid navigation through a piece.

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

- Candidates must ensure that written and audio materials for separate components are **not** packaged together.
- Submissions should be clearly presented with pages attached and should include a signed cover sheet.
- Care should be taken to avoid overlap with other components.

General comments

Candidates presented a fair range of topics across the submissions from popular genres, to classical instrumental and vocal music, musicals, film scores, and music from computer games. The most successful were investigations where the candidates' enthusiasm for the topic selected was clear in their work.

Analysis of music was often minimised in favour of a generalised overview of a topic using paraphrased secondary sources. Candidates should use their evaluative and analytical skills to explore the topic fully and demonstrate the depth and richness of writing and analysis that is required for this component.

A minority of projects missed opportunities to address a body of music as the focus, but instead gave emphasis to psychology or socio-political factors almost to the exclusion of any mention of music.

Where titles are presented in the shape of a question, care must be taken to ensure this is answered or addressed in an appropriate way in the body of the study. Candidates are advised to re-visit their titles as part of the revision process and amend if needed. It is to be expected that on-going research may legitimately take candidates in a different direction and an adjustment of the title may be needed at the end of the process.

A key concept in the study of the subject of music at this level is to facilitate the broadening of subject knowledge. The cover sheet for this component indicates the importance of avoiding overlap between options of 03, 04 and 05 and it is an administrative requirement that candidates in this option explain the scope of their work in Composing or Performing. Candidates may need support to ensure they avoid a narrow remit for themselves by the approach or topic they pursue. Comparisons of recordings, for example, are closely linked to Performing and should not form the focus of an Investigation.

To encourage curiosity and breadth, a vocalist who performs a repertoire of songs from musicals might be steered away from an Investigation of different songs from musicals of the same composer or period, to avoid a narrow remit.

(a) Reflective statement

The syllabus explains how the reflective statement must be prepared using the candidate's journal. The journal is a documentation of the ongoing reflection and response in the research process.

Candidates included evidence of well-kept logs via the reflective statement as they outlined some of their thoughts and choices along the way. Some valuable reflection was observed, and responses would be improved where the statements contained more detailed evaluative comments.

Candidates often referred to the difficulties of keeping their final report within the recommended word count. Others recognised that the constraint of the word count was indeed beneficial and enabled them to submit a well-organised, concise project.

A small number of submissions did not include a reflective statement at all. Some were very short, 4 or 5 sentences of summary remarks which leaves a missed opportunity for attracting marks for this element.

(b) Listening

Only a few submissions were entirely effective in providing suitable audio clips to illustrate and support their research findings. The requirement to include appropriately edited audio clips is well sign-posted in the assessment criteria. The essay writing was often meandering and ineffective without the relevant audio tracks to clarify the points being made.

Use of manuscript examples sometimes helped to illuminate the reader but these often omitted clefs, instrument details, bar numbers, etc. Annotated sections of scores were helpful but the inclusion of whole unmarked scores is not required or helpful.

(c) Contextual understanding

Most candidates were able to develop their skills in assessing the quality and reliability of their sources. Many used scholarly sources to build a contextual framework for their research. Some seminal texts may stem from earlier times and should not be ignored but candidates can include more contemporary research to support their study.

Candidates should be supported in how to navigate the vast quantities of online material and achieve a balance between quotation of the views of others and expressing independent thinking.

(d) Analytic/investigative techniques and technical vocabulary

Candidates were often over-reliant on niche post-graduate theses found online rather than the work of renowned scholars in their field when it came to analysis of the music. Impressively, some candidates were able to use their understanding of the elements of music gained in the Listening paper to attempt some convincing analysis in conjunction with the work of others and come to some independent conclusions.

(e) Communication and substantiation of judgements

Candidates demonstrated a keen understanding of the need to adopt a suitable reader-friendly referencing system. In many cases references were clear and comprehensive but there remained a tendency for candidates to omit details of performers/composers/conductors, etc. in the discography detail.

Track lists are an essential inclusion to enable the reader to navigate audio clips.

The most successful investigations were well planned in the early stages and organised in a logical and sequential manner. Candidates had been able to edit and refine their work so that arguments were coherently constructed and presented in a logical and defined sequence.

Concluding remarks

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This component is a substantial part of a qualification enabling candidates to develop skills and understanding needed for the study of music in higher education and/or lifelong learning. The most successful work will therefore demonstrate higher skills of critical thinking and reflection. It will present ordered and coherent arguments, demonstrating independence in learning and research together with statements of a candidate's own reflections and conclusions.