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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
Music Technology (8MT0)  
Paper 03: Listening and Analysing

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## General Comments

It is clear that centres and candidates are now 'bedding in' with the new specification. This is especially evident with the level of responses to question 5, which demonstrated much clearer awareness of AO4-related thinking. There are, however, still some instances of candidates' responding in purely musical terms. It should be noted that any musical observations should be related whenever possible to the use of technology.

Candidates are also reminded that clarity of handwriting is paramount; marks cannot be awarded for responses that cannot be read.

## Specific Questions

1b Very few candidates had their headphones on incorrectly.

1c The majority of candidates could hear the technique being used, but not all had the necessary technological vocabulary to identify it.

1d This question required students to apply their knowledge and understanding to a specific situation, namely 'how did these musicians stay in time?' The responses were varied, but nearly all candidates had at least one plausible solution. Click/Guide tracks were the most common answer.

1e This may seem a fairly straightforward question, but a surprising number of candidates' responses referred to 'riding the faders' or simply 'balancing it.' Candidates should use their own hands-on experience as a guide, and they will all have used compression.

1g Some responses were too vague. The response 'distortion' does not in itself satisfy the question, in the same way that 'panning' lacks specificity. 'Different levels of distortion', 'different effects applied', 'panned to different places in the stereo field' would all have made more complete answers.

2b Again, there were some very general answers such as 'it's the same'. Responses that gained marks included less generality. Candidates who identified *what* was the same (velocity, articulation, phrasing etc) fared better.

2c Most candidates correctly referred to the polarised panning of the backing vocals, whilst very few mentioned the strings.

2d A significant number of candidates misunderstood the term 'balance' and referred instead to either panning or use of effects. Some simply responded with what one could argue is the norm; lead vocals louder than backing

vocals. Candidates are reminded that this is primarily a listening assessment, and that sometimes a mix does not ‘conform’.

2e There were some disappointing responses here, because the candidates did not always answer the question. They often identified the nuts and bolts of how the drum sequencing had been put together, but not how the technology had been used *creatively* to give *variation*.

3a Most candidates named an appropriate delay, but many tackled the second part of the question with a standard response for capturing a piano, mostly involving a pair of mics placed toward the top and bottom of the range, rather than applying their knowledge to the kind of piano sound heard in the recording. Some responses clearly referred to ambient miking, and some tried to capture the delay using two mics.

3b For part (i), some candidates referred to what they heard, but not in comparison to modern preferences. Part (ii) was answered considerably better.

3c This received a whole range of answers from ‘squeaky chairs’ to ‘people leaving the studio.’ Candidates who identified the problem were generally able to provide a valid reason. The most popular response was ‘spill’.

3d This caused some confusion, as ‘bounce’ has different meanings depending on the temporal context, and the medium used. This question was about what the term meant in the 1960s using analogue tape. Candidates who understood this would often gain at least two of the three marks available. Even had the date not been provided, it should be clear from listening that this was not a digital recording.

4a Correct terminology was required here, although credit was given if a description of the filtering was sufficiently detailed. Candidates who scored well identified the correct filter, the fact that it was sweeping and, importantly, the direction of travel. Few mentioned resonance or Q.

4b The more versed in technological terminology the candidates were, the more accurate their responses. Some were very vague such as ‘there is an echo-like effect’. This required strong listening skills to identify the nature of the delay.

4c Some candidates did well in dissecting this section. Most identified the fade in on the claps, the use of fills, and the analogue sounds. Many simply stated that it got louder.

4d Here is where the AO4 thinking begins. Many candidates could hear what was happening in the mix, but failed to elucidate, to explain why this choice

had been made, or what effect it had on the listener. There are always reasons why a mix is like it is, and these are what the candidates need to discuss in order to be awarded full marks. Why are the pads lacking in HF? Why was that particular reverb setting chosen?

5 This question demands even more in terms of AO4 responses. Many candidates were able to write at some length, and with some accuracy, concerning the salient elements of each recording, but sometimes failed to join the dots, which may have taken them from a level 2 to a level 4 response. Many, for example, stated that the Harry James recording was captured with a single mic. This is true, but what are the consequences of this (masking, muffled timbres, mono signal, reliance on room acoustic etc.), and how is this different to the Manhattan Transfer recording with multiple mics/tracks (increased separation, ability to mix post-recording, to apply different effects to different tracks etc.)? An understanding of the two eras is required in addition to listening skills. Some candidates assumed that because the Manhattan Transfer recording was clean and well balanced, that it must have been digital, and this influenced some responses adversely. However, there was much more evidence of the kind of analytical thinking that AO4 requires than in the previous series, which is to be both welcomed and commended.

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