

# **Report on the Units**

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**January 2009**

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Advanced GCE Music 7872

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Music 3872

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# Chief Examiner's Report

## General Comments

The January session of written units at Advanced level in Music appears to fulfil contrasting functions at each of the two qualification levels: at AS level most candidates appear to be resitting Unit 2552 in order to improve upon performance in an earlier sitting (usually the previous June), while at A2 many candidates appear to be making early initial entries for Unit 2555, either in order to have this part of the music course completed and assessed after one term or as a preparatory entry that allows a follow-up resit in June.

Whatever pattern is being adopted, it is vital that candidates undertake research (including attentive and sustained listening) as part of their regular preparation. Both units demand a high level of personal familiarity with a relevant body of music if candidates are to perform successfully.

AS is the foundation unit that seeks to develop and establish the basic skills and musical techniques that are required in the academic study of music. Without these skills firmly in place at the end of the AS course, candidates will find it difficult to tackle the higher demands of the A2 course successfully.

Most worrying is the frequent under-performance of able candidates in **Section B** of Unit 2552. This part of the unit is based entirely on candidates' study of six prescribed items of repertoire and they should be thoroughly familiar with this music at an appropriate level of detail. Only by diligent exploration of the prescribed musical "snapshots" offered as the prescribed repertoire in Unit 2552 will candidates be able to acquire the investigative and analytical skills they need to apply to a broader historical topic in the corresponding section of Unit 2555.

The new OCR A-level Music qualification offers its AS Units (G351, G352 and G353) for first assessment in June of this year, and these will be running alongside the final session of the current AS Units (2550, 2551 and 2552).

In January 2010 only Unit 2555 from the legacy specification will be available, with the new Unit G353 as the only AS unit available for the session.

In June 2010 the current A2 units (2553, 2554 and 2555) will be available for the final time, and all six units of the new specification (G351, G352 and G353 at AS level and G354, G355 and G356 at A2 level) will also be available.

Information relating to the new specification is available on the OCR website ([www.ocr.org.uk/gce\\_music](http://www.ocr.org.uk/gce_music)), from where specimen papers and support materials can be downloaded.

## 2552 Introduction to Historical Study (Written Examination)

### General Comments

Candidates' scripts this session covered a wide range of ability, although there were relatively few that produced very high marks. This suggested that for many candidates the January session provided a valuable opportunity to resit the paper following an initial sitting last June.

This unit is now well established and Examiners' Reports have frequently drawn attention to areas in which candidates fail to achieve the standard of response and accuracy expected at Advanced level. In many cases the key area of concern is Section B of the unit, where examiners see entire sections of questions based on a particular prescribed item of repertoire left with blank answer lines, presumably because this was either not covered in preparatory study or not revised, as part of a "gambling" strategy. Such approaches to the unit put candidates at a distinct disadvantage: the specification makes it clear that three items of orchestral repertoire and three jazz recordings are to be studied in detail.

The unit title is "Introduction to Historical Study" and the work undertaken in preparation for Section B is vital in helping candidates to acquire and develop the foundation study skills that they will need in order to tackle more independent investigation of a broader body of repertoire should they continue to A2 in this subject. For those candidates who do not progress beyond AS level, the Unit should provide them with an ability to understand how the six specific musical pieces they have studied "work" as representative examples of their genres. In both cases, candidates are expected to know the repertoire thoroughly, and one of the best ways of doing this is through repeated attentive listening. The iPod generation of candidates have more opportunities than ever to access music (including the prescribed repertoire) for repeated listening wherever they are, and they need to take advantage of this in their preparation for the Unit.

### Teacher Tips for the Unit

- **Provide candidates with plenty of opportunities to practise listening tests (and past papers for this unit) prior to the examination itself. This will help them to develop techniques for tackling aural questions of various types.**
- **Encourage candidates to use the preparation time wisely to listen attentively to the music extracts so that they gain some aural familiarity with the music before they begin to write (they have 5 minutes' preparation time - with access to the question paper and insert - before the examination begins).**
- **Ensure that candidates prepare material on all three prescribed orchestral scores and all three jazz recordings for the unit. A gambling strategy here is dangerous and can lead to serious under-performance in the unit.**
- **Continue to read Examiners' Reports thoroughly: many points are repeated from session to session. Although the final session for this unit will be June 2009, almost all observations made in this report will apply equally to its replacement unit in the new specification (G353 – Introduction to Historical Study in Music) that will be available for the first time in June this year.**

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Section A

**Extract 1A** BEETHOVEN, *Symphony no.7 in A, op.92*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 27-50, 150-173<sup>1</sup>, & 255-272, Herbert von Karajan, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (1963), Deutsche Grammophon 463 092-2, track 2, 00'43" – 01'24", 04'18"- 04'58" & 07'16"- 07'45" [Total length of recorded extracts: 01'50"]

- 1) Although many candidates perceived that the extract contained three main sections, the response "ternary" was not completely accurate, since it did not make clear the **ABB** pattern structure of the extract.
- 2) Examiners were disappointed that many candidates described the note B as a passing note rather than an appoggiatura. Such responses suggested an incorrect understanding of the note's *harmonic* function.
- 3) Most candidates were able to identify the use of descending sequence accurately.
- 4) Most candidates were able to outline the basic shape of the melody, but the most common mistakes were the omission of a C<sup>#</sup> in the first beat of bar 11 and a failure to appreciate the *chromatic* descent in bar 12.
- 5) The majority of candidates correctly identified the position of chord **I**, but many confused the placing of chords **V** and **Vb**. Aural attention paid to the bass line in bars 22 and 23 would have given the clue to solve this problem.
- 6) Many answers referred to the use of triplet decoration and were able to locate examples accurately. Fewer scripts made more detailed reference to aspects such as the change of melodic shape (for example, in bars 35 and 36), or the simplification of the motif from bar 5 at bar 29.
- 7) The most common observation in answer to this question was the addition of a flute to the instrumentation. However, the question asked about the *use* of instrumentation, so examiners were looking for more detail on the deployment of resources here. Many scripts noted the use of *pizzicato* in the strings but fewer answers referred to aspects such as the broken chord/arpeggio figuration in the strings, or the move of the pedal to the bottom of the musical texture.
- 8) Examiners saw some completely correct answers to this question, but many candidates measured the interval leaps incorrectly and misjudged the chromatic movement in the section from bar 61 to bar 62. Another common error was the omission of accidentals (sharps) from the ascending line at bar 63<sup>2</sup>: a common occurrence of the sharpened 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> degrees of an ascending minor scale.
- 9) As in **Question 7**, candidates were asked about the *use* of instruments, so a basic list of the instruments heard was not sufficient as an answer. The most perceptive answers referred to the antiphonal nature of the scoring and showed how the material was passed down the instrumental range from the high woodwind to the bassoons and horns.
- 10) Many answers to this question were too general in their observations to achieve high marks: examiners awarded some credit for recognition that the melodic and harmonic outlines of both passages were similar, but relatively few answers went into greater depth and showed how elements such as the rhythmic motif (crotchet + two quavers) or the falling chromatic line (derived from bar 12) were treated in **Passage 1iii**. Examiners were pleased that so many candidates noted that the violin countermelody of **Passage 1i** became the main melodic idea of **Passage 1iii**.

**Extract 1B RON GRAINER, *Old Ned*, (no score available), No orchestra specified / no conductor specified (1962), Pye Records / River Records (1999) RRCD15, track 6, 00'01" - 00'53" & 01'47" - 02'25" [Total length of recorded extracts: 01'30"]**

- 11) Most candidates identified the trombone accurately, although several scripts gave the incorrect answer "tuba".
- 12) Almost all candidates identified the rhythm pattern accurately.
- 13) Examiners were pleased that so many answers described the note G<sup>#</sup> as a passing note, but many failed to spot that this was a *chromatic* passing note: a qualification required for full marks.
- 14) Many candidates were able to place all three chords accurately. Examiners were pleased to see evidence of such a high degree of harmonic awareness from so many candidates.
- 15) This question required candidates to isolate **two** specific melodic changes but many answers were very vague in terms of locating melodic changes accurately and describing the changes in accurate musical terms. Many answers simply provided a general comment such as "more notes added", without giving any specific musical reference as a location. The most common aspect of melodic change identified was the addition of an upper auxiliary note on the first beat of bar 15.
- 16) Many answers noted the use of two-bar units of music and the changed ending (most notably the addition of a sustained note to the melodic line). Relatively few candidates perceived the structural significance of the phrase extension (5 bars) evident towards the end of the extract.
- 17) Many candidates were able to notate the bass line (often a problem at AS level) with complete accuracy and examiners were delighted to see this level of security in candidates' performances. The most common error among aurally perceptive candidates was a failure to appreciate the *chromatic* nature of the descending line from bar 20<sup>3</sup> to bar 21<sup>1</sup>.
- 18) (a) Most candidates were able to identify the dominant pedal accurately. Examiners also gave credit for references to an inverted pedal.  
(b) Most candidates were aware of the *glissando* technique employed by the trombone player.  
(c) Answers to this question were often rather vague and failed to mention specific detail. Many answers referred to the use of tonic/dominant alternation and some listeners with a wider aural perspective of the extract were able to realise that the trombone line was taken from the introduction to **Passage 1i**.
- 19) Almost all candidates were able to identify the key of **Passage 1ii** as D major.
- 20) The accuracy of melodic dictation has demonstrated a marked improvement in recent sessions and examiners were pleased that many candidates gained full marks for their answers to this question. The most common error was a misjudging of the falling 3<sup>rd</sup> interval from A to F<sup>#</sup>.
- 21) (a) Examiners expect candidates at AS level to be able to refer to specific musical details (gleaned from their listening) in their answers, but too many responses to this question provided superficial comments such as "same instruments". Examiners were hoping that candidates would notice that the melody line was no longer confined to the banjo but taken up by the saxophone at bar 25, or that the banjo and saxophone shared the melody line toward the end of the passage.

- 21) (b) Many candidates commented on the lack of an introduction in **Passage 1ii** but few commented on the fact that the return of the opening phrase at bar 41 was truncated, or that **Passage 1ii** lacked the extended melodic pedal note featured in **Passage 1i**.
- 22) The best answers were able to locate melodic changes accurately and describe the change in musical terms. Unfortunately too many candidates failed to gain marks by writing solely about instrumentation. This was not what the question asked and examiners were unable to credit comments that referred only to the instruments heard.

### Teacher Tips for Section A

- Remind candidates to use all the evidence they have (from both the skeleton score and the recording) in order to inform their answers. On occasions candidates' answers suggest that they have missed an important point of evidence in one or other of the sources.
- Try to cover **both** options in preparation for Section A: covering only **one** of the styles will restrict candidates' choices in the examination itself.
- Past papers and mark schemes are available via the OCR website. These will provide candidates with valuable practice experience and going through mark schemes alongside candidates' answers will often point out key areas for additional revision or greater depth of knowledge.
- Encourage candidates to use precise musical terminology in their answers: the specification makes it clear that at GCE level candidates are expected to be able to use appropriate subject-specific terminology in their answers.

### Section B

Extract 2 **BEETHOVEN, *Concerto for piano and orchestra in c, op.37*, first movement, bar 481 to bar 500.**

- 23) (a) This question was not answered well. Most candidates simply mentioned use of the pedal, but at this level of study (and in relation to a *prescribed* item of repertoire) examiners were looking for an awareness that the printed symbol instructed the player to use the *sustaining* pedal.
- (b) This section was answered accurately by most candidates,
- (c) Most candidates appreciated that the instruction indicated that all instruments (or the full orchestra) should play.
- 24) Most answers to this question were accurate. Examiners awarded credit for references to repeated *semiquavers* (but *not* quavers) as well as *tremolando*.
- 25) The most successful answers to this question engaged with aspects of texture such as the block chords alternating with broken-chord figuration and the bare octaves from bar 9 to bar 18. Unfortunately many candidates wrote about instrumentation, which meant that their answers were unable to receive credit.

- 26) This question asked candidates to write about the *sound* of the music at a point in the movement where the aural landscape is like nothing else in the work. It was disappointing that so many candidates simply provided descriptions of what was printed in the score and failed to engage with the *aural effectiveness* of the music. Such responses suggested cursory listening in the preparation of this prescribed item of orchestral repertoire. Candidates should know the music beyond the symbols on the page: it should always be appreciated as *sound*.
- 27) This question was not well answered and many candidates failed to mention any aspect of harmony in their responses, preferring to refer to aspects of instrumentation instead. Only the most perceptive candidates spotted that the chord progression from bar 13 to bar 16 was repeated but at a faster rate of harmonic change from bar 17 onward.
- 28) Many candidates received full marks for their answer to this question but several responses suffered as a result of incorrect interval transposition or octave displacement. A common error among able candidates was the omission of a flat before the E in bar 19.
- 29) Candidates who had a good understanding of the prescribed movement were able to answer this question accurately. Examiners were surprised that many responses failed to focus on the specific musical detail required for credit.
- 30) Answers to this question were disappointing. The music of the extract occurs only once in the entire prescribed movement and Examiners had expected more candidates to be able to locate the music as the section that immediately followed the piano cadenza.

**Extract 3 MILES DAVIS, *So What* (1959), from *Kind of Blue*, Columbia Legacy / Sony Music CK 64935, track 1, 00'33" – 01'29". [Length of recorded extract: 00'56"].**

- 31) (a) Most candidates identified the double bass accurately.
- (b) *Pizzicato* and *glissando* were the two most common answers to this question but examiners also gave credit for mention of pitch bending. Some candidates decided to produce lengthy lists of every possible playing technique and in such cases examiners marked only the first **two** items in the sequence.
- (c) Most candidates identified the soloist correctly as Paul Chambers.
- 32) Answers to this question generally received most marks for comments made in relation to the use of the drum kit, and responses in this section were encouragingly detailed. Comments on the use of woodwind, brass and piano tended to be less detailed, often restricted to mention of the statement of the characteristic *So What* chords without any description of the nature of the motif.
- 33) Most candidates knew that a trumpet solo by Miles Davis followed the recorded extract, and candidates with detailed knowledge of the recording also referred to aspects such as the walking bass or Davis' use of techniques such as ghost notes and half-valving.
- 34) Examiners were looking for a *precise* location here: a general answer such as "the introduction" (given by many candidates) was too vague to receive credit.
- 35) Many candidates incorrectly believed *So What* to have been recorded in Chicago rather than New York. Examiners credited the few answers that referred to Manhattan, even though this response specified a region rather than a city.

### **Teacher Tips for Section B**

*(Most points are observations from previous reports that remain valid)*

- **Ensure that study of the prescribed repertoire a regular part of preparation for the unit. It is important that candidates get to know the music thoroughly.**
- **Help candidates to find their way around scores, especially in the early stages of the AS course. It is important that candidates gain confidence in handling the printed scores of prescribed orchestral repertoire.**
- **Encourage candidates to listen to the prescribed works as regularly as possible: candidates need to appreciate the music as sound, not just as notes on the page. Placing tracks on an iPod for regular and repeated listening can be very helpful.**
- **Avoid leaving preparation of the prescribed repertoire until the last minute; this will not help candidates to become thoroughly familiar with the music they need to study.**
- **DO NOT forget that the prescribed repertoire changes regularly. Consult the OCR website for the prescribed repertoire relevant to any particular session of this unit.**

### **Section C**

Candidates' answers covered all the questions this session, with **Question 36** and **Question 37** proving especially popular. Examiners are pleased that candidates' answers continue to demonstrate an increasing focus on contextual understanding in this section, using detail from the prescribed repertoire to support relevant points of knowledge.

In this session relatively few candidates wrote far more than was required (there were fewer additional sheets of paper attached to scripts than in most previous sessions) and this has enabled many candidates to focus more on the relevance of what they write. It is often the case that (in lengthy answers to **Section C** questions) the writing tends to deteriorate towards the end, frequently degenerating into irrelevance and/or repetition. Candidates need to be alert to this danger in order to avoid restricting their access to the highest mark bands which demand writing that is thorough in its treatment of musical detail and consistently relevant in its focus.

- 36** This question proved popular with candidates and the best answers were able to draw on specific evidence from the prescribed repertoire in order to demonstrate awareness of the most obvious contrasts between the rôle of the solo instrument in two of the three works mentioned. The most popular combination was Haydn/Davis, but examiners saw evidence of all possible permutations across the cohort.

The best answers concentrated consistently on the rôle(s) of the solo instruments and frequently discussed their relationships with the other instrumental forces involved. Many perceptive candidates who chose the Haydn/Davis combination wrote effectively about the contrast of relationships between soloist/orchestra and soloist/small ensemble. Some answers even questioned the legitimacy of identifying any *one* “soloist” in the Miles Davis *So What*.

The least successful answers tended to focus on descriptions of instruments and aspects of their design, while failing to address the rôle of these instruments in the music. Many examiners were exasperated to discover that so many answers referred to Haydn’s writing for a valved (rather than keyed) trumpet. Such comments revealed a lack of diligent and scholarly preparation.

- 37** This question was a popular choice and almost all candidates were able to show an awareness of the salient musical features of Jelly Roll Morton’s *Black Bottom Stomp*. The least successful answers rarely ventured beyond basic descriptions of events but the most informed candidates were able to focus on aspects of instrumentation and style that were characteristic of Morton’s output and often contrasted this with features generally present in jazz of the late 1920s.

The most informed candidates demonstrated deeper contextual awareness, appreciating the fact that by the late 1920s much of Morton’s original innovatory style was becoming passé and demonstrating an awareness that jazz was moving in a new direction as the 1930s dawned, causing Morton to be seen no longer as a musical innovator, and his music to be viewed as a stylistic anachronism.

- 38** A small number of candidates attempted this question but many answers demonstrated strong awareness of the use of brass by both Haydn and Weber. Most candidates wrote at length about the “Romantic” use of brass instruments in Weber’s overture, mentioning particularly the opening “forest music” in the horns, but accounts of the use of brass instruments in Haydn’s concerto tended to focus exclusively on the solo trumpet (which was exceptional for its time) rather than discuss the writing for the *orchestral* brass instruments in the work.

- 39** Candidates who chose to answer this question generally revealed good knowledge of Weber’s overture and were able to show how it reflected the music of its time. Many candidates were well aware of Weber’s programmatic use of the orchestra and were able to describe key points of interest such as the “Samiel” music and the “forest” interlude, but the best answers discussed aspects of the music in greater depth and considered the aural effectiveness of moments such as the powerful opening octaves, or points at which sudden dynamic contrasts are strikingly handled by Weber.

- 40** Very few candidates who chose this question succeeded in addressing its demands and many answers simply provided a history of the development of jazz performance, often including wild speculation as to the nature of performing venues and audience composition.

The least successful answers produced an often inaccurate history of the development of jazz that became focussed on a social history of the genre, whereas the question required knowledge of the performing opportunities afforded to Ellington and his orchestra.

Most candidates were aware of Ellington's link with The Cotton Club, although relatively few answers made it clear that candidates appreciated the nature of the audience at the venue. Although most candidates picked up the visual clue to the nature of the entertainment provided by the photograph, very few answers demonstrated an awareness of the "themed" nature of the extravaganza shows performed there (Egyptian, Africa, Oriental, for example), or were able to show how Ellington adapted his music to suit the theme of the moment.

### Teacher Tips for Section C

- Give candidates regular opportunities to organise their ideas in practice 'essays' before the examination itself.
- Remember to explore broader contextual aspects such as instrument development, the nature and composition of audiences, performing conditions and social and cultural background to the prescribed repertoire. Questions will test these aspects of learning regularly.
- Ensure that candidates write their answers in continuous prose (but not one continuous paragraph!): a list of bullet points is not acceptable as an answer in Section C, although this method of response is permissible in Sections A and B of the unit.
- Explore the wealth of background material available on DVD, CD and via the internet to provide contextual background on social and musical aspects of the prescribed repertoire.

...and remember:

This is an A-level Music course. Time spent listening attentively is not time wasted: intelligent background listening can be of enormous help to candidates in developing a sense of context for this section of the unit.

## 2555 Historical and Analytical Studies

There was a significantly larger entry for the unit this session, with more centres entering candidates for a 'pre-sit', or for a practice dry-run. The evidence reported by examiners was for an overall good standard of attainment, much improved on January 2008, and at least as good as June 2008. This is very encouraging, and shows sound teaching and secure preparation for the qualification.

It was pleasing to see a good number of marks in the higher range, achieved by candidates who may well not feel the need to re-sit the unit. Those achieving marks in the mid-range will have gained much from the early entry. There were those who already show good aural skills, and a knowledge of the two Areas of Study when answering Section A; for them the need between now and June is for a more thorough knowledge of the Section B Topic, and for specific musical illustrations. There were those, conversely, who performed better in Section B, and for whom further concentrated work on aural skills should be a priority.

### Section A

#### Extract 1

- Q. 1 This was well answered by many, who achieved 3 or 4 marks. Weaker candidates often described the opening bars as 'in unison' rather than 'homophonic', and were not able to use correct language when identifying the change to contrapuntal texture in bar 10. The reduction to basses only for the end of the passage in question was missed by weaker candidates.
- Q. 2a) Many candidates showed a perceptive understanding of the musical response to text in this passage, and their answers did not ignore the contribution of harmony and tonality, with the change to C major, the whole-tone or modal flavour in the melody, and the chromaticism all being mentioned.
- 2b) Here, too, most candidates were able to pick up on the musical reflection of 'bullet' and 'division'. However, many answers included references to the music of the timpani, despite the requirement in the question to refer only to the vocal writing.

**Teachers' Tip.** As reported in June 2008, many marks were lost when candidates failed to answer the specific requirement of questions, or failed to remember this requirement through a multi-part question. A simple remedy is to underline or highlight the key words and triggers in a question, to focus candidates' thoughts and responses. It was noticeable in this session that those candidates who adopted this practice invariably gained full, or nearly full marks in such questions.

- Q. 3 The standard of answers to the melodic dictation was improved this session, with nearly all candidates gaining some credit, and many who achieved 3 or 4 marks. The difficulty lay in sorting out the tones and semitones in the melody, and here the accidentals in the timpani part were an aid to aural perception. Many answers were correct but for the inclusion of accidentals to achieve the correct intervals.  
It was clear from a large number of answers that the performance of the rhythm in the first bar was less than clear, and examiners were sympathetic here.
- Q. 4 The 1st Bass *divisi*, the different rhythm and note values for 'stopwatch' and 'map', and the first use of *ff*, were popular answers from the many candidates who went on to gain 4

or 5 marks here. This was an opportunity for the average and weaker candidates to show what they knew and understood from the setting.

- Q.5 Similarly, this question allowed all candidates across the range to score well. Candidates were free to gain the five marks wherever they could, across the three passages named in the question. Some interpreted 'the introduction' to mean many more than the first four bars. Few spotted the timpani's reference to the opening melody, in bars 60/61, or the sole example of rhythmic unison with the voices, to underline the climax in bar 66.
- Q. 6 Examiners are by now used to a number of candidates who, each session, rather inexplicably give no answer to this standard question. This time the level of response was also disappointing as many answers failed to address the specific aspect of accompaniment, or failed to explain the answer with reference to examples of text from their chosen work. As usual there were otherwise creditable answers which discussed works written outside the stated period.

## **Extract 2**

- Q. 7 Most answers gained at least one mark for describing the structure of the Theme. The stride LH and octave RH melody were popular answers from the many candidates who scored all 3 marks in the second part of the question.
- Q. 8 Observations on Texture were more successful than on Tonality: the frequent modulations in the Variation were not heard by the majority of candidates. Just a few were able to identify the changes between major and minor.
- Q. 9 Responses here were largely disappointing. Some candidates did observe that the Variation began with the three pairs of chords which conclude section B of the Theme, and they often went on to identify that the Variation contained much development and extension of this section B melody, with LH interjections using fragments of section A. However, the majority of candidates misinterpreted this question, and repeated observations on texture and structure from previous answers.

## **Section B**

For many candidates the level of knowledge and understanding shown in these essays could at best be described as 'good/general'. As an assessment of work in progress, the papers revealed candidates who are well on the way to acquiring the necessary level of understanding and familiarity with the repertoire to do well in this unit. The signs are good, and with further work and engagement with the music, these candidates should do well in the summer.

There were though some very impressive answers, from candidates whose overall performance will have secured a high grade. These answers showed a real understanding of the principles and musical features in question, and candidates were able to make close and relevant reference to both music and text.

### **Topic 1**

Answers here were invariably of good or high quality, often showing a real familiarity with the music. Questions 10 (with answers split more or less equally between Tallis and Byrd) and 11 (mostly Monteverdi or Palestrina) were most popular.

### **Topic 2**

This topic attracted relatively few answers in this session, and certainly not sufficient to draw any conclusions or generalisations. J.S. Bach (Questions 14 and 15) put in several appearances.

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### Topic 3

Question 16 was the most frequent choice here. Answers were characterised by a general understanding of the relevant features, but specific knowledge was often thin on the ground, certainly when required to illustrate from three songs. Candidates were often able to describe the opening piano figuration in an accompaniment, and relate it to the general mood or story, but they were unable to show how the accompaniment changed and developed, particularly in relation to harmony and tonality, as the drama of the story unfolded.

Question 17 was also answered by a good number. Sadly, many of these answers did not address instrumental works as required.

### Topic 4

As usual this topic attracted the largest number of centres and candidates, and all three questions were popular.

Question 19 was not particularly well answered with only superficial accounts of short extracts from film scores, or rather rambling accounts of storylines (e.g. *Star Wars*) with little mention of the integration with the music.

The particular aspect of the topic is *the integration of music and drama* and it is necessary when discussing film to give a rigorous and detailed account of this link, showing how a film score can variously reflect, anticipate, and accompany action, dialogue, thought, emotion, and scene. Candidates should communicate their understanding and knowledge of these features by illustrating the use of musical materials, including *leitmotif*, orchestration, and tonality to achieve this integration. (They would also earn the gratitude of examiners by learning how to spell 'integration'!)

### Question 20

The modest number of candidates answering here usually did quite well, giving relevant and quite detailed accounts of the influences in works such as *The King and I*, *Miss Saigon* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, as well as *Curlew River*.

### Question 21

For once candidates were given the opportunity to discuss *West Side Story* alone, without reference to other earlier or later musicals. The question did however require candidates to consider 'extended scenes' in order explain and illustrate the integration of music and drama. Some candidates were not able to do this, either making attempts to relate the music of the whole musical, or giving accounts of short isolated numbers. Really successful answers, and there were some, chose wisely, and were able to give detailed accounts of the musical development through such scenes as The Prologue, The Dance at the Gym (often running on into 'Maria') and the Quintet leading to The Rumble.

### Topic 5

As with Topic 2, there were not sufficient answers here in this session to give generalised comments or more specific inferences.

It is pleasing to note that centres are secure in their preparation for Topics 4 and 5, and the different repertoire from the last sixty-four years which they use. There was just one example in this session where a candidate answered with inappropriate repertoire from the 'wrong' topic.

## Section C

### Question 25

All too often answers here gave potted histories of Western music, without really addressing the specific feature of its 'function'. Some began well, by mentioning music for worship, and later in the Renaissance and Baroque music for the entertainment of the court and the aristocracy. These responses often meandered off into prepared answers explaining how technology has changed how music has been produced or disseminated.

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More specific and better informed answers were able to explain the function of music in making political statements, in advertising and propaganda, and in music therapy, as well as other uses.

### Question 26

Answers here were divided between weak and superficial statements of personal views on the re-use of another's material, and those who gave detailed illustrations, particularly from jazz and contemporary cover versions of substantial re-workings of previous performances.

### Question 27

Most popular here was *The Rite of Spring*, though all too often answers concentrated on the subject matter and the unconventional choreography. The musical features were addressed by only a few, who were able to explain how time has allowed us to view this innovative music in the context of early 20<sup>th</sup> century developments in musical language.

### Question 28

A small number of answers were received here, usually of good quality. Although they mostly failed to explain and illustrate how such musical features as rising and falling melody, harmonic colouring, *melisma*, tempo, rhythm, *tessitura*, or accompaniment can all enhance text when it is sung, they were able to give convincing accounts of how vocal settings can heighten the emotion and meaning of text, and its impact on the listener.

### Question 29

Far too many candidates began long and not always appropriate accounts of musical technology back in the early days of recording, rather than concentrating as required on the last fifty years. The question gave an open invitation to discuss the work of 'musicians', so to performers and composers could be added record producers, and others directly involved in the technology of sound. Far too many answers though included accounts of the impact of technological change on listeners and how they access music.

## The Shape of Things to Come

The A2 units of the new Specification for GCE Music will be examined for the first time in 2010, although there will also be re-sit opportunities for this legacy Unit 2555 in both January and June of that year.

The new Historical and Analytical Studies in Music unit (Unit G356) has received a great deal of interest, with the changes and new content being welcomed by centres. The Specification is based on the present course, and develops it further. The major changes can be summarised:

- Section A will now have only one listening extract, lasting a maximum of five minutes, and carrying 40 marks. It will continue to be taken from a vocal work written between 1900 and 1945, and the questions will focus on features in the music which relate to the Areas of Study *Tonality and Interpretation*. *Interpretation* replaces *Words and Music* as an Area of Study for all three units at A2, and in this case refers to the interpretation of the text in the music of the extract.
- Section B. In this section, candidates will study a genre chosen from a list of six. For each genre there are three pieces of prescribed repertoire for study, and centres will supplement this listening and study with other related repertoire for contextual understanding. Again, *Tonality and Interpretation* will be the two areas of focus in this study. Candidates will answer two questions in this section, each carrying 25 marks.
- There is no Section C synoptic essay in the new Specification.
- The paper is marked out of a total of 90 marks.

Full details of the new Specification, together with specimen assessment material, are available from the Board and from its website.

# Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Music (3872/7872)  
January 2009 Examination Series

## Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2552	Raw	100	68	61	55	49	43	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2555	Raw	100	72	65	58	52	46	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

## Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
<b>3872</b>	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
<b>7872</b>	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
<b>3872</b>	15.93	35.39	60.00	76.92	95.39	100	65
<b>7872</b>	5.88	47.06	76.47	88.24	94.12	100	17

## 82 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

[http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums\\_results.html](http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html)

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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