

AS AND A-LEVEL MUSIC

A-level (7272)

Component 1: Appraising music (7272/W) Sections A, B and C

See a number of student responses that demonstrate how high levels are achieved along with the original examiner's comments. This resource includes example responses from Section A (Listening), Section B (Analysis) and Section C (Essay).

Version 1.1



The following examples, given from Sections A (Listening) and B (Analysis), were awarded a mark in the top band of 9–10 out of 10. The descriptor in the mark scheme for work in this band is ‘a comprehensive and authoritative response which is consistently coherent and logically structured’.

A variety of approaches may be taken with equal potential for success; some use continuous prose, others bullet points. Some are particularly strong on pinpointing appropriate examples from the excerpt, others on perceptive, expressive summaries of key aspects of the character of the excerpt.

None of these examples is ‘perfect’ – there may be small inaccuracies or examples of awkward expression – but all show evidence of excellent listening skills and the ability to communicate a well-informed understanding of the excerpts.

Section A – Listening

Question 03

The excerpt is taken from a Nocturne by Chopin. [Nocturne in E flat major, Op.9, no.2]

Analyse the excerpt, explaining how it is typical of Chopin’s music.

[10 marks]

Example 1

The left hand plays a rhythmically regular figure throughout, consisting of a bass note and a broken chord. This gives the music a $\frac{3}{4}$, waltz-like feel. The music begins with an anacrusis of one beat. The phrases are mostly periodic and balanced. The melody places particular emphasis on the 3rd scale degree. The texture is exclusively homophonic, with the melody intended to sound like a singer improvising in the ‘bel canto’ style. The second pair of phrases is harmonically identical to the first, but the melody is elaborated in Chopin’s signature ‘fioratura’ style, with ornaments such as trills, mordents and rapid arpeggiated figures with shorter note values and a wide melodic range. The harmony is typically early Romantic in its use of chromatic substitutes (e.g. viio7 over a tonic pedal in the second bar, instead of V7), and also its thirds relations (e.g. Vb in the dominant to IV in the tonic at 1:09). The passage ends with an even more elaborate version of the opening phrase (ending with a cadenza-like scalic figure). The overall structure is therefore AABA.

Example 2

- Melody begins with a major 6th leap to then fall conjunctly down in a scale in the first few seconds, a common feature of Chopin's lyrical writing
- Great sense of rubato throughout
- The music is in a major key with a melody and accompaniment texture, with the melody in the right hand throughout
- At 0:12 a turn can be found in the melody, giving rhythmic and melodic interest
- In the left hand accompaniment a rhythmic ostinato is played as crotchets in 3/4 time signature which helps support the more rhythmically adventurous melody, another common feature for Chopin's Nocturnes
- Diminished 7th chord creating expressive feeling in the melody at 0:24
- The melody and accompaniment is diatonic, with areas of chromaticism such as in the melody and bass at 0:20
- Big passionate melodic leap at 0:26 balanced by a low bass note in the left hand
- Original melody repeats again at 0:34 but now with ornaments, typical of Chopin's nocturnes as he develops the melody (trill at 0:36, altered melody at 0:42)
- Acciaccatura at 0:59 showing more melodic development
- Perfect cadence at 1:00
- Moves on to a second theme at 1:02 and touches on the relative minor at 1:12
- Big crescendo at 1:20
- Melodic and bass lines move in contrary motion at 1:30
- Spread chord at 1:35 to reintroduce the original theme at quatter dynamic

Question 06

The excerpt is taken from the track ‘Don’t You Worry ‘bout A Thing’ from the album ‘Innervisions’ (1973).

Analyse Stevie Wonder’s use of musical elements in the excerpt, explaining how they are used to create a happy, relaxed feeling.

[10 marks]

Example 3

- Major key gives bright feeling
- Moderate/fast tempo gives up-beat but relaxed feeling
- Predictable melody line – major 3rd down, up a major 2nd, down a 4th
- Regular 4 beats in a bar, maracas/shakers every bar as well as-
- Piano with accompaniment filling harmony
- Simple bass line
- Music cuts out at 0:18 and then comes back in; bit of tension and relief
- Backing vocals supporting soft voice – 2 voices overlapped at start; back into 3rds at 0:17 giving support
- Strong rhythmic beat. Hi-hat every beat (crotchet)
- Regular 4-bar chord sequence. Changes at 0:20
- Dissonant 6th played in piano at 0:31 which resolves to 5th, then perfect cadence at 0:35, this is where first chord sequence and first melody comes in again. Melody repeats
- ‘Don’t you worry bout a thing’ chorus conjunct and consonant
- 1:04 descending chromatic sequence in backing vocals harmony, repeats again and then back to chorus
- 1:35 starting chord sequence comes back while scat singing in backing vocals and humming with no words chorus; imitation between vocals

Example 4

The instrumentation of the extract consists of the keyboard, Stevie Wonder’s vocals, maracas, bongos, backing vocals, drum-kit. The metre is steady 4/4 and the instrumentation and the steady tempo creates a laid-back atmosphere. The extract is characterised by the falling chromatic scale – the maracas playing on beats 1 & 4. Stevie Wonder uses vocal melismas, ‘having’ at 18 secs., which create a chilled-out atmosphere. The use of silence at the end of the verse before the keyboard comes back in playing chords (notably the diminished 7th chord at 22 seconds). The syncopation, between the vocals and the keyboard also creates a happy laid-back atmosphere. Steve Wonder sings at a middle tessitura – the vocal sound is comfortable and chilled. The vocal line uses dotted rhythms and cross rhythms which reflect the lyrics, “life’s a drag”, the vocal line metrically dragging slightly. The repetition of vocal melodies makes it memorable and catchy along with the simple verse-chorus structure. There is not huge amounts of dynamic contrast – the piece mainly just a consistent mezzo piano – adding to the chilled-out, easy-going atmosphere. The message is clear through the repetition of the lyrics ‘don’t you worry ‘bout a thing’. The backing vocals enter (Wonder’s own voice) at 1:06 in falsetto (in thirds) during the chromatic descending scale. The cymbal also begins, playing on beats 2 and 4, the texture thickening and building. At 1:20 Wonder reaches the climax and goes up the octave singing the same descending scale pattern. Stevie Wonder also uses shouts and exclamations to express joy and happiness.

Question 12

The excerpt is taken from the musical 'The Bridges of Madison County' by Jason Robert Brown (2014).

In this song, the main character is buying a dress and remembers how she used to take pleasure in her appearance when she was younger.

She reflects on how these feelings have been re-awakened by her recent meeting with a man to whom she feels attracted.

Explain how Jason Robert Brown's handling of musical elements in the excerpt helps to create a feeling of growing romantic excitement.

[10 marks]

Example 5

- Forte dynamics from the start
- Major key
- Forte dynamic from the start
- Melody and accompaniment texture
- Full sounding orchestration with acoustic guitar, piano and strings
- Piano plays 7th chords through line 2, creating passionate feeling
- Diminished chord on line 5
- Violin counter melody introduced at 0:22
- Each line ends with a rising interval showing her joy and optimism
- Melody from lines 1-4 used again at lines 5-8 but from line 2 'just' starts to change; ascending in pitch rather than descending, showing her excitement growing
- Major scale descending in strings at 0:34 almost like church bells ringing at a wedding
- Dominant 7th chord on line 9
- Descending melodic sequence and harmonic sequence at lines 9-10 to lines 11-12
- Accompaniment drops out at line 16 to emphasise and then re-enters at 'please' with intervallic augmentation at 'away'
- 'Away' breaks the syllabic word setting we've had until now as it goes into a melismatic vocal passage containing a melodic and harmonic sequence
- Accompaniment cuts back over lines 17-20 with just strings and piano
- Diminished 7th chord over line 19
- Drawn-out rhythm in line 20 with rests between 'just' and 'please'
- Ends with glockenspiel glissando

Question 15

The excerpt is taken from 'Blues by Five' on the album '*Cookin' with the Miles Davis Quintet*' (1956).

Explain how Miles Davis brings elements of his own style to the old form of the blues in the excerpt.

[10 marks]

Example 6

- Texture slowly builds. Starts with piano who plays virtuosic passage work and syncopated chords. This is unusual as early form of blues piano usually just accompanies.
- Piano in locked hands technique, creates stepwise movt. This creates dissonance against the continual walking bass.
- Last 4 of 12-bar blues form don't follow usual chord sequence, instead of finishing on a I chord, Miles uses extra harmonic variety using ii-V-I progressions to add extra colour. He also alters original blues by adding extensions and chromatic alterations to the usual pattern (major and minor 7ths).
- Solo is more modal, exploring modes outside of the Mixolydian. He also uses extensions to add extra colour.
- Solo also contains pitch bending and cymbal phrases which call for conversation between the soloist and rhythm section creating a more inclusive feeling.
- Faster tempo than old form of blues, with ride cymbal creating a constant pulse.
- 1:04, use of repeated melodic motif, over I⁷ then IV⁷ to create dissonance.
- Very long solo section, this allows soloist to develop solo, which Miles does by increasing his range and increasing rhythmic variety as solo progresses.

Question 21

The excerpt is taken from James MacMillan's '*From Ayrshire*' (2005) and is headed 'Like a very fast reel'.

Explain how MacMillan's music blends elements of old Scottish folk music and more modern features.

[10 marks]

Example 7

- Begins with two percussion beats, combined with a horn line (ascending) and two forte chords.
- Immediately afterwards a violin solo playing a fast quaver melody taking over, which uses techniques of double stopping at 0:10. This also gives a feeling of the Scottish heritage of MacMillan.
- Melodic line in the violin is very chromatic
- Very lightly underneath we can also hear a drone held, again giving the impression of a traditionally written piece of Scottish nature.
- The pedal underneath is very dissonant and is bringing the modern aspect of the music forward.
- Drone ends at 0:17 leaving the exposed violin melody
- At 0:18 more string instruments join also creating a dissonant sounding chorus of strings
- All but 2 strings drop out playing harsh, dissonant diminished 5th intervals over a growing in dynamics + timpani roll
- Music bursts out with a horn interjection at 0:24 which returns us to the impetuous violin quaver line heard before
- At 0:37 we get some conventional harmony with 'oom-cha' accompaniment in the horns and a counter-melody in strings underneath the inverted pedal set up by the first violins but this ends with a whip crack at 0:39 taking us back to the first violin playing dissonant parallel intervals, double stopping
- This chromatic and virtuosic violin line grows in tempo throughout its duration and is again joined by a low timpani at 0:46 with dark double basses underneath
- Great textural change here from violin + double bass (0:46) to just high strings (0:52) to pizzicato strings (0:54)
- Switching between virtuosic violin solo to dark tutti string chords frequently between 0:54 and 1:02 then settles into another violin solo at 1:05
- Brief melodic sequence at 1:13
- Highest pitch at 1:24
- Finally joined by strings tutti and horns at 1:24

Section B – Analysis

Question 22.4

Analyse the composer's handling of harmony, tonality and texture in the excerpt, relating the excerpt to the movement as a whole.

In your answer, you should make reference to specific details in the score. [Purcell: Sonata for Trumpet and Strings, 1st movement, bb.11-29.]

[10 marks]

Example 8

The extract opens with antiphony between the solo trumpet and the strings. The tonality at this point has abruptly changed to the relative minor. The antiphony continues as the music modulates to A major in bar 16 with a shorter motif, and the whole ensemble plays together for the perfect cadence at the end of the phrase. At bar 17 an inverted pedal appears in the trumpet on the tonic and beneath it the tonality changes abruptly to A minor, using several first inversion chords to change seamlessly to the new expressive key. The accompaniment plays in a contrapuntal texture, incorporating the falling quaver idea of the melodic motif from the start of the extract. As the inverted pedal disappears, the harmony is restored to A major and at bar 20 the tonic major key of D is joyfully restored, and a new motif is passed antiphonally between strings and trumpet, then once again fragmented and passed in an antiphonal texture between the parts. The piece ends with the whole ensemble in homophony and firmly in the tonic key, as the final perfect cadence is reached, with a note of anticipation in the violin and [trumpet] and the falling 7th in the viola creating parallel 5ths in the final quaver of the penultimate bar. A 4-3 suspension in the violin 2 creates tension. These notes of anticipation and 4-3 suspensions are employed in all the cadences of the movement, yet the falling 7th is only used to strengthen the final cadence.

Question 23.4

Analyse how Mozart's handling of melody, harmony, rhythm and dynamics helps to portray Bartolo's character in the excerpt.

In your answer, you should make reference to specific details in the score. [Mozart: 'La Vendetta' bb.30-72.]

[10 marks]

Example 9

The first eight bars of this movement are characterised by contrasting 2 bar phrases. The first two bars are high in the singer's range, with a dramatic octave leap at forte, and the harmony in three firm chords in stabbing crotchets (I-IV-I). The second two bars are lower in the range with an interval of a second, at a piano dynamic and with more sustained notes playing two chords (V-I). These bars are repeated with other words, describing the techniques Bartolo will use to outsmart Figaro. The effect is of sudden outbursts of anger followed by sly cunning. At bar 38, Bartolo takes on a seemingly calm melody at piano, which develops into patter style singing in quavers relentlessly for four bars, as Bartolo becomes more and more agitated, before bursting into three dramatic statements of 'il fatto e serio' ('the case is serious'), with colourful Italian Augmented 6th chords every other bar and dramatic sf markings contrasted with sudden p every other bar. After a few more bars of calm as Bartolo explains his cold determination, he begins a fast triplet idea, again in patter style, but for 8 bars, typical of a basso buffo opera character. Bartolo explains the lengths he will go to to defeat Figaro. Finally, Bartolo sings sustained notes on a tonic pedal, a calm contrast from his fast triplet idea. He is characterised by his calm planning and sudden angry outbursts.

Question 24.4

Discuss the composer's handling of harmony, tonality, texture and dynamics in the excerpt, relating the excerpt to the movement as a whole.

In your answer, you should make reference to specific details in the score. [Grieg: 'Norwegian March' bb.107-end.]

[10 marks]

Example 10

The excerpt is in C major bars 107-135 which is the tonic key. The melody returns to the mediant note bars 107-112 and there is a very bare texture with a V pedal bars 107-109, up an octave higher in bars 110-111. The texture becomes more chordal bars 112-135 with the melody in the left hand with the dynamic gradually crescendoing in opposition to the descending melodic line. At bar 127 the dynamic reaches *f* from the contrast of *ppp* in bar 107. The melody is also now played in octaves, giving a deeper, heavier feel. This and the deep pitch creates tension. A sequence of 17 chords is played bars 124 onwards, leading to bar 135. The pitch is now centred back at middle C and is low and the dynamic has continued to increase to *ff* in bar 135. This is when an unexpected modulation to *Ab* major occurs. It is a typical modulation in 3rds of the romantic period. The texture is large, heavy and chordal with low 5th intervals in the bass. In bar 139 the dynamic has increased to *fff* as it modulates back to C major. The large chordal texture continues until bar 143 where general silence is used and the texture and dynamic begin to decrease. In bar 144 the piece diminuendos back to a tranquil *p* dynamic in bar 147. From bar 147 the melody returns with a I bass pedal at a *p* dynamic. The melody now rests on I and there is no modulation to G major this time, as this shows the piece is reaching the end. In bars 155-end syncopation is used in antiphonal imitation on the final perfect cadence of the piece. This and a *pp* dynamic and little slower marking solidifies its calming nature, diminuendoing at the end into the silence. This is typical of Grieg and the Romantic period.

Example 11

The excerpt begins in C major which is the key of the piece. There is a bare 5th in the left hand, which are extremely common in this piece to add to the folk style, which is then followed by lone Gs against the melody. This sparse harmony along with the extremely high tessitura and very soft dynamics act as a point to build from as the sequence descends. The right hand then plays a long sequence of root and 7th 3rd inversion chords with alternating suspensions between the upper and lower parts to add to the dissonance when played against the melody, now in the left hand, in a melody and accompaniment texture. As the sequence descends, the dynamics get louder with a 'Molto' instruction emphasising the scope of the crescendo until bar 127 where the dynamic is *forte* and the left hand plays the melody in octaves with the right hand chords now accented. When the right hand reaches the bass clef in bar 135, there is an abrupt tertiary modulation to *Ab* major, emphasised by the previous long passage in C – and the dynamic is now *ff*. The right hand takes over the melody which now also harmonised in both hands on the strong beats with the left hand bringing back the bare 5ths. The piece reaches its loudest point at bar 139 and then diminuendos to *p* at bar 147. Here, there is a repeat of the more sparse harmony and bare 5ths in the left hand from bar 155.

Section C – Essay

The examples given from the 'Essay' section of the exam were all awarded a mark in the top band of 25–30 marks out of 30. The descriptors for this band are as follows:

- The essay shows a commanding grasp of relevant issues and an assured and comprehensive musical understanding.
- There is a convincing sense of conveying the aural experience of the music under consideration.
- The writing utilises a wide range of appropriate musical examples.
- Technical vocabulary is comprehensive, accurately used and incorporated into a mature writing style.

The original examiner's comments have been added below each essay.

Question 25


Discuss how two of the named artists have used musical elements to create social or political commentary in their work.

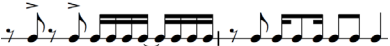
[30 marks]

Example 12

Beyoncé's 'Listen' from the musical 'Dream Girls' has a strong message about standing up for one's self and following your own voice and heart. The song opens on a B major sus2 chord which evokes a feeling of unresolved yearning – her want for better. There is a melody and accompaniment texture of just piano and voice plus a light cymbal roll on the first beat to create a 'wash'. Beyoncé sings in her low register with a light vibrato and quietly to show her restrained emotions. The piano part is descending and thin, including a 4-3 suspension in bar 4 (B A# G# F#) which is reminiscent of gospel/church music – hence inspiring. Also, the extended C# minor 7 chord in bar 3 is an example of romantic harmony used to create richer emotions. The verse ends with a tertiary modulation to D major for the pre-chorus. This has an uplifting effect and shows her confidence grow. Along with the triplet on 'into your heart' the pulsing violin crotchets help to increase the temperature, as well as the instrumental gliss. The triplets reflect Beyoncé's newly found freedom. All this helps the chorus to sound more acclaimed when it arrives. Here, it modulates back to the tonic of B major and Beyoncé has finally moved up into her head voice and uses her strong voice with embellishments via melisma and large intervals. This broadening is further developed by crescendo and full use of drum kit. Bass on 1 & 3, and snare on 2 & 4. Also the strings are more prominent. Overall, this development is to signify how the character will no longer let herself be oppressed by society. Also, the modulation up a semitone at the Bridge further allows a sense of uplift and so inspires the listener to 'listen' to her message.

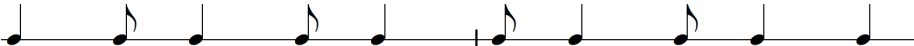
Stevie Wonder's 'Superstition' also critiques society's view of superstition. The piece is distinctly

funk and opens with  which propels us into the light rhythmic groove where bass plays the drum beats of 1 & 3 snare is on the back beats of 2 & 4. The snare's harsher tone allows the off beats to be accented achieving a funk-rhythm which shows his relaxed attitude towards conspiracy and society's beliefs. Over this, the closed hi-hat plays an intricate changeable rhythm of swung semiquavers and quavers. The swung rhythm further shows his mocking of superstition because it sounds so casual. On the 4th bar, the Moog synth and 2 clavinet come in. The first clavinet and hi-hat play an interlocking rhythm which follows the pentatonic scale. The 2nd comps an Eb (b7#9) chord, and the bass and kit provide a strong rhythmic anchor. The light interlocking groove is typical of funk. Stevie enters on the third beat serving as an anacrusis, amounting to a significantly stressed down beat. His line is syncopated due to the tied Gb over the bar line, and explores the pentatonic mode. The lines come in pairs, following an arch shape overall falling a perfect fifth. This has a declamatory mood – showing his relaxed attitude. On the third line, the saxophone and trumpet come in in octaves, playing a syncopated riff:

 (Notice the vibrato on the last 3 notes. This adds an improvisatory feel and so further adds to the relaxed character.)

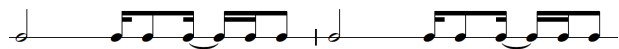
The climax of the song happens midway through the chorus when the sax and trumpet play an augmented V+ of Bb and Gb on a repeated sextuplet. This is significant because it is the shortest note value so far, and dissonance is created between the brass instruments – not the octaves we have had so far. Altogether, this alerts the listener to the next line 'Superstition...' as the brass immediately tacet causing this line to stand out monophonically. The line however is a falling figure and so helps to immediately regain the relaxed original character. Overall this allows Stevie to show his view of how silly society is when it comes to beliefs.

'You are the Sunshine of My Life' is soul and shows a positive outlook on relationships in society. The piece is much more still and focused on melody and harmony rather than rhythm – like in funk. It opens with $\text{I}^9 - \text{I}^9 - \text{V}^{\#5} - \text{V}^{\#5} :||$ The use of 7th chords has a happy content feel – reflecting how happy the 'lover' is. The Fender Rhodes comps as the hi-hat plays the back beat. At the end of each 2 bar phrase, a bossa-nova-like rhythm is introduced on the Rhodes in parallel thirds:

 This is rhythmically

interesting and adds a Latin tinge. Furthermore, the congas provide semiquaver fills. To reflect the song's lyrics, Stevie chose the first 2 lines of Verse 1 to be sung by the male backing singer and the line 3 & 4 to be sung by the female backing singer – to show union. The lines come in pairs, like question and answer phrases. The song builds by the addition of semiquavers and backing vocals on line 3 – 'oohs' which helps to create the warm rich tone – reflecting the happiness of love. Stevie enters on verse 1 (after the chorus) and changes the tone to a more articulated one. This is due to the addition of 'stabbed' 'ba ba's, plosives which thus help to achieve greater articulation. The cymbal provides constant quavers which adds a shimmer to the warm texture. The piece modulates up a semitone to add to the sense of uplift and so highlight what love can do. Overall, the addition of more prominent backing singers on 'love has joined us' and 'ooh's help to 'open' the sound, along with the crescendo.

‘Crazy in Love’ by Beyoncé and Jay-Z is very different to ‘Listen’ as it is all about Beyoncé’s new found love for the rapper Jay-Z. It shows her dependency on him – as she is going ‘crazy’ which is shown through the repetition of lyrics and motifs. The song starts with drum machine and a sample from the Chi-Lites ‘Are You My Woman?’ which is very catchy as it has a diatonic phrase which is repeated, but the second time rises:



The sustained D minim helps to show her insistent and constant desire for him. Beyoncé enters with an ostinato of ‘uh-oh’. This covers a perfect 4th and the repetition further shows how this love is making her go mad. The structure is simple verse/chorus, but also has the addition of Jay-Z rapping over the intro and middle verse and chorus. Similar to the Stevie Wonder duet at the beginning – this is to reflect the love they feel for each other. The tonality is major, flicking between Bb major and G minor. However the use of E natural instead of Eb creates an augmented 4th. This raised fourth makes it in the Lydian mode – creating a bright, major, happy sound. The rapping by Jay-Z makes use of short rapid note values – this shows us how he too is infatuated by love as there is so much to say. It is repetitive which further makes it catchy and shows that relationships within society can make them completely dependent on each other. Cowbell use may be to reference the sample, but also adds to the rhythmic excitement of the piece and create an energised ecstatic character.

Mark: 28/30

In spite of wandering away from the question in the latter stages, this essay is very impressive in the degree of musical detail included. There is a real sense of involvement, plus the ability to represent the aural experience of the music.

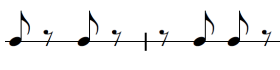
Question 26

Explain how two of the named composers have used rhythm, metre and tempo to create a sense of action and/or stillness in their music for media.


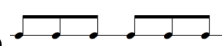
[30 marks]

Example 13



Herrmann creates action and stillness in his films with the use of rhythm, metre and tempo.

In the 'Psycho' Prelude, he combines conflicting rhythms  to create a chaotic introduction, perhaps foreshadowing the dark plot of the film.


This is contrasted, however, with the 'City' theme, that moves in crotchets, creating a calm atmosphere while the audience have the view over Phoenix. The use of repetitive crotchets in the stabbing scene is very effective with the regular tempo mimicking a heartbeat showing the action. In the film 'Vertigo', he again uses these features. In the rooftop scene he uses rhythmic augmentation to add to the chaos,


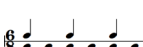
 played by the strings, elongates to  played by the oboes. The quick tempo shows undulation, adding action to the scene over the fear of heights.

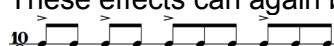
Zimmer also creates action and stillness with the use of rhythm, metre and tempo. In the film 'Inception', tempo indicates the dream level so rhythmic augmentation indicates a deeper dream

level so  from the original 'Non, je ne regret rien' becomes , representing a juxtaposition as the chaotic dream scenes are often represented by slow music.

Action is created in the 'Mombasa' scene due to the tempo and rhythm of

 as it accompanies Cobb avoiding assassins. The hemiola effect created by the accents gives the action scene an element of uncertainty. Another hemiola effect is added

earlier on in the film in the 'Dream is Collapsing' cue the  ends up in  as Cobb shoots Arthur to wake him up, creating a feeling of action.

These effects can again be seen in Batman ['The Dark Knight Rises'] where the 10/8 rhythm  can be heard. During the plane scene this adds action as it is an uncomfortable rhythm for the listener and is the rhythm associated with Bane.

Mark: 20/30

Some excellent rhythmic observations are made here, across a range of music by the two composers. Metre and tempo are addressed appropriately. The approach is largely descriptive, but suitable context has been provided.

Question 28

Are the most interesting performances in jazz always the result of original composition or can re-interpretation of well-known tunes produce equally interesting results?

Discuss this question through detailed discussion of the work of *two* of the named artists.

[30 marks]

Example 14

Jazz can be defined by the performance of jazz standards, but equally by new original compositions that challenge the way the listener perceives jazz. Both interpretations of jazz are valid and necessary for the future of jazz. In this essay, an examination of Charlie Parker and Miles Davis, two of the most influential jazz musicians of the 20th century, will highlight the need for performers of original jazz and jazz standards.

Charlie Parker epitomises the performance of traditional jazz standards and jazz charts previously recorded by other artists and redefining them as his own. His work 'Ko-Ko' (1945) is based on the 32 bar song form of Ray Noble's chart 'Cherokee'. Charlie Parker was a Bebop musician, who took the chords from jazz standards and improvised/added a new melody over them in a technique known as contrafacting. The chart opens in octave texture between the sax and the trumpet, the octave texture leaving a more exposed sound than the original. The music is swung, but performed at a rapid tempo of 300+BPM. The walking bass can be heard prominently. These are the defining characteristics of Bebop. Parker epitomised Bebop through his experimentation of his own virtuosity. The chart progresses to a muted trumpet, then an alto sax solo before harmonising in 3rds and 4ths then octaves. The bass drum that follows suddenly is an example of Max Roach's sporadic drumming style, again another characteristic of Bebop. His highly syncopated snare solo (not in the original Noble standard) helped to highlight Parker as a performer willing to experiment. In Parker's improvised solo, at 1'16, there is a musical quotation from Alphonse Picou's 'High Society', one of the earliest jazz standards to have been recorded. It demonstrates that while Parker's improvised solo made use of pitch-bends and glissandos, there was still an underlying inspiration from original compositions. It presents Parker as a performer, able to reinterpret well-known jazz charts into new interesting pieces of jazz.

Charlie Parker's 'A Night in Tunisia' (1946) reinforces this theme significantly. It is based on the well-known Dizzy Gillespie chart (recorded 1941-2). It opens with the bass oscillating from Eb7 to Dm7 in an arpeggiated bass riff. The drums enter with toms on bar 5, with a syncopated alto and tenor sax riff at bar 9. The trumpet enters with the melody at bar 13, catching the listener by surprise (expecting a second 8 bar phrase). The beginning is straight while the B section of the chart is swung, creating two contrasting styles. At the C section, Parker performs a repeated concert A. As the chords change, this pedal note changes its role in the chord from the dominant in D min to the 11th, #11th and #9th among others. The #9 is significant because Bebop made use of the # and flat 5 and 9 to move around the established key. The famous alto break at 1'16 features this to allow the solo to be harmonically adventurous. The improvised solo from the alto sax, tenor and trumpet were based on the A section melody (particularly the 7th bar for the trumpet and the tenor) and the B section harmony for the guitar solo. The use of improvised solo and the changing of styles presents Parker as an experimental performer that took well-known jazz charts and made them his own, defining Bebop as he progressed.

Miles Davis is an example of a jazz artist who composed original jazz charts. His 1959 work 'So What' (part of the album 'Kind of Blue') was monumental. It opens with the piano and bass performing in free time. The piano uses quartal harmony (similar to Debussy's 'Voilles') in the beginning – a stack of perfect 4ths with a 3rd on top. It also features a call and response between the bass and piano. The bass then develops into a groove, using the modal scale Dorian on D. After 16 bars, it shifts a semitone to Dorian on Eb. The use of modal scales allows Davis to improvise continually. His solo in 'So What' took a central motif and began to develop it further. A similar idea was repeated in Coltrane's tenor sax solo and the piano. The emphasis was less on traditional scalar virtuosity and more on lyric ideas. While Coltrane's solo features more ascending and descending lines, Davis provided a high tessitura with a top D to E heard suddenly, capturing

the listener by surprise. Miles Davis demonstrates the importance of composition and improvisation in the need for interesting jazz.

Miles Davis' 1969 work 'Shhh – Peaceful' reinforces the sense of an original composition. His work is based on a loose sonata, with the beginning representing the exposition; 5'56 represents the development and 12' represents the recapitulation. The chart opens with a D7sus4 chord on the organ, with the hi-hat on the drum beat providing a constant semiquaver line. The use of the F# to the G in the Guitar as crushed notes acts as the sustained 4th in D7sus4 chord. The music is divided up as well with the 'Shhh' section up to 9 minutes and the 'Peaceful' section following. This structural development demonstrates the possibility of interesting jazz from original compositions/charts. The use of the synth organ and the electronic effects creates a sense of fusion between rock and jazz, an idea arguably explored further by Pat Metheny. The trumpet solo is again improvised, built upon three independent themes. This is similar to the improvisational style of 'So What' (the opening of the trumpet solo in 'Shhh-Peaceful' is arguably reminiscent of the opening of the improvised solo in 'So What'). Miles Davis is clearly demonstrating that original compositions have the ability to produce interesting performances that challenge and combine jazz and classical elements.

To conclude, both Charlie Parker and Miles Davis are two of the most important jazz musicians of the 20th century. Charlie Parker's portrayal of well-known jazz standards epitomised Bebop with melodic, harmonic and rhythmic innovation. Conversely, Miles Davis presents the ability of most composed and structured works to be challenging and interesting to the ear. The use of classical influences and the development of modal jazz are clear examples of jazz. Together, Parker and Davis explore the full breadth of possibility throughout jazz composition and performance. It demonstrates that a re-interpretation of a well-known jazz standard and brand new compositions can excite, challenge and interest a variety of audiences to an equal degree. Charlie Parker and Miles Davis demonstrate this clearly.

Mark: 29/30

Well-chosen examples, discussed in a high level of detail and with intelligent focus on the question. Some of the discussion is a little broad in relation to detail, so it is not entirely consistent.

Example 15

Throughout the 1940s, Jazz became the popular music. This was because composers of the swing period arranged well known tunes into Big Band hits with the help of originality from composers. Duke Ellington is thought to be a master of arranging; today, many of the great well-known standards ('Take the A Train') are his own compositions. He created interesting performances by arranging melodies into complex textures, using webs of riffs and call+response to create co-ordination between players. This resulted in melody coming alive, by writing it in sections of instruments (trumpets, trombones, saxes), passing it around the band for timbral contrast. Further interest came from extended harmonies to add extra colour and writing in 32 bar song form or 12 bar blues to make sure the melody is heard at all times.

A good example of Duke's originality is 'The Mooche'. Written for big band, Duke explores the exotic 'jungle style' to create an interesting work. The piece sets the scene using high, parallel clarinet lines, that are in 3rds and descend chromatically. This provides dissonance and contributes to the exotic sound world being created. Further contribution comes from the trumpet, which uses the plunger mute to create a 'growl' sound. Both of these parts are in a call + response style texture but are contrasted, with the solo trumpet being more virtuosic, using shorter note values and timbrally different. Underneath these two melodies is a steady bass which moves chromatically around C-7 and its tritone substitute B7. This creates extra colour making the track more interesting. After the elongated, 24 bar intro, the first 12 bar blues (A) is played by the bright, loud horns who play a syncopated melody in block chords. However, Duke manipulates the 12 bar blues by using substitutions and extensions. The chord progression is:

Eb ⁷ Bb ⁷	Eb ⁷ Bb ⁷	Eb ⁶	Eb ⁶	Ab ⁶	Ab ⁻⁷	Eb ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁻⁷ Bb ⁷	F ⁻⁷ Bb ⁷	Eb ⁷ Bb ⁷	Eb
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Duke uses secondary dominants and major – minor shifts to add harmonic variety. The next 12 bar blues (B) is played by the clarinet who uses pitch bends and varied rhythms for virtuosity. This section is in Eb minor and the soloist makes this darker mood by changing to playing in their chalumeau register, creating timbral variety. The C section moves back to the major key, but now the soloist is a scat singer, imitating the jungle style by adding rough vibrato and 'growl' qualities. Another excellent example of Duke's originality can be found in his ground-breaking 'Transbluesency'. This unusual work shows how altering the norm can create an interesting performance. The usual big band has been replaced by a smaller ensemble. The main melody is in a 3 part texture. This is similar to the block chord idea of 'The Mooche', however, the voicing across the group is unusual. The highest part is an 'instrumental' voice which uses classical vibrato, instead of using jazz [sound], to create an interesting timbre; the middle melodic voice is a high muted trombone which has an unusual fragile sound. The lowest voice is the clarinet who plays in its chalumeau register. This combination of instruments creates an exotic and forward-thinking approach to jazz. Further contrast comes from the rhythm section. There is no drum kit and the time feel is straight, which was unusual for the time. The bass is fragmented and uses rhythmic diminution towards ends of phrases to create contrast. The piano also disrupts the sense of time by playing virtuosic fills and syncopated chords to add rhythmic variety. However, although original compositions allow their composer to be free from the usual constraints, re-interpreting well-known tunes can be even more challenging. It requires innovation and a wealth of knowledge to be able to create something original and interesting from pre-composed work.

Someone who was excellent at this was Charlie Parker who played in the bebop era. Unlike swing, smaller groups were used and virtuosic improvisation came to the fore. Tempos were a lot faster and the rhythm section became more inventive, taking solos and improvising ('Koko' by Parker features a virtuosic drum solo by Max Roach, showing that the role of the drummer was changed). Charlie Parker's tune 'Shaw Nuff' is a good example of a work which wasn't originally composed by him. 'Shaw Nuff' is a contrafact of Gershwin's 'I Got Rhythm'. Therefore Parker uses the harmonic progression but adds a new, angular and disjunct melody which uses constant quavers and unpredictable changes in direction to add extra brilliance and interest to his playing. The introduction seems somewhat separate from the actual head. It starts with piano, bass and drums who play a syncopated ostinato that displaces the strong beat, adding rhythmic contrast. When the

trumpet (Dizzy Gillespie) and Parker (Alto Sax) enter, the melody is catchy and memorable, which is unusual for bebop. The harmony is interesting as it moves chromatically from B- to Bb7, using a tritone substitute. The texture is also interesting as it includes stop-time bursts to show off the virtuosity of other members (the piano solo played by Al Haig before the head). Although Parker is using Gershwin's chords, his intro is an original idea, showing that Parker has maintained his influence and personal touch. The piece then follows a typical head-solos-head structure, using the 32-bar song form AABA structure to show off the brilliance of the individuals. Because of the fast tempo, the harmonic rhythm is very fast, which when improvised over, creates interesting and exciting solos. Parker's solo uses varied rhythms and constant lines to show off his talented playing. He also uses extensions and a wide range to show off the capabilities of his sax, all the while creating interest by using fragmented phrases. This builds tension and momentum but also allows for conversation between the rhythm section which creates textural contrast. His solo is abruptly cut off by a high, impactful note from Dizzy. This shows the playful relationship between the two. His solo further develops in long and short note values, and repeated motifs. Parker can also be original. 'Night in Tunisia' is an excellent example of combining Latin and swung jazz to create interest. Starting with piano, guitar and bass, the intro moves chromatically from Eb7 to D-7. Further layering comes from the saxes, who are in 3rds and add articulation contrast via short, snappy riffs. Dizzy enters playing a long, disjunct legato melody, which also creates timbral contrast against the saxes. The mute also gives the trumpet an intense quality. The B section (AABA song form) is played by Parker, who uses a clear, bright tone, playing a descending sequence. However the time feel has moved from Latin to swing, which adds rhythmic variety. The chord sequence of the B section is:

A- ^{7b5}	D ^{7b9}	G- ⁶ D ^{7b9}	G- ⁶	G- ^{7b5}	C ^{7b9}	F ^{o7}	E- ^{7b5} A ^{7b5}
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This decorated circle of minor ii-V-I adds extra harmonic variety. After the form is finished, a unison repeated melody is played by the two saxes and trumpet using this rhythm:

as an ostinato and stop-time breaks for contrast.

Therefore to create an interesting performance is not about whether you composed it or not, but how you use originality and innovation to create interest, and if it wasn't for the forward thinking of Parker and Ellington, Jazz wouldn't be the same.

Mark: 30/30

An excellent survey of a range of pieces, with a close focus on the requirements of the essay title.

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