



Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2015

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in
Music

Unit 8: Music and Production Analysis
(20375F)

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General:

This was the second sitting of the Unit 8: Music and Production Analysis exam paper with a relatively small cohort but significantly larger than in the previous Summer 2014 exam series.

Whilst it was evident that learners had engaged in some planning and exam preparation for the longer response questions, it was evident that insufficient preparation had been given to developing a firm understanding of the specification content in terms of musical features. There were many instances where learners clearly had not understood musical devices and the distinction between the musical elements. There were numerous misinterpretations between dynamics and timbre for example.

There were also several examples of learners providing indiscriminate responses such as lists of instruments, descriptions of the meaning of lyrics or background information on the artists. Centres are encouraged to ensure that learners read the question correctly to avoid providing inaccurate responses and therefore wasting valuable examination time.

The use of poor spelling was also a cause for concern, particularly significant was the misspelling of instruments such as piano, musical devices such as arpeggio and other key musical terms. Learners were credited where possible providing the response was legible.

Learners should take care to provide no more than the stated number of responses.

Q01

- a) A high proportion of learners identified solo as the correct response here.
- b) Nearly all learners achieved 1 mark for identifying pop as the genre of the music.
- c) A reasonable number of learners were able to successfully identify 150 as the tempo of the piece.

Q02

- i) High percentage gave an accurate response.
- ii) Most achieved a mark here and most of the incorrect responses related to Bridge.
- iii) Successful in the main.
- iv) Mostly accurate responses.
- v) Mostly accurate responses.

Q03a

Disappointing response to question. Several answers gave names of instruments or production techniques where question clearly asked for a musical device. Quite a few answered with falsetto believing that falsetto voice can be applied to a female voice.

3 (a) Which musical device is used in the main melody at:

0:24 to 0:25 'Take me in'

and

1:10 to 1:11 'Fall head first?'

arpeggio

(1) Q03a 1

Q03b

Poor responses with some seemingly providing answers relating to question Q03a. Many referred to production devices as opposed to musical devices.

Q04

This item was answered well by most learners. Some had included 'voice' as a response but was not allowed for this item.

The most common responses were Guitar, synthesiser and drums.

4 Identify three instruments used in this piece.	Q04	3
1 Bass Guitar		
2 Drum kit		
3 Synthesiser		
(Total for Question 4 = 3 marks)	Total	3

Q05

There were mixed responses to this item, where some learners' response addressed timbre or pitch instead of dynamics e.g. loud, thick.

5 The following question relates from 0:17 to 0:38, the lyrics of which are as follows: <i>'Handlebars and then I let go, let go for anyone Take me in and throw out my heart and get a new one Next thing, we're touching You look at me it's like you hit me with lightning'</i> Describe the use of dynamics in this section.	Q05	2
The section starts off mezzo forte, then there is a gradual crescendo up to the chorus, which begins forte.		
(Total for Question 5 = 2 marks)	Total	2

Q06

This was answered well with a high number responding with studio. Others offered Studio overdub or booth, all of which were acceptable for credit.

Q07

Learners were challenged by this item and many failed to take notice of the requirement to identify a production technique. Many provided echo as a response based on the repetition of the words but this was not a correct answer relating to production technique. Panning was identified by most as correct response, but those identifying left or right & autopan were credited.

7	Identify the production technique used on the vocals from 0:14 to 0:17, when the following words are sung: 'Hit, hit, hit me with lightning'	Q07	1
<p>Panning</p>		Total	1
(Total for Question 7 = 1 mark)			

Q08

Fairly well answered with most being able to identify the effects. Others were unable to provide descriptions of how the effect was used or identify how it was used correctly. Some identified actual instruments and described the effect of this which was not the correct response. Most were able to provide at least one accurate 'effect' response.

The example below was awarded 4 marks.

8	Identify two production effects used throughout the piece and describe how they are used.	Q08	
Effect 1			
Reverb on the major on of the tracks			
Description			
This gives the overall final production of the track to have a room-like sound to the recording instead of be remaining flat			
Effect 2			
Panning			
Description			
The many track have been command to a separate ^{separate} location in the stereo field. Lead vocal is in the middle, Guitar in the right and Piano in the left.			
(Total for Question 8 = 4 marks)			

Q09

This question had been misinterpreted with several referring to dynamics as opposed to texture as requested in the question. Most found the descriptive element of the question difficult with several learners referring to the location in the music where it took place. Others merely added 'dense' or 'sparse' without qualifying the placement.

9	Give two examples of how changes in texture are used to create contrast of mood from 2:17 to the end.	Q09	4
Explain how each contrast is achieved.			
Example 1			
From 2:17 to 2:23, the texture is quite sparse, silence at 2:24			
Explanation			
creates mystery, intrigues the listener?			
Example 2			
Normal texture The texture is dense until 2:43, when drums then at 2:49 there are no drums, is only guitar and vocals			
Explanation			
Finishes with just guitar and vocal, creates suspense, just left hanging there			
(Total for Question 9 = 4 marks)			Total 4

Q10

This was less well answered with a low number of learners being able to identify the decade in which 'Step on' by Happy Mondays was released in the 1990's.

Q11

A well answered question with a high proportion responding accurately.

Q12

Although reasonably answered, this item provided difficulty for those learners who clearly had no or limited knowledge of the specification content. Musical 'device' continues to be a problem with some learners not understanding what it means. Many learners clearly believed it referred to production or instrumentation.

12 Identify one musical device used in the introduction up to 0:32.	Q12	1
<i>riffs</i>		
(Total for Question 12 = 1 mark)	Total	1

Q13

Mixed responses here where some learners did not understand 'non-tuned' percussion. Several offered guitar or bass guitar. The spelling of instruments for this question was also very poor with some being illegible.

Q14

This item generated several accurate responses with most learners identifying the texture as thin or sparse. Some used the term whilst other provided a description in full sentences.

14 Identify the texture from 0:33 to 0:50.	Q14	1
<i>Thin/Sparse</i>		
(Total for Question 14 = 1 mark)	Total	1

Q15

A highly successful question with most learners achieving full credit.

Q16

Answers provided clearly showed learners had prepared for this type of question. Whilst some identified changes, they weren't always specific in terms of their location and therefore could not always be credited. Other responses described the change but did not specify how this changed the mood. Several identified the introduction of the backing vocals describing this as a pensive mood and a change in genre. Others were at times vague in describing how the change of mood actually occurred.

16 Explain one way in which a change of mood is created from 2:33 to 3:09.	Q16	2
Instead of having the lead vocalist singing there is a gospel choir and theres quite a sparse texture. This helps change the mood as it's more calming and chilled out than the rest of the song.		
(Total for Question 16 = 2 marks)		Total 2

Q17

There were mixed responses here where the majority of learners seemed to understand the placement of the lead vocals as middle forward in the mix, but many were unable to correctly identify the backing vocals as middle back, left and right. Those who answered just left or right were not credited as they didn't demonstrate an understanding of the placement in the stereo field.

17 The lead vocals and backing vocals are placed differently in the stereo field. Identify the placement. Lead vocals in the centre Backing vocals on the left and the right	Q17	2
(Total for Question 17 = 2 marks)		Total 2

Q18

This was answered well with most learners providing distortion as their response. The other popular response was chorus. Some learners misinterpreted the question and produced answers relating to dynamic or type of guitar.

18 Name one effect or device used to create the guitar sound on this track.	Q18	1
distortion		
(Total for Question 18 = 1 mark)		Total 1

Q19

This was successfully answered by a high proportion of learners identifying 4/4 as the correct time signature of the piece.

Q20

This was generally well answered with microphones the most popular response. Some learners were able to understand the need to explain one development, however not all referred this development to audio quality as specified in the question or vice versa. Whilst some identified a piece of equipment, their following response proceeded to explain about a different audio equipment entirely.

20 Happy Mondays recorded some of their tracks at Capitol Studios, which was founded in 1956.

- (a) One development in recording equipment since 1956 is the use of the digital audio workstation (computer).

Identify **one** other piece of recording equipment that has developed since 1956.

(1) Q20a 1

4 TRACK MULTI RECORDER

- (b) Explain how **one** development in recording equipment has improved audio quality.

(2) Q20b 2

MODERN DAY MICROPHONES HAVE THE OPTION OF VARIOUS POLAR PATTERNS WHICH MEANS THAT THEY CAN BE ADJUSTED TO RECEIVE SOUND INTO THEM FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WHICH HELPS REDUCE BLEED FROM OTHER INSTRUMENTS ~~AND CAN BE~~

(Total for Question 20 = 3 marks)

Total 3

Q21

This question discriminated well at all levels, where nearly all learners were able to provide a correct response and scoring at least one mark. Evidence of planning on some papers demonstrated good preparation. However, the question proved challenging to the less well prepared learners, particularly the focus on the vocal features. These responses tended to discuss musical features in general. A recurring tendency seen was for learners to begin discussing the vocal features but lose this focus with responses becoming more generalised. The higher level responses clearly demonstrated application of knowledge and were able to apply themselves effectively to the specific aim.

SECTION C

Question 21 relates to **both** track 1 on the CD: **Starry Eyed** by **Ellie Goulding** and track 2 on the CD: **Step On** by **Happy Mondays**.

21 Compare the vocal features of the two pieces.

(8) Q21 7

There are both similarities and differences between the vocal features of the two pieces. A main difference is that the lead singer on 'Starry Eyed' is female and the lead singer on 'Step On' is male. This entails different vocal ranges and tones - Ellie sings higher than the lead singer of Happy Mondays.

'Starry Eyed' was released more recently and is a different style of music, therefore production effects have been used to add to Ellie's voice. For example, overdubbing is used so that we hear two voices - Ellie singing in two different octaves at the same time. This doesn't happen in 'Step On'. There is also added vibrato to her voice in the outro and echoes in the backing vocals ("oh").

However, in 'Step On', not so many effects are added to the voice. The lead singer's voice is mainly unaltered by production effects. This makes it sound more improvised - especially as he sometimes speaks instead of singing and adds it ^{(Starry Eyed) has a more fixed vocal melody} at the end in the intro. ~~Also~~ Another difference is that in 'Happy Monday' there are more singers as there is a section featuring a choir. ~~However~~ However, the lead singer and the choir don't sing together, therefore 'Starry Eyed' has a more complex vocal feature. In 'Step On', we hear whistling at the end, which is not present in 'Starry Eyed'.

There are also similarities between the vocal features of the two pieces. Both have a vocal verse-chorus structure with repetition of lyrics and melodic phrases depending on which section of the piece it is. Both pieces also feature vocals in the intro before the main singing of the verse starts.

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