

MUSIC

Paper 9703/01

Listening

A generally high standard of expression in essays reflected a serious, thoughtful approach with occasional flashes of passionate engagement with the music. Answers were nearly all well-structured and usually to the point. All candidates attempted three Questions, though some may not have left sufficient time to do themselves justice in **Section C**. It is not clear whether candidates were being over-cautious in their reluctance to refer to music other than the Prescribed and Core Works (in **Sections B** and **C**) or whether they had very little other experience of wider repertoire(s) to draw on in their answers.

Section A

Candidates had prepared well for this Section and most showed themselves to best advantage in this part of the paper. Some very high-scoring answers demonstrated close knowledge of the Prescribed Works, particularly the Schubert, an understanding of the relationships between techniques and effects, careful attention to relevance and the ability to cite details in a convincing way. **Questions 1** and **3** attracted almost equal numbers of candidates: few chose **Question 2**.

- 1 Most candidates were aware of differences in style, tone and texture between the two movements but many were hazy about the basic defining features of a Minuet and Trio, particularly the form – it was often referred to as being in Sonata Form. The best answers were those that could distinguish clearly between 'Minuet', 'Trio' and 'Scherzo' (however spelt) and also drew attention to Beethoven's passage linking the movement to the Finale.
- 2 Three principal features of a concerto were usually listed: double exposition, cadenza and the virtuosic nature of the solo part. Some candidates were also able to distinguish between the orchestra's *tutti* moments and its accompanimental role, and to make valid comparisons between concerto and symphony both in this respect and in terms of number and type of movements. But answers generally suffered from a lack of specific detail relating points made about concerto in general to the Haydn concerto in particular.
- 3 There were many comprehensive commentaries on individual variations but candidates were not always able to sustain this level of detail over three variations. Some accounts were surprisingly eloquent, the choice of vivid adjectives to describe rhythms, figures and textures testifying to close appreciation of the music. Not all, however, attended to the requirement to choose 'contrasting' variations and others strayed into irrelevance with introductory discussion about the form and harmonisation of the initial statement of the theme or even biographical matter.

Section B

The majority of candidates chose **Question 5**. Only **Question 4** was explicitly tied to any of the Core Works: **Question 5** was designed to be accessible to candidates who had only studied the Core Works, but it also gave full freedom to range outside these. The scope of **Question 6** lay entirely outside the Core Works.

- 4 The difficulties experienced with this Question were often of a candidate's own making: a straightforward answer listing the roles of the soprano soloist, the SATB and boys' choirs would have formed the backbone of a satisfactory answer. Brief descriptions of examples of chordal, imitative and unison/octave singing would have completed it. Discussion of the Owen poems was irrelevant but several candidates were determined to work this into their answers.

- 5 The standard of answers was high: candidates chose the work (or works) about which they were most confident and enthusiastic and showed keen aural awareness in their enumerations, as well as considerable involvement in their chosen work's 'message'. Some very good answers showed a good understanding of the need to relate personal response to a detailed identification of techniques used to create the effects being so vividly described. Many compared the Britten with the Vaughan Williams but many others wrote equally confidently about the Penderecki only. A few candidates were able to refer to other movements in the choral works but there was otherwise virtually no evidence that music by any other composers had been studied.
- 6 'Popular song' was unexpectedly often misunderstood: more than one candidate read it as an invitation to talk about the Britten and Vaughan Williams, giving virtually a looser answer to what had been posed as **Question 5**.

Section C

Fewer answers in this section achieved high marks. While candidates had clearly been well prepared in terms of knowing the music of the Prescribed and Core Works less attention had been paid to fleshing out the contextual background to the inception and performance of these works. All except **Question 10** could be answered well by thoughtful candidates who relied only on the Prescribed and Core Works for their references. But the Questions were also amenable to illustration by examples drawn from a much wider range of repertoires. It was disappointing that so few candidates felt sufficiently confident of their own judgement to refer to any music that they perform themselves or listen to outside the classroom. **Question 8** attracted the greatest number of candidates: a substantial number chose **Question 9** but relatively few **Questions 7** or **10**.

- 7 Although most candidates were able to relate tempo to speed, only a few were precise enough to tie its definition to the beat. But they nearly all realised that they had a great deal of illustrative material at their fingertips, particularly from the Prescribed Works, and discussed the different movements of symphony and concerto, and contrasted this with examples of unmetred music in the Britten and Penderecki pieces. One enterprising candidate also discussed a range of piano music in a relevant way.
- 8 Again, there was a wealth of material available to candidates simply by comparing the Prescribed with the Core Works. Most made some attempt at this and were able to convey the ideas of orchestras enlarging and composers becoming more innovative (a disconcertingly large number saw the eighteenth-century as very rule-bound and painted a gloomy picture of composers suffering from oppressive conventions which stifled their powers of expression). The best answers were those which not only described technological advances in terms of new instruments, new ways of playing them and improvements in tuning, but were also aware of the differences in sound and texture (beyond simply 'louder') which became possible. One candidate widened his discussion to consider the issue of 'authenticity'.
- 9 Answers were generally framed in terms of reception, i.e. whether the music feels personal to the listener, rather than the composer's intention. The basic evidence available to all candidates was, of course, the contrast between chamber music and small-scale orchestral music for private performance, and larger works for public concert halls or cathedrals. Misconceptions abounded about the nature of the audiences for whom eighteenth-century composers wrote. The most thoughtful candidates widened the scope of their answers to include examples from popular music genres (there were many references to Bob Dylan and Woodstock), and also considered the issue of recorded music. Although many candidates argued their point of view solidly, and some attempted the difficult task of distinguishing between 'music as entertainment' and 'music as expression', too many lacked sufficient references to examples to support their case convincingly. One or two widened the scope of their answers to discuss music which they had performed themselves.
- 10 There were disappointingly few satisfactory answers to this Question. Although most candidates were able to identify the types of feature that would need discussion (rhythm, scale, harmony, melody, instruments etc), the level of their answers remained too general, never succeeding in making sufficiently explicit references to examples from a single identified tradition to communicate what distinguishes 'their' tradition from any other.

MUSIC

Paper 9703/02
Practical Musicianship

General comments

For the first year of this new Syllabus, the standard of work presented was very encouraging. The majority of candidates had been fully prepared for the Elements chosen and most of the work submitted was well organised and efficiently assessed by Centres.

Element 1

Most candidates performed music which showed a variety of styles and was appropriate to their level of musical understanding. Candidates were, on the whole, ably accompanied where necessary and Centres had taken considerable care to ensure suitable venues were chosen for the performances. Centres are reminded that permission must be sought from CIE if backing tracks are to be used for the accompaniment. Many candidates had an audience – sometimes other candidates from the Centre. This added to the sense of occasion, but it is of course the candidate's choice whether an audience is, or is not, present.

Element 1 requires candidates to present a representative selection of music performed on a single occasion and consisting of 3 or 4 short pieces lasting 6 –10 minutes in total. Centres should note that candidates might be disadvantaged if they perform only one or two longer pieces, as they may not have the opportunity fully to demonstrate their *well developed coherent understanding of a range of styles* as assessed in criterion E and also possibly in criterion B where *technical control across a wide range of techniques* is assessed, they might not be able to access the whole mark range.

Many candidates gave articulate, thoroughly prepared, spoken introductions to their performance programmes. This introduction puts the forthcoming programme of music into context for their audience and the Examiners, and its relevance and extent to which its context is reflected in the performance is assessed in section E of the assessment criteria. Some introductions included brief demonstrations of styles and techniques from the pieces to be played. Whilst this should not too far extend the length of the introduction, this clearly showed how candidates had considered the musical context of their pieces and gave an interesting insight into the music for all concerned. Those candidates who gave only the titles of their pieces with, in some instances, the briefest background to the composer, disadvantaged themselves both in their ability to access the full range of marks in section E of the assessment criteria, and often by their lack of understanding of the music in their actual performance. Centres' attention is drawn to the guidance regarding introductions, which is given in the Syllabus and Guidance for teachers, Component 2: Practical Coursework Element 1, paragraph 2. Some Centres included written copies of the spoken introductions in their submission. This is not a requirement, but was of assistance to Moderators, particularly where English was not the candidate's first language.

Many Centres included video/DVD recordings of their candidates' performances as well as the obligatory audio recording. It is essential that all such recordings are clearly labelled with a track list – most Centres provided excellent documentation in this respect, but some had not given due concern to this and recordings mixed candidates and Elements in a seemingly random order. This made the process of moderation a needlessly difficult one. The quality of recordings was generally very good and considerable time and effort had gone into this aspect of the work. Centres should ensure that the music stand does not obscure the camera's view of the performer – this was particularly problematic where seated guitarists were involved. Centres are also reminded that photocopies of all music performed should be included in the submission. Again most Centres complied with this requirement. Those that did not, need to be aware that candidates may be disadvantaged if Moderators do not have access to all the materials that were available to the Centre's assessors.

Centres coped very well with the paperwork required in the assessment process of this Element. teachers were almost always able to place the candidate in the correct band for each of the assessment criteria and there were very few arithmetical errors.

Element 2

This was the area in which the greatest number of Syllabus infringements occurred. This element is designed to give candidates an opportunity to show a more diverse range of skills than Element 1. Candidates should develop and extend their skills over a sustained period of time and the two chosen forms of activity should be assessed and recorded on audio or video tape on three occasions. The recordings must be forwarded to CIE for moderation. Progress made is an integral part of the assessment process in this Element, so it is essential that evidence of all three assessment occasions is provided. The documentation should be completed in as comprehensive a way as possible to enable Moderators really to understand the process that the candidates have experienced.

Care must be taken to ensure that the disciplines offered in Element 2 do not overlap with those of Element 1. The aim is that candidates have an opportunity to be credited for practical music making beyond the solo performance offered in Element 1. If Element 1 has been performed in Ensemble, or with a group of “accompanists”, then Ensemble may not be offered as part of Element 2. This is equally true where the nature of Element 1 is improvisatory, improvisation may not be one of the Element 2 disciplines chosen. Several Centres this year fell foul of this ruling and some candidates even gave an improvisatory ensemble performance in Element 1 and then chose ensemble (again improvised) and improvisation as their Element 2 options. Other candidates had too much overlap within the two disciplines of Element 2, e.g. singers who performed in a trio as “ensemble” and then in a trio as “accompaniment”. Some candidates also performed on a “second instrument” which was too closely akin to that used for Element 1. These, and similar infringements, are not acceptable – candidates should be showing how they have extended and diversified their skills.

Having dealt first with infringements, there was much positive on which to report. There were many outstanding examples of work in all disciplines of this Element. Some Centres had clearly given serious consideration to which disciplines would best suit each of their candidates and submitted concise, but thorough notes on the progress made and the standard reached. In this Element, consistent hard work is credited and many candidates were able to show a real commitment to this aspect of their course.

Assessments were generally accurate as regards the final outcome, but in Centres where interim assessments had not been fully documented and recorded, there was little real evidence for Moderators of either the progress made, or the consistent hard work that had occurred. Centres which allowed candidates to play to their strengths were most successful. The enthusiasm shown by some candidates brought real credit to themselves and their Centres. The problems arose when not enough preparation time had been given – at least six months is needed for this Element. Centres might find a table outlining the requirements helpful:

Date	Activity	Evidence required
At start of course – at least six months before submission	Decide the two disciplines to be studied	
During the course	First interim assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record audio/video evidence of work in each discipline ● Complete relevant sections on p.2 of Element 2 Working Marksheet – copy in Syllabus – include title/composer, candidate’s role, evaluative comment
Later in the course	Second interim assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record audio/video evidence of work in each discipline ● Complete relevant sections on p.2 of Element 2 Working Marksheet – copy in Syllabus and Guidance for teachers – include title/composer, candidate’s role, evaluative comment
At the end of the course	Final assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record audio/video evidence of work in each discipline ● Award mark for each discipline ● Complete Working Marksheet p.2-3 making comment in support of the marks awarded ● Submit all recordings and documentation to CIE

Element 3

Although no candidates offered this Element this year, Centres might find a few guidelines useful for future sessions. A set of 6 – 8 exercises should be submitted demonstrating the candidate’s understanding of the chosen tradition. The candidate’s level of progress should also be shown. The work should be dated and presented in chronological order and teachers should give a clear outline of the course undertaken – this is particularly important where the tradition studied is not western tonal harmony. The material chosen for submission should be based on actual repertoire with the *incipit* (if appropriate) and any given material (usually the top or bottom line) clearly distinguishable from the candidate’s work. An aural approach to the working of exercises is essential and candidates should be encouraged to develop their inner ear by playing through their work.

Element 4

This element gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their composing skills in two compositions. These should either be fully notated, or detailed notes on the process of composition should be submitted.

Candidates produced work in a variety of styles, sometimes using technology to compose, notate and record the final pieces. Most candidates wrote idiomatically for the chosen instruments, although there was a surprising number that did not include their main instrument, as performed in Element 1, in their compositions. Candidates demonstrated their ability to use a variety of techniques within appropriate structures and were able to show inventive and effective shaping of materials. The recordings submitted had been carefully produced and mostly gave a clear picture of the candidate’s intentions. Scores were generally accurate, well edited and neatly presented. Imaginative use of software packages was evident in many cases.

Teachers made accurate assessments of their candidates’ work, with very few adjustments being necessary at moderation.

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Paper 9703/03
Performing

General comments

All candidates for this Paper performed to a good standard and there were some outstanding renditions of a variety of styles from mainstream Western repertoire to folk music from around the world.

This Paper requires candidates to carry out an extended performance of 12 – 20 minutes in length based on a single focus. While all candidates worked within the set time limits, some performances consisted entirely of music where the whole piece was repeated, either because it was a completely strophic song, or a piece with repeats and a *da capo*, thus meaning that there were only about 6 minutes of actual musical material. Candidates who choose this type of music should endeavour to perform beyond the bare minimum time allocation so that they give themselves an opportunity to access the upper mark bands for which they must show their technical control of a wide range of techniques, and well-developed, coherent understanding of the chosen stylistic focus. This can be difficult to achieve when the performance is very short.

The majority of candidates had chosen an appropriate focus for their performance. These ranged from those based around a period of music to those that worked with a stimulus such as *The Seasons in Music*. Centres are reminded that candidates should be exploring a genuine focus – there were some very tenuous links between pieces this year.

Most candidates gave appropriate oral introductions to their performance and, as with Component 2, those who did not disadvantaged themselves in their lack of ability to access the full mark range in Assessment Criterion E – Stylistic Understanding. Candidates should set the focus in context and give an insight into how it is demonstrated in each of the pieces performed.

Candidates were ably accompanied on appropriate instruments and, where the use of backing tracks was unavoidable, it was pleasing to see that these had been prepared especially for the candidate's performance.

Audio and video recordings were of good quality and suitably labelled for submission.

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Paper 9703/04
Composing

General Comments

It is very pleasing to report that the quality of composing submitted has been of a high standard and candidates have enthusiastically engaged with the challenges presented in the syllabus. Candidates demonstrated that they were able to produce a piece within the required time parameters; they were able to present, sustain, extend and explore ideas in a way that thoroughly engaged the listener.

Many candidates submitted work firmly rooted in the Western tradition but it is to be hoped that in future years, candidates and teachers alike will feel able and encouraged to explore the wider remit of the syllabus. Indeed, candidates may draw on, or present a fusion of any traditions or styles. The choice of musical language is unlimited.

Successful composers are those whose critical listening gives them insight and an aural familiarity that is beneficial to their own work. Wide ranging, intelligent listening is to be encouraged.

The syllabus provides the opportunity to link the research elements of composing to a submission as part of Component 5: Investigation and Report. Composers throughout history have thrived on the influences of musicians that have preceded them or may be contemporary with them and candidates who wish to document their analytical investigations can choose to do so through this route.

Comments on specific aspects of submissions

Materials, their use and structures.

Candidates explored a range of ideas and structures. Some had found the study of set works to be beneficial, for example, in writing a Theme and Variations. Others were drawn to a more directly narrative, descriptive approach. Collections of related miniatures or character pieces were successful in providing a structural framework within which to present ideas. Some found inspiration in a mixed media approach, linking the idea of film dialogue and accompanying songs. Whilst this is an acceptable and welcomed format, care must be taken to balance the respective ingredients. Script and song lyric writing are vital elements of such work, but should not overly dominate the musical contribution when the work is surveyed as a whole. Balancing spoken text, instruments and sung vocals within a recording presents challenges in order to communicate the composer's intentions with clarity; nevertheless, such adventurous musical explorations are to be commended.

Use of Medium

Although many compositions relied on Western instrumentation, some work widened the instrumental palate to include an extended range of more global timbres.

Strings were a popular choice of medium and it was heartening to observe familiarity with instrumental techniques and attention to the more detailed demands of articulation on the score. Candidates wrote with understanding of the respective sonorities of instruments and exploited the range of expressive attack that is idiomatic to string instruments. Candidates who explored larger dimensions of orchestral writing were less successful than those who limited their resources. Although some candidates will have the skills to orchestrate their ideas with confidence and imagination, others will quickly discover that there are techniques to be learned in order to be successful working with large forces.

Notation and Presentation

The primary purpose of the requirement for a recording is to enable the candidate to express and communicate their ideas. Centres will not necessarily have the resources to attempt live recordings in some cases but some candidates valiantly produced worthy submissions. Where candidates realised their compositions using a sequencer, there was, in most cases, an impressive demonstration of editing expertise in order to produce an expressive result. Scores were frequently furnished with a thorough level of detail in terms of dynamics/tempo, but more attention could be given to phrasing.

Those candidates exploring musical ideas which demand a different approach to staff notation are reminded that the syllabus allows for a detailed commentary to be offered as an alternative.

Using technology

Whilst many candidates harnessed notation software to good effect, a minority produced ideas which were limited in their rhythmic invention. Candidates should be wary of using the computer mouse simply to add notes to a staff rather than allow their own musical imaginations to dictate more intricate rhythmic options. Many candidates will find complex rhythms difficult to notate but teachers can provide invaluable training to enable candidates to acquire this skill.

The flexibility available to composing candidates in the syllabus is an encouragement, not only to use software in a conventional music context but to explore the whole range of exciting possibilities that the creative use of technology can offer.

In conclusion, Centres are to be congratulated for the composing work of candidates submitted.

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<p>Paper 9703/05 Investigation and Report</p>

There was a high standard of presentation in Reports: great care had been taken with word-processing, structure, footnoting, bibliographies and discographies. Audio examples, whether on CD or tape, were mostly representative, giving adequate selections of material for discussion, and were carefully cross-referenced in the text. The Report, therefore, was able to fulfil its function well as a vehicle to reflect the nature of the Investigation.

It was clear, though, that resourcing the Investigation is often a problem: candidates need to ensure that they will be able to lay their hands on a sufficient range of appropriate repertoire before they become too deeply committed to a particular topic. Internet sites were not, on their own, able to supply the extended examples that candidates needed to be able to access. The Internet is, however, a very valuable tool to help in tracking down where and how the necessary material can be obtained. This may take time and needs to be set in motion as early as possible.

Although candidates had been judiciously instructed regarding matters of presentation, the extent of support and guidance in the earlier stages of the Investigation was less clear. Teachers were rightly wary of giving improper help, and had obviously confined their advice to general principles, but there was also a need to ensure that each candidate's aural skills and technical vocabulary were sufficiently developed to carry off the projected task successfully. However diligently a candidate listens and reflects, if the relevant analytic skills are not developing simultaneously there is a danger that observations will not progress beyond rather vague appreciative statements. Candidates certainly need to respond to the music – their enthusiasm is important in sustaining their interest through the task – but they need also to learn to be able to describe fairly precisely what the effect of the music is and then to explain what techniques are used to achieve each effect. The Investigation should be a learning process in itself.

Candidates also needed supervision to ensure that what they say is generally the case in their text is supported by the specific examples that accompany it. There was sometimes a gap between information taken from a published commentator about the nature of the repertoire in general and what could be demonstrated from the candidate's examples. Assertions in the text of the Report that 'x and y are typical features of this music' would often have benefited from challenge by a Supervisor along the lines of 'which of your examples shows this particular feature?' (or 'how many...?').

Such insecurity regarding aural perception and analytical/technical vocabulary was often matched by a lack of confidence at the level of outlining the background to the repertoire and explaining concepts central to discussion of it. Although a good range of sensible reading had usually been carried out, this was rarely sufficiently assimilated for candidates to be able to lay the books on one side and explain the matter in their own words. While careful to avoid plagiarism - references were duly acknowledged in footnotes and bibliographies - by picking out a sentence from one text and a sentence from another, candidates sometimes produced an unconvincing, jumbled mosaic, which betrayed the shallowness of their understanding.

Nonetheless, the topics chosen were worthwhile in themselves and much had always been learned *en route*.

In 9703, the required link with the Component 3 or 4 was effectively demonstrated.