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Contents

Why choose Cambridge International?	2
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827).....	4
<i>Symphony No. 5 in C minor</i> (Movements 1 and 2)	4
1 Background	4
2 Instruments	6
3 Directions in the score	6
4 Techniques	7
5 Structure and Form	7
6 Commentary	9
Richard Wagner (1813–1883).....	15
<i>The Mastersingers of Nuremburg</i> – Overture	15
1 Background	15
2 Instruments	17
3 Directions in the Score	17
4 Techniques	18
5 Themes	19
6 Structure and Form	21
7 Commentary	22
Introduction: Latin American music	26
I Choro	26
II Samba	30

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 5 in C minor (Movements 1 and 2)

Candidates are not expected to know every detail of these notes, but they should focus on:

- structure and terminology
- themes and their transformations
- key centres and modulations
- identification of chords
- instruments and texture
- alto clef (violas) and transposition (clarinets in B flat)
- score markings, performance directions, instrumental effects
- background information about the context and genre of the work

Scores

There are a number of different editions of this work, many freely available online. It is important that candidates use a score with printed bar numbers. The metronome marks which can be seen in the scores are not on Beethoven's original manuscript, but appeared in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1817, with the suggestion that they had been worked out by Beethoven. However, musicians today agree that they are probably not what Beethoven actually intended.

The Eulenburg Audio+Score has a spelling mistake for the word *Contrabasso* at the start of each movement.

1 Background

Beethoven was born in Bonn, at the time the seat of the Elector of Cologne. He had many siblings, but only two brothers (Caspar and Nikolaus) who survived infancy. Both his father and grandfather were employed as musicians in the Elector's Court, his grandfather even reaching the position of *Kapellmeister*, taking responsibility for the musical establishment. Beethoven's earliest teacher was his father, who gave him piano and violin lessons. He made his first public appearance in Cologne in 1778, which led to lessons from other teachers, including tuition on the viola and organ.

Beethoven's most important early teacher was the court organist Christian Gottlob Neefe, who taught him from 1781 including the study of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. By the age of 11 Beethoven no longer attended school and effectively became a full-time musician. His work included becoming a deputy organist to his teacher. By the age of 12 Beethoven's first composition was complete: a set of variations on a march, with many other works soon following.

In 1787 it was suggested that Beethoven should spend some time in Vienna and funds were raised for him to undertake the trip. However, after just two weeks he was recalled to Bonn, due to his mother being very ill, and eventually dying of tuberculosis. Nevertheless, it is thought that he managed to play in front of Mozart during his brief stay.

On at least one occasion, during a journey to or from London, Haydn stopped in Bonn and was introduced to Beethoven. Haydn agreed to begin teaching him, necessitating Beethoven's relocation to Vienna in November 1792. The lessons with Haydn did take place, though were not a huge success and Beethoven took lessons

with others too. However, with the financial support of the Elector back in Bonn, Beethoven quickly established himself in Vienna and made contact with many useful patrons, giving private concerts. When the Elector was forced to leave Bonn in 1794 due to the political situation, he discontinued the payments to Beethoven, who then worked entirely as a freelance musician, performing, teaching and composing. Around the same time Beethoven's brothers made their way to Vienna to work.

Throughout his life Beethoven was concerned about his finances. After he threatened to leave Vienna, an annuity was set up for him by three of his most generous patrons, giving him an annual income for life. The patrons also sometimes provided Beethoven with somewhere to live, as well as commissioning new works. Some even became his piano pupils.

In October 1802 Beethoven wrote the strange document known as the *Heiligenstadt Testament*. As usual, he was spending the summer in the village of Heiligenstadt, just outside Vienna and this year spent rather longer there than usual. The document is a kind of will, addressed to his two brothers and makes clear the anguish Beethoven was suffering, due to his hearing loss. However, Beethoven did not die for many years and the document was not discovered until long after his death. Beethoven's final appearance as a concerto soloist (in his own fourth piano concerto) was in December 1808 and his final appearance in public as a pianist (other than as an accompanist) was in 1814.

In 1815 Beethoven's brother Caspar died, leaving Beethoven co-guardian of his nephew Karl (together with his mother). There followed many years of legal battles for sole guardianship and then years of caring for the boy. In September 1826 Beethoven travelled to his other brother Johann's country property. Although he was already ill, he did manage to work during the stay. However, on his return to Vienna in December he became very ill and died the following March. Three days after Beethoven's death it is said that as many as ten thousand people paid their respects to the composer.

Sketches of Symphony No. 5 date from as early as 1803 and it is possibly that the first two movements were completed by 1805. However, Beethoven then turned to writing his fourth symphony and many other works, returning to work on the fifth in 1807, completing it the following year. It is typical of what is often known as his 'heroic period' (beginning with Symphony no. 3). Immediately after completing the fifth symphony Beethoven followed it with the sixth, known as the *Pastoral*.

Beethoven had been requesting a venue for a benefit concert (from which he would be able to keep the profits) for some time. This was eventually offered by the Theater an der Wien, to take place on 22nd December 1808. Beethoven programmed an extremely long list of works, including the first performances of the fifth and sixth symphonies (numbered the opposite way round from the way we know them today), the fourth piano concerto, movements from his Mass in C and a finale specially written for the occasion: a work for piano, chorus and orchestra.

Parts for the fifth symphony were published in 1809 with the score not appearing in print until 1826. It is dedicated to two of Beethoven's most significant patrons: Prince Lobkowitz and Count Andreas von Rasumovsky.

Beethoven's life and output can be divided into three periods. Though this is rather simplistic; it is useful in grouping together works of similar styles. During his early period (1782–1802), which included his first two symphonies, Beethoven was mastering the Viennese Classical style, assimilating and extending it and becoming an established composer. The middle period from 1802 to 1815 includes Symphonies 3 to 8 and was Beethoven in maturity and was the period in which he was becoming increasingly deaf. The third period includes just one symphony (number 9) and sees Beethoven rather more serious and reflective, exploring new sounds and composing techniques.

2 Instruments

The first two movements of Beethoven's Symphony no. 5 are scored for the standard Classical orchestra (though he does add extra instruments for the final movement). There are two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, plus timpani and strings.

In both movements the clarinets are in B flat, sounding a tone lower than written. Candidates should practise writing small fragments of the clarinet parts at sounding pitch.

In the first movement the horns are in E flat, sounding a major sixth lower than written, while in the second movement they are in C (due to the different key for the movement), sounding an octave lower than written. In both the first two movements the trumpets are in C, sounding as printed. Candidates will not be expected to transpose any brass parts. It was relatively unusual to include brass in slow movements at this time. At this time brass instruments did not have valves and therefore had a restricted number of notes which they were able to play. For this reason their music is mostly based on notes of the tonic and dominant chords. The timpani are tuned to the tonic and dominant of the work (C and G), even in the second movement, which is in a different key.

In both movements the parts for strings are written on five staves, with the basses often having different music from the cellos. The double basses ('Contrabasso') sound an octave lower than written but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part. The viola part is written in the alto clef (where middle C is on the middle line). Candidates should practise writing small fragments of this part in the treble clef, at sounding pitch. Both the cello and bassoon parts sometimes use the tenor clef, to avoid the use of ledger lines for higher notes. Candidates will not be expected to write any of these parts in a different clef.

3 Directions in the score

Most markings in the score are in Italian. However, the German marking 'zu 2' appears in some editions in the wind and brass parts. This indicates that the notes are to be played by both instruments. When only one instrument plays there is the number 1.

The tempo of the first movement is *Allegro con brio*, meaning quick and lively with spirit. At b268 the marking *Adagio* indicates a slow tempo. Though this is not usually followed by another marking, it is understood that this tempo is for one bar only (some scores do have *Tempo I*). The tempo of the second movement is *Andante con moto* meaning at a walking pace with movement, but at b205 the marking *Più mosso* means more movement (i.e. faster), followed by a return to the original tempo with the marking *Tempo I* at b218.

In the first movement at b175 the entire orchestra is marked *più f*, literally meaning more loud. Similarly, at b217 the instruments are told to play *sempre più p*, meaning always more quietly.

At b249 and b252 in the first movement the timpani have the marking *ten.* beneath their minim with a trill and pause sign above. This is an abbreviation of *tenuto*, meaning held, suggesting that the roll (indicated by the trill) should continue for the duration of the note.

When the string players have the abbreviation *pizz.* (e.g. first movement b254 in the violas, cellos and basses) it is short for *pizzicato* and indicates that the notes are to be plucked. They return to using the bow with the marking *arco* (e.g. violas b264).

In the second movement the clarinets and bassoons are marked *dolce* at b22, meaning sweetly.

At b114 the cellos have a grace note before their final group of demisemiquavers. This is an *acciaccatura*, a crushed note, to be played quickly before the following note.

4 Techniques

As a late-Classical / early Romantic work, the symphony uses functional tonal harmony, in which the tonic, dominant and subdominant are particularly important. There are frequent perfect cadences, particularly at the end of movements. However, Beethoven does not always modulate to the most obvious (closely related) keys. He does modulate to the relative major in the first movement and F and G minor, but also G major and the tonic major C major. Modulations are frequently achieved through the use of chromatic chords such as the diminished seventh and augmented sixth.

The second movement is in the fairly unusual key of A flat major, which is the submediant of the whole work, with modulations to C major, a very distant key, which allows use of the timpani tuned to C and G. In both movements there is also use of pedal notes, sequences, antiphony, echo and silence.

5 Structure and Form

At the time Beethoven was writing this work, symphonies were in a standard four-movement pattern:

- I Fast movement in sonata form (sometimes with a slow introduction)
- II Slow movement
- III Minuet and Trio (or Scherzo and Trio)
- IV Fast movement, often in sonata or sonata-rondo form.

Beethoven follows the conventions here with a sonata-form Allegro first movement. Sonata form movements usually have:

- An exposition section, with a first subject in the tonic, a transition modulating to the dominant (or relative major if the work is in a minor key) and a second subject in the dominant (or relative major). The exposition is then repeated.
- A development section, where themes from the exposition are developed (fragments of themes are manipulated and heard in a variety of keys)
- A recapitulation section, with the first subject in the tonic, a transition (which does not modulate) and the second subject in the tonic.
- A coda

Beethoven greatly expands the length of the coda, compared with earlier composers of symphonies.

The structure and keys of the first movement could be summarised as below:

EXPOSITION	First subject	1–51	C minor
	Transition	52–58	Modulating to E flat major
	Second subject	59–110 ¹	E flat major
	Codetta	110–124	E flat major
DEVELOPMENT		125–248 ¹	F minor, C minor, G minor, G major, C major, F minor, G major
RECAPITULATION	First subject	248–296 ¹	C minor
	Transition	296–302	C minor, ending on V in C minor
	Second subject	303–374 ¹	C major
CODA		374–502	C major, F minor, C minor

The second movement is in double variation form, with a coda. This is where two different themes are presented and then alternately varied. Though the use of brass in a slow movement was relatively unusual, they are used in the C major sections, a key in which classical composers typically used brass and drums.

The second movement follows this structure:

Theme A	0–22	A flat major
Theme B	22–48	A flat major, C major, modulation to V in A flat major
Theme A Variation 1	49–71	A flat major
Theme B Variation 1	71 ³ –97	A flat major, C major, modulation to V in A flat major
Theme A Variation 2	98–123	A flat major
Theme B Variation 2	123 ³ –166	A flat major, C major, modulation to V in A flat major
Theme A Variation 3	166 ³ –204	A flat minor, A flat major
CODA	204 ³ –247	(Hints of) D flat major, A flat major

6 Commentary

FIRST MOVEMENT – C minor

EXPOSITION (b1–124)

First Subject (b1–51)

The symphony opens with a powerful statement of the work's main motif, played *ff* by clarinets and strings in octaves. The motif consists of three repeated notes followed by a longer note a minor third lower and this motif and particularly its rhythm pervades all movements of the symphony. The opening five bars are a descending sequence, as b1–2 are repeated a tone lower in b3–4, with the final note extended into b5. Because of the lack of harmony in these bars, it is not immediately obvious whether the key is E flat major or C minor.

From b6 the motif is played in imitation, divided between the upper string parts, while the cellos' and bassoons' held C confirms the key as C minor. From b14 the motif is modified slightly by the 1st violins, to create stepwise movement, rather than a falling minor third. This new version is played three times, with imitation a bar later and in inversion from the 2nd violins and violas. The last time the rest of the orchestra join, which leads to an imperfect cadence in b20–21, including an augmented 6th chord in b20.

After the G.P. in the second half of b21, the 1st subject continues, though Beethoven is already beginning to develop it. It is now a tone higher and the motif is stated once by most of the orchestra before returning to imitation in the strings, this time including the cellos and basses, who play a version of the motif in inversion. As the strings sustain each final note of the motif a dominant seventh chord is built up, which resolves to the tonic at b29 – in other words b25–29 are an extended perfect cadence. B29–32 are a repetition of b25–28, with wind and horns joining in at the end to begin a crescendo. This is reinforced by more instruments gradually joining and together with the rise in pitch the excitement builds with the repetition of the motif. From b33–47 the cellos and basses have a tonic pedal, while from b38–43 the 1st violins have a one-bar ascending sequence. The pedal moves to the dominant, leading to a perfect cadence in the tonic at b51–52, marking the end of the 1st subject.

Transition (b52–58)

This part of the exposition is used to modulate to a different key for the 2nd subject. Beethoven achieves this very swiftly and dramatically by suddenly moving onto a *ff* diminished seventh chord in b52 and using the same chord for five bars. After a bar of silence this pivot chord is followed by chord Vb in E flat major, preparing for the 2nd subject in the relative major.

Second Subject (b59–110¹)

Unison horns announce the start of the 2nd subject, with a typical 'horn call' phrase. This is based on the 1st subject motif, with three repeated quavers followed by longer notes. However, the interval between the final quaver and first note has been extended from a minor third to a perfect fifth and rather than having separate quavers in the third bar (b62), there is just a minim, again followed by the interval of a perfect fifth.

The melody played by the violins from b63 contrasts with the strong horn opening, since it is *piano*, *legato* (and in many editions, *dolce*) entirely in crotchets and mostly conjunct. Nevertheless, it is still related to the horn call melody, since the outline (B flat – E flat – F – B flat) is the same as the horns, but just starting on a low rather than a high B flat (the relationship is harder to see than to hear as the horns transpose). Although the melody line jettisons the rhythm of the opening motif, it is still heard in the cellos and basses, who have the motif every four bars in inversion. Meanwhile, in b62–74 the horns hold the final note of their horn call as a dominant pedal.

From b67 the 1st violin melody is repeated by the 1st clarinet and then again from b71 by the 1st violins, doubled by the 1st flute an octave higher. From b75 the music turns in a new direction, with the addition of E naturals and D flats and an ascending sequence in b75–82. There is increasing chromaticism, particularly from

b84, with the addition of G flats suggesting E flat minor. The two-bar rising and falling figure is played five times over an ascending chromatic bass line, which uses the opening motif rhythm. Excitement is also built up with a *crescendo* and the addition of more instruments, until the triumphant tutti dominant seventh *ff* at b94. With a slight alteration in the melody line at the start and with different orchestration, the music from b94 is repeated from b101.

Codetta (b110–124)

These few bars, bringing the exposition to a close, make much use of the rhythm of the opening motif, highlighted by Beethoven's unusual beaming of the quavers. There are five perfect cadences in E flat major, followed by two bars of silence. The exposition is then repeated in full.

DEVELOPMENT (b125–248¹)

This begins in a similar way to the start of the movement, with the opening motif a third higher than b1 and in the clarinets and horns, answered just one bar later by the strings, who have the interval of a descending minor second (semitone). The strings' D flat begins the move towards F minor (the subdominant) and the opening motif is repeated by the clarinets, violins, violas and cellos in alternation, together with held notes. Many of these instruments have the descending semitone version of the motif, from b126–127. At b137 the 1st violins have the version with the filled-in step, first heard at b14, answered one bar later in inversion by the 2nd violins. Throughout this passage the violas and cellos have a dominant pedal, occasionally moving briefly to the D flat a semitone above.

B143–144 see the horns, violas and cellos ascend chromatically to a dominant G, to bring the music back to the tonic key of C minor. The melodic material is now monopolised by the strings playing a stepwise version of the motif (in inversion in the lower strings), with double basses added *pizzicato* below, playing the tonic and dominant, outlining a series of perfect cadences. When the violins have ascending crotchets in b151–152 (as in the cellos and violas eight bars earlier) the music moves towards G minor and the wind work as a section taking more of the melodic interest in addition to the strings.

From b159 there is imitation between the wind and upper strings, using the rhythm of the opening motif, but now ascending. Meanwhile the cellos and violas move in contrary motion in continuous quavers with the 2nd bassoon and double basses providing the bass line.

At b168 Beethoven uses the same diminished seventh chord as he did for the transition, but the original G flat now appears as an F sharp. The chord moves up a semitone at b171, followed by a G minor chord in second inversion in b175. The diminished seventh from b171 is reused at b177, though at a louder dynamic and with a higher bass, leading to a D major first inversion chord in b178². At this point the music has built to a climax and is preparing for the next idea.

From b179 the horn call start of the second subject in the exposition is played in octaves by the violins with an answering outline of a descending dominant seventh chord in octaves by the violas, cellos and basses, leading to a perfect cadence in G major in b186–187. The wind and trumpets interject occasionally with shortened versions of the opening motif (only two quavers instead of three).

From b187 the music from b179 is repeated in C major. A third statement is heard *ff* on the woodwind, but without the final note. The last two notes of this statement are harmonised and these harmonised notes are then exchanged several times between all the wind and strings, with the pitch rising. As the dynamic reduces to *p* and then *pp*, these exchanges reduce to just single notes, settling on a repeated first inversion D major chord.

Finally the motif returns *ff* fully from b228, in G major. Although the version of the motif used is that of the horn call at the start of the second subject, it now has falling thirds instead of falling fifths. There is just one

statement of the motif, for four bars before the minims alternating between strings and woodwind return. Here each section plays a diminished seventh chord. This is the only chord Beethoven uses until b248¹.

At b240 the lower instruments (bassoons, horns, cellos and basses) enter with the opening motif, imitated by the upper wind and strings. This is repeated until they join together (all in octaves) from b245.

RECAPITULATION (b248–374¹)

First Subject (b248–296¹)

The music from b1 onwards returns, but it is now rescored and is not completely in octaves – the flutes and oboes add harmony notes. The rescoring continues from b253 – clarinets and 1st oboe are now playing (before it was just the bassoons) and the 1st violins take more of the melodic material, allowing the violas to play *pizzicato* with the cellos and basses.

From b261 the material is much as before, with the 1st violin motif played three times, leading to an imperfect cadence (an augmented sixth chord to chord V in b267–268), with most of the orchestra playing. However, the sustained notes in the accompaniment from b261 are now taken by the wind instead of the strings. There is also a significant change in b268 – the original G.P. at b21 is now filled in with an oboe cadenza.

B22–24 are omitted and the music moves straight on to what was originally heard from b25, with the strings in imitation, now with added oboes. From b273 the strings play together in octaves rather than separately (compare with b29) and more wind and horns add held notes. The wind and horns also add imitation from b278, but as the excitement builds to lead to the transition, the music is virtually identical to the exposition.

Transition (b296–302)

As before, this is very brief and now does not need to modulate, since it would be expected to be followed by the 2nd subject in the tonic. The same diminished seventh chord is used as before, but with the G flats respelled as F sharps. Instead of being followed as before by chord V in E flat major, Vb in C minor is heard at b302.

Second Subject (b303–374¹)

The original 'horn call' now becomes a 'bassoon call', in C. With the entry of the strings at b307, it becomes clear that this is in C major, not C minor. From b311 the 1st flute is in dialogue with the 1st violins (originally it was the clarinets and then the flutes). Meanwhile the horns hold a dominant pedal from b306–321. The inverted opening motif is played by the timpani, in addition to the cellos and basses this time. As the music becomes more chromatic from b323 there are changes in orchestration – the melodic material is shared by the 1st flute, 1st clarinet and 1st violins and by b341 we have lost the references to the opening motif (before this was continued by the violas and basses). From b357 the wind and brass have offbeat chords as before. There is a strong perfect cadence in C major in b361–362, which is repeated four more times, incorporating the main motif.

CODA (b374–502)

Despite the emphatic perfect cadences in C major at the end of the recapitulation, Beethoven now embarks on a long coda, which is about a quarter of the length of the movement and in which he continues to develop the musical material. It begins in a similar way to the Codetta (compare b109 onwards), with the rhythm of the opening motif featured in the whole orchestra. At b376 there is a sudden change of direction towards F minor, but the root position F minor chord in b380–381 becomes D flat major in 1st inversion in b382 (the trumpets and timpani have to drop out, as they are unable to play the required notes).

From the preceding *ff* tutti (minus trumpets and timpani), there is a sudden reduction in the dynamic and scoring in b386, to just clarinets, bassoons and horns playing the opening motif in inversion at a *p* dynamic.

However, after a bar of silence we return to the *ff* tutti and a diminished seventh chord, sustained by the wind and brass and played in quavers by the timpani and strings.

A new version of the 2nd subject begins from b398, played by the bassoons, violas and cellos in C minor and with falling minor thirds rather than fifths. A new unison violin countermelody is added, which itself becomes subject to development from b407. It is played as separate rather than slurred quavers, with the wind and lower strings playing a crotchet version, all as a descending sequence.

From b423 the violins also use crotchets and with the violas have an ascending sequence, accompanied by held chords and the opening motif rhythm (with the initial quaver rest filled in) in the timpani. This leads to a perfect cadence in C minor in b438–439.

The music immediately returns to crotchets, now imitated between wind and strings at two-bar intervals. A descending figure in the wind (b453–455) has the final bar echoed by the strings and the imitation becomes ever closer until the wind and strings are just one beat apart for the imperfect cadence in b459–460. The descending figure and succeeding imitation is presented again, but this time with the strings going first.

A return to the 1st subject material from b469 almost sounds like it is leading to another recapitulation from b478. This time it is a tutti *ff* and in the harmonised version, as at the start of the recapitulation. When the music from b6 and b253 is presented again from b483, it is with the 1st violins taking most of the melodic material (as at the start of the recapitulation). It is now accompanied by a tonic and dominant pedal in the cellos. This time the material doesn't move anywhere though, it is repeated at the same pitch before the movement ends with twelve bars of perfect cadences in the tonic C minor.

SECOND MOVEMENT – A flat major

Theme A (b0–22)

In contrast to the melodies in the first movement, built of short melodic motifs, Beethoven now presents an extended eight-bar melody, played in unison by the cellos and violas and accompanied by *pizzicato* double basses. As is usual with Beethoven though, nothing is quite as straightforward as it first appears. The E natural in b4 suggests a chord of C major (which is chord V in F minor, the submediant or relative minor of A flat major). However, part of a circle of fifths in b5–7 and a descending sequence quickly brings the music back to A flat major and there is a perfect cadence in the tonic in b7–8. The end of the phrase (including the sudden *f*) is then echoed twice – first by the strings and bassoons and then by the wind, who add an extension. The strings then echo the wind, from b15, with a new version of the extended echo. Together with the tutti echo from b193, we hear no fewer than five perfect cadences in the tonic in b9–21. References to the opening motif of the symphony are used within the cadential section, for example in the clarinets, 2nd bassoon, 1st violas, cellos and basses in b18–19.

Theme B (b22³–48)

Though this is a new theme, it begins in a very similar way to Theme A, also in A flat major. 1st clarinet and 1st bassoon have the theme in octaves, with the 2nd clarinet and 2nd bassoon harmonising in thirds and sixths, while the violins join for the ends of phrases. The violas have triplet staccato semiquavers and the cellos and basses have the *pizzicato* bass line. After the opening upbeat, the rhythm (e.g. b32–33 in the oboes, trumpets, horns, timpani, cellos and basses) can be seen as making a reference to the opening motif of the symphony.

At b 27 the sudden addition of the G flat creates a diminished seventh chord and harmonic instability. This allows Beethoven to quickly move to C major with an augmented sixth chord (b29, the G flat becomes F sharp) followed by a *Ic-V⁷-I* progression in the new key and a *ff* tutti. The oboes, horns and trumpets now play the theme in the new key, while the upper strings all have the staccato triplet semiquaver accompaniment. The triumph of C major quickly dies away though and there are chromatic *pp* bars to lead back to the tonic. A descending chromatic bass line, together with many diminished seventh chords ends on chord V in A flat major at b48.

Theme A**Variation 1 (b49–71)**

The variations in this movement take the form of *doubles*, a type of variation where shorter note lengths are used to present a decorated version of the theme. For this variation the theme is again in the violas and cellos, but this time in continuous semiquavers. The double bass accompaniment is nearly exactly as before, but there is now also *pizzicato* violin accompaniment and sustained 1st clarinet notes. Oboes, 2nd clarinet and bassoon join for the first perfect cadence, the first echo is by strings and bassoon (as before) and the extended echo is by woodwind, with minimal changes to the original version. The final two echoes are the same as the theme.

Theme B**Variation 1 (b71³–97)**

In this variation the theme is presented as originally – to start with the only change is in the viola accompaniment. Instead of staccato triplet semiquavers they now have legato demisemiquavers. The modulation is effected in the same way, but the 2nd violins and violas have a rhythmicised version of their notes of the diminished seventh chord. There is a rhythmic link back to the motif at the start of the symphony (though now it is three demisemiquavers followed by a semiquaver and then two extra semiquavers). As before, there is a perfect cadence in C major in b79–80. The only difference in the presentation of the C major part of the theme is in the demisemiquaver rather than triplet quaver accompaniment in the upper strings.

As before, the second theme dies away, with the same chromatic chord sequence, just with a rhythmicised cello accompaniment, reminding the listener of the opening of the symphony. The demisemiquavers, *ff* and *sf* makes this overall a more strenuous version of Theme B.

Theme A**Variation 2 (b98–123)**

This time there are even shorter note values in the violas and cellos (now demisemiquavers), while the double basses are joined by the violins in the *pizzicato* accompaniment, also with slighter shorter note values. There is now accompaniment from the 1st flute, oboe and bassoon, holding long notes in octaves.

In this variation the first phrase is played three times in total (starting in b98, b106 and b114), the second time with the 1st violins taking the decorated melody while the 2nd violins have relatively long notes, the violas and cellos have a rocking *pizzicato* semiquaver accompaniment figure, the double basses play the original bass line, but arco and sustained and the 1st clarinet and bassoon have off-beat octave leaps.

The third repetition of the phrase is *f* and tutti, with the melody line in the cellos and double basses, accompanied by repeated semiquaver chords in the rest of the orchestra. Rapid ascending E flat major scales in octaves in b121–122 lead to the climax on the note E flat and a pause. A sudden *pp* then leads into the next variation.

Theme B**Variation 2 (b123³–166)**

The *pp* string quavers on beats 3 and 1 provide a dominant seventh introduction and continue under the start of this variation, which has now changed character considerably and is initially passed from the 1st clarinet to the 1st oboe, then the 1st flute and finally the 1st oboe again, overlapping with the flute. There are 11 bars with just woodwind, who begin imitatively (1st flute, then 1st oboe, then clarinets) before the flute and oboe play legato semiquavers in thirds and the clarinets in thirds, mostly in contrary motion with the flute and oboe. At b144 the strings echo the woodwind's previous bar.

A sudden *crescendo* and a G minor seventh chord in b145, followed by a G⁷ chord in the following bar effects a very swift move to the C major theme. Here it is played *ff* for the first and only time with the full orchestra, but very much in its original form. There is then a swift *diminuendo* and a new version of the linking passage in which the strings gradually shorten the note values, from triplet semiquavers to demisemiquavers, outlining an E flat major broken chord.

Theme A**Variation 3 (b166³–204)**

Here the theme is varied in several ways. It begins in the tonic minor and is presented in a very detached, *staccato* form by the woodwind. The 1st violins continue the demisemi-quaver broken chords and the rest of the strings have a pizzicato quaver accompaniment. Because of the new key, the theme takes a different path from before and there is an imperfect cadence in A flat minor in b175–176.

Fragmented semiquaver ascending and descending scale passages follow, starting with 1st flute, then 1st clarinet before being passed around the strings. Demisemi-quavers are reintroduced by the violas from b181 and the dynamic and texture quickly builds to a triumphant statement of Theme A tutti and *ff* from b185. The violins play the theme in octaves, imitated a bar later by the wind and accompanied by fast repeated demisemi-quavers in the lower strings and then also brass and timpani chords. The initial echoes at the end of the theme are obscured by rapid demisemi-quaver scales, but from b195 the gentle wind echo from b10 is repeated (the bassoon part looks different in some scores, but this is because of the use of different clefs). This is followed by the string varied echo of the woodwind, as at the start of the movement, but the melody is now played by the 1st violins and violas (rather than the 1st and 2nd violins). This variation ends with three perfect cadences in the tonic.

CODA (b204³–247)

Over a tonic pedal in the cellos and basses marking each beat and off-beat upper strings, at a faster tempo, the 1st bassoon has version of the main theme in the same rhythm as used at the start of Variation 2 of Theme B (b127). The G flat in b206 creates chord V^7 in D flat major, and the F flat two bars later turns D flat major into D flat minor. However, A flat major quickly returns in b213, together with repeated demisemi-quaver accompaniment to the opening fragment of Theme A, reaching ever greater heights together with the use of decreasing note lengths.

At the Tempo 1 from b219 the wind have their usual echo of the end of the theme (as at b10), but the strings' version adds an ascending sequence for variety, before leading to the perfect cadence at b228–229. The opening fragment of Theme A is used several times over the A flat chord, which now continues to nearly the end of the movement. The movement ends with three perfect cadences, the middle of which is an echo, a *p* contrast to the surrounding *ff*.

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

The Mastersingers of Nuremberg – Overture

Candidates are not expected to know every detail of these notes, but they should focus on:

- structure and terminology
- themes and their transformations
- key centres and modulations
- identification of chords
- instruments and texture
- alto clef (violas) and transposition of clarinets in B flat
- score markings, performance directions, instrumental effects
- background information about the context and genre of the work

Various scores of this work are available, including some free online. Whilst any full score version would be fine for candidates to use for study, an edition without bar numbers will need to have these added.

The work candidates will study is the Overture to Act I. This is also sometimes known as the Prelude or Vorspiel. As a standalone work, the Overture ends with three tonic chords, but if Act I of the opera follows then there is a single tonic chord on which the chorus begin to sing the first scene.

Scores vary in their layout of instruments. Some have woodwind together at the top, followed by brass, percussion and strings, while others place the horns between the clarinets and bassoons. There are also some differences in tempo and expression markings.

1 Background

Wagner was born in Leipzig to Carl and Johanna Wagner. Carl died just six months after Wagner's birth and his mother soon married the actor and artist Ludwig Geyer, moving the family to Dresden. This raised questions about the identity of Wagner's true father, which have never been answered. Geyer's love of the theatre was shared by some of his stepchildren, including Wagner, whose first creation was a play.

As a child Wagner attended schools in Dresden and Leipzig, received piano, violin, harmony and composition lessons. He had a thorough grounding in music, including the study of counterpoint. This included time at Leipzig University from 1831. He was also inspired by the work of other composers, particularly Beethoven, Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Weber's *Der Freischütz*.

During his adult life Wagner moved around a great deal, rarely staying in one place for more than a few years. He was a Kapellmeister in Dresden, a chorus master in Würzburg, musical director for a travelling theatre company (based in Magdeburg), a musical director in Riga and worked in Paris as a freelance musician. Wagner also spent time in other towns and cities, including Venice, Vienna and Geneva. His frequent moves were for several reasons: liaisons with various women meant that it was sometimes prudent to move away, he was often in debt and had to escape creditors and sometimes he was even likely to be arrested for his political activities unless he moved on. However, his fortunes took a positive turn when the 18-year-old Prince Ludwig, a Wagner fan, acceded to the Bavarian throne in 1864. He paid off Wagner's debts, gave him a yearly allowance and covered the costs of many of Wagner's later projects.

Though he composed other works, Wagner is chiefly remembered today for his operas, or 'music-dramas' as he preferred to call his later works. He was unusual in that he preferred to write his own librettos. In fact he sought to control and integrate all aspects of visual and aural expression into one dramatic experience. He called this concept *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art). One device used to achieve this integration was the *leitmotif*. This is a short melodic motif which represents a character, location, object or some theme in the story. These *leitmotifs* are rarely sung, but instead are heard in the orchestra. Wagner's first opera dates from 1833, when he was twenty, though it was not performed in his lifetime. Wagner's dedication to opera and 'music-dramas' is reflected by the fact that he arranged to build an opera house in Bayreuth. His works are still performed there today.

Wagner wrote a large number of articles and books expounding his musical and other ideas. These were not always well received, though the 1851 book *Opera and Drama* sets out his ideas about the theatre and music. His autobiography *Mein Leben* has also been shown to portray a romanticised version of the truth! Wagner suffered from a heart condition and after a fatal heart attack in 1883 his body was taken to Bayreuth for burial.

The first sketches of the libretto of *The Mastersingers* date from 1845, when Wagner was staying in Marienbad and read a history of German poetry, which included information about mastersingers. He later read other books about mastersingers, by Grimm and Wagenseil. It seems he was keen to write a cheerful work to balance *Tannhäuser* and it is his only mature comic opera. Unlike his other works, *The Mastersingers* takes place in a clearly defined time and place (rather than a setting from a myth or legend) and does not include any supernatural elements. Having created a first draft of the text, Wagner then took a break from the work, not returning to it for over a decade. The libretto was completed in 1862, followed by the Overture. Wagner conducted the first performance of the Overture in Leipzig in November 1862 and then resumed work on the rest of the opera. A private reading of the libretto took place in Vienna in the same year, to an audience including the critic Eduard Hanslick, who unsurprisingly took offence at being parodied as one of the characters and left without comment. However, the opera was not completed until 1867.

From the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries guilds of mastersingers existed in many German towns and cities. These comprised lower- and middle-class tradespeople and craftsmen, who came together to compose and perform songs. They had detailed rules for how the songs were to be created. These were monophonic and were performed unaccompanied. Hans Sachs (1494–1576) was one of the most famous mastersingers, writing a huge number of poems and songs and was immortalised by Wagner in his opera.

Wagner's opera is set in the mid-sixteenth century. The plot centres round the young hero Walther von Stolzing, who has newly arrived in Nuremberg and hopes to win the hand of Eva, the daughter of the eldest mastersinger Pogner, who has promised Eva's hand to whoever wins the next song contest. Walther's competitor is Beckmesser, the foolish town clerk, a caricature of the critic Hanslick. Hans Sachs, a shoemaker, is another central figure in the plot, helping Walther to create his prize-winning song, which initially comes to Walther in a dream, whilst Beckmesser, having overheard Walther's song, performs a poor version of it. The plot is sometimes seen as a metaphor for the conflict between old and new musical ideas. Some see Walther as representing Wagner himself – having new and radical ideas, which are then shaped and ultimately successful by following the rules. However, there is also recognition that traditional ideas need to be renewed if they are not to become stale.

The first performance of the complete opera (which lasts over 4½ hours) took place on 21st June 1868 at the National Theatre in Munich, with Hans von Bülow conducting. Wagner sat in the Royal Box with King Ludwig. The premiere was a success and the opera was quickly taken up by other cities in Germany, Europe and beyond, though some productions made cuts. Due to the length of the opera it is not often performed today, but concert performances of the Overture are frequent.

2 Instruments

Though Wagner is renowned for his use of a large orchestra, he was relatively conservative in his choice of instruments for *The Mastersingers*. To the late classical double woodwind (two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons) he adds a piccolo part. The piccolo sounds an octave higher than written, but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part. The clarinets are 'in B' in the German score, meaning that they are 'in B flat', sounding a tone lower than written. Candidates should practise writing small fragments of the clarinet part at sounding pitch.

The brass section is relatively large, with four horns in F (two change to horns in C at b34 for five bars and E for b93–122), three trumpets (two in F and one in C), three trombones and a tuba. The trumpets in F sound a perfect fourth higher than written, while the horns sound a perfect fifth lower in F, minor sixth lower in E and octave lower in C. However, candidates will not be expected to transpose any of these parts. The trumpet in C sounds as written (at concert pitch). Wagner expected players to use brass instruments with valves, so they are capable of playing the full range of pitches, though are best suited to particular keys. This is why horns in E are used in the E major section and the trumpets do not play here at all.

The percussion section comprises timpani (Pauken) tuned to the tonic and dominant (C and G), triangle and cymbals (Becken).

The parts for strings are at the bottom of the score, with the harp on two staves, followed by five further staves (the cellos and basses have their own individual parts). The double basses are another transposing instrument, their notes sound an octave lower than written but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part.

The viola part is written in the alto clef (where middle C is on the middle line). Candidates should practise writing small fragments of this part in the treble clef. The trombones and at times the bassoons and cellos use the tenor clef (where middle C is on the fourth line), but candidates will not be expected to write any of these parts in a different clef.

3 Directions in the Score

Scores of the Overture include markings in both German and Italian and sometimes these are used simultaneously!

The tempo indication at the start, *Sehr mässig bewegt* means literally 'very much at a moderate tempo'. At the same point the wind and brass are marked *sehr gehalten*, meaning very sustained, while the strings are *sehr kräftig*, very strong.

In scores where wind and brass instruments share a single staff, the marking a 2 indicates that both players should play the written notes (in other scores this is indicated by stems in both directions). When only one instrument is to play, the marking 1. is used. If as many as four instruments are notated on a single staff in a score (e.g. all four horn parts), then candidates may see notations such as 3.4. *a2*, meaning that the written notes should be played in unison by the third and fourth horns.

Immer f in b8 means always loud, while *rinz or rinforz.*, in b12–13 is an abbreviation for the Italian *rinforzando*, meaning becoming louder quickly.

In b27 the strings are marked *meno f*, less loud, while the 1st flute and 1st clarinet are marked *ausdrucksvoll*, expressively. *più p* at b29 means more quietly.

At b34 the horns on the lower of the two staves have the marking 'in C', meaning that they should change the instrument they are using to one pitched in C instead. They return to their F horns at b38. At b34 the other instruments are marked *dolce*, meaning sweetly.

Ein wenig rallent. at b36 combines both German and Italian, meaning 'a little slowing down!' This is followed by *Tempo* at b37, the return to the original speed. *Stacc. e più f* two bars later means detached and louder.

Wagner continues to mix Italian and German from b59, with *espr.* or *espress.* short for *espressivo*, meaning expressively.

The long German tempo indication at b89, *Bewegt, doch immer noch etwas breit* means agitated, though always still rather broad, while the one at b97, *Mässig im Hauptzeitmass* means moderately, in the tempo of the beginning. Also at this point the strings are marked *zart* or *sehr zart*, (very) tenderly or delicately.

From b96 the double basses play *pizz.*, short for *pizzicato* meaning plucked with the finger. This Italian term is cancelled by a German marking in b105, *Bog.* short for *Bogen*, meaning bowed. The marking *leidenschaftlicher* at b105 means more passionately.

At b114 the 2nd violins are marked *div.* or *divisi*, literally meaning divided. In practice this means that one of the players sharing a music stand plays the top notes, while the other plays the bottom notes.

noch bewegter at b118 means more agitated and the marking at b129, *sehr kurz gestossen* means played very short. The violas are told to play *aber gut marki(ert)* (the e is not present in some scores) in b140. This means but well-marked (stressed or emphasised, even though it is staccato at this point). *scherzando* in the violins at b158 means jokingly.

At b166 some of the bass instruments (bassoons, bass tuba and double basses) have the marking *allmählich immer starker*, meaning gradually/little by little always stronger, while the violins are *immer bewegter im Vortrag*, which can be understood as always moving in the foreground.

At b171 the cellos have the Italian word for marked (stressed or emphasised), *marcato*. Two bars later they are told to play *nicht gebunden aber sehr gehalten*, not smoothly, but very held. Meanwhile the 1st violins should be *sehr feurig*, very fiery.

The final tempo indication is at b196, *Sehr gewichtig*, meaning very weighty (i.e. relatively slow).

The double lines on the notes in the violin and viola parts from b214 indicate that they should play repeated semiquavers, rather than quavers.

4 Techniques

Wagner's later compositions are generally known for their complex textures and rich harmonies, with great use of chromaticism. However, perhaps due to the sixteenth century setting of *The Mastersingers*, Wagner presents music which initially sounds diatonic. Nevertheless, this covers much underlying chromaticism and rich use of harmony, including dominant sevenths resolving unexpectedly, 9th, 11th and 13th chords, diminished and secondary sevenths, augmented chords and keys related by thirds. Wagner makes great use of *leitmotifs* (musical motives or themes associated with certain characters or places, which are heard when the character enters or is thought of), presenting many of them in the Overture (see below). Their simultaneous presentation later in the Overture leads to complex textures with lush orchestration. This Overture is particularly noted for its frequent use of countermelodies and contrapuntal textures.

The key of C major had long been associated with festive and ceremonial events, reflecting the ceremonial nature of the mastersingers' activities.

5 Themes

As with much of Wagner's music, the Overture involves the manipulation of themes and motifs, presenting music which will later be heard in the opera. The *leitmotifs* are presented in various forms, including in combination with others, resulting in a melody-led structure.

Given the central place of Hans Sachs in the plot, it seems at first odd that there is no musical reference to him in the Overture. However, the Overture was composed relatively early on in the writing process, at which stage Sachs was not the central character he was to become in later drafts.

These are the main *leitmotifs*:

The Mastersingers



Walther's Wooing



The Mastersingers' March – this theme is based on a melody from a book of mastersongs.



The Guild of Mastersingers – this theme has clear links to the opening theme and also similarities to the melody of another mastersong.



Walther's Yearning

89

(1st violins joined by oboes after one bar)

The Love Theme

97

(1st violins)

Walther's Spring Motif

103

(1st violins)

The Apprentice Mastersingers

122

(1st oboe and 1st clarinet)

Derision Motif

138

(Cellos)

6 Structure and Form

The sheer number of themes listed above shows the melody-led nature of the Overture. However, a loose sonata-form structure can also be identified, with an opening exposition including a 1st subject group of themes, transition and 2nd subject. There then follows the development (though many ideas are developed both before and after this section, while the development contains more variation of themes than development) and a recapitulation, where themes are combined contrapuntally.

The table below outlines the main sections, themes and keys

EXPOSITION			
1	1st subject, 1st theme	The Mastersingers	C major
27	1st subject, 2nd theme	Walther's Wooing	G major
40 ³	1st subject, 3rd theme	Mastersingers' March	C major
58 ³	1st subject, 4th theme	The Guild	C major
89	Transition	Yearning	Modulating
97	2nd subject	Love Theme (incorporating the Spring motif)	E major to dominant of C
DEVELOPMENT			
122	Development of 1st subject, 1st theme	The Apprentices, Derision Motif, Yearning	E flat major
RECAPITULATION			
151	1st subject, 1st theme	The Mastersingers	C major
158	1st subject, 1st theme, 3rd theme (in diminution) and 2nd subject	The Mastersingers, Mastersingers' March and Love Themes	C major
174	1st subject, 4th theme	The Guild	C major
187 ⁴	1st subject, 3rd theme	Mastersingers' March	C major
196		Derision Motif	C major
211	1st subject, 1st theme	The Mastersingers	C major

7 Commentary

EXPOSITION (bars 1–121) Main keys: C major and E major

1st subject, 1st theme (bars 1–26)

As already mentioned, audiences would have associated the key of C major with majestic ceremonial music: Wagner begins the Overture with the theme representing the mastersingers. It appears again in the opera when David is preparing for their entry and also in Act III when they enter. This stately theme initially appears to be very periodic, with the opening four bars answered by a similar phrase. However, this phrase is extended with a descending sequence (b7 onwards), over a dominant pedal from b8 (double basses, 3rd and 4th horns, bassoon and timpani). Virtually the full orchestra play, as befits the importance of the people they are representing, only the piccolo, triangle, cymbals and harp are not heard at all. The texture is homophonic, with many instruments doubling the melody, with a bass line often moving in contrary motion, adding to the strength of the theme. The rhythm and melodic shape of b2 is important to note, as it will be heard later in other contexts. The relatively long notes, the use of the falling perfect fourth and the dotted rhythm add to the strength of the theme. Wagner uses suspensions to reflect the sixteenth century setting of the work.

From b14 it initially sounds as though the theme will be heard again in F major, but after the opening bar an ascending sequence leads it in a different direction, to a perfect cadence in G major in b26–27.

1st subject, 2nd theme (bars 27–40)

Coinciding with the second chord in the perfect cadence in G major is the start of Walther's wooing theme. This returns in Act I, when Walther and Eva cast each other longing looks in church. There is a change in orchestration, to just strings and wind (plus two horns with a sustained note and then a countermelody) with the two-bar melodic idea played by the 1st flute and 1st clarinet in octaves then echoed by the 1st oboe, followed by a variant of the theme played by the 1st flute then the 1st clarinet. The dynamic is also quieter, sometimes with a small *crescendo* and *diminuendo* and the theme is much freer rhythmically, using syncopation. Each time the two-bar theme does not sound finished, making it sound like a question. Falling perfect fourths are used between the 1st and 2nd notes and the 3rd and 4th notes, foretelling Beckmesser's use of the same interval in his song at the end of the opera. The second bar uses mostly stepwise movement, including some chromaticism. This is a much more typical Romantic (and Wagnerian) melody. It is accompanied by a dominant pedal in the bassoons and double basses and string countermelodies. From b36⁴ the middle part of the melody is used in a transitional passage, leading to two bars of staccato semiquaver descending scales in the violins in unison. The increase in dynamics and rising pitch and the use of shorter note values builds up the excitement again.

1st subject, 3rd theme (bars 40³–58)

Often known as the 'Mastersingers' March', this C major theme has many march-like features: the fanfare-like rhythm at the start of each phrase, followed by a rising melody based on a broken chord, played by the brass in quadruple time. The melody itself is derived from an actual mastersinger tune, by the 14th-century composer Heinrich von Mügelin. Like the opening theme, it reflects the grandness and tradition of the mastersingers and is also heard later in the opera when the mastersingers make an entrance, often carrying their banner. The 14th-century melody (the seven crotchets at the top of the harp line) is heard three times (with a slight change at the end on the third occasion). This is accompanied by fast ascending scales in the strings, who then take over the melodic role (with the flutes) from b46³. When the theme is repeated from b48³, a different harmonisation takes it higher than the original version and extends it for slightly longer (compare b46–48 with b54–58), leading to a perfect cadence in G major in b57–58. However, this is short-lived as C major returns immediately for a new theme.

1st subject, 4th theme (bars 58³–89)

The Guild theme is derived from the opening theme: bar 2 of the Overture is extended and developed, with a countermelody (initially heard in the 1st and 2nd horns, violas and cellos). The countermelody includes suspensions e.g. b59–60 and frequently moves in contrary motion to the melody. As with earlier themes, Wagner often uses sequence to extend the melody: b59–62 are repeated in b64–66, but with the final four quavers repeated as an ascending sequence, meaning that the melody reaches even greater heights. From b67 the wind and 1st trumpet take up the melodic line. This theme and its extension are an example of Wagner's 'unending melody': the theme is spun out without resolution for 30 bars. It is mostly diatonic, with some use of chromaticism such as b72–73 and b87. At b76–79 the violins, violas and 2nd clarinet have a four-bar ascending sequence and the accompaniment includes offbeat arpeggiated harp chords. As the theme continues the orchestration becomes gradually richer, until by b84 virtually all the instruments, including the piccolo, are playing *ff*.

Transition (bars 89–96)

The end of Wagner's unending melody does not resolve as expected: the dominant chord of C major in b89 moves to the submediant. Here we are introduced to Walther's yearning motif. This two-bar melody features syncopation, a dynamic increase and decrease and the melodic figure of a turn followed by a rising leap. There are clear links with the earlier wooing theme. The presentation of this theme contrasts with the preceding guild theme in that it is harmonised more chromatically. As the transition, the purpose of this passage is to modulate to the new key for the 2nd subject. Wagner achieves this via a melodic and harmonic sequence: the A minor chord in b89 moves down a tone, then up a semitone (to B flat), similarly the C minor chord in b93 moves down then up a semitone to D flat. The cellos point the way of the enharmonic change with an F sharp (while the basses and bassoons still have a G flat). This is a G flat 7 chord but respelled as F sharp 7 it is chord II⁷ in the following E major. This passage involves much use of countermelodies, resulting in a contrapuntal texture.

2nd subject (bars 97–121)

Though the chord resolves onto E major, it is in 1st inversion, not root position. Wagner introduces us to the theme representing Walther's love for Eva. This four-bar melody, played initially by the 1st violins is heard as part of Walther's prize-winning song in the final act, though the song is in triple rather than quadruple metre. Here the flowing melody is relatively lightly scored, with a countermelody in the violas. B103 sees the introduction of the 'Spring' motif from Walther's 'Spring Song' in Act 1 Scene 3, played here initially by the 1st violins. The motif is heard in various rhythmic variations (e.g. 1st violins b105–106). At b114 the love theme reappears in the 2nd clarinet, 3rd and 4th horns and violas, but only for two bars (Wagner takes just the start and end of the theme). A continuing *crescendo* and gradual increase in orchestration, together with an increase in pitch through the use of ascending sequences builds the excitement. A seventh chord on F sharp in the second half of b117 leads to the return to the C major key signature at b118 and a dominant pedal in C in the 3rd trumpet, 4th horn and double basses. Over this the spring motif is repeated at increasing volume, with a diminished seventh chord (F sharp, A, C, E flat) at b121⁴. The growing excitement continues: the tempo increases and at b120 tutti woodwind, strings, horns and trumpet 3 have *molto cresc.*, leading to the central section of the Overture.

DEVELOPMENT (bars 122–150)

This section is relatively short and involves more variation than development, but development takes place throughout the Overture. The diminished seventh chord at the end of the exposition could be heard as the seventh chord in G major. However, it actually moves to an E flat major chord in 2nd inversion, complete with a change of key signature. This section opens with the mastersingers' theme from the start of the Overture but varied. It is in rhythmic diminution (played twice as quickly, with extra subdivision of the first beat), staccato by the woodwind, with an accompanying walking bass in the bassoons. In this form the theme represents the younger, apprentice mastersingers. This four-bar diatonic melody is answered chromatically by the strings, with

an almost complete descending and ascending chromatic scale played by the cellos and a variant of the Spring motif in the 1st violins.

When the wind re-enters at b127³ they present an extended, higher version of the apprentices' melody, now including flutes and horns. As ever, Wagner extends the melody through use of sequence. Rather than a perfect cadence in B flat major from b133–134, there is an interrupted cadence, to a chord of G minor. The strings answer again, with the Spring motif and much chromatic movement. At b136 the 1st violins incorporate the yearning motif from the transition.

At b138 we are introduced to the derision motif by the cellos, with the violas joining at b140 and the 2nd violins at b142). This is heard in the opera when Beckmesser awkwardly sings his song and the crowd laugh at him. It is heard simultaneously with the apprentices' theme, first in octaves in the 1st flute, 2nd oboe and 1st clarinet and then by other pairs and groups of three instruments. By presenting the two melodic ideas at the same time, Wagner sets up a contrapuntal texture rather like a double fugato (a passage of music involving imitative entries of two themes, as at the start of a fugue). Both the texture and dynamic gradually increase and at b144 the woodwind and strings swap roles, with the apprentices' theme in the 2nd bassoon and cellos and the derision motif in the 2nd flute, 1st oboe and clarinets. An increase in pitch and the frequency of the trills adds to the growing excitement. At the climax of this section we heard the yearning motif again, played by the 1st violins (b149–150). Throughout the development, although there is melodic chromaticism, Wagner stays faithful to the keys of E flat and B flat major. The section ends (b149–150) with another diminished seventh chord (F, A flat, B, D).

RECAPITULATION (bars 151–223)

This begins in C major (with a printed key-signature change) with the mastersingers' original theme from the opening of the Overture, but now played by the 3rd trumpet and 3rd trombone for one bar, before being taken over by the 1st and 2nd trombones, violas and cellos. From the fifth bar the theme is changed, with b153–154 repeated in an ascending sequence. Meanwhile the piccolo, 1st flute, 1st oboe and 2nd clarinet have the semiquaver fragment of the derision motif and the violins have conjunct ascending and descending semiquavers, slurred in pairs across the beat.

This is a taste of what is to come, since from b158 Wagner presents three themes in combination. The mastersingers' theme is played by the tuba, bassoons and double basses and the love theme is played by the 1st clarinet, 1st horn, 1st violins and cellos, while many of the rest of the instruments have the mastersingers' march in diminution. It is played with three triplet semiquavers (instead of a quaver and two semiquavers) followed by quavers instead of crotchets. At b170 the mastersingers' march is replaced by the derision motif, heard with both the semiquavers and quavers for one bar (2nd violins, violas and cellos) and then just the semiquavers.

From b173⁴ the Guild theme is heard strongly (2nd horn, bassoons, tuba, cellos and basses) with accompaniment and then brief suggestions of the Apprentices' theme from b177, over the repetition of the Guild theme. When the Guild theme has its third repetition (b182) it is extended with an ascending sequence.

At b187⁴ the mastersingers' march takes centre stage, played by the brass as before, in the original note values, but this time without woodwind and harp accompaniment. Instead of demisemiquaver scales, the lower strings have a walking quaver bassline, while the upper strings have offbeat sextuplet semiquavers (the final four of each beat, after a rest). When the march is repeated with virtually the full orchestra from b 195⁴ the wind return and the cellos and basses return to a variant of the derision motif, sometimes becoming purely stepwise semiquavers. At b203 the end of the march merges with what was originally the countermelody for the Guild theme (piccolo, 2nd flute and violins).

After a flurry of trills over a dominant pedal from b207, the mastersingers' theme is heard for the final time from b211, now tutti *ff*, with a prominent triangle part, the derision motif in the piccolo and 2nd violins and trumpet broken chords. This forms part of an extended plagal cadence, with the tonic chord reached at b218, repeated until the end of the Overture.

Introduction: Latin American music

The Federative Republic of Brazil is the largest country in both South America and Latin America and has a population of over 211 million people. Brazil's largest cities are found along the coastline and include Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Salvador. The country is one of the most multicultural and ethnically diverse nations, with a mix of white people of European descent, black people of African ancestry due to slavery, mixed-race people that have indigenous, European and African ancestry, indigenous Amerindian peoples and other East Asian races as a result of migration. This racial and ethnic diversity has contributed to the nation's exciting and vibrant urban music culture.

Candidates do not need to study music from the whole of Latin America but should be taught about the instruments and musical features of choro and samba, which are described in the following sections. The instruments or terms specific to this world focus with which candidates should be familiar are printed in bold. Information has been provided on the history and socio-cultural context of this music for the benefit of teachers; candidates should have a general awareness of the background to each style but will not be tested in detail on this.

I Choro

Choro is primarily an instrumental genre that emerged around 1870 in the urban neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro. The word 'choro' is believed to originate from the Portuguese verb *chorar*, meaning 'to weep', 'cry' or 'lament'. Many *choro* compositions have a melancholic feel, but *choro* music may also be lively and light-hearted. *Choro* is a fusion of the lyrical song form *modinha* and dances such as polkas, waltzes, tangos and *maxixe*, a form of African-influenced dance associated with black and poor white immigrants. It is a complex synthesis of European melodies and harmonies with Afro-Brazilian rhythmic timbres and textures. It gained much popularity in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly with the rise of cinema and the growth of the recording industry and radio. From its inception to contemporary times, the genre has continued to evolve and change because of political factors and nationalistic sensibilities.

1 Instrumentation

Cavaquinho

A small, plucked lute of Portuguese origin with four metal strings. In Brazil it is a very important instrument in *samba* and *choro* music. Its strings are tuned to $d' - g' - b' - d''$ (D4-G4-B4-D5) and are played with a pick.

Bandolim

A flat-backed variant of the mandolin with four courses doubled in unison. The pairs of strings are tuned to $g - d' - a' - e''$ (G3-D4-A4-E5).

Pandeiro

A tambourine-like hand frame drum commonly used in *samba*, *choro* and other forms of Brazilian music. It has a drum head that can be tuned, with metal jingles (*platinelas*) around the rim. It is held in one hand and struck on the head by the other hand to produce the sound. Rhythmic patterns are played by alternating the thumb, fingertips, heel and palm of the hand. A *pandeiro* can also be shaken to make sound, or a finger can be run along the head to produce a drum roll effect.

The traditional instrumentation in a *choro* ensemble comprises a flute, a *cavaquinho*, two six- or seven-stringed guitars, and a *pandeiro*. The flute takes on the role of the solo instrument, whilst the other instruments provide accompaniment. One of the guitars provides the bass. By the 1930s, horns of the jazz band, clarinet and samba percussion such as *ganza* (rattle or shaker), and *reco-reco* (a hollow, grooved gourd rubbed with a stick) had been added to instrumental *choro* compositions. In the 1940s and 1950s, the *bandolim*, a small mandolin-like string instrument was introduced. In contemporary *choro* performance, the *bandolim* is an essential solo instrument.

2 Musical characteristics

Harmony

Due to its influence from the European art music tradition, the music of *choro* tends to use diatonic major and minor scales. Scales with simple key signatures, such as C, F, G, Bb and D major and their relative minor keys A, D, E, G and B, are usually used. Triadic harmonies are common, although chords with sevenths, ninths and elevenths are also found. Modulations occur frequently. In a major key piece, common modulations are to the relative minor and subdominant keys, and music in the minor key favours modulation to its relative major and tonic major. Modulations to the dominant key are rare in both the major and minor modes. However, within phrases dominant-tonic progressions are favoured.

Musical Form

Choro typically has three sections in rondo form; the first theme returns in alternation with contrasting themes (A-B-A-C-A). However, ternary (A-B-A) form may also be found. Sections are often repeated. The parts or sections in *choro* tend to be regular, either 16 or 32 bars long.

Metre and Rhythm

Most *choro* pieces are in 2/4, but there are also pieces in 3/4 or 2/2 or 4/4 time. As a result of Afro-European influences, dance rhythms in *choro* are one of the defining characteristics of the genre, including the waltz, polka, schottische, maxixe (a form of Brazilian tango), lundu (the dance of African slaves) and samba.

The accompanying rhythm in waltzes is the typical rhythm whereby a low bass note is played for the first beat and the other two beats are filled out by higher chords. *Choro* melodies in 3/4 time are generally played at a slower tempo with notes of longer durations. Melodies and underlying dance rhythms in duple metre in *choro* are characterised by the use of semiquavers. The basic pattern played by the guitar is as follows:

Ex. 1 sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern (notated by Murray 2013: 136)



The more complex samba rhythm is also used in *choro*; the syncopated core rhythmic pattern has two measures per cycle.

Ex. 2 On the beat samba rhythm used in choro (notated by Murray in 2013: 134)



Where the first part of a phrase is off the beat, the two measures of the samba rhythm are switched (example 2).

Ex. 3 Off the beat samba rhythm (notated by Murray 2013: 135)



The guitar plays the bass and the chords. During performance, variations are played by altering various parts of the rhythm, adding melodic or bass lines, and using chordal inversions and dynamics. In the case of the *cavaquinho* and *bandolim* which are plucked or strummed with a single plectrum, they do not play bass but play chords using downward or upward pick strokes.

Instrumental Roles and Performance Practice

In the earlier development of *choro*, the flute, and later the *bandolim*, were the main solo instruments. Today, the most common solo instruments include the flute, *bandolim*, clarinet and saxophone. Traditionally, guitar and *cavaquinho* are considered more as accompaniment instruments, but they can fulfil the solo role as well. The soloist, aside from playing the main melody, also improvises by embellishing and ornamenting melodic lines. Some accompanying instruments pluck or strum the rhythms; other accompanying instruments play long, graceful **counterpoint** lines over rich and varied chord changes. The seven-string guitar produces a low-register melodic **countermelody**, at times improvising new lines based on the harmony.

In a music gathering, musicians communicate spontaneously with each other. If there are multiple solo instruments in the same performance, they take turns playing the main melody, and at times, those who are competent enough may provide melodic accompaniment through counterpoint lines. Accompanists in *choro* hone their skills by refining their rhythms, adding rhythmic variations, memorising chord progressions as well as melodic phrases, counterpoint, harmony and chord inversions. Accompanying instruments also aim to learn the solo lines as well, but it is more common for *cavaquinho* players to play the solo melodic part than guitarists, who focus on bass and chord plucking patterns and harmonisation.

Improvisation is an important hallmark of *choro*; but unlike jazz improvisation, the concept of improvisation in traditional *choro* takes the form of melodic and rhythmic decorations and variations on the themes.

3 Performance context

In the early days, amateur musicians gathered in small cafes, bars and private homes to play *choro*. Such a gathering is called a ***roda de choro*** (lit. *choro* circle). Performers of *choro*, regardless of social background, talent and status, were treated as equals, with the spirit of camaraderie and exchange very much being the focus rather than musical virtuosity. This practice, historically considered the 'heart and soul' of the music, was the ethos of the original *choro* circle.

Today, *choro* groups play in concert halls throughout Brazil and outside the country; they also play in televised performances and release recordings.

4 Socio-political context

From the time of its inception in 1870 to 1920, *choro* was the most popular music in Brazil. By the mid to late 1920s, *samba*, with its more conversational lyrics and stronger rhythmic feel as well as foreign music such as jazz from North America, gained popularity and *choro* began to fall out of favour with the public.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, against the background of music nationalism and as a reaction to foreign music disseminated through the radio and record industries, *choro* was reinvigorated through the works of Brazil's most well-known European art music composer Heitor Villa Lobos. Villa Lobos played *violao* with *choro* groups. He also played the *choro* compositions of flautist and saxophonist Pixinguinha. Promoted by the Brazilian National Radio as the 'Old Guard' of authentic Brazilian music, Pixinguinha's band were seen to be preserving and protecting *choro*, thereby establishing it as the foundation of Brazil's national musical heritage. For a time, spurred on by journalists and writers who exerted their influence in the concerns about preserving the 'authentic' legacy of Brazilian traditions, *choro* was brought back to prominence. But the influence of foreign investment and international popular music in Brazil in the 1960s soon pushed *choro*'s new-found popularity back into the shadows yet again. Even though *choroes* continued to play in private gatherings and for occasional public performances, and *choro* composers such as Jacob do Bandolim (master bandolim player) and *cavaquinho* player Waldir Azevedo continued to have commercial successes with their *choro* compositions, public interest in *choro* was low.

Choro's second revival began around the mid-1970s as the country's military administration began to move away from absolute authoritarian rule to an establishment of civil liberty. This key political moment lent impetus to the government's *Política Nacional de Cultura* (National Cultural Policy) launched in 1975. Under this new cultural initiative, *choro*, which had been considered to be threatened, became one of the music traditions to be safeguarded for the preservation of Brazilian 'cultural identity'. From then onward, concerted efforts by the national and Rio de Janeiro state governments projected *choro* into the public consciousness, resulting in a full-scale *choro* boom. Its success was the direct result of an intervention by a middle-class cultural elite of academics, journalists and critics, championing *choro* as an 'authentic' culture.

II Samba

Samba is an Afro-Brazilian form of clamorous dance music that is associated characteristically with the **carnival** context. The samba of Rio de Janeiro developed between the late 1920s and the early 1940s from traditional forms of samba that had been practised in the north-eastern state of Bahia, a region which saw the arrival of the first African slaves brought to Brazil. In the late nineteenth century, with slavery abolished and with a post-emancipation wave of labour migration, the musical form was brought to Rio de Janeiro. Here it was practised widely in the *morros*, the poorer hillside neighbourhoods and the *favela* (slums). Early samba is a mix of European-derived dance music combined with African-derived rhythm and musical practices. In 1928, the first samba school (*escola de samba*) was formed. Today, many kinds of samba sub-styles exist. One of the most well-known style is the Carnival samba (*samba-eneredo* or *samba-carnavalesco*). It is closely associated with a large percussion section and a strongly syncopated style of playing that gave the music its Afro-Brazilian identity.

1 Instrumentation

The large percussion section in samba is called the **bateria**. But cavaquinho and guitars are also used to provide harmonic accompaniment to the vocals; some of the pitched percussion instruments can also contribute to the melody.

Percussion instruments in the *bateria*

Pandeiro (see description above)

Tamborim – a small round frame drum of Portuguese and African origin without snares or jingles. The drum is made of metal, wood or plastic whilst the head is made of nylon. It is normally tightly tuned to ensure a high, sharp timbre. It is usually played with a small wooden drumstick or with a beater made of nylon strings or threads bound together.

Agogô – a double metal bell attached by a u-shaped piece of metal. *Agogôs* may be of different sizes and shapes; the bells produce two different pitches. A wooden stick is used to hit the bells to produce a cowbell-like sound or they could be squeezed together to produce a clicking sound.

Ganzá – a cylindrical rattle or shaker made from plastic, metal or hand-woven basket materials. It is filled with beads, metal balls, pebbles or other similar items to create rattling sounds.

Reco-reco – a notched scraper made of bamboo or metal.

Caixa – a snare drum played with two wooden drum sticks. It has metal wires or strings that run across one head to give it a 'snare drum' sound.

Cuíca – a single-headed bucket-shaped friction drum. A long, thin stick pierces through the centre of the drumskin. A unique squeaking sound is made by rubbing the stick between the thumb and forefinger with a damp sponge or piece of leather.

Repinique – a medium-sized, two-headed drum. In samba music, it is a lead and solo instrument as it is tuned to a very high pitch to stand out among the rest of the ensembles. It is played with one wooden stick and one hand.

Surdo – a large bass drum about 60cm deep. Three *surdo* drums, of different diameters, are used; they are played with one mallet, with the other hand damping the head.

2 Musical characteristics

Musical and Rhythmic Structure

Samba music is typically in 2/4 metre, comprising catchy eight-bar melodic phrases; in instrumental sambas these are typically performed either by a guitar, *cavaquinho* or mandolin. A key feature of samba is the **percussion break** known as *paradinha* ('little stop'). They can be inserted between the verses and the song refrain. A song may also end on a *paradinha*. During these percussion breaks, the *bateria* stops the main samba **groove** to play a **call and response** phrase or to play a different rhythm. In these, the lead *repinique* plays the calls. Samba songs typically consist of introduction, verse and chorus.

Samba rhythm is characterised by **syncopated** rhythms and a fast, energetic tempo. The percussion instruments in the *bateria* combine to produce a dense **polyrhythmic** texture. In the Rio de Janeiro-style Carnival samba, three surdo drums create a distinctive pattern which propels and drives the music. The largest and deepest-pitched surdo (the 'primeira'/first part) provides the pulse or rhythmic reference for the entire *bateria*. It plays beat 2 of the duple metre and may also sound pick-up notes to start the music. The primeira is answered by a slightly smaller and higher-pitched 'segunda'/second surdo which sounds beat 1 of the basic 1, 2 rhythm of samba. A third surdo known as 'terceira'/third part is played on the smallest and highest-pitched surdo. The terceira part consists of more complex patterns that provide fills and syncopations, 'cutting' across the basic pulse created by the other two surdo parts. Terceira patterns provide the important 'swing' feel of the *bateria*.

Ex. 4 Basic rhythm of the three types of surdo (Howard 2019)

The notation shows three staves for surdos in 2/4 time. Surdo 1 (primeira) has a pulse on the second beat of each measure. Surdo 2 (segunda) has a pulse on the first beat of each measure. Surdo 3 (terceira) has a complex pattern: a quarter note on beat 1, a quarter rest, a quarter note on beat 2, a quarter rest, a quarter note on beat 1, a quarter rest, a quarter note on beat 2, and a quarter rest.

Each samba school has its own *terceira* rhythmic pattern. When there is a rest in the surdo rhythms, the non-mallet hand creates a soft dampened sound by holding the fingertips flat on the drumhead.

The *agogô* bell typically plays a simple duple metre rhythm.

Ex. 5 A typical pattern played by the *agogô* (Howard 2019)

The notation shows a single staff for the agogô in 2/4 time. It plays a simple duple metre rhythm: a quarter note on beat 1, a quarter rest, a quarter note on beat 2, a quarter rest, a quarter note on beat 1, a quarter rest, a quarter note on beat 2, and a quarter rest.

The small high-pitched frame drum *tamborim* provides a syncopated layer.

Ex. 6 *Tamborim* rhythmic pattern (Howard 2019)



The *pandeiro*, *ganza* and the *repinique* provide a constant semiquaver rhythmic background, giving the music its drive:

Ex. 7 Pattern played by the pandeiro and ganza (Howard 2019)



3 Performance context

Samba is performed in the pre-Lenten street Carnival celebrations which culminate in the three days preceding Ash Wednesday. Carnival season typically lasts four or five days. Merry-making, singing and dancing and a parade in which participating groups wear extravagant costumes to mark this celebration. *Sambistas* dance through the city streets followed by batteries of deafening percussion. Samba schools compete for prizes based on their music performance, dance choreography and costumes. Each school's performance is centred around a specific theme, typically one that promotes Brazilian identity and revolves around national, historical or political figures and events.

By the mid-1920s, the growing record industry was producing recordings of samba and its music was played on radio stations, increasing its popularity both nationally and abroad.

4 Socio-political context

In the early 1920s, as samba developed in the poor hillside neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro and was associated with dissenting groups, the music and its erotic dances were considered vulgar and not well looked upon by the local authorities and the elite. But as Carnival took hold, parading groups of *sambistas* and samba music began to gain popularity, especially among the rising middle class and abroad due to the rising recording industry and radio. Samba was promoted by the government in the 1930s. In 1934, Carnival was designated as an official national event and samba became a part of the government's *Estado Novo* (New State) campaign as a symbol of Brazilian identity. Registered samba schools flourished with support from public funds and samba's association with Carnival was validated.

By the 1960s, the samba schools had increased greatly in size. After the Brazilian capital was moved from Rio de Janeiro to the newly-built city of Brasilia, commercialisation of samba schools set in as Carnival became more competitive as it became an important part of the tourist economy of the city. Today, the samba schools and samba music have continued to be the nucleus of Carnival and Rio de Janeiro's principal focus of tourism.

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