

CCEA GCSE Music
Summer Series 2016

Chief Examiner's Report and Principal Moderator's Report

music

Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Music for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk

Contents

Component 1:	Composing and Appraising (Controlled Assessment)	3
Component 2:	Performing and Appraising (Controlled Assessment)	5
Component 3:	Listening and Appraising	8
Contact details		13

GCSE MUSIC

Principal Moderator's Report

Component 1: Composing and Appraising (Controlled Assessment)

Overview of the Component

The GCSE Music specification requires candidates in this component, to create **two** contrasting compositions, one of which is to be related to the core or an optional Area of Study and maintain a composition log for each. This component is a **controlled assessment task** governing the setting, taking and marking of the task. It comprises 30% of the total marks available for the subject.

Overall Trend

It is encouraging to report once again, that the high standards of previous years have been maintained. There are three discernible traits in performance; in the first instance there continue to be considerably fewer exceptional portfolios submitted; additionally, there were considerably fewer very weak submissions. Thirdly, there continued to be large 'brunching' of compositions in the Grade C/D boundary. The trend of a slightly stronger submission alongside a slightly weaker composition continued.

It is encouraging to note that the most successful submissions exhibited sufficient flair and creative skill to allow candidates to further hone these skills at a more advanced level.

Congratulations for the significant amount of time and effort taken by centre staff in encouraging their candidates to neatly present their folios and provide a, generally excellent, quality of scores and CD's.

Recordings and Scores

The use of notational software programs continues unabated with a high degree of dexterity. The vast majority of centres included recordings of their compositions and scores. It is not, however, a requirement to submit recordings but their provision is a definite aid during moderation. It was disappointing to note the significant numbers of submissions where candidates chose 'software' instrumentation inappropriate to the acoustic range or timbral effects of the same-named acoustic instruments. Candidate log information did not always clarify the rationale in the choice of instrument in such cases. I reiterate that here is an element where a 'research' activity on instrumentation would be beneficial.

Success Criteria and Standard of Centre Assessments

The majority of centres submitted exemplified high standards of internal assessment, including effective standardisation within their centres. Fewer centres were reviewed this year at Post Moderation. Those which did require adjustment to marks, showed major discrepancies in interpretation of agreed standards as outlined in the assessment criteria grids in the specification.

Criterion (iii) was the least consistently assessed, where high marks were often awarded for little or no evidence of secondary chords, effective cadences or added colour to the harmonic language.

Criteria (i) caused less concern when applied to strophic songs. Fewer candidates were rewarded for multiple verses with little melodic or rhythmic differences or additional counter-melodies.

The vast majority of folios presented were assessed by centres under Success Criteria A (where technology does is not a core component). A very small number of centres used Success Criteria B, although in many cases this did not benefit candidates as there was insufficient evidence under criteria (iv) to gain highest marks.

Overall, a decrease in the number of centres had marks adjusted. It is important to note that a lot of time is spent in ensuring the TAC6's issued to centres are as affirming and positive as possible, celebrating good work, well assessed, authenticated and presented. Any constructive comments noted by the moderator team are designed to affect future in-centre planning and should be taken on board.

The quality of recordings submitted continues to rise, which is most encouraging. The moderation team, however, must be sure that the candidate composition log **fully** explains the processes involved in these recordings.

The overwhelming majority of centres and candidates are to be congratulated on the manner in which time constraints, authentication procedures and controlled assessment guidelines have been managed. **Any centres submitting non-authenticated work had their submissions returned to ensure compliance.** Centres submitting controlled assessments as part of consortium arrangements are on the increase.

Authentication procedures & Composition Logs

The Composition log is an integral part of the composition process. Logs submitted used the CCEA template in the main (available on the CCEA Music microsite). For those centres who chose to provide their own templates and/or composition diaries, these were detailed highly informative, well-documented and beautifully presented. There were some excellent examples of good classroom practice in the teaching of composition skills, effective self, peer and teacher evaluation and a refreshing transparency in the quality of teaching and learning in Music Departments throughout the province.

It is a clear requirement of this component that a Log is submitted for each composition, and that they are authenticated by teachers and candidates.

There was significantly less evidence of fulfilling the letter of the law by ticking a box on the far right of the candidate log. The moderation team thank the majority of centres for the insight provided by music staff in their qualifying comments.

Areas of Study

Repeated Patterns again proved the most popular related area of study with *Vocal Music and Musical Traditions in Ireland* closely following behind.

Links to *Vocal Music* resulted in many well-structured, stylishly-developed and balanced rock/pop/urban songs with well-established references to the features expected. The trend of paying attention to detail by candidates in writing or researching appropriate texts is to be applauded.

There were very few through-composed compositions in the *Incidental Music* option. For those who did, it as here that greatest creative use was made of technology, especially in music to accompany film or computer games.

Traditional suites of Slow Airs, jigs, reels etc., were popular in the *Musical Traditions of Ireland* option and a large number brought new insight to the, often formulaic, nature of Traditional Irish/Ulster-Scottish dance forms, sub-planting new rhythmic intricacy and harmonic invention.

Centres who use class-based compositional tasks as teaching tools were less good at clearly outlining individual outcomes which showed differentiation between candidates and allowed creativity and freedom of choice. Larger number of candidates used the 'Free Composition' option. Centre staff are reminded that the specification does require two 'contrasting' compositions to be submitted.

Administration and Compliance with Specification

Congratulations! Fewer arithmetical errors were noted. Totalling **across** the criteria, transferring marks from Candidate Record Sheets to OMR and totalling **down** for the final folio mark were the most common errors.

Large numbers of unauthenticated work had to be returned to centres to ensure compliance in this respect.

Centres are also reminded that submissions to CCEA should include the work of the highest and lowest candidate, even if they have not been requested.

There is also a requirement to include the TAC2 form of internal standardisation, even in one-teacher centres.

Use of Technology

It is most encouraging to note the increase in the technical knowledge shown by candidates in handling a wide range of school and home based media.

There were fewer examples of work where candidates had not clearly indicated the use of pre-programmed tracks/loops, downloaded files or material from media-sharing websites (e.g. YouTube) Teacher Assessments accurately reflected the original work of candidates in the vast majority of centres.

Still too many centres submitted CDs which had not been correctly formatted for audio playback.

Conclusion

The high standard of this component has been maintained and centre staff are encouraged to continue their good work. It is our hope that candidates will continue to benefit from the high quality guidance and direction of their Music staff.

Chief Examiner's Report

Component 2

Performing and Appraising

This was another very successful year with a wide variety of solo and ensemble performances and ability ranges. We thank the schools for the continuing high standards achieved, the welcome given to members of the examining team and the care taken in presentation of all the performances.

It is of the utmost importance for teachers to read the report and take on board the suggestions within it and correct any problems which still reoccur.

1. Examiners should not be asked to examine more than 20 candidates in one day, spread over the day with an appropriate break for lunch. In many cases an examiner will have to visit two schools on the same day, so it is vital that the first school be well organised and no time wasted so that the examiner has time to travel to the next school and also have a break for lunch.
2. Examiners contact their schools early and arrange dates and times of arrival. Only in a real emergency can these be changed once agreed.
3. Examiners usually plan to arrive in time to greet pupils and after this begin their examinations. It is most important then that the session begins promptly.
4. There were reports unfortunately of a few schools which did not adhere to this and kept examiners waiting before the examinations began and in between pupil performances. Examiners must not be required to sit for long periods waiting for candidates to appear – the schedule must be prearranged by the teacher in charge and strictly adhered to.
5. If a candidate makes a “false start” to their performance it is quite acceptable for them to start again. However, once the performance is over on no account can the candidate be allowed to repeat the piece(s) again.
6. Once again this year some candidates performed pieces at a much higher level than the required guidelines. There is a danger here that if not performed without mistakes marks are lost. It is much better to perform an easier piece at the required level without errors and gain high marks.
7. Teachers are not allowed to remain in the room during an examination unless accompanying a candidate. They should not be actively participating in ensembles either as performers or directors.

Solo Performance

1. More outstanding performances this year on a wide variety of musical instruments. As in other years a large number of singers offering a wide repertoire of folk song, lieder and songs from the shows. It is important that teachers do not underestimate the difficulties of the songs chosen. Often a popular ballad or song can contain many rhythmic and pitching problems.
2. It is important that singers do not use music or text copies, or hide behind a music stand when presenting their songs as it detracts from the important communication between soloist and listener.
3. Backing tracks are still becoming a useful resource in the solo performances. It is important that the person responsible for starting the track leaves the room immediately, they are not permitted to remain the room during the examination.
4. Most of the Piano accompaniments are of a very high standard. Occasionally though the accompanist (often the teacher) is so heavy handed that it drowns out the pupil performing.
5. It is expected that after a two year preparation period that performances should last at least 1.30 minutes minimum but not over five minutes. Less than that candidates can lose marks where there is not enough for the examiner to award the whole range of marks.
6. Performing two pieces is inadvisable but is a matter for the candidate to decide. Often performing a second piece not as well as a first piece can result in a loss of marks.
7. We expect teachers to indicate the Grade level of the pieces presented by their candidates.

Ensemble performance

1. Again this year examiners reported a wide variety of interesting and enjoyable ensembles.
2. It is hoped that candidates themselves will set these up, with teacher guidance, and then practice together in preparation for the examination.
3. We must stress that setting up ensembles should be as quick and easy affair, well rehearsed beforehand with all necessary instruments tuned and all equipment to hand. Checking of sound levels is expected before starting and time can be allowed for this. There must be no manipulating of sound levels by teacher or sound engineer during performance. They are not permitted in the examination room at this time.
4. A repeat of the solo style performance with candidate and accompanist is not a true ensemble. Too often we see pupil and teacher accompanist as an ensemble, and in such cases the teacher invariably “leads”. Therefore the candidate loses marks as they are supposed to be “in charge” of the performance.
5. It is vital that teachers and pupils check that on their Exa4 form that the instrument being examined is clearly defined and easily distinguished from the other members of the group if played back in recording. If this is not done then it impossible for that part of the examination to be remarked at a later date – should a remark be requested.
6. Ensemble groups should be kept to small numbers so that the candidate can be identified clearly. Bands or orchestras are not permitted.
7. Teachers should make certain that the candidate’s part is not being doubled by another player, and should be of sufficient length and content for an assessment to be made. Not just a few bars of solo or duet in an otherwise unison piece.
8. Should an examiner discover that a candidate’s part is being doubled by another player, that player will not be permitted to remain in the ensemble during the examination.

The Discussion (Viva)

1. The series and sequence of questions in this part of the examination has now been established long enough for teachers and candidates to be aware of what will be asked.
2. If possible the music used by the candidate should be given to the examiner before the Viva begins so that it can be a focus for the initial questioning.
3. The piece being discussed must be connected to one of the areas of study. We should make clear that Incidental Music is music written specifically for film, television or stage drama and NOT “songs from the shows” or “music which tells a story”. Too many candidates have a very vague idea as to what constitutes Incidental Music and teachers need to be make this area clear.
4. No two discussions are ever the same – but they do follow a recognisable structure.
5. Examiners report how much they enjoy the experience of visiting schools, meeting fellow teacher/musicians and comment on the very high standards of performances they hear. We thank the schools once again for this.

Component 3 Listening and Appraising

General Overview

The papers this year contained a wide range of questions which discriminated over the whole range of ability. There were sufficient easily accessible questions throughout and also some more testing questions as well.

The questions within the papers, reflected the depth and breadth of the areas of study, as well as providing some on unknown pieces of music to test candidate's abilities to use their knowledge gained throughout the course. The examiners agreed that the questions discriminated well and all were within the scope of the specification.

A great deal of thought goes into the wording of the rubrics in each question. Therefore the candidates need to learn how to study these carefully and work out exactly what answers are being expected.

It is important that before the examinations begin that candidates write their centre number and candidate number clearly on their paper.

There were many instances where candidates demonstrated their ability to listen and analyse what they heard. However, there were still too many who relied on vague general comments such as *imitation, sequence, walking bass, harmony, word painting* etc., and continuing to use the phrase "the use of" without indicating the part of the music they are referring to.

The identification of instruments still seems to be a real stumbling block again this year. Candidates find difficulty in distinguishing between an oboe and clarinet, a flute and a piccolo, and between the four main instruments of the brass family.

It has been said often in these reports that the term "drum" is unacceptable – this *must* be qualified as to which type of drum is being mentioned. Within a drum kit there are several instruments, the collective title will not do, candidates must specify which piece of equipment they mean, nor is the title *snare* acceptable as the name of a particular instrument.

In Paper 2 there are three "long answer" questions – Numbers 3, 6 & 9. Part of the assessment of these questions is the ability of the candidate to write clearly, legibly and using correct spelling of musical terms and composer's names etc. Occasionally scripts can be so illegible that it is impossible to work out what the candidate means – and unfortunately it can lead to a loss of marks. Sometimes in these longer questions candidates opt for "bullet points" in a list. In these cases the points **must** be linked to a specific point in the music or text, and be of sufficient length to make a sentence. A list of unconnected *buzz words* does not gain marks.

Readability

The papers presented no problems in this area and were accessible to candidates.

Mark Schemes

The mark schemes were extremely comprehensive and accessible, covering all possibilities with an appropriate range and allocation of marks.

The Papers

Paper 1: Repeated Patterns in Music

There were five questions this year, two based on the set works and two on unfamiliar music. The last question was once more a written one based on the Music Industry.

Q1 Sy No 7 Allegretto 0.00–1.59 – Set Work

The opening question was quite an accessible one on the opening of the movement. Candidates were asked to fill in the missing words on the four sections.

- (a) It was disappointing that so many failed to identify the two missing wind instruments here most managed to identify the “forte” and the diminuendo.
- (b) Another rather disappointing response here as too few identified the correct Instruments.
- (c) Well answered by most candidates, as was
- (d) Most knowing the source of the music.

Q2 Waltz from Swan Lake – 0.00–1.12

The first of the “unfamiliar music” questions.

- (a) (i) There was a very wide range of possible answers here and the majority of candidates did answer well.
- (ii) Not all identified the Horns here – as mentioned above this is an area where many candidates lose marks.
- (b) (i) Well answered, a majority recognised the String family here.
- (ii) A lot of scope here for the four available marks and candidates did well here.
- (c) (i)& Good answers here too.
- (ii)
- (d) (i) A good number knew this was music from the Romantic era, but at (ii) there were too many unconvincing reasons for the choice.

Q3 The Planets Suite – “Mars” 2.39–3.09

Another question on a set work and a “mixed bag” of answers, so it discriminated well.

- (a) (i)& Well answered, though we did see some incorrect guesses as to the instrument
- (ii) at (i)
- (b) This was most disappointing – particularly as this a set work, and a popular one at that. There were few who managed to gain the full four marks available. Too many wild guesses where there were many different points that could be made.
- (c) (i) Most knew who the composer was though not always attributing the correct century.
- (ii) Again the answers here were not good, too many references to “big orchestras” – and if they gave the correct century for Holst as the composer that was a correct answer, though not everyone did.

Q4 Les Miserables – “Do you hear the people sing?” 0.00–2.12

The other perhaps “unfamiliar” piece though a song with which a large number of candidates would possibly have heard before – if not even performed in the musical from which it was sourced.

- (a) (i) Although Tenor or Baritone was accepted here too many failed to identify the type of voice correctly.
- (ii) A huge number of comments here, often incorrectly naming the voices, the change of key and the higher pitch.
- (iii) Various answers here but most recognised the SATB chorus.
- (b) There were five marks available here and it was one of the difficult parts of the question. There were very few full marks, and too many rather mixed versions as to what was actually happening in the closing bars of the music.
- (c) Well answered most recognised this as a March.

Q5 The question on the Music Industry – one on which candidates regularly score highly. That being said the number of candidates scoring full marks here was surprisingly low. There was an attempt to get away from what might turn into an English Comprehension test by keeping the opening statement brief and to the point. The questions produced many and varying correct answers.

- (a) Too many tried to lift their answer word for word out of the opening statement which was a pity as we expected answers, brief and to the point in the candidate's own words.
- (b) (i) Many lost marks here by not saying that this is a Disc or Tape or some kind of recording. By just saying it was a thing sent to others to promote the band was not enough.
- (ii) Well answered, nearly everyone was correct here.
- (c) (i)& Mostly good answers here, just a minority giving rather vague comments, or
- (ii) not linking the answer to the extract.

Paper 2

Section 1: Musical Traditions of Ireland

Q1 Extract A “Cuckoo’s Nest”; De Danaan; 1.34–2.26

Good answers in this section with majority of candidates gaining 8 out of the 10 marks available.

- (a) (i)& Most candidates correctly identified the four instruments.
- (ii)
- (iii) A small minority of candidates did not recognise the reel.
- (b) Cuckoo’s Nest medley.
- (c) While the binary form was well identified, the major modality was not. The group was correct in most answers.

Extract B “Battle of the Somme”; Ravara Pipe Band; 1.40–2.12

- (d) (i) Incorrectly noted as the second of the two melodies. This is the Battle of the Somme.
- (ii)& The snare drum and the slip jig 9/8 metre well answered.
- (iii)
- (iv) Again, the major key was too often mis-identified.
- (e) Universally well answered with the full name of the band noted.

- Q2** “Drowsy Maggie”; The Chieftains; 2.20–3.50
- (a) (i) & Tin whistle & Reel were correctly identified by most.
(ii)
 - (b) (i) & Two, Bones & Fiddle and Bodhran.
(ii)
 - (c) This was disappointingly with few candidates gaining full marks. Unison, Loud dynamics, abrupt ending, not playing together, trill, ornamentation, sustained E note – many of these were missed
 - (d) Drowsy Maggie well noted. The modal tonality was frequently missed. The Chieftains was also identified by most.

- Q3** The very extensive mark scheme allowed all candidates to achieve. The best responses correctly noted the themes and their instrumentation in their correct order. Other responses were more haphazard in their organisation but candidates were rewarded nonetheless. The identification of the correct instruments was a key weakness. Candidates should not think that unconnected comments about ‘loud’, ‘fast’ etc., will be credited.

Ten valid points were sought as QWC accounted for a further three.

Section 2 Incidental Music for Stage, Screen and Television

- Q4** Extract A: Hans Zimmer; “Davy Jones Theme”; 0.00–0.35
- (a) (i) The first incorrect note (2nd quaver bar 3) was most commonly identified. The last note in bar 7 was often missed.
 - (ii) Tonic-Dominant was missed by many. This very strong harmonic ingredient should have been identified more frequently.
 - (iii) & 3/4 time and D minor.
 - (iv)

Extract B: Ron Grainer; “Dr Who Theme”; 0.00–0.35

- (b) Comprehensive mark scheme offered most scope. Majority of candidates focused on the electronic effects, rhythmic ostinato, tonality and the insistent forte dynamics.
- Q5** Mendelssohn; “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”; 3.06–4.06
- (a) Order of themes was well identified (Theme 1, 3 & 2)
 - (b) (i) & Forte/Fortissimo and Pedal.
(ii)
 - (iii) This was poorly answered. The only melodic instruments playing are lower strings (cello & Double bass), horn and ophicleide. The timpani is also the only percussion instrument.
 - (c) (i) The question asked which “character” in the play and Bottom was the only acceptable answer.
(ii) A good differentiator question with the focus on the braying effect created by the falling 9ths and 10ths played by the clarinets and violins.
 - (d) Overture, Mendelssohn and Romantic well identified. Majority of candidates did not correctly identify the sonata form.

Q6 Again the very extensive mark scheme allowed all candidates to achieve. The best responses correctly noted the themes and their instrumentation. The order of these themes achieved a much better response. Weaker answers with unqualified, unspecific instrumentation or general comments about tempo and dynamics ‘wasted’ vital marks. The xylophone ostinato was frequently misidentified as the glockenspiel. There was greater analytical detail evident in this question. The melody of the “Singin’ in the rain” was well spotted!

Ten valid points were sought as QWC accounted for a further three.

Section 3: Vocal Music

Q7 Extract A “Run”; Snow Patrol; 0.00–0.30

- (a) (i) & It was disappointing to note the large numbers of pupils who did not identify the instruments playing. It has long been convention that “guitar” is not a specific answer when considering rock instrumentation. The ostinato was played by the electric rhythm guitar.
- (ii) Three chords form the basis of this iconic song.
- (iii) Surprisingly, although the group were well identified, the song “Run” fared less well.

Extract B “Schwartz”; “What is this feeling”; 2.56–3.31

- (b) (i) Major tonality.
- (ii) The question specifically asked for comments on the instrumental accompaniment and should have had no reference to vocal themes or effects. The question offered great scope for candidates to achieve, yet the majority of candidates gained 3 out of the 4 available marks.

Q8 Handel; “Messiah”; “Glory to God”; 0.00–0.39

- (a) (i) Rhythm 2 was well identified.
- (ii) All voices EXCEPT bass are singing.
- (iii) This was poorly answered; Homophonic only acceptable answer.
- (b) (i) Disappointing response although the mark scheme highlighted the key. Ingredients of the staccato repeated chords, played softly by the strings.
- (ii) Only Tenor and Bass acceptable.
- (iii) Two marks awarded for the octave interval and its direction of travel (descending).
- (iv) Allegro tempo identified by majority.
- (c) A good gain question, but identifying the correct century of composition (18th century) proved elusive for many.

Q9 More than the other two longer type questions, this one suffered from lack of focus. Too many candidates lost valuable marks in unrelated comments, which could have so easily been related to the lyrics or line numbers.

Ten valid points were sought as QWC accounted for a further three.

Contact details

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