

# MUSIC

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Paper 9703/01

Listening

## Key messages:

- Refer to specific musical examples as precisely as possible
- Avoid repeating points using the same examples in different sections of the paper
- Show secure knowledge of instrumentation
- Listen to music from a wider range of repertoire than just that of the Prescribed and Core Works.

## General

A considerably-increased entry demonstrated the widest possible range of achievement. A number of impressive candidates scored exceptionally high marks in all three sections of the paper, other candidates were very creditable and the rest mostly solidly satisfactory. Where there was weakness it was only in a very few cases evident across the paper as whole; more often, one poor third answer significantly depressed an otherwise promising overall mark. Answers reflected a high level of preparedness and only at a very small number of Centres did candidates appear to be unfamiliar with the music (especially that of **Section A**).

Most candidates read the questions carefully and answered relevantly. Some insisted on overlong preambles in which they wrote out all they knew before getting to what the question really required them to address. This tendency was particularly noticeable in answer to all three questions in **Section A**. Several candidates who had struggled with the prepared repertoires of **Sections A** and **B** responded well however to the challenge of reflecting more broadly on issues in **Section C** and were able to illustrate their answers with knowledgeable references to a range of different repertoires.

Technical terms: the number of technical terms that candidates are expected to use correctly in this Syllabus is quite small. The use of everyday language that communicated clearly what had been heard, and explained effects convincingly, is wholly acceptable. However candidates should avoid using the word 'song' when referring to purely instrumental music (symphony, concerto, quintet etc) in **Section A** repertoire: this demonstrates a lack of engagement with the nature of this repertoire.

The technical terms 'dynamics' and/or 'tempo' were frequently confused: a common error was to describe the tempo as 'louder', or the dynamics as 'faster'.

## **Section A**

The majority of candidates answered **Question 1**. The standard of commentary-writing has improved every year and this is a skill which has clearly been well-taught. There was, however, a danger of relying too heavily on this increased facility when answering other types of question, particularly those that ask for a 'comparison', or to 'explain similarities and differences' between two works: sometimes very accurate commentaries demonstrated familiarity with the music but left Examiners to do the work of drawing conclusions about its significant features. In all three questions, many answers were vague about instrumental resources.

1 There were some very well-informed, detailed answers worthy of full, or almost full, marks. Most candidates could describe 'who did what' in recognisable terms but a secure understanding of the variation process was less frequently evident: only the best answers referred to the consistency of the harmonic framework.

Some candidates spent too long at the beginning of their answer describing in detail the structure, instrumentation and harmonic features of the Theme, without subsequently incorporating this information and making it relevant to their discussion of the variations.

Common errors: (i) a large number of candidates understood 'Variations I, II and III' as 'movements' I, II and III; (ii) references to 'the orchestra', as well as to multiple instruments ('cellos' were frequently referred to), showed a weak grasp of the nature of chamber music; (iii) although the use of shorter note-values may make the music appear to go 'faster', this is a matter of a change in 'rhythm', not 'tempo'; (iv) 'staccato' was sometimes termed 'pizzicato'. CD timings were not adequate reference points (all recordings differ).

- 2 This question was poorly answered. Few candidates knew which instruments were used in each of the orchestras though some had a sense of bigger/smaller, louder/softer. There was a great deal of irrelevant information (e.g. about heroes and schoolteachers), several answers even suggesting that the woodwind instruments represented 'chattering' candidates. Some candidates did recognise the use of the strings as the driving force, and one or two made special mention of horns, but few accurate examples of the use of any other solo instruments were offered. Several candidates believed timpani to have an important role in both pieces, others mistook oboes for clarinets in Haydn's orchestra.
- 3 This was the least popular question in the section. Although most candidates understood that the presence of a solo instrument in a concerto changed the nature of the musical interactions, few were able to demonstrate its more virtuosic role convincingly: this could have been done by a simple comparison between the technical demands of its part with that of the orchestral violins. More tangible similarities/differences, such as the number and nature of movements (the lack of a Menuet and Trio in the concerto, for instance), the two-fold exposition in the concerto's 1st movement or improvised cadenzas, were often overlooked.

### Section B

- 4 Candidates who chose this question were usually comfortable with it. Very good, close knowledge of the music was demonstrated. Differentiation rested on the degree of specificity with which points were supported. Several answers expressed reservations about what was perceived as the 'limitations' of the instrumental accompaniments (perhaps an implied comparison with the more vivid role of Verdi's orchestra). This could be a tenable view but few who held it actually examined the contribution of the ground basses. Word-painting in the vocal line, however, was generally understood in principle, and examples chosen as illustration of the point were potentially relevant. A few answers gave convincing explanations of such examples, but the general run of answers was rather vague, leaving the singer's text to speak for itself. Some of the weakest candidates were enthusiastic in their responses to the tragedy, sympathising with Dido's 'pain', but focused too much on narrative, quoting extensively the words of songs without at any point describing how these were expressed by the music. Others gave detailed appraisals of vocal quality and effective use of dynamics in the performance they were familiar with, a slight misinterpretation of the meaning of the question; there was also a tendency to understand 'music' as referring only to 'accompaniment'. Several answers strayed into discussion of other parts of the opera, particularly recitatives and choruses (another instance perhaps of today's loose use of the word 'song', here taken to mean 'any type of movement' in the opera).
- 5 The underlying narrative of the songs had generally been appreciated and most candidates understood the piano's contributions to their moods as well as to its descriptive role. Differentiation lay principally in the extent of each answer's exploration and explanation of examples. There were many very full, perceptive answers.
- 6 Very few candidates chose this question. Their examples were well-chosen, mostly from musicals, but the exploration of "musical features" was generally superficial, focusing principally on tempo and dynamics. It was a surprise that so few even mentioned the love-duet in *Otello* but several believed that there was one in *Dido and Aeneas*.

### Section C

Many brave attempts were made in **Questions 8, 9 and 10** to pin down sometimes elusive concepts. The best answers always came from candidates who had a wide range of listening experiences on which to draw and were able recall relevant details of what their attentive ears had noticed. Where asked for, opinions were offered but supporting 'arguments' were not always convincing.

- 7 A very small number of candidates chose this question. They were usually able to give an adequate definition but the discussion of actual cases was often very sketchy and too many simplistic

comparisons were made between their status as subject to 'patronage' or 'free-lance'. Centres are urged to do more to help their candidates understand the contexts in which music comes into being, particularly that of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

- 8** Candidates relished this question. Many were able to make sensible comparisons between the sounds of the voices of named pop and opera singers, and to offer convincing practical reasons for the differences. Quite a number of excellent answers showed a very advanced understanding of the anatomy and mechanism of the voice, and explained in some detail the effects of different types of technique.
- 9** Most answers showed a lively awareness of the danger of 'homogenisation' in today's music. Candidates with direct experience of both a traditional music culture and Western music were able to cite stimulating examples of composers attempting to bring the two together in ways that acknowledges and respects both. Few, however, went on to explain in any detail how this marriage was manifest in the music.
- 10** On the whole answers demonstrated a good understanding of the role of tempo in a wide range of music, candidates often drawing on their own experience in performance. Some had reflected on interpretative issues and showed insight into the problem of determining 'intention', the best-informed of them being able to discuss knowledgeably changing concepts of tempo over time. A few thoughtful candidates explored cover versions, in which new performers adopted different tempi from the originals for expressive purposes. Many, however, probed no further than straightforward contrasts of slow/fast, the former usually being associated with sad/peaceful and the latter with 'excited'. It was unfortunate that a small number of candidates fell back on examples they had already discussed fully in answers to earlier questions (several returning to the role of tempi in establishing the moods of the songs cited in **Question 5**).

# MUSIC

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<p>Paper 9703/02 Practical Musicianship</p>
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## Key messages:

- For Element 1 candidates should choose a range of repertoire within the level of their ability
- Centre assessors should make detailed comments on the working mark sheets for Element 2
- Each composition for Element 4 should be composed for two or more instruments/voices

## General comments

Candidates achieved a good overall standard of work in this component. There were some outstanding examples of performing in Elements 1 and 2, and some very promising compositions in Element 4. Work presented for Element 3 was of a generally satisfactory level. It was clear that most Centres had chosen suitable elements for individual candidates, thus ensuring that they were able to work to their strengths.

Almost all candidates presented **Element 1**. The majority of candidates presented appropriate repertoire that allowed them to perform to the best of their ability and which demonstrated their technical skill and understanding, thus enabling them to access the full range of assessment criteria. Singers and pianists predominated, but there were many able drummers, guitarists, string and wind players. Most candidates were accompanied by piano, but backing tracks may be used where suitable live musicians are not available in order to enable candidates to demonstrate their full stylistic understanding of the music. Backing tracks must not include the candidate's part. Most Centres were able to provide appropriate accompanists and suitable venues, though a few candidates were disturbed by extraneous noise from both within and outside the performance room.

In this element candidates should include a range of styles. Whilst most had clearly given careful thought to this feature of their programme, others performed just one, often short, piece. This did not always give them the opportunity to demonstrate this aspect of the requirements.

The standard of spoken introductions was good, with candidates showing real understanding of the music. Most gave short, but well focused, introductions, while others spoke at more length. However, a number of candidates gave no introduction, or merely named their pieces. The introduction puts the forthcoming programme of music into context for their audience and the Examiners, and its relevance and extent to which its context is reflected in the performance is assessed in **section E** of the assessment criteria. Without it, candidates cannot access the full range of marks.

Almost all candidates who presented **Element 2** offered two disciplines as required. Care should be taken to ensure that the repertoire chosen gives candidates an opportunity to develop and extend their skills appropriate to their own ability. Centres should also ensure that the work submitted for the two disciplines, and the nature of activities undertaken, are sufficiently different from each other. The majority of candidates had worked hard on the two disciplines they chose and Centres had taken considerable trouble to produce detailed comments on the working mark sheets, giving a clear insight into the reasoning behind how the marks had been awarded. Detailed comments on the working mark sheets are particularly helpful in enabling Moderators to understand how marks have been awarded by the Centre. Where mark sheets are not completed, it is difficult for Moderators to make their assessment. Most submissions were clearly documented and there were audio/video recordings of all three assessments for each discipline as required. Ensemble performances should be submitted on DVD, so that it is possible to distinguish the contribution of individuals. Care should be taken to ensure that the camera is placed so that candidates and their instruments are not obscured.

Only a small number of candidates prepared **Element 3** and the work presented was of a satisfactory standard. This element requires candidates to submit a set of six to eight exercises demonstrating understanding of techniques in an established tradition. The work should be dated and presented in

chronological order and teachers should give a clear outline of the course undertaken – this is particularly important where the tradition studied is not western tonal harmony. The candidate's level of progress should also be shown. The exercises must be based on actual music by named composers or identified as traditional, or by region, if from folk or indigenous sources. Candidates are not expected to present full texture without any given material and at least one part should be given throughout. The course should give candidates an opportunity to develop their understanding of one established tradition and should enable them to demonstrate a range of skills appropriate to study at this level. Whatever the chosen tradition, the work submitted should be carefully notated and marks should be awarded for the accuracy of the notation.

A large number of candidates presented compositions for **Element 4** this year and a good overall standard was maintained across a variety of styles and genres. It was pleasing to see that a number of candidates had been able to produce live recordings of their compositions. The contrasting nature of the two pieces enabled candidates to demonstrate a range of invention and composing technique in writing for at least two instruments/voices. This session there were several compositions for solo piano, which does not meet this requirement. While the majority of compositions demonstrated a good level of understanding of techniques and instruments, some were rather short and did not develop ideas sufficiently to access the higher mark bands. A few compositions for large ensembles were very successful and demonstrated genuine understanding of orchestral/band textures, but candidates who wrote for a small number of instruments with which they were really familiar generally did best. Most scores were well edited. Those candidates who do not present a score should provide detailed notes on the process of composition. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their composing skills through the completion of a range of short tasks before undertaking work for final assessment. Centre marking for this Element was often a little generous and assessors are encouraged to consider the wording of each section of the assessment criteria very carefully when awarding marks.

Most Centres submitted all the necessary paperwork for the component as a whole and provided CD/DVD recordings of good quality. Centres are advised to check CD/DVDs very carefully before they are despatched ensuring that all relevant items are included and that each complete track/file plays correctly. Centres are reminded that all the work for this component should be submitted as one package for moderation.

# MUSIC

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Paper 9703/03  
Performing

## Key messages:

- Candidates should select repertoire of suitable length that is appropriate to their technical capabilities
- Candidates should present a focused spoken introduction to their recital
- Copies of the music performed should be enclosed with the submission

## General comments

It was a delight to listen to a range of accomplished young musicians performing their Component 3 recitals. It was clear that almost all candidates had prepared thoroughly for this aspect of the Syllabus and had really enjoyed working on their chosen repertoire. Vocal music included art songs, operatic arias and musical theatre, while instrumentalists mostly chose music from the classical and romantic eras. There were a number of jazz and popular music performances and some candidates performed music from their own country.

The majority of recitals were of an appropriate length. While the suggested timings are only guidelines, recitals which are too short run the risk of preventing the candidate from accessing the highest mark bands because of failure to demonstrate a wide range of techniques. Some candidates performed in front of an audience and most were competently accompanied, where applicable. Much time had clearly been spent in preparation with accompanists, thus enabling candidates to perform to best advantage in the examination. Backing tracks were used to good effect where appropriate live musicians were not available.

Most candidates had thought carefully about the focus of their performances. Almost everyone linked their pieces together in an appropriate way and had undoubtedly learnt much from researching their chosen focus. Candidates are required to give a short, spoken introduction to their performance. This should describe the overall focus and show how it is reflected in each item. Most candidates demonstrated genuine understanding in their introduction, but a few just listed the pieces they were about to perform. The content of the spoken introduction is assessed in **Section E** of the assessment criteria – Stylistic Understanding – and the full range of marks cannot be accessed if no detail about the music is given.

Microphones and cameras were usually suitably placed and most Centres presented their candidates' work on CDs or DVDs of high quality and had taken care to ensure that the candidate could be readily identified. The majority of Centres had packaged the work in a way that was easy to manage and enclosed all the required paperwork including photocopies of the music performed.

Centres are reminded that submissions for the different Components of the examination should be sent separately as they are required by different Examiners.

# MUSIC

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**Paper 9703/04**  
**Composing**

## **Key Messages:**

- Time for planning and refinement of ideas is well-spent
- Attention should be paid to performance directions

## **Administration**

Many centres / candidates presented the work in a clear and helpful way. Centres are encouraged to double check that they have accurately labelled the component submitted. Audio CDs were presented so as to enable access on conventional equipment by the majority; this enabled Examiners to focus on their assessment task.

## **General Comments**

The range of work submitted this session was consistent with the requirements of the syllabus in most cases. Candidates showed thoughtful application to the task and in many cases showed the connection with their own listening, research or other areas of the course in simple but informative supporting notes. Whilst this is not a requirement it can be helpful to Examiners in understanding the rationale behind a composition, particularly if it may not be easily understood by listening to the music alone. Some candidates provided a programme note where this was appropriate or in some cases essential for an informed listening experience.

## **Materials**

Candidates drew on a varied range of inspirations for their starting points and compositional ideas. Some of these included:

- Programmes inspired by National folk tales or seasonal programmes
- Historical and geographical events (e.g. The Armada / Japanese Tsunami)
- Techniques of World musics and language woven together – heterophony, Nordic melody, song settings using indigenous text
- Musical structure – sonata form; theme and variation form
- Various outworkings of a largely minimalistic musical language
- Experimental composing combining ‘found sounds’ and acoustic instruments in a technologically mastered ‘soundscape’.

The quality of basic ideas or materials is essential. Sometimes this involved strong, well-shaped melodies but at other times simpler ideas had the potential for development and growth. The range of ideas in the work seen this session included harmonic, rhythmic, textural and timbral ideas as well as melodic and ostinato pitch shapings.

## **Use of Materials and Structure**

Some structures involved a choice from the outset and materials developed within that structure; other successful approaches included the unfolding of ideas that generated a framework as the work progressed.

The composing task set involves a work of approximately 8 minutes length and it is always necessary to consider the techniques and skills required to generate what is a reasonably substantial piece. Some compositions came in discreet sections – often three – that, nevertheless, were linked even by the loosest of threads. Effective use of materials is directly linked to the potential and quality of the initial ideas. Some candidates had the maturity to re-visit and re-shape their ideas. Others showed improvement as the piece progressed but had not understood the important role that refining can play. Weaker work involved the

constant generation of new ideas – leaving behind potentially fruitful initial thoughts unexplored and under-developed.

Centres might consider the usefulness of encouraging candidates to work short exercises exploring common developmental techniques such as extension, variation, augmentation, diminution, harmonic addition etc. alongside their 'main' composing task.

Those candidates working with patterns, ostinatos and riffs in a quasi-minimalist style had various levels of success. The best work displayed strong control of the unfolding pace of events in both rhythmic and harmonic transformations.

### Use of Medium and Texture

It was most encouraging to see some exploration of the use of technology coupled with genuine interest in sounds and the way they can be manipulated and incorporated into a musical framework alongside more conventional instrumental forces. Background reading and listening [Cage, Reich, Metheny, Kotche, Pink Floyd] had played an important role here. As with consideration of how materials are used, candidates should be wary of producing work well beyond the 8 minutes suggested. Honing initial ideas is as vital in an electronic medium as an acoustic one. 'Stream-of-consciousness' working has its place but a lengthy piece may be a sign of indiscipline and composers should always be willing to be a severe critic of their own work.

Some candidates wrote for large orchestral ensembles but few had the skills of orchestration to handle such a large palette effectively. A great deal can be learned about writing for instruments by intense and analytical listening together with score reading of relevant works.

A small number of candidates wrote for indigenous instruments – the *kantele* [Nordic dulcimer] as well as Far Eastern versions of this instrument received successful attention; careful thought was given to other instruments that could perform a complementary role within small to medium sized ensembles.

Several solo piano scores displayed varied styles – some virtuosic, some ambient and more minimalist but generally the instrument was handled with a good measure of success.

Writing for string ensembles showed accomplishment where candidates gave appropriate consideration to the voicing, voice leading and linear writing within each part.

### Notation and Presentation

A pleasing number of candidates gave thoughtful attention to the live realisation of their compositions whilst others put considerable effort into achieving an expressive and communicative performance using computer sequencing/notation programmes. Whilst it is understood that live performances are not always practical within the resources of the centre and wider community of teachers, families / friends – nevertheless the relationship between successful composition and the possibility of hearing one's own creative work in a live context cannot be over-stated. In particular, those candidates submitting songs this session all produced competent and at times compelling vocal performances, much to their credit.

Centres are reminded that MIDI files do not constitute a 'recording' which should at the very least be mixed down / exported as an audio file on compact disc for submission.

The level of detail provided on scores has seen another improvement. There were very few scores that did not convey detail beyond the pitches and rhythms or the music.

Candidates must always consider the appropriateness of the following performance directions:

- Opening tempo – certainly a word, or phrase to convey opening mood or tempo is preferable and more helpful to performers than a simple metronome marking
- Further tempo changes, rit / rall / accel. indications, etc. must be counteracted by hidden metronome markings if necessary to ensure that sequenced scores restore any 'a tempo' instructions accurately
- Dynamic markings and other markings of expression need to be thought through for the ensemble as well as individual instruments. They can be *overdone*. It is useful to look at parts as well as the score if using a computer notation programme because it is easier to detect moments when, for example, an instrument comes in after several bars rest and there is no dynamic marking for this new entry.



- Articulation markings in woodwind and brass writing are an important indicator of a candidate's understanding of the very different 'attack' sounds the instruments are capable of – legato and staccato passages and the effective mixing of these basic articulations are of fundamental importance.
- Similarly, candidates writing for strings should show some understanding of bowing conventions. This is not necessarily concerned with up and down bow markings but with slurs or the lack of them, implying separate bow strokes are required.

Candidates working aurally, whose ideas are genuinely not suitable for notation in staff format, should do all they can to represent their ideas not only in descriptive words but also in diagrammatic ways to assist in giving a comprehensive overview of their work.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Candidates have been particularly successful when they have understood the need for a sustained, consistent level of work on their composing. Planning should always include some level of 'research' – this may involve listening to other music with similar intentions or finding out about particular instruments or combinations of instruments. Time given to the refining of ideas is always fruitful.

Many candidates conveyed great enthusiasm and commitment to the expression of their music ideas and have clearly been supported in this by the learning environments around them. Opportunities for sharing, discussing and reflecting critically on their work and those of others can lead constructively to a more informed, mature approach to this creative activity.

# MUSIC

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**Paper 9703/05**  
**Investigation and Report**

## **Key message:**

Centres are advised to study the requirements for both 9703/05 and 8663/06 carefully, particularly in the following respects:

- Candidates must complete the form supplied in **Section 6** (of the Syllabus) to certify that their Report is their own work.
- The core findings of the candidate's investigation must be supported by an accompanying cassette/CD of recorded examples, carefully chosen and explained. (**Section 4**)
- A full bibliography and discography must be appended. (**Section 4**)

## **General comments (both levels)**

In some cases, teachers had not signed the candidate's form, potentially casting doubt on the independence of the work and, in a few, no form at all was enclosed. The inclusion of a CD of judiciously-chosen short audio examples is not only a very valuable way for candidates to substantiate their judgements and demonstrate their understanding of the music, it often also contributes significantly to the evidence that the work is, indeed, independent of other commentators (Assessment Criterion 4). It is not acceptable for candidates simply to direct the Examiner to YouTube clips, as some did. Where the purpose of the Investigation was to compare multiple interpretations of a single, substantial piece, unless audio examples were enclosed, Examiners lacked crucial evidence to verify the accuracy of the candidate's judgements. There were also many Reports that offered neither a bibliography nor a discography and several that quoted sources without acknowledgement. If extensive, the latter practice constitutes plagiarism which is treated as dishonesty. Changing a few words here or there, or paraphrasing closely, is equally reprehensible. When counter-signing the candidate's declaration that the report is all their own, independent work, teachers are affirming that they have reason to believe this to be true.

The full title of the component should also be noted: Investigation and Report. While the last of the five Assessment Criteria explicitly rewards Communication, it is as a measurement of the candidate's effectiveness in communicating the findings of an investigation conducted over a sustained period of time. Work in both components should represent half the total time spent on this subject during the year, i.e. it is equal in its demand and weighting with whichever other component is being studied. It is not, therefore, a piece of work that can be executed satisfactorily in a few days, in the form of a desk-bound Internet trawl. There was a noticeable difference in achievement between candidates who had visited a handful of websites over one or two days and those who had actively sought out appropriate books, articles and other sources of learning, including recordings. The report should reflect the learning developed by reading and listening over a sufficient period of time for familiarity with a body of music, reflection and understanding to grow to the point where a convincing point of view can be demonstrated.

## **9703/05**

There were some impressive Reports which reflected breadth and depth in their investigations as well as, in some outstanding cases, considerable intellectual maturity. Some included evidence of wider reading and listening in the form of the notes they had made as they gathered their information and responded to what they heard. Quite a number of candidates, however, had lacked the initiative to extend their enquiries much beyond the introductions they had prepared for their Recital in Component 3. Some of these, while promising in other respects, tended to dwell overlong on aspects of technical and practical difficulties to be overcome in performance. While some of these discussions were enlightening, sometimes showing how technique had been consciously harnessed to interpretive intent, the assessment of success in these matters must rest on the actual performance presented for Component 3. It was not relevant to the investigation of

the music itself. In some of these instances the urging of the instrumental (or vocal) teacher's voice was also strongly felt.

On the whole, candidates who discussed a wide range of repertoire, which had informed their approach to their composition for Component 4, presented convincing evidence of real development in listening, understanding and critical reflection. Some of these had worked patiently and intelligently in pursuit of off-the-beaten-track repertoire to fulfil what was communicated as a quest of very personal significance.

### **8663/06**

A wide variety of topics produced an equally wide range of achievement. Most candidates had chosen wisely. In some cases it was obvious that the chance to explore and explain repertoire for which there was already a history of personal enthusiasm had been seized energetically. A small handful of topics overlapped with aspects of the repertoire for **Section A** in Component 1. The Syllabus expressly warns against such duplication:

....extend skills and ...understanding by applying them to music from a different repertoire or tradition from the ones studied in Component 1 (**Notes on teaching the syllabus**).

While interest in the music of Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven may have been stimulated by the study of **Section A** repertoire, it is advisable to steer candidates away from this period, even where the intended focus is a slightly different genre, because some of the essential contextual background will almost inevitably duplicate what is properly the province of Component 1. Although many of the candidates that did overlap in this way showed a fairly good level of analytic understanding, matters that pertained directly to **Section A** could not be credited, e.g. a paragraph outlining the principles of Sonata Form, or Haydn's employment at Esterházy. The ability to apply this knowledge and understanding independently to other repertoire, however, could be rewarded.

A great many candidates wrote knowledgeably about specific aspects of jazz or popular music. Some, however, who probably did know the music very well, were not able to be as convincing because their discussions centred too much on lyrics, leaving the music itself unexamined. A few others strayed too far from their examination of the music into eulogistic reminiscences about first encounters with the repertoire/performer and effusive accounts of how important the music had become to them.

Most of the Centres new to this Component had fulfilled the requirement for audio examples to be enclosed with the Report, some of their candidates doing so generously and appropriately. Examiners listened carefully (and often very appreciatively) because the extent to which a musical example demonstrated the point in the text threw significant light on the level of the candidate's understanding, aural perception and analytic skill. Conversely, CDs that contained complete pieces of music that were not explained in the text (or, in some cases, even referred to) could make no contribution to such assessment. In a few cases the examples were not identified, either in the text or a discography. A very small handful of CDs proved to be blank.