



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE AS-Level
In Music (8MU0) Paper 03

edexcel 

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2018

Publications Code xxxxxxxx*

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2018

Paper Introduction

This paper tests the skills of musical analysis and evaluation.

Students needed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements, contexts and language, in relation to the music they have studied and to unfamiliar music, for each area of study. They needed to analyse and evaluate music in written and aural form, in order to make critical judgments about its musical elements, context and language, within the scope of the area of study.

In terms of assessment, Section A of the paper comprised Questions 1-4 and was worth 45 marks. The three listening questions (questions 1, 2 and 3) were based on extracts from three of the set works, each from a different area of study and Q4 consisted of two dictation questions including pitch and rhythm dictation and a 'spotting the errors' question. Skeleton scores were provided for questions 1-3. Section B comprised an essay question based on a piece of unfamiliar music worth 15 marks and an essay question (from a choice of three based on set works from three of the areas of study) worth 20 marks.

In the listening questions, examiners were looking for good aural skills applied to the music of the extracts. This included knowledge of chords, keys and intervals as well as common musical devices such as pedal, ostinato and ornamentation. Students also need to be able to identify musical instruments.

Question 5 tested the ability of students to relate their learning to another piece in a similar style or genre to one of the set works. Unfamiliar pieces are those which are neither set works nor suggested wider listening in the specification. Unfamiliar music will have similar stylistic characteristics to one or more of the set works. No skeleton score was provided for Q5. Students were expected to formulate critical judgements on both familiar and unfamiliar music. Q6 asked students to evaluate music with reference to musical elements such as tonality, structure and sonority. No audio was provided for this question but an illustrative excerpt of several pages of score was provided, although students were expected to use their knowledge of the set work as a whole in their answer. The main problem with the Q6 essay question was that some students did not answer the question posed. If asked to discuss structure and tonality, as in the Schumann question, then any comments relating to dynamics or sonority might well be correct but are irrelevant. It was clear that, at times, students simply wrote down everything they could remember about the piece with little or only scant regard for the specifics of the question.

Many students, as last year, approached this new paper with confidence and it was pleasing to see some high marks.

Many students performed well in Section B of the paper and it was impressive to read how much musical detail had been learnt by the most able students. This included appropriate references to relevant examples of wider listening although there was an over-reliance on set works. Students are reminded that they are expected to listen to a wider variety of related works beyond those in the prescribed set works list. The quality of written communication tended to be quite good although it was common for references to wider listening to be vague rather than 'fluently embedded' which is the expectation for a Level 4 essay.

8MU0_03_Q01a

Question Introduction

This question asked students to identify the two types of voice heard in the extract. Most students correctly identified the voices as soprano and bass. The most common incorrect answer was tenor but the range of the bass solo went below the tenor range. This extract came from the second movement of 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott' which is a duet sung by soprano and bass.

Item: QC0444000949949

Introduction

This was a typical two mark response.

Examiner Comment

Bass and soprano are the two types of voice heard.

Examiner Tip

Make sure the performing forces of each set work have been learnt.

8MU0_03_Q01bi

Question Introduction

The two questions at 1b ask students to identify chords. There were few correct answers to 1bi with most students identifying the first chord as A major.

Item: QC0444000536613

Introduction

This is one of the few correct responses to 1bi.

Examiner Comment

Either supertonic, chord II or E minor would have secured the mark.

8MU0_03_Q01bii

Question Introduction

There were more correct answers to the second chord question. The most common incorrect answer was D major.

Item: QC0444000835873

Introduction

This is a typical correct response to this question.

Examiner Comment

Chord V or dominant would also have received credit. The chord was a seventh chord but the seventh was not required by the mark scheme.

8MU0_03_Q01c

Question Introduction

This was a straightforward question asking students to identify the cadence. Most students correctly identified it as perfect.

Item: QC0444000999513

Introduction

There were many correct responses such as this one.

Examiner Comment

Perfect (cadence) is the correct answer.

8MU0_03_Q01d

Question Introduction

This question asked students to compare the two vocal parts by giving one similarity and two differences. Most students answered this question well, the mark scheme being replete with options for both similarities and differences. The most common answer that was not creditworthy was: the soprano is higher than the bass.

As this question required students to describe the vocal parts, references to texture or instrumentation were not creditworthy.

Most students correctly stated that both the soprano and bass parts are melismatic and largely conjunct.

Item: QC0444000466719

Examiner Comment

This was a full mark response although the explanation of the word melismatic was unnecessary.

The creditworthy points here are:

- melismatic
- soprano is doubled by the oboe
- (soprano) sings longer note lengths = different rhythms

Item: QC0444000466713

Examiner Comment

This response achieved two marks:

- scalic

The bass uses a quaver melody and the alto uses crotchets (this achieved credit as different rhythms, even though the voice part referred to was soprano not

alto) difference 2 is not true as the bass sings an independent part and is melodic.

8MU0_03_Q01e

Question Introduction

This question required students to identify two of the three keys the music passes through between bars 12 and 15. Many students correctly identified A major and D major. However, the identification of E minor proved to be more problematic, despite the D sharp in the skeleton score in bar 14. Common incorrect answers were B minor and G major.

Item: QC0444000835874

Introduction

This is a typical full mark response. The two most common keys to be recognised by students were D major and A major.

Examiner Comment

The possible answers to this question were A major, D major and E minor.

Examiner Tip

Look closely at the skeleton score for clues as to the key changes.

8MU0_03_Q01f

Question Introduction

This question required students to describe the texture.

Most students correctly identified the texture as being contrapuntal or polyphonic but three marks responses were rare. More informed answers identified the unison strings and the independence of the bass solo from the instrumental bass.

A common incorrect answer was 'fugal'. Although there was a fugal texture in other places in this set work, the question referred to the texture of the extract, therefore fugal was incorrect.

Item: QC0444000466715

Examiner Comment

There are no creditworthy points here, as 'few bars of polyphony' implies that only a small proportion of the extract is polyphonic, whereas in fact the majority is polyphonic. Homophonic is not creditworthy as only the opening has a homophonic texture.

Item: QC0444000466719

Introduction

This was a typical two mark response.

Examiner Comment

There are two creditworthy points in this response:

- contrapuntal
- Homophonic up until bar 9 (= 'opening is homophonic' in the mark scheme).

Examiner Tip

Remember to locate textures in your answer eg the opening is homophonic. Homophonic on its own is not sufficient to achieve credit in this question.

8MU0_03_Q02a

Question Introduction

This was a straightforward question that required students to identify a harmonic device. Pedal was the answer required by the mark scheme although many students correctly identified it more precisely as a dominant pedal.

Item: QC0444000835880

Introduction

This is a typical correct response.

Examiner Comment

The answer to this question is pedal (note).

8MU0_03_Q02b

Question Introduction

This question was a straightforward question requiring students to identify a percussion instrument. There were many correct answers although a large number of students mistook the timpani for a bass drum.

8MU0_03_Q02c

Question Introduction

This question asked students to compare two sections of the music. Whilst it was mostly well done, there were some vague responses that did not achieve credit such as 'higher' and 'different pitch' rather than the more precise answer 'an octave higher' which was required by the mark scheme. Students are reminded that they should aim for as much precision as possible in their answers.

Item: QC0444000821728

Introduction

This is an example of a response that is not precise enough to achieve credit. It was awarded no marks.

Examiner Comment

Note values is too vague; the mark scheme requires 'higher' to be qualified by 'an octave'; the student does not say how the tempo is different in the second extract.

Examiner Tip

Aim to be as precise as possible in similarity and difference questions.

Item: QC0444000999536

Introduction

This is an example of a response that was awarded full marks.

Examiner Comment

The marks were awarded for:

- String melody has exactly the same notes (= same melody).
- String melody is played up the octave in 43-59.
- Accel poco a poco in 43-59.

Examiner Tip

It is not necessary to include definitions of musical terms eg accel = gets faster.

8MU0_03_Q02d

Question Introduction

The only possible answer to this question was 'auxiliary'. There were many incorrect answers that named a specific pitch e.g. 'A' rather than a type of note, which is what the question asked for.

8MU0_03_Q02e

Question Introduction

As there were two marks available for this question two points needed to be made.

Item: QC0444000999519

Introduction

This is an example of a two mark response.

Examiner Comment

One mark was awarded for G minor and the second for modal or Aeolian.

Examiner Tip

In tonality questions aim to be precise by naming the key, in this case G minor.

8MU0_03_Q02f

Question Introduction

There were few full mark answers to this question. The most common correct choices from the list provided were 'mainly quiet dynamics' and 'repeated motif'. The most common incorrect answer was 'diminished 7th chord' which was not creditworthy as there were no diminished 7th chords in the extract.

8MU0_03_Q03a

Question Introduction

This question was mostly well done although there was some mention of non-rhythmic features such as metre and dynamics which did not receive credit.

Item: QC0444000536615

Examiner Comment

This was a two mark response:

Syncopated and cross rhythms are correct but there were no dotted rhythms in the extract.

Item: QC0444000536620

Examiner Comment

This was a full mark response. The student has actually made four correct observations for a three mark question:

- Syncopated rhythm
- Mainly quaver rhythms
- Polyrhythms
- Cross rhythms.
- There were no triplets in the extract.

Item: QC0444000835876

Examiner Comment

In this response one mark was awarded for repeated idea. There are no triplets in the extract and staccato is not a rhythmic feature.

Examiner Tip

Try to use musical terminology eg ostinato, rather than repeated idea.

8MU0_03_Q03b

Question Introduction

There was a lack of understanding from some students as to where the 4 part texture occurs as they had relied too much on the skeleton score rather than listening to the music. A common misconception was that the opening texture is 2 part, as there were only two parts in the skeleton score. While monophonic was in the mark scheme, some students did not receive credit as they had wrongly stated that the texture is monophonic at the beginning. There seems to be a common misconception that because one instrument (in this case the piano) is playing that necessarily means that the texture is monophonic.

Item: QC0444000536622

Examiner Comment

This response was awarded two marks for:

Four part and Monophony.

Examiner Tip

If sections of the skeleton score contain neither notes or rests it is because part of the music is missing from the score.

In the first two bars of the piece Piano 1 was in fact playing.

Item: QC0444000999517

Introduction

The texture words homophony and polyphony were not in the mark scheme due to the nature of the music.

Examiner Comment

This was a typical response that did not receive credit.

Examiner Tip

Texture is about the number of parts as well as the type of texture.

8MU0_03_Q03d

Question Introduction

This question was mostly well done with many students providing a comprehensive list of items that were inserted between the piano strings and a detailed description of how this was achieved, although there were items named that Cage did not specify.

Item: QC0444000536616

Examiner Comment

This was a typical two mark response.

In short-answer questions, the mark allocated for a question indicates how many

points need to be made.

Item: QC0444000536624

Introduction

This response was awarded one mark.

Examiner Comment

The mark was awarded for 'strings have had materials attached to them'. The student needed to name at least one of the items in order to achieve two marks.

Remember to make two points for a two mark question.

8MU0_03_Q03e

Question Introduction

This question required students to identify a feature of the music that make its title appropriate ie features that make it suitable for dance. There were surprisingly few correct answers, the most common incorrect one being that the music is fast.

Item: QC0444000466710

Introduction

This response was awarded the one mark available.

Examiner Comment

In this response 'driving rhythm' was the credit point.

Item: QC0444000835878

Introduction

This response was also awarded one mark.

Examiner Comment

In this response 'clear....pulse' was the credit point (= clear beat in the mark scheme).

8MU0_03_Q03f

Question Introduction

The most common correct answers to this question were 'complex rhythms' and 'exploration of sonority'. The most common incorrect answer was 'use of piano' which, whilst being a feature of the music, was not a feature of 20th century experimental music which is what the question asked for.

8MU0_03_Q04a

Question Introduction

The leap between the second and third notes proved to be problematic for many students although most heard the descending notes to the 'D' in the given part.

Students should try and avoid the temptation of spending an excessive amount of time listening to the dictation questions at the expense of time available for the essays. The two essay questions are worth a total of thirty five marks.

Item: QC0444000536618

Examiner Comment

Although there are two mistakes with pitch (notes two and three) the rhythm is completely correct and this response was awarded five marks.

Item: QC0444000536622

Examiner Comment

This was a neatly written full mark response.

Item: QC0444000949946

Examiner Comment

Although the pitch of the second note is incorrect, this mark achieved full marks.

Examiner Tip

One mistake of pitch or rhythm is allowed in a full mark response.

This question proved to be problematic for most students. This year there were three incorrect pitches to identify. There were few three mark responses, the least likely note to be identified being the last note in the penultimate bar.

Item: QC0444000536613

Examiner Comment

This was a clear three mark response.

8MU0_03_Q05

Question Introduction

This question required students to draw on their knowledge and understanding of a particular genre and make observations regarding features heard in unfamiliar music. Students had to relate the features to the genre and justify their points with examples from other relevant works.

There were some well written essays offered in response to this question, showing that

students had a thorough understanding of the Baroque concerto with some students identifying the composer correctly, as Bach.

Where essays were placed into the Level 1 or Level 2 bands, it was usually because observations were not linked to the genre and/or pieces of wider listening were not used to support points made. In some essays, there was an over-reliance on set works to illustrate points made, particularly the Vivaldi Concerto in D minor.

Make sure observations are linked to the genre being discussed, preferably giving a specific example from another piece of music.

Essays that achieved Level 4 marks were the ones that showed a clear understanding of the features of a Baroque concerto and that included relevant examples of wider listening to illustrate the points made.

Item: QC0444000466719

Examiner Comment

The student names Baroque composers at the start of the essay and correctly names the instrumental groups (ripieno, concertino and continuo). Other correct observations include the use of the harpsichord and the ornamented melody.

However, the description of a perfect cadence was irrelevant and there is limited mention of musical elements such as tonality, organisation of pitch and dynamics.

There are only two works mentioned in support of the student's observations and neither was precisely identified.

This was a Level 2 essay and achieved a mark of six.

Examiner Tip

Aim to include an example of wider listening for each observation made.

Item: QC0444000536618

Introduction

This essay is a high level 3 essay and was awarded eleven marks. The student identified the music as being one of Bach's Brandenburg concertos. Valid observations included:

- concerto grosso
- ripieno
- concertino
- harpsichord
- basso continuo
- suspensions
- circle of fifths

- modulation to related keys
- ornamentation
- polyphonic and imitative textures
- sequences

Examiner Comment

Further precise links to wider listening (rather than simply naming a composer such as Handel) would have been enough to put this essay into the Level 4 category. Observations regarding the instrumentation could have been linked to the Baroque period.

8MU0_03_Q06a

Question Introduction

6a was the least popular essay choice amongst candidates and many essays were descriptions of Mozart and the story of the opera, or discussion of the characters, rather than an analysis of word painting and tonality. There were few references to other relevant operas. Here candidates simply described the musical features with no reference to the context/genre. Students should avoid the temptation to spend a lot of time re-telling the story of the opera.

Item: QC0444000469923

Examiner Comment

This essay makes good points in relation to word setting. These include:

- the coloratura soprano
- the Queen's wide vocal range
- syllabic singing to imitate speech

There are appropriate links made to Purcell's Dido and Aeneas and West Side Story.

There were no correct observations in relation to tonality. The one key that is mentioned (B flat minor) is incorrect.

This is a Level 2 essay and was awarded seven marks.

Examiner Tip

Make sure all the elements asked for in the question have been covered.

8MU0_03_Q06b

Question Introduction

This essay required students to evaluate the use of structure and tonality in the first movement of Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor.

Most students correctly identified the structure as being sonata form with more

informed answers including descriptions of the two subject groups, the bridge passage, the exposition repeat and the codetta and coda.

It was pleasing to see that many students had learnt the keys Schumann used and their relationship to the tonic, for example the tertiary modulation to B major.

Some candidates were too keen to write down everything they knew about Clara Schumann, especially the details of her personal life as opposed to her musical output. There were lots of references to the instruments/sonority and themes being 'passed around', which did not contribute to a discussion about structure and tonality. Better responses commented on what was typically expected in Classical sonata form, and how Schumann had developed these expectations, making relevant links to a wide variety of 19th century chamber music. Most candidates were able to suggest relevant comparisons, e.g. piano trios by Brahms, Beethoven and Schubert.

Item: QC0444001025356

Introduction

This essay was awarded a mark of 15, at the top of Level 3. However, there was a certain amount of irrelevant information such as the first paragraph and the points about syncopation.

Relevant observations included:

- sonata form exposition
- exposition repeat
- 2 subject groups
- codetta
- development
- recapitulation
- Keys: G minor, B flat major, D major, C minor, F minor, B major
- dominant pedals used to prepare key changes.

Examiner Comment

References to wider listening can only be credited if they are used to support relevant observations.

Examiner Tip

Make sure you comment only on aspects of the music required by the question. Avoid the temptation to write down everything you know about the piece as it wastes valuable time and could result in marks being lost.

8MU0_03_Q06c

Question Introduction

The 'Kate Bush' essay was the most popular of the three essay choices.

It was usual to read lengthy descriptions of Bush's music education. This essay required students to comment only on the performing forces and structure of two of the set pieces. However, it was common for students to discuss the third set work as well. It is important that students confine themselves to answering the question and do not include irrelevant information. There were some very detailed essays offered, with evidence of pertinent wider listening.

Item: QC0444000536617

Introduction

This essay included descriptions of both the songs asked for in the question and covered both performing forces and tonality. There were appropriate links to wider listening and an understanding of context.

However, there was no mention of Kate Bush's distinctive voice and aspects of the structure of both songs were missing, for example the instrumental section and the bridge passages in Cloudbusting.

Points mentioned that are in the indicative content in the mark scheme include:

- The use of Fairlight CMI in both songs as sequencer and sampler.
- The steam engine effect at the end of Cloudbusting.
- The use of a string sextet and balalaika in Cloudbusting.
- The use of synthesised strings in Under Ice
- The structure of Cloudbusting is strophic whereas Under Ice is through composed.

Examiner Comment

This is a Level 3 essay and was awarded a mark of fourteen. It covers all parts of the question and includes some links to wider listening although the link to Cornflake Girl is not appropriate as it is negative. A better link would have been to cite an example of a song that is through composed to illustrate this particular point, not one that isn't.

Examiner Tip

Remember that the term 'performing forces' encompasses voices as well as instruments.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- Learn the key stylistic traits of each piece, as well as common musical devices such as ostinato, pedal, and circle of fifths, melodic features, rhythmic features and playing techniques used.
- Become familiar with the context of each of the set works. Be able to describe their characteristics in relation to the period in which they were written. Listen to related repertoire of each Area of Study and learn the key stylistic traits of

each piece.

- Listen to pieces other than the set works (wider listening) and learn their stylistic features.
- Aim to make links to wider listening to support observations made in the essay questions.
- Practise recognition of chords and modulations. Practise rhythm and pitch dictation regularly, paying particular attention to the aural recognition of melodic intervals.
- Practising sight singing and singing intervals is invaluable.
- Give specific examples in essays: for example, name a particular piece to support a point. Develop essay writing skills, particularly in relation to time management and embedding links to wider listening. Make sure the names of instruments and voices used in the set works are learnt.
- Actively listen to the set works many times, in order become very familiar with them.