

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions in both sections .

1. The Buggles : Video Killed the Radio Star

a. Name 2 production processes that have been used on the lead vocal in the first verse. (2)

1. Compression.
2. EQ.

b. What instrument plays at 0:09 seconds. (1)

Fretless Bass

c. How has the 'far away' feel been achieved on the backing vocals at 2:34. (1)

Wide Reverb, wet increased original signal set low

d. On the outro, a second backing vocal is layered over the first by the same singer. What is this technique called. (1)

Multi tracking or overdubbing

e. Unusual for the eighties, which percussion instrument is mixed prominently at 0:34 seconds.

Bass drum, Kick drum (1)

f. State four reasons why this track could not have been recorded in the 1950's

Use of synthesisers, sequencers, fretless bass, hi gain guitar, extensive multitracking, various different effects on vocal parts, electric bass, good production quality, Synth drums, use of delay.

(4)

(Total for question 1= 10 marks)

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www.musictechstudent.co.uk

2. Blondie : Heart of Glass

a. Which elements of disco are incorporated into this track (3)

drum machine, sequencer, synths, octaves in bass part, open/closed hi hats on offbeats, 4/4 dance beat

b. How are the vocals thickened on the chorus (2)

lead vocal double tracked with second voice an octave lower

c. What gives the first instrumental break (2:00) its unusual feel. (2)

It goes into 7/4 for first three bars. Alternates between 4/4 and 3/4.

d. This track was recorded before MIDI. What does MIDI stand for and how could it have been used

On the sequencer and drum machine parts. (3)

Musical Instrument Digital Interface. Sync the sequencer and drum parts together.

Quantise them to tighten rhythms.

(Total for question 2 = 10 marks)

3. Rocket 88 : Ike Turner/Jackie Brenston

a. This track was recorded in 1951. Explain two characteristics that support this. (4)

Chamber reverb/ slapback echo has been used on vocals . The recording is mono (1) as only one track tape was available (1) . No effects other than reverb (1) as they had not been invented until the 1960s (1) some of the instruments sound distant (1) due to limited number of microphones (1). Surface noise present (1) due to vinyl consumer format. (1) double bass used (1) because the bass guitar was not widely used.

b. Explain three processing techniques that could be applied during mastering to give this song a more contemporary sound. (6)

Apply EQ (1) to cut low-mid muddiness/to apply a loudness curve/make bass instruments thicker (1) apply high pass filter (1) to remove plosives on vocals in breaks (1) • automated de-esser/dynamic EQ/automated EQ (1) on the vocal to remove sibilance (1) • mix compression/multi-band compression/brickwall limiter (1) to give a higher average level/reduce dynamic range (1) • stereo widener/reverb (1) to give a simulated stereo field (1) • noise reduction/audio restoration (1) to remove unwanted noise and hiss.

(Total for question 3 = 10 marks)

4. The Beatles: Strawberry Fields Forever

a. The introduction features a Mellotron. Explain how a Mellotron worked . (4)

The Mellotron had a bank of magnetic audio tapes inside, each lasting approximately eight seconds and containing a range of pre-recorded sounds. This was triggered by the keys on the keyboard.

b. What problems may you have encountered using a Mellotron and what could you use today to achieve a similar effect. (6)

Flutter and speed variations on the tapes, pitch wobble, dissonance when playing chords.

A sampler, loaded samples, Vst technology, synthesis, preset sound banks.

(Total for question 4=10 marks)

Total for section A = 40 marks

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Section B

5. Pink Floyd : Comfortably Numb

Scissor Sisters : Comfortably Numb

Compare the different production and performance techniques used in the two versions.
(20)

Original: live recording of rhythm section, mainly acoustic instruments, spoken style vocal

(Sprechgesang) use of timed delay, early synth sounds, different lead vocalists, strings, rhythmic

pushes, epic and wide sound production, extended instrumental sections, recorded to tape,

vocal harmonies, voice used for effect (scream), progressive rock leanings in arrangement (6:53).

New version: Falsetto vocal, timed delay, compressed drum machine, muted guitar sample, synth

drums for fills, faster tempo, hi hats on offbeat, sequencer, rhythmic pushes in instruments but

drums maintain solid beat in dance style, simplified arrangement, no instrumental breaks,

(Total for Question 5 = 20 marks)

6. Van Halen : I'm the One

The electric guitar has come a long way. Name the various effects, innovations and techniques in

this song that confirm it could not have been recorded in the 1950's
(15)

Use of phaser, delay, hi gain distortion/fuzz. Humbucking pick ups for reduced hiss, locking

tremolo system (Floyd Rose), lighter string gauges, smaller frets, more accurate intonation, lighter

bodies , cut away's for higher neck reach. Dive bombs, harmonics, trills, tapping, palm muting,

tremolo picking, whammy bar tricks, legato runs, hammer ons, pull offs.

(Total for Question 6 = 15 marks)

Total for section B = 35 marks

Total for paper = 75 marks