



Guidance Notes on Briefs Assessing Technique

Introduction

The notes that follow are intended as additional information to that contained in the relevant pages of the Specification. For each Compositional Technique option, an Overview is given, followed by advice on possible approaches to the task. Finally, a list of outcomes that might lead to various mark levels are offered, for each option, across each of the four Assessment grids. It is important to note that assessments will be formed balancing the positive with the negative features of each submission with regard to their context and frequency within the assessment criterion: the presence of one or any of the positive exemplars will therefore not guarantee a higher mark level (conversely one or more negative feature(s) will not automatically mean a lower one.) Therefore, in the Bach Chorale and Two-part counterpoint options, no attempt has been made to differentiate between the levels within the mark ranges identified.

The Briefs Assessing Compositional Technique will be released on 1 April in the year of certification and candidates will have four to six hours in controlled conditions to complete the tasks. (See specification, page 40, for details of Controlled conditions.)

For options 1, 2 and 3 candidates are required to submit a score and a recording (a MIDI-generated recording will be acceptable). For option 4 no score is required, but candidates may submit one, if desired, to clarify their intentions. Centres and candidates should note the technical requirements in the specification for the Remix recording.

Assessment

Briefs assessing technique are assessed using **four** assessment grids (found on pp 43 -51 of the specification.) The grids for Creating and Developing Musical ideas with coherence, for Creating and Developing Musical ideas with Expressive Control, and for Creating and Developing Musical ideas with Technical control are used for **all four** Briefs assessing technique. Grids 4.1-4.4 (pp 48-51 of the specification) are **brief-specific**.

Brief 1 - Bach Chorale

Overview of the task

Though compositional techniques have been, and still are, in a continuous process of development, musicians have for many years made a particular study of Bach's harmonisations of the melodies of the Lutheran Church known as 'chorales'. Many of these melodies existed long before Bach's time. Some were composed by other musicians, some had a 'folk' origin but were adapted for use in the Church, where they were familiar to most listeners. Bach used many of these chorales in his cantatas and settings of the Passion but there were many others which he harmonised just to be sung to religious poems by choirs and congregations, accompanied by the organ, as part of the service.

The 371 chorales collected by Albert Riemenschneider (R) constitute a wonderful resource for any student of harmony. Bach was composing at a time when major and minor tonalities had become more firmly established and when the balance between harmony and counterpoint was beginning to be tilted more in the direction of the former, though still with a strong sense of polyphonic texture. As such, his harmonisations demonstrate an astonishing range of possibilities within the vocabulary of the time and proved to be, with very little further development, the archetype of all harmonic styles until the early years of the twentieth century (and of much music beyond that time).

The brief will be available from 1 April for that year. It will require candidates to harmonise two chorale melodies in the style of Bach. One will be in a major key, one in a minor key; both will be between 12 and 18 bars in length and in quadruple time.

Approach to the task

Students need to be familiar with triads in root position and first inversion, the tonic triad in second inversion in contexts in which Bach would have used it and seventh chords and their inversions (including diminished sevenths). They must also learn about voice-leading and other procedures typical of Bach's style, including modulation to closely-related keys, passing notes, both accented and unaccented, and suspensions.

In preparing for the task that will be the basis of assessment for the qualification, students are advised to practise harmonising suitable melodies as regularly and over as long a period of time as possible. They may find it helpful to begin by learning the various ways in which cadences are handled by Bach. They should then study the implied tonal direction of each phrase before attempting to harmonise the earlier part of the phrase.

To increase their understanding of the historical context of Bach's harmonic technique, students should try to gain some awareness of the harmonic procedures of earlier composers (e.g. Schutz, Buxtehude) and of later models (e.g. Mozart). They should certainly be aware of the extent to which Bach was creating a contrapuntal texture in his chorale harmonisations. In this respect, it may be helpful to study one or two of his chorales in open score, perhaps singing or playing the various voice parts separately.

ASSESSMENT GRID 1: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH COHERENCE – i.e. Chords and Keys. See Specification pages 43, 44

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- a logical and enterprising tonal strategy
- Appropriate passing modulations, e.g. a brief excursion to A minor in a phrase which is destined to reach a cadence in C major
- Suitable choices of a reasonably wide range of chords in appropriate inversions
- Well-designed cadences (even if apparently formulaic)
- Some creation of tension by appropriate use of dissonance (e.g. suspensions, secondary sevenths, accented passing notes)
- Reasonably (Level 4) or generally (Level 5) secure technique (but Style, Part-writing and Line are assessed under later grids)

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Failure to identify a suitable key at one or more cadences
- Unenterprising choice of keys (e.g. too many cadences in the tonic where other possibilities exist)
- Poor implementation of a chosen cadence in respect of chord choice in the approach or in the cadence itself
- A narrow range of chord choices
- Over-use of root position chords
- Inappropriate use of second inversion chords (only cadential and passing 6/4s are acceptable, the latter in the IVb-Ic-ii7b progression)
- Inappropriate use of diminished chords (these should normally be in first inversion, but suitable use of diminished seventh chords is acceptable)
- Inappropriate use of augmented chords
- A chord repeated in the same inversion from weak to strong (though this may be acceptable at the beginning of a phrase, preferably with the bass leaping up an octave)
- A chord repeated in root position to first inversion (or *vice versa*) from weak to strong (though this may be acceptable at the beginning of a phrase if root position to first inversion)
- a bass note repeated from weak to strong unless it becomes a dissonance on the strong beat
- Unsuitable chord choice by juxtaposition (e.g. IVa after Va unless outside parts move in contrary motion)
- Unsuitable chord choice in relation to prevailing tonality or immediately preceding or following modulation
- Unsuitable chord choice where that choice effectively prevents the proper preparation or resolution of a dissonance
- Failure to include necessary accidentals

ASSESSMENT GRID 2: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH EXPRESSIVE CONTROL – i.e. Style. See Specification page 45

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- A sense of polyphony
- Secure and enterprising tonal structure
- Enterprise in the choice of cadences, including the construction of imperfect or plagal cadences where suitable - note that interrupted cadences are also possible but should not be used more than once in any chorale
- Rhythmic fluency
- Appropriate treatment of leading notes at cadences
- Appropriate use of chromaticism
- Appropriate use of accented passing notes, particularly in the bass
- Appropriate four-part texture, with the tessitura of inner parts reasonably high where possible
- Appropriate use of suspensions
- Appropriate use of two chords to harmonise one crotchet beat
- Shapely and well-directed melodic lines

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some elements of the above but there may also be

- Uncharacteristic textures, especially with regard to spacing (any two adjacent upper voice parts should normally be no more than an octave apart, but any interval up to an eleventh is acceptable for one beat)
- Some thinness of texture (e.g. too many chords with no fifth, particularly at cadences)
- Over-use of doubled major thirds - note that, though these are not annotated and penalised as such, Bach normally doubles the major third only when the interests of the melodic shapes of the relevant voice parts are better served by such doubling
- Inappropriate harmonisation of a minim with only one chord and without a suspension (usually 4-3)
- Regular harmonisations of quavers in the soprano with two separate chords, implying that the possible treatment of the second quaver as a passing note had not been considered
- A lack of appropriate quaver movement
- Over-use or inappropriate use of auxiliary notes
- Widespread errors in rhythmic notation

ASSESSMENT GRID 3: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH TECHNICAL CONTROL – i.e. Part-writing. See Specification pages 46, 47

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Flowing lines which result in clear harmonic progressions
- A considerable degree of contrary motion, particularly between soprano and bass
- Some rhythmic counterpoint, with passing notes sometimes occurring in more than one part simultaneously and also occurring in different parts on different beats

- Avoidance (or mainly avoidance) of 'grammatical' errors, e.g. parallel 5ths and 8ves, exposed 5ths and 8ves, etc.

For lower marks (Levels 3, 4, 5), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Parallel 5ths and/or 8ves - though a diminished 5th to perfect 5th, or *vice versa*, is acceptable unless the bass is involved
- Exposed 5ths and 8ves (these occur when the outside parts move in the same direction, ascending or descending, to an interval of a 5th or 8ve and the soprano part leaps)
- Doubling of leading notes - though this occasionally works when parts move in contrary motion, early in a phrase rather than at the cadence, e.g. R 58 bar 1
- Doubling of notes of dissonance, including fourths in 6/4s and sevenths - though a doubled fourth may occur as the result of an auxiliary note heard against a 4-3 suspension, particularly in an often-used cadence figure, e.g. R 58 bar 19 and R 177 bar 9
- Crossing of parts - though this may be acceptable when inner parts cross for one or two beats in the interests of the relevant melodic lines (but the alto should not cross the soprano, nor the tenor the bass)
- Overlapping of parts - though regular 'Bachian' exceptions are always acceptable, e.g. two adjacent parts a third apart both leaping a fourth, ascending or descending
- No third in a 5/3 or a 6/4 chord
- No fifth in a 6/3 chord
- Too many, or too few, notes in one or more parts to accommodate the number of syllables to be sung as implied by the melody

ASSESSMENT GRID 4.1: RESPONSE TO THE BRIEF – i.e. Line.

See Specification page 48

All three added parts should be considered here, but especially the bass, which should display, at least to some extent, all of the qualities listed below. Alto and tenor parts may show some degree of stasis within one or two phrases of the chorale, but should display elements of these qualities when looked at overall.

Acceptable vocal ranges are alto g' to d'', tenor c to a', bass C to d', though the two lowest bass notes should be used sparingly and usually only at a cadence.

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- A sense of direction (within the tonal context)
- Fluency of movement, including a reasonable number of passing notes
- Balance between conjunct and non-conjunct movement (a suitable balance will be different for the bass as compared with the inner parts)
- Reasonably wide range, especially in the bass

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Awkward melodic intervals - note that octave leaps are freely used, even within inner parts, but should normally be preceded and followed by movement from and to notes

inside the leap, perhaps by step. Sevenths are more problematic - they are sometimes used by Bach, particularly in the bass, and may be acceptable within the overall line. Minor sevenths usually work better than major sevenths.

- Diminished intervals - though acceptable, descending or ascending, if followed by a semitone in the opposite direction. Also, see R 55 bar 9 bass for an example of an acceptable diminished interval which is part of a sequence.
- Augmented intervals - rarely satisfactory, though Bach occasionally has one in an inside part as a result of the harmonic minor scale (see R 7 bar 21 alto).
- A lack of direction - random notes
- A lack of direction - a return to one particular note, perhaps two or three times
- Poor shape
- Too narrow a melodic range

Brief 2 - Baroque Counterpoint

Overview of the task

Counterpoint has been defined as 'the art of combining melodies'. In the early Middle Ages, European music was mainly monodic (a single line). Then composers began to add other voices to their own original or a pre-existing melody. The first great flowering of polyphony (many voices) came with the School of Notre Dame in Paris around the year 1200. This way of writing music, almost always for voices rather than instruments, continued to develop, notably in Flanders and Italy. It reached its peak in the sixteenth century, by which time Palestrina was the leading composer in Rome and there were significant composers in many other European countries, including England.

From that time onwards, music began to be written as much for instruments as for voices and also for performance in places other than the Church. Further developments in style followed, as instruments were capable of wider ranges of pitch, wider leaps and shorter notes. This period of development, known as the Baroque, overlapped with the previous polyphonic age and began in Italy but the leading composers by the early eighteenth century were German - Bach, Handel (who came to London in 1710 and eventually settled there) and Telemann. Besides their Church music and operas (in the cases of Handel and Telemann), they wrote many sonatas for solo instrument and continuo. It is movements from these that provide the material for the pastiche involved in this task.

The brief will be available from 1 April for that year. Candidates will be given a movement for violin or flute and continuo (unfigured) of between 24 and 42 bars. This may be in a major or minor key and in simple or compound time. They will be required to complete some passages for the solo instrument and some for the bass in the style of the late baroque.

Approach to the task

Students need to be familiar with the basic harmonic vocabulary of the period - triads in root position and first inversion, the appropriate uses of second inversion chords, and seventh chords and their inversions (including diminished sevenths). They must learn to use this knowledge to construct suitable harmonic progressions for given melodic lines and to understand the possible implications of given bass lines when adding solo lines above them. They should be able to recognise the possible tonal implications of any passage and to handle modulations to related keys as necessary.

Students should also develop their skills in contrapuntal techniques - the use of passing and other non-essential notes and suspensions, including the various means of decorating suspensions - and be able to create shapely and well-directed melodic lines in the treble or the bass. In the early stages, it may prove helpful to study counterpoint by the traditional means of 'species' exercises. These develop resource and fluency.

The harmonic and contrapuntal techniques that will have been acquired should then be exercised with reference to the style of suitable movements by late Baroque composers. At this stage, attention will need to be focused on particular aspects of style, e.g. the use of imitation, sequence and the interplay, both rhythmic and melodic, between the two parts. Many examples by the above composers and others of the same period can be found to demonstrate these facets. As with all skills, regular practice is essential and it is recommended that students create their own exercises from such movements.

ASSESSMENT GRID 1: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH COHERENCE – i.e. Chords and Keys. See Specification pages 43, 44

The Specification states that marks are awarded here 'for the organisation of the music: the melodic construction, harmony and rhythm'. In the case of Baroque Counterpoint, it should be borne in mind that assessment grid 4 covers Line, so that is where the chief assessment of Melody takes place, and assessment grid 2 covers the stylistic aspects of Rhythm, though the accuracy of rhythmic notation should be taken account of here. Assessment grid 1 therefore mainly covers harmony, both in the solo and the bass passages.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Accurate perception and implementation of tonality both in solo and bass passages
- Enterprising choice of chords and chord progressions
- Well-designed cadences (even if apparently formulaic)
- Some creation of tension by appropriate use of dissonance (suspensions, secondary sevenths and accented passing notes)
- Control of the rhythm, including accuracy of notation

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Some failure to identify implied tonality
- Errors in implementation of implied harmonic structure where the bass is given
- Errors in harmonic structure where the solo line is given
- Errors in implementation of chosen harmonic structure where the solo line is given - these may include:
 - Inappropriate use of 6/4 chords (only cadential and passing 6/4s are acceptable, also occasionally a 6/4 between two other positions of the same chord)
 - Incorrect treatment of dissonance – where chord choices effectively prevent the proper preparation or resolution of a dissonance (see also under assessment grid 3)
- A chord repeated in the same inversion from weak to strong
- A bass note repeated from weak to strong unless it becomes a dissonance on the strong beat
- An unsuitable chord choice by juxtaposition (e.g. IVa after Va unless the parts move in contrary motion)
- An unsuitable chord choice in relation to the prevailing tonality or the immediately preceding or following tonality
- Failure to include necessary accidentals
- Misjudgements, including, e.g. narrow range of chord choices or inversions
- Errors in rhythmic notation

ASSESSMENT GRID 2: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH EXPRESSIVE CONTROL - i.e. Style. See Specification page 45

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- An effective stylistic blend between added and given material
- Effective use of given material in melodic sequences, development or imitation
- Effective use of short rests
- A sense of counterpoint, including rhythmic counterpoint
- A suitable degree of rhythmic vitality
- A sense of overall structure, including effective links from and to given material

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Misjudgments with regard to stylistic blend with given material
- Missed opportunities for sequence, imitation or other use of given material
- A limited sense of counterpoint, including in bass sections
- Inappropriate overall tessitura in either part, whether too high or too low
- Poor links from and/or to given material
- Unbalanced rhythmic patterns, using too many or too few notes
- Errors in rhythmic notation, including grouping and beaming

ASSESSMENT GRID 3; CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH TECHNICAL CONTROL - i.e. Part-writing. See Specification pages 46, 47

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Flowing lines which result in clear harmonic progressions
- A reasonable degree of contrary motion
- Security in movement of part against part
- Security in the handling of dissonance

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Parallel 8ves and/or 5ths including diminished to perfect and *vice versa*
- Exposed 8ves and/or 5ths (these occur when the parts move in the same direction to an 8ve or a 5th and the upper part leaps)
- Incorrect treatment of dissonance (suspensions and sevenths must be prepared and resolved, also fourths in 6/4s, though these may sometimes be approached by step from above; suspensions may have decorated resolutions within the style of the period)
- Incorrect treatment of passing notes (these should be approached and quitted by step)
- Doubling of a leading note

- Unacceptable false relations
- Too frequent use of bare 8ves or 5ths, especially on strong beats
- Poor alignment of parts in the score

ASSESSMENT GRID 4: RESPONSE TO THE BRIEF - including Line. See Specification page 49

For higher marks (Levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Fluency and creativity in the development of the given material
- A sense of direction in melodic lines, whether in the solo part of the bass
- A sense of phrase
- Fluency of movement, including a reasonable number of passing notes
- Balance between conjunct and non-conjunct movement
- Reasonably wide range – in the solo part, the tessitura should centre on the upper half of the treble stave and may extend to d''
- Reasonably wide range – in the bass part, C to e' is acceptable, but it should not cross the solo part at any point and should normally be in the higher part of its range when the solo line is high

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Little or no development of given material
- Unduly narrow melodic range in a particular passage
- Unduly low or unduly high tessitura in a particular passage
- Notes out of range of the solo instrument or the bass
- Undue repetition of one or two particular pitches within a short passage
- Awkward intervals – 8ve leaps are freely used and 7ths may be used with discretion, but both are better when preceded and followed by movement from and to notes inside the leap
- Diminished intervals unless followed by a semitone in the opposite direction
- Augmented intervals - rarely acceptable unless perhaps part of a melodic sequence
- Leading notes which ought to proceed to their tonic but do not

Brief 3 - Arrangement

Overview of the task

Composers have been using melodic ideas not of their own making for hundreds of years. Renaissance Masses were more often than not based on the well-known repertoire of Plainsong while some composers even re-arranged polyphonic pieces by themselves or others in 'Parody' Masses. More recently the Theme and Variations genre has provided composers with rich material for creative re-interpretation – Mozart and 'Twinkle, twinkle' and Rachmaninov (and Lloyd Webber) and Paganini's Caprice. In the twentieth century a skilful arranger became a vital part of Jazz styles, taking popular songs and re-casting them for the Big Bands, while in Pop music the 'cover version' has become a staple. What all these diverse musical forms have in common is their creation of a new and viable piece of music from the old – something which at once honours the original, but which also explores and develops new possibilities and pathways that might have been unthinkable to the original composer. There are many ways to do this, from the 'methodical' approach of Theme and Variation to the more modern trend to present pieces in a totally new style.

Students will harmonise a given melody of between 12 and 24 bars in length and extend this to form a satisfying arrangement for the specified instruments and/or voices (no more than four) in the brief. The brief will specify an audience and occasion.

Approach to the task

Harmonise – students will need to know, and be able to use:

- the harmonic vocabulary of tonal music, as it applies to the chosen style of the arrangement. This may include triads in root position, first and second inversions, dominant and secondary sevenths, secondary dominants, diminished and half-diminished sevenths, augmented sixths and Neapolitan chords.
- common progressions, such as cadences
- modulation to closely-related keys
- harmonic features of other styles, e.g. parallel chord movement in some early 20th century styles or extension, added note and substitution chords in Jazz and Pop

Extend - students will need to be able to:

- extend and develop the given melodic material using melodic and rhythmic devices, e.g. sequence, ornamentation, inversion, and/or augmentation/diminution

Write for instruments and/or voices - students will need to be able to:

- write idiomatically for voices and instruments, taking due account of range, register, articulation, tone colour, and where appropriate, the structure and meaning of any text
- write effectively for various combinations of voices and instruments, controlling and varying the textures employed

Establish a style - students will need to be able to:

- use musical elements to establish and maintain style(s) and structures appropriate to the given audience and occasion

ASSESSMENT GRID 1: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH COHERENCE. i.e. melodic construction, harmony and rhythm.
See Specification pages 43, 44

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

Melodic construction

- Added melodic material (extensions to the stimulus, added inner or bass parts) has a strong sense of melodic flow and is appropriate to the style (level 4), or is excellent and imaginative (level 5). Added parts combine convincingly and appropriately with given or other lines.
- Phrase-lengths are clear, in keeping with the style, and consistently and convincingly handled

Rhythm

- Rhythmic elements and devices contribute to the success of the music and are appropriately varied and controlled. This may include rhythmic devices (syncopation, cross rhythm) or variety of metre (perhaps including successful use of compound or additive rhythms).
- Rhythms that successfully characterise the chosen style (e.g. 'Swung' rhythms in Jazz styles) with excellence (level 4) and imagination (level 5).

Harmony

- Appropriate (level 4) or imaginative (level 5) harmonies which fit and/or enhance the given melodic stimulus and any added material.
- Fluent harmonic movement, with a good variety of, and control of, harmonic vocabulary (see above) appropriate to the chosen style (e.g. correct use of 2nd inversion chords, if writing in Baroque or Classical styles.)
- Successful control of harmonic rhythm
- Successful management of key and modulation (where appropriate)

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

Melodic construction

- Melodies may have some structure and shape (level 3), but may contain awkward melodic shapes (e.g. large leaps or upwards augmented intervals) (level 2), or melodic features not an accepted part of the chosen style (level 1)
- Melodies overly reliant on triadic or scalar material and which are stiff or lack direction (level 1 and 2)
- Melodies which are inconsistent with the chosen method of pitch organisation (e.g. tonality, modality) (level 1 and 2)
- Melodies which are overly repetitive or with too much unstructured diversity (level 1 and 2)

Rhythm

- Rhythms that are overly repetitive or with too much unstructured diversity (as appropriate to the style) (level 1 and 2)
- Rhythms that do not support the chosen style or which create an insecure sense of metre or pulse (level 1 and 2)

Harmony

- Chords chosen may be functional, uninteresting (levels 2 and 3) or may not match the stimulus and/or any added melodic lines, perhaps creating some uncomfortable moments (level 1). Use of chords may not match the chosen style (e.g. unwise use of 2nd inversions.)
- Limited range of chords in relation to the chosen style (e.g. use of only Primary chords or overly repeated four-bar sequences) (levels 1, 2 and 3)
- Unclear sense of pitch organisation (e.g. tonality, modality) created perhaps by poor chord choice or poor handling of dissonance
- Poor control of key and modulation (level 1 and 2) or perhaps missed opportunities (level 3)

ASSESSMENT GRID 2: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH EXPRESSIVE CONTROL - i.e. Style. See Specification page 45

Marks are awarded here for the control of appropriate and expressive stylistic characteristics, idioms, conventions and procedures appropriate to the brief and for the awareness of occasion and audience in the handling of the chosen style.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Generally convincing (level 4) or assured (level 5) control of the harmonic, rhythmic and rhythmic features that establish and maintain a vivid sense of musical style
- Successful use of specific features and conventions which demonstrate a deeper understanding of the chosen style (e.g. melodic fills in Blues or chromatic descending octave figures in Latin American styles)
- Creative use of structural procedures or conventions appropriate to the chosen style (e.g. a well-paced introduction, a successfully placed stop-time section or a well-judged instrumental solo).

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Arrangements which may have some sense of style sense of style (level 3), perhaps with inconsistent control (level 2) of stylistic features or with serious misjudgements (level 1)
- 'broad-brush' treatments, with little subtlety or perhaps arrangements in which one element is clearly 'in-style' while others are not (level 1 and 2)

- Arrangements where structural features are unstylistic or where the structure is uninteresting (level 3), lacks variety or has too much diversity (levels 1 and 2)

ASSESSMENT GRID 3; CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH TECHNICAL CONTROL - See Specification pages 46, 47

Marks are awarded here for the handling of the instrumentation and textures, and for the creation of stylistic 'feel'.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Idiomatic use of voices and/or instruments with broadly satisfying (level 4) or assured (level 5) handling. Careful attention to range, register, articulation and tone colour, and, for voices, to word-setting.
- Broadly satisfying (level 4) or assured (level 5) part-writing, as appropriate to the style of the piece.
- Successful control of a variety of textures appropriate to the style and forces chosen, broadly satisfying (level 4) or assured (level 5) handling.
- Most (level 4) or all (level 5) features of the chosen style have been included successfully (level 4) or creatively (level 5).

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Writing that is generally successful with some obvious misjudgements (perhaps functional-playable but lacking real instrumental or vocal character) (level 3), or compromised by misjudgements, such as unidiomatic or unplayable material (level 2) or lacking control and with many misjudgements and errors (level 1)
- Part-writing (as appropriate to the style) may be generally successful with obvious misjudgements (level 3), have significant errors (level 2) or contain many misjudgements and errors (level 1)
- Handling of texture that is generally successful with some obvious misjudgements (perhaps a little unvaried) (level 3), or compromised by misjudgements, such as lack of variety (level 2) or lacking control and with many misjudgements and errors (level 1)
- Stylistic features are generally convincing (level 3), inconsistent or sometimes unsuccessful (level 2) or recognisable but compromised by serious misjudgements (level 1)

ASSESSMENT GRID 4: RESPONSE TO THE BRIEF- Arrangement. See Specification page 50

Marks are awarded here for the overall response to the brief in terms of creative response and development of the given stimulus.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- A response which creates a mostly convincing (level 4) or convincing (level 5) impression, by successful matching to audience and occasion or by creating a viable alternative.
- The stimulus is developed with fluency (level 4) and with fluency and creativity (level 5), making successful use of musical devices (see above)
- Additional material is mostly convincing (level 4) or is convincing and enhances the overall impression (level 5)

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- An inconsistent (level 3) response, one compromised by technical weaknesses (level 2) or showing little control (level 1)
- Some development of the stimulus, but with missed opportunities or a formulaic and/or mechanical approach (level 3) technical weaknesses (level 2) or little evidence of development (level 1)

Brief 4 - Remix

Overview of the task

With the advent of widespread and powerful personal computers in the 1990s DJs and musicians, already used to mixing together songs using their turntables, were able to explore the possibilities of collages combining elements from different songs (usually beats or vocal lines) with new material, sometimes added via sequencers, to create new, and commercially successful tracks. While some of these artists were performing musicians (such as Moby) many, such as Norman Cook (Fatboy Slim), were DJs with little or no performing facility, but with great ears for a beat and with a strong sense of how to re-interpret and revitalise snippets of old songs into something new and vibrant. The key to all of this was the use of digital audio samples, which, due to computer memory considerations, were initially quite short. This brevity proved however to be a distinct advantage in these early stages as the Remixers were forced to add much new material, making the Remix much more than the traditional 'cover version'.

Record companies soon came to realise that they could make money from 'old' recordings by sending them out to the Remixers, usually in the form of separate tracks, called 'stems'. Most commonly the Remixers started from the Vocal line from the original, but Drumbeat patterns and Bass lines (often called 'grooves') were an alternative starting point. From there, the whole shape of the original song could change, with the material being re-ordered, cut-up digitally in small snippets, speeded-up, slowed down or submitted to any number of different manipulations in the pursuit of the new e.g. Fatboy Slim's 'Praise You', released in 1999, combines samples from a song by Camille Yarbrough, a test Piano sample from JBL speakers, and material from Disney's 'It's a small world'. Moby's 'Why does my heart feel so bad?' (1999) surrounds two samples from a 1963 Banks Brothers song with largely sequenced additions.

With the increasing availability of high-quality and cheap audio editing and sequencing technology it has now become quite commonplace for artists to release 'stems' from their own songs in order that their fans can make their own remixes and there are also now many websites from which samples can be legally downloaded as a starting point for Remix (and which can provide a valuable practice resource for students undertaking this option.) While originally associated with Club dance, Remix has now become a mainstream feature of Pop music.

Students will develop given vocal audio sample(s), available for download from the Pearson website, into a remix suitable for a nightclub setting. Using the stylistic conventions and styles of electronic dance music, digital audio editing and sequencers they will create a piece demonstrating skills in the use of rhythm, harmony and melody and in sound manipulation.

Approach to the task

Use of Music technology - Students will need to be able to:

- edit and manipulate audio samples
- create, edit, manipulate and mix together MIDI and audio sequences
- use signal processing (Effects, EQ, Dynamics) to enhance atmosphere and style

- Produce a clear, well-balanced recording with good use of the stereo field

Establish a clear style - Students will need to be able to:

- Identify and be able to recreate the stylistic features of a range of Club dance styles (the 'feel' or 'groove')
- Identify and use the stylistic and structural conventions of various dance styles

Harmony, melody and rhythm - Students will need to be able to:

- use harmony to accompany and enhance the given vocal stimulus and other melodic material
- Create melodic material to complement and enhance the given vocal stimulus and which establishes and maintains a clear sense of style
- Use rhythmic features that complement and enhance the given vocal stimulus and which establish and maintain a clear sense of style

ASSESSMENT GRID 1: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH COHERENCE. i.e. melodic construction, harmony and rhythm
See Specification pages 43, 44

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

Melodic construction

- Added melodic material (counter-melodies, additional melodies or bass parts) has a strong sense of melodic flow and is appropriate to the style (level 4), or is excellent and imaginative (level 5). Added parts combine convincingly and appropriately with given or other lines.
- Phrase-lengths are clear, in keeping with the style, and consistently and convincingly handled

Rhythm

- Rhythmic elements and devices contribute to the success of the music and are appropriately varied and controlled (e.g. drum patterns with a good drive and some fills.) This may also include successful use of rhythmic devices (syncopation, cross rhythm).
- Rhythms that successfully characterise the chosen style with excellence (level 4) and imagination (level 5).

Harmony

- Appropriate (level 4) or imaginative (level 5) harmonies which fit and/or enhance the given vocal stimulus and any added material.
- Fluent harmonic movement, with a good variety of, and control of, harmonic vocabulary appropriate to the style (there may be less variety of chord/key than in the other techniques options).
- Successful control of harmonic rhythm
- Successful management of key and modulation (where appropriate)

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

Melodic construction

- Added Melodies may have some structure and shape (level 3), but may contain awkward melodic leaps (e.g. large leaps or upwards augmented intervals) (level 2), or melodic features not an accepted part of the chosen style (level 1)
- Melodies overly reliant on triadic or scalar material and which are stiff or lack direction (level 1 and 2)
- Melodies which are inconsistent with the chosen method of pitch organisation (e.g. tonality, modality) (level 1 and 2)
- Melodies which are overly repetitive for the style or with too much unstructured diversity (levels 1 and 2)

Rhythm

- Rhythms that are overly repetitive or with too much unstructured diversity (as appropriate to the style) (level 1 and 2) (e.g. unvarying drum loops without any fills or 'space'.)
- Rhythms that do not support the chosen style or which create an insecure sense of metre or pulse (level 2) or where the added parts are not 'in sync' with the vocal stimulus (level 1).

Harmony

- Chords chosen may be functional, uninteresting (levels 2 and 3) or may not match the stimulus and/or any added melodic lines, perhaps creating some uncomfortable moments (level 1)
- Limited range of chords in relation to the chosen style (e.g. use of only a few chords or overly repeated sequences) (levels 1, 2 and 3)
- Unclear sense of pitch organisation (e.g. tonality, modality) created perhaps by poor chord choice or poor handling of dissonance
- Poor control of key and/or modulation (level 1 and 2) or perhaps missed opportunities.

ASSESSMENT GRID 2: CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH EXPRESSIVE CONTROL - i.e. Style. See Specification page 45

Marks are awarded here for the control of appropriate and expressive stylistic characteristics, idioms, conventions and procedures appropriate to the brief and for the awareness of occasion and audience in the handling of the chosen style.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Generally convincing (level 4) or assured (level 5) control of the harmonic, rhythmic and melodic features that establish and maintain a vivid sense of musical style.
- Successful use of specific features and conventions which demonstrate a deeper understanding of the chosen style (e.g. the inclusion of snare rolls to mark a change of section in Trance or of 'early' handclaps or snare to 'push' the beat in House)

- Creative use of structural procedures or conventions appropriate to the chosen style (e.g. a well-judged breakdown or introduction section, successful use of Verse/Chorus/Middle 8)

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Remixes which may have some sense of style sense of style (level 3), perhaps with inconsistent control (level 2) of stylistic features or with serious misjudgements (level 1)
- 'broad-brush' treatments, with little subtlety or perhaps Remixes in which one element is clearly 'in-style' while others are not (level 1 and 2)
- Remixes where structural features are unstylistic or where the structure is uninteresting (level 3), lacks variety or has too much diversity (levels 1 and 2)

ASSESSMENT GRID 3; CREATING AND DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS WITH TECHNICAL CONTROL - See Specification pages 46, 47

Marks are awarded here for the handling of timbres, sound manipulation, and for the creation of structure and stylistic 'feel'.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- Creative use of timbres and sound manipulation with broadly satisfying (level 4) or assured (level 5) handling of signal processing (Effects, EQ, Dynamics), balance, stereo image, synthesis and sample editing.
- Most (level 4) or all (level 5) features of the chosen style have been included successfully (level 4) or creatively (level 5).
- Use of techniques such as looping, copying and pasting to create a structure with musical direction and coherence (level 4) or with well-linked sections and a stylistic structure (level 5).

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- Use of timbres and sound manipulation that is generally successful with some obvious misjudgements (level 3) (perhaps poorly chosen timbres), or compromised by misjudgements (level 2) (such as over-use of effects), or lacking control and with many misjudgements and errors (level 1) (poor balance, lacking EQ, poor recording quality/distortion.)
- Stylistic features are generally convincing (level 3) , inconsistent or sometimes unsuccessful (level 2) or recognisable but compromised by serious misjudgements (level 1)
- Use of techniques such as looping, copying and pasting creates a structure that is uninteresting (level 3) overly repetitive (or conversely, unpredictable) (level 2) or lacks variety (level 1)

ASSESSMENT GRID 4: RESPONSE TO THE BRIEF - Remix. See Specification page 51

Marks are awarded here for the overall response to the brief in terms of creative response and development of the given stimulus.

For higher marks (levels 4, 5), submissions may display all or most of the following

- The music makes good (level 4) or imaginative (level 5) use of the stimulus, with logical and mostly convincing (level 4) or extensive and convincing (level 5) development.
- Editing of the vocal sample creates some new material (level 4) or 'reimagines' the material (level 5) (perhaps with successful use of fragmentation, re-ordering, time-stretching/compression or of pitch-shifting)

For lower marks (Levels 1, 2, 3), submissions may display some of the above but there may also be

- The music makes appropriate (level 3) or limited (level 2) use of the stimulus. At level not all of the stimulus may be used.
- There may be some editing of the stimulus (level 3), or the development may be limited to repetition (level 1 or 2) or misjudged (level 2) or unsuccessful (level 1) use of fragmentation, re-ordering, time-stretching/compression or pitch-shifting.