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Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE
Music Technology (9MT0)
Paper 03

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9MT0/03 Principal Examiner's Report to Centres 2024

General comments:

This year's paper differentiated well between candidates. There was a considerable increase in the mean mark, suggesting that centres are preparing their candidates well.

Once again, there were very few incomplete papers, indicating sound time management and exam technique.

Candidates are reminded to listen closely to the audio stimulus material; to draw out relevant production details from each stimulus recording, rather than describing a general capture and mixing approach for the particular era, genre or featured instrument. Where an effect or production technique is identified, candidates must discuss parameter settings and the way in which it is used, rather than providing a list of effects without qualification.

Additional answer sheets continue to be used. Candidates are reminded to write concisely, and in the space provided wherever possible to avoid the use of extra sheets.

Responses for questions 5 and 6 that used a tabular format/bullet points were again far more concise than those written in continuous prose. Candidates should be encouraged to take this approach if they prefer, rather than producing an outline plan and then reiterating the same points in continuous prose.

Additionally, the production aspect headings provided for question 5 can be used as sub-headings in candidate responses.

This report should be read in conjunction with the published mark scheme.

Specific questions:

Question 1

- Q1a – Well answered by the majority
- Q1b – There was great differentiation between more and less able candidates. Stronger responses considered a range of effects and sampling techniques.
- Q1c i – Candidates were adequately prepared overall, and often referred to both the reverb time and other parameters.
- Q1c ii – This item differentiated well. Some candidates were too vague with responses such as "the reverb was a bit shorter".

Question 2

- Q2a – The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify pan positions for the instruments specified.
- Q2b – Many candidates scored full marks here, demonstrating a reliable application of knowledge related to the recording era.
- Q2c – Candidates seemed better prepared to explain commands than previous series, with many being able to name and explain two different methods of adding reverb.

Question 3

- Q3a i – The majority were able to identify hiss as the unwanted noise. Common incorrect responses included hum and 'static'.
- Q3a ii – This differentiated well. Many candidates could identify one suitable EQ/filter type, but naming a second was more challenging, often getting low pass and high pass muddled up.
- Q3b – Most candidates scored 1 mark for guitar but far fewer were able to name the clavinet. Often there was a confusion with clavichord and Clavinova – both very different instruments.

- Q3c - These items required close listening and discussion of synth settings, providing a wide range of response qualities. Less confident candidates tended to lack knowledge of oscillator settings for part (i) and filter envelopes for (ii).

Question 4

- Q4a - A mark for the shaker was most prevalent here. Many mistook the bongo/conga for a cowbell.
- Q4c - Lower-level responses scored 1-2 marks for generalised era facts that were relevant to the stimulus. There were a fair number of responses that only covered multitrack recording technology and microphones. High quality responses revealed far closer listening and analysis of the song, drawing out production features synonymous with 80s production.

Question 5

A greater number of candidates used the provided bullet points as headings, helping to better structure their answers and ensuring the scope incorporated a range of production aspects.

As in previous years, many responses erred on the side of general detail that could be applied to any song in the particular era, and so scored middle marks.

Level 1 and Level 5 responses were rare and there were very few incomplete answers. The main barriers to reaching the top band were a lack of parameter discussion and candidates not referring to specific sections of the song.

Question 6

Candidates seemed thoroughly prepared for a question on delay. Consequently, many scored full marks.

Short and blank responses were extremely uncommon, and there was a considerable increase in the mean mark.

Even more candidates provided song-specific detail than in previous years, and this tended to be packed with parameter detail, leading to a strong AO3 outcome.

Overall, candidates seem far more clued-up on what the task involves - they are well prepared by staff in centres.