

Examiners' Report

June 2025

GCE Music 9MU0 03

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Introduction

In this paper, candidates are required to show knowledge and understanding of musical elements, language and context. This is in relation to music they have studied through the set works and also to unfamiliar music. They are required both to demonstrate and apply musical knowledge: Assessment Objective (AO) AO3, and use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements : AO4.

Section A comprised Questions (Q) 01-04 and was worth 50 marks.

Q01(a)-(c): These three questions were based on excerpts from set works from three areas of study, with an audio track and skeleton score.

Q04 consisted of an aural dictation question of pitch and rhythm.

Section B, worth 50 marks in total, comprised an essay question based on a piece of unfamiliar work from one of the areas of study, worth 20 marks, and an essay focussing on a set work, worth 30 marks.

In the listening questions candidates were tested on aural skills being applied to excerpts of the set works. This included identification of sections, intervals, chords and cadences. Candidates were also required to describe particular musical elements, for example the melody, harmony or tonality of a specific passage, or identify musical features that the composer used to create a specific mood or that were stylistic of the genre.

Q05 tested the ability of the candidate to write an essay about an unfamiliar piece of music that was connected to one of the areas of study, in relation to the musical elements and programmatic nature of the question. An audio track was provided, but no skeleton or illustrative score.

Q06 required candidates to write an essay from a choice of four options, each from a different area of study, based on a set work. Candidates were presented with three musical elements on which to focus. No audio was given but an illustrative excerpt of a portion of the score was provided in the resource booklet.

For both Q05 and Q06, candidates should aim to produce a well-structured essay. Essays should have fluent use of musical vocabulary in relation to specific musical elements and with a musical explanation of the feature and the effect created.

Essays should make links with the context. Candidates should refer to a variety of other relevant pieces of music throughout the essay. They should show knowledge of the linked piece, in relation to the musical feature, in order to justify their observations.

One area to highlight is the importance of time-management, which is entirely in the hands of the candidate for this examination. Quite frequently, it was clear that Section A had been approached thoroughly, but Section B suffered from insufficient time, with short or insubstantial essays. The examination is 2 hours 10 minutes and it is advisable not to spend any longer than one hour on Section A, leaving roughly 1 hour 10 minutes to complete the Section B essays.

It is recommended in the timings guidance document produced by Pearson that approximately 35 minutes are allowed for Q05 and approximately 45 minutes for Q06. Candidates might like to try not completing the paper in question order and leaving the two essays until the end of the examination. They could split the essays up or perhaps start with an essay.

It is essential that candidates approach the exam with a clear time plan of how long to spend on each question, adhere strictly to this structure, and to have practised this before the actual exam. It is advisable to practise writing timed essays as part of examination preparation, ensuring that handwriting is legible. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all questions.

This report will provide guidance on each question and give examples of candidates' work for questions where the mark scheme is more complex.

Question 1(a)

In this question candidates were required to describe the music at the start of the excerpt. It was very pleasing to see many candidates making a good start to the exam with this question.

Typical responses included ascending, syllabic, homophonic and parallel.

It is important that candidates practise describing with musical vocabulary the music at the start of a piece or a main section of the set works.

This is a very good response, full of musical vocabulary.

It is organised in a succinct way, which is absolutely acceptable, as an alternative to full sentences.

1 Courtney Pine, *Back in the Day*: Inner State (of Mind)

Listen to Track 1 and refer to Excerpt 1 in the Resource Booklet.

(a) Describe the music of the vocals at the start.

(3)

Accapella crotchets
Chordal
Ascending
pentatonic



This candidate gives more correct responses than there are available marks.

Marks are given for:

- A cappella [1]
- Crotchets [1]
- Chordal [1]
- Ascending [1]
- Pentatonic [1]

Total: 3 marks [maximum]



Practise describing the start of each work or beginnings of the main sections.

This is a very good response, full of musical vocabulary and written in a succinct way.

The candidate organises it with key words, rather than full sentences, which is absolutely acceptable.

1 Courtney Pine, *Back in the Day: Inner State (of Mind)*

Listen to Track 1 and refer to Excerpt 1 in the Resource Booklet.

(a) Describe the music of the vocals at the start.

(3)

Accapella crotchets
Chordal
Ascending
pentatonic



Again, there are more correct points than there are marks available.

- A cappella [1]
- Crotchets [1]
- Chordal [1]
- Ascending [1]
- Pentatonic [1]

Total: 3 marks [maximum]



Practise describing the start each set work or main sections within the piece, using musical vocabulary.

Question 1(b)

Candidates found this question more challenging and did not seem confident writing about the element of harmony.

They did not seem to understand that this involved writing about the type of chords used. Very few candidates identified the specific chords used.

The most typical correct answers were two chords or dissonant. There were misunderstandings about extended chords, which many candidates wrote about, because in these bars the added notes to the chords did not go beyond the 7th.

Candidates often wrote about completely different elements such as texture or instruments.

This is an extremely good response with real understanding shown of harmony.

(b) Describe the harmony at bars 2 to 9.

(2)

It alternates between two chords, C^{m7} & D^{m7}.
The use of seventh chords is a feature typical of jazz.



This candidate gives more correct answers than there are marks available.

Marks could be given for:

- Alternates/two chords [1]
- C [1]
- D [1] Minor [1]
- 7th [1]

Total: 2 marks [maximum]



Focus on the element of harmony, with specific vocabulary, chord analysis and harmonic

features, for each set work.

(b) Describe the harmony at bars 2 to 9.

(2)

It alternates between two chords, C^{m7} & D^{m7}

The use of seventh chords is a feature typical of jazz.



Marks are available for:

- Two/alternating chords [1]
- C [1]
- D [1]
- Minor [1]
- 7th [1]

Total: 2 marks [maximum]



Learn the main features of each of the elements for each set work.

Question 1(c)

In this question candidates were asked to describe the melody of the vocal line in specific bars.

It is important to remember that melody is described in the specification as the organisation of pitch. Some candidates were able to identify conjunct and the reference to Gershwin's Summertime, but vocabulary from other elements was brought in incorrectly.

Where candidates hear a leap, they should identify the interval of the leap, rather than only writing 'leaps' or 'disjunct'.

This is an example of a good response where the candidate keeps closely to specific melody vocabulary.

(c) Describe the melody of the vocal line at bars 10 to 13.

(2)

• narrow range, conjunct,
• based on Gershwin's 'summertime'



Marks are available for:

- Narrow range [1]
- Conjunct [1]
- Gershwin's 'Summertime' [1]

Total: 2 marks [maximum]



Learn vocabulary for each of the musical elements for each of the set works.

Question 1(d)

The correct answers for these two intervals were perfect 4th and perfect 5th.

Whilst some candidates were successful, it remained a challenging question for many, with a wide variety of incorrect answers and uncertainty over correct terminology.

There were candidate examples where only a number was given or where they had written major or minor instead of perfect.

Regular practice throughout the course both identifying and understanding the theory of intervals is so important, in order to be able to answer these questions correctly.

Question 1(e)

Candidates performed very well on this question, describing features of jazz influence in the excerpt. It was pleasing to see many examples of full marks.

Common responses were saxophone, improvised, blue notes, syncopation. It is important that candidates note that features should be isolated to the excerpt, rather than the entire song.

This is an excellent answer with many correct stylistic features.

(e) Describe features of jazz influence in this excerpt.

(3)

7 Blue notes
7 Saxophone
7 extended chords
7 Syncopation
7 heavy ornamentation

(Total for Question 1 = 12 marks)



Marks are available for:

- Blue notes [1]
- Saxophone [1]
- Extended chords [1]
- Syncopation [1]
- Ornamentation [1]

Total: 3 marks [maximum]



Learn stylistic features for the genre of each of the set works.

Question 2(a)

In this question, candidates were asked to describe the texture of specific bars.

There were many good answers with 'starts monophonic' and 'polyphonic' being the most frequent; homophonic was sometimes given as an incorrect response.

Where the texture changes during the specified bars it is important to use location words such as 'starts', 'becomes', 'ends'. Candidates should also remember that the number of parts playing is an essential concept of texture too.

Some candidates simply named instruments, rather than using texture terminology.

This is a good answer with correct information.

Candidates should be aware that polyphonic and contrapuntal/counterpoint are alternative responses for the same point.

There will not be credit for 'thick' or 'thin' texture.

2 Bernard Herrmann, *Psycho*: Finale

Listen to Track 2 and refer to Excerpt 2 in the Resource Booklet.

(a) Describe the texture of bars 1 to 13.

(2)

begins monophonic and becomes polyphonic
counterpoint used - thickening texture



Marks are given for:

- Begins monophonic [1]
- Polyphonic [1]

Total: 2 marks



Avoid the words 'thick' and 'thin', to describe texture.

Question 2(b)

The correct answers for these two intervals were minor 7th and perfect 5th.

Whilst some candidates were successful, this remains a challenging question for many, with a wide variety of incorrect answers and uncertainty over correct terminology.

The minor 7th interval caused greater challenge and was often incorrect. There were candidate examples where only a number was given or where they had written major or minor instead of perfect, for the 5th.

Regular practice throughout the course both identifying and understanding the theory of intervals is so important in order to be able to answer these questions correctly.

Question 2(c)

In this question, candidates were required to describe the music played by the 1st violins in specific bars.

Candidates were often able to identify high, conjunct, descending, chromatic. Not many recognised the dynamic level or use of mutes. Sometimes incorrect string techniques were provided.

Where a feature occurs in one place only, candidates should give a location, such as stating ends with semibreves, in order to gain credit.

This is an excellent response, succinct, and full of relevant musical vocabulary.

(c) Describe the music played by the 1st violins in bar 9 beat 3 to bar 14.

(3)

Very high texture
Muted
Descending chromatic scale



Marks are available for:

- High [1]
- Muted [1]
- Descending [1]
- Chromatic [1]
- Scale [1]

Total: 3 marks [maximum]



Focus your attention only on the instrumental part required by the question.

Question 2(d)

This style of 4-mark multiple-choice question is a test for candidates to select the correct features and eliminate the incorrect, from a range of correct and incorrect musical vocabulary, which related to the end of the excerpt.

The features and musical vocabulary covered chords, intervals, playing techniques, dynamics and texture.

The chords and descending intervals caused the greatest challenge for incorrect responses and should be practised as part of aural training throughout the course.

Q02e

This question was frequently correct and it is pleasing that candidates are learning the date of composition/release of the set works.

Candidates should be reminded always to add the date of composition to their Q06 essays in the opening contextual paragraph, and make good use of the information that they have learnt.

Question 3(a)ii

In Q03(a)(ii) candidates were asked to name the section from which the excerpt is taken.

There was mixed success in identifying the Exposition section, and a wide variety of correct and incorrect responses was seen.

In Q03(a)(ii) candidates were asked to identify the part of this section at the start of the excerpt. Very few were able to recognise the characteristic music of the 2nd subject. Others used a wide range of incorrect terminology, rather than the conventional names of sonata form sections.

It is important that candidates listen regularly to the set works and are able to name sections and main themes within the overall structure.

Question 3(b)i

Candidates were asked to describe the music heard at the start of the excerpt and a good range of responses was seen for this 4-mark question.

Common responses included homophonic, descending, conjunct, syncopated, only piano.

Some candidates seemed to write about different bars and the violin and cello parts, which were not playing here. Candidates should be able to describe the music of both the 1st and 2nd subjects in this set work.

This is a very good answer with a number of correct features across different elements to describe the music of these bars.

(b) (i) Describe the music in bar 1 beat 2 to bar 2 beat 4.

(4)

The melody played by the piano is syncopated. ~~Starts with syncopate~~
There is an appoggiatura at the end. It is in B^b major.
Only the piano is playing. It is quiet. There is a
chromatic inner line in the piano.



Marks are available for:

- Homophonic [1]
- Only piano [1]
- Descending [1]
- Conjunct [1]
- Quiet [1]

Total: 4 marks [maximum]



Learn the musical features of main themes. Always write at least, or even more, points than

the number of marks available.

Question 3(b)ii

This question followed straight on, describing the music of the violin and cello in the next two bars.

Common responses were octaves, ascending, legato, sforzando.

It was surprising that more candidates did not identify the melodic shape of a diminished 7th, with some incorrectly writing conjunct instead. Where leaps are involved, it is important to state the interval used, rather than only writing leaps or disjunct.

Some candidates answered unison incorrectly, rather than octaves, for the distance between the violin and cello.

This is a good answer, in clear bullet points.

Marking is positive so the unison is ignored and the octaves accepted.

(ii) Describe the music of the violin and cello in bars 3 and 4.

(3)

- They both play in octave unison
- They outline a broken diminished 7th chord
- They play rising crotchets



Marks are available for:

- Octaves [1]
- Diminished 7th/broken chord [1]
- Rising = ascending [1]
- Crotchets [1]

Total: 3 marks [maximum]



Look at the number of marks on offer and use bullet points to help make that number of

points. Where leaps are heard, state the interval.

Question 3(c)

Candidates were asked to name the cadence heard in specific bars.

There was mixed success, with some identifying perfect correctly, but many incorrectly mistook it for plagal or imperfect.

It is important to incorporate aural skills of chords, keys and cadences into the A level Music course.

Question 3(d)

Candidates were asked to name the chord heard at a specific bar.

Candidates continue to find chord identification a challenging part of the paper. The correct answer was dominant 7th.

Frequently-seen incorrect responses were dominant but without the 7th, diminished 7th and a whole selection of other chords, often unrelated to the key.

It is important to incorporate aural skills of chords, keys and cadences into the A level Music course.

Question 3(e)

The correct answers for these two intervals were perfect 5th and diminished 5th.

Whilst some candidates were successful, particularly with the perfect interval, it remains a challenging question for many. There was a wide variety of incorrect answers and uncertainty over correct terminology.

There were candidate examples where only a number was given or where they had written major or minor instead of perfect. Regular practice throughout the course, both identifying and understanding the theory of intervals, is so important in order to be able to answer these questions correctly.

Question 3(f)

In this question, candidates were required to explain how the composer generates excitement in specific bars of the excerpt.

It is important that candidates are familiar with musical features that create a certain mood. For example, for a mood of excitement the musical features of ascending, high pitch, crescendo, faster harmonic rhythm might be expected, and these were indeed the most common correct responses for this question. Candidates are not required to describe the mood created and credit is only given for correct terminology.

This was a very good response, in which the candidate uses much well-selected vocabulary to match the mood given in the question.

They answer succinctly in bullet points and they are not required to refer to the mood in their response. Although some candidates find this helps focus their answer, credit is only given for correct musical vocabulary.

(f) Explain how the composer generates excitement in bar 27 to bar 29 beat 1.

(2)

- Ascending chromatic scale
- Higher violin tessitura
- Crescendo



Marks are available for:

- Ascending [1]
- Chromatic [1]
- Higher tessitura [1]
- Crescendo [1]

Total: 2 marks [maximum]



Try making a list of musical vocabulary that matches different moods of the set works.

Question 3(g)

Candidates were required to write about the tonality of the excerpt.

Many found this question challenging and many did not understand the level of detail for a tonality question.

It was very common for candidates only to write major or minor, which was not sufficiently detailed for this level. Frequently, G minor was named as the key but, it was not, for this excerpt. Very few identified Bb major as opening key of the excerpt.

It is important that candidates learn the main keys and features of tonality for each of the set works for both listening and essay questions.

This candidate achieves 3 marks with some correct information.

They are mostly focussed on tonality and notice the opening key of the 2nd subject.

However, writing minor would not gain any marks and fast harmonic rhythm is a harmony feature.

(g) Describe the use of tonality in the excerpt.

(3)

Starts in Bb major, then Minor.

Then Goes to D major in Bar 13, then F major bar 15 beat 2

Overall Sings Fast Harmonic Rhythm (ie frequent modulations and changes of key)



Marks are given for:

- Bb major [1]
- D major [1]
- Frequent modulations [1]

Total: 3 marks



Focus on the element of Tonality and learn the main keys of the set works.

Question 4

Many candidates had good success with the aural dictation question. It was extremely pleasing to see many examples of full marks, and marks of 7 and 8, forming nearly half of all candidates' responses.

This exercise had its challenges, being in the bass clef and with awkward areas of both pitch and rhythm. Candidates tended to fare better with rhythm than pitch.

In terms of rhythm, the music was in 4/4 and candidates needed to check that each bar had the correct number of beats: lack of sufficient beats was a common error.

There was a variety of note lengths and syncopation in bar 3, although a rhythmic pattern was established here. Different versions of beaming are not penalised, this being a test of ear, rather than theory.

In terms of pitch, there was a repeated note leading from the given material, a descending sequence in bar 3, and no leaps larger than a 3rd. Even the vast majority of candidates who achieved full marks did not hear the G natural at the end of bar 2. However, the mark scheme does allow for a couple of errors and still achieve full marks.

This is a very good response, which achieves 7 marks.

Rhythms are entirely correct and they use different approaches in their workings out to assist them with this aspect.

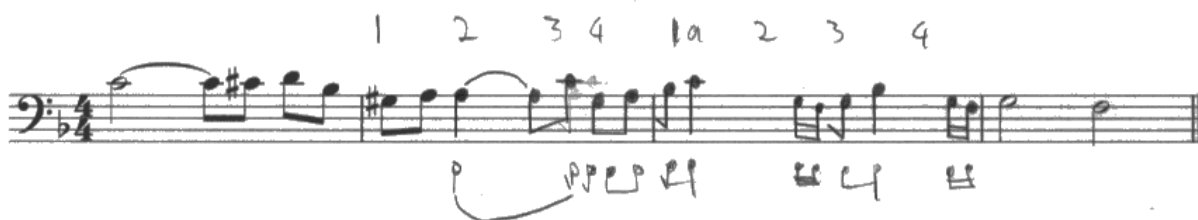
Pitch is more challenging and they miss several of the leaps of 3rds.

Marking is from the beginning, ignoring bar lines, until both pitch and note lengths are incorrect.

It continues from the end, ignoring bar lines, until both pitch and note lengths are incorrect. If there is any music remaining unmarked, credit is given for any pitch or note length that is placed on the appropriate beat.

4 Listen to Track 4.

Complete the melody in bars 2 to 3.



Note 1 - pitch and note length correct

Note 2 - pitch and note length correct

Note 3 - note length correct

Note 4 - note length correct

Note 5 - note length correct

Note 6 - pitch and note length correct

Note 7 - note length correct

Note 8 - pitch and note length correct

Note 9 - pitch and note length correct

Note 10 - pitch and note length correct

Note 11 - pitch and note length correct

Note 12 - note length correct

Total - 19 correct pitches and note lengths

Total: 7 marks



Check there are the correct number of beats in each bar.

Listen carefully for sequences or patterns.

Work out the interval of each leap carefully.

Listen carefully that it follows on correctly from the given material at the start and end.

Check that writing on the stave is legible and that notes are placed clearly either on the line or space.

Question 5

This question required candidates to use their aural skills to identify musical features from an unfamiliar piece of music.

In combination with their aural skills, candidates could draw upon their knowledge and understanding of a particular genre related to the area of study, in this case Music for Film, and connect their observation using musical vocabulary to the question. They were required to link their musical features with examples of relevant works.

The question states, "Discuss how the composer reflects this through the use of musical elements." This means aiming to cover all musical elements. This year, candidates covered insufficient musical elements, or stated at the beginning of the essay three musical elements that they would cover. This is not advisable because coverage of the elements is important in order to reach higher marks.

The musical elements for this question are: Melody, Harmony, Tonality, Structure, Sonority, Texture, Tempo/Metre/Rhythm/Dynamics.

The question also states, "Relate your discussion to other relevant works that may include set works and other music." It is therefore a requirement of the essay to write about examples of other music. This should occur frequently, throughout the essay, linking to the different elements.

The indicative content in the mark scheme is large and candidates are not expected to cover all, or even most, of it. This would not be possible in the time allowed and candidates would not have time to create a meaningful discussion. Some representation of features across the elements is sufficient. Marking takes place using a levels-based mark scheme and not by adding up correct points.

Candidates who approached the essay by giving an account in chronological order often had less success. They tended to fall into a pattern of repetition as musical features returned throughout the recording and omitted elements. It was not necessary, nor recommended, that candidates relate features to timings on the audio track.

It is essential that candidates allow sufficient time to listen to the audio track several times, make notes, plan and then write their Q05 essay. They must check that they have transferred all vocabulary points from the plan into the essay, so they can be integrated into the discussion. It was pleasing to see candidates using the first page of the Q05 answer area below the question for planning purposes. The best planning listed each of the musical elements, so none was neglected.

Pearson recommends in both the Administrative Support Guide and the Timings Guidance document for Unit 3 (available on the Pearson website), that candidate spend ideally 35 minutes and no less than 30 minutes on Q05.

Candidates are advised to:

- interpret the question by highlighting key words

- listen to the unfamiliar piece a few times and make a plan before writing the essay
- organise the essay by musical elements
- use the eight musical elements as a check list to provide coverage of the elements
- include examples of relevant music with composer, piece title, and movement, if from a large scale work (or cue if from a film soundtrack)
- show some knowledge of how the feature has been used musically, not programmatically, in the linked piece in order to create a justification
- Identify a musical feature and explain the effect this creates. This can be done succinctly, with an adjective to provide the explanation
- Link this to the question and the composer's intention
- Make a connection with a relevant piece of music. Show knowledge of how the same feature has been used in a different piece and how the composer approaches this

The candidate starts with a thorough planning page covering most of the elements but omits structure.

In the essay they cover correct features for the elements of Melody, Harmony, Sonority, Texture, Tempo/Metre/Rhythm, (Dynamics only in plan). The use of a plan results in a highly-organised essay. Many elements are covered, but there is not quite a thorough range of them.

Use of musical vocabulary is certainly competent, but not quite excellent. There is much vocabulary used, but there are errors, which are ignored and this reduces the fullness of the account.

Elements are linked well to the question, with a sense of the composer's intentions.

References to other music are made throughout the essay and they are well-chosen and appropriately stylistic. They are usually specific with the precise cue in the film soundtrack, but occasionally not.

Most are illustrations by simply naming the piece and composer and stating it is the same. Elfman's *Birth of a Penguin Part 1* had a sense of justification, explaining how the harp glissando is used in that piece.

Please note there is no need to provide an introduction or conclusion, which in this essay did not bring any new information or discussion.

5 Music for Film

Listen to Track 5.

This excerpt, called the Final Confrontation, is taken from a film soundtrack. In this scene the main character is involved in a dramatic fight.

Discuss how the composer reflects this through the use of musical elements.
Relate your discussion to other relevant works which may include set works and other music.

(20)

Melody

Motifs → Wagner
Shore
Ascending sequence

Texture

Polyphony
Rapid movement

Harmony

↳ Mostly consonant
Some moments of dissonance
Cadences at times
Functional, diatonic

Performing Forces

Harp glissando tremolo strings
Use of brass
String ostinati
+ brass
Down bow

Tonality

Tonal, common tonal
language

Tempo, metre + rhythm

Ostinati
long held notes
offbeat notes
rapid percussion
phrases

Dynamics

Crescendi

Brass writing could be Powell or Elfmán

Batman ~~theme~~ (1989) theme

Ostinati similar to Zimmer

Bombastic orchestral
writing pioneered by
Williams

Argument: Typical Hollywood style used to create
drama.

In 'Final Confrontation' the main character is involved in a dramatic fight. The composer utilises a typical Hollywood musical language to achieve this through use of melody, harmony, performing forces, and texture amongst other features.

The melody of the piece is somewhat chaotic however it borrows from the typical Hollywood language inspired by Wagner in Operas such as Tristan and utilises leitmotif effectively. In a similar way to Elfenman in Batman Returns: Batman vs the Circus, leitmotifs are varied, altered, and restated in various different ways which create a chaotic fight-like mood as well as a general feeling of tension. As with many works in the Hollywood catalogue, the melodies are mostly diatonic with occasional use of chromaticism to enhance the tension. Similar techniques can be seen in John Powell's 'This is Berk' from How to train your Dragon, where as well as excessive use of leitmotif, he uses occasional chromaticism to inject moments of tension ~~into~~ into the score.

In terms of harmony, this piece follows the Romantic-inspired tradition of John Williams in works such as Main Title / Rebel Blockade Runner from Star Wars (Episode 4: A New Hope) where typical

Functional harmony is used but with occasional moments of interest, in this some use of 7th chords to add tension and in Star Wars the use of ~~4th chords~~ quartic harmony adding intrigue. Occasional chromaticism is used in this piece to add dissonance, ~~then~~ thus tension into the music and drive forward the chaotic feel of the piece. Cadences are also used to delineate different sections of the music to allow the narrative to progress and create drama.

Performing forces are possibly the most interesting part of modern film music, since Max Steiner's score for King Kong in the 1930s, symphony orchestras have featured in many of the scores to the hit films of each year; this score is no different. Across the piece, a variety of ~~for~~ textures and techniques feature. Harp glissandi often serve as lead-ins to sections as they do in Elfman's Batman Returns: Birth of a Penguin Pt. 1 where a harp glissando transitions the music into a more driving score for the title sequence; whilst string tremolandi add to the drama of the scene, as seen in a stage context in Schwarz's Defying Gravity from Wicked where tremolandi feature at the most dramatic moments. The brass writing is somewhat reminiscent of Elfman in Batman (1989): Main Titles

with its bombastic flare however the more intimate sections resemble the softer writing of John Powell throughout 'How to Train Your Dragon'. In terms of texture, the piece features a range but is predominantly polyphonic which represents the chaos and drama of an ongoing fight quite well; as previously mentioned Elfenman uses this to great effect in Batman vs the Circus.

Finally there are numerous other features of note however some particularly worthy mentions include the use of ostinati and the occasional syncopation.

Ostinati have long been used in film music because they create drive and bring drama to an otherwise underwhelming scene. They feature heavily in this piece, both in brass and in strings, at the bottom of the texture to create just this feeling of drive. The music of Hans Zimmer including 'Time' from Inception frequently include ostinati at the bottom of the texture in this manner. Finally offbeat brass chords help to unsettle the ~~texture~~^{pulsed} and add to the chaos and tension previously established.

Overall the composer successfully uses musical elements to create tension and drama throughout the piece as is the core purpose of film music.



Elements covered: Melody, Harmony, Sonority, Texture, Tempo/Metre/Rhythm, (Dynamics in plan).

The question is referred to throughout the essay.

Other music includes: Elfman *Batman Returns*, Powell *How to Train Your Dragon*, John Williams *Star Wars*, Steiner *King Kong*, Shwartz *Defying Gravity*, Elfman *Batman*, Hans Zimmer *Inception*.

References to other music are mostly illustrations, just occasionally attempting to say something musical.

On balance, this essay meets some of the requirements of Level 4, but not all, due to lack of justifications and coverage of the elements, placing it in the middle of the mark band.

Level 4

Total: 15 marks



Make a plan whilst listening but check that all vocabulary is transferred to the essay.

Have a paragraph for each of the musical elements.

Link to the question throughout.

Refer to examples of other music throughout.

Create justifications by naming a piece of music, composer, movement/cue, but write about how they have used that feature musically in their composition.

Question 6(a)

Q06: General information

Q06 required candidates to show knowledge of three elements of one of the set works, or a movement or song, and they were given a choice of four set works from different areas of study.

Candidates needed to use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements (AO4).

This was achieved by:

- giving musical explanations of the effect of their chosen vocabulary feature
- making links with the context in which the piece was created
- making connections with other relevant pieces of music
- lack of contextual information. This could be no opening contextual paragraph or a very short one. Many essays did not include any background information about the piece, not even the date of composition
- lack of discussion and musical explanations, often presenting a list of features
- unbalanced elements with one that was neglected or less well-covered
- focus on elements that were not in the question
- inconsistent references to other music throughout the essay
- imprecise other music references. Composer, piece, name and movement/film cue if a large multi-movement work are needed
- illustrations, rather than justifications, of other music

This is a well-structured essay with musical features and discussion/explanations across the three elements.

The contextual paragraph is relevant but lacks detailed information about the composer and set work.

Candidates are encouraged to learn the date of composition both for the listening section and the essays.

There are examples of other music, included fluently throughout the essay, with some as illustrations and others as justifications.

Composed at the height of England's neoclassical movement by one of its most prolific composers, Vaughan Williams' 'Bredon Hill', taken from his song cycle 'On Wenlock Edge', brings to life (the English country side) and helps revive old folk song tradition. Vaughan Williams both evokes the beautiful scene of a Shropshire hillside, akin to his depiction of nature in 'The Lark Ascending', and brings together the old with new, as he did in 'Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis', to create a beautiful and timeless work of art.

Firstly, unlike Vaughan Williams' use of melody is akin to that in traditional folk song. For example, the text setting of the piece is predominantly syllabic, mirroring traditional songs such as 'Scarborough Fair' - in both songs, this is so that the narrative, which takes precedence, is clear, and so that the song is accessible to trained amateurs for 'Bredon Hill' and to everyday people for 'Scarborough Fair'. In both songs, the vocal melody also follows the natural word accentuation of iambic pentameter throughout, again making the lyrics clear and easy to understand. However, despite the syllabic text setting, there are occasional melismas - "good people come and pray" is a prime example.

The melisma on "pray" highlights this important word, emphasising the religious aspects of the story, akin to how the melisma on "mirage" in Fauré's 'Après un rêve', a contemporary art song, does the same to reestablish that the singer is talking about a dream, and how Purcell's 'Music For a While' has a long melisma at "eternal" to remind listeners of Arcato's immortality. The vocal melody is also mainly conjunct, creating a calm feel in the earlier verses of the song, similar to the main theme of 'The Last Ascending', which also creates a calm mood. However, in ~~verses~~ the later verses, such as Verse 5, this conjunct nature suddenly becomes dark and tense as the singer describes the death of his beloved, creating a sense of mourning similar to the Beatles 'Eleanor Rigby', which has mostly conjunct verse melodies to reflect the entrapment its characters feel in their daily lives. However, the switch to a more disjunct melody with a high tessitura at "Oh noisy bells, be dumb!" suggests a release of anguish at the end of the song as if the speaker has finally accepted his grief.

Vaughan Williams' use of harmony also reflects the scene and story he is trying to tell. He mainly employs non-functional harmony, and there is a lack of perfect cadences ~~to~~ throughout the piece. This means that a clear tonality is never established, so the ~~tonality~~ tonality changes

between Aeolian and Dorian in the verses, where F naturals occur. This mirrors the free feeling one may experience out in the countryside, without being grounded, and this use of harmony is similar to Debussy's 'Pagodes', also not having many cadences. Debussy also uses non-functional harmony to paint a scene, but his is a scene of the East, evoked by the bare 5ths and parallel 5ths and 4ths he uses. Vaughan Williams also uses parallel chords in 'Bredon Hill', with the characteristic parallel 7ths of the Intro painting the picture of a tranquil and peaceful Sunday morning in the countryside. The parallel 7ths mixed with the percussive nature of the piano chords also illustrates the church bells ringing which are described in the lyrics, similar to Debussy's 'La cathédrale engloutie' which opens with similar bell-esque parallel chords. Finally, the use of static harmony in the first two verses, with the chords often not changing for several bars, creates a grounded feeling, as if the lovers depicted in the song are carefree and have no worries. This is similar to the Beatles' 'Eleanor Rigby' 'once again', which mostly only uses two chords - i & ~~IV~~ VI - in an attempt to create that ~~same~~ sense of entrapment one again.

Finally, the use of texture in Bredon Hill is

expert, cleverly and clearly painting a picture of love and ~~has~~ the lyrics of the song. Firstly, the song's opening homophony parallels the coda of Berlioz's 'Rêveries - Passions', which uses a series of homophonic plagal cadences to paint the picture of religious reverence for the artist's beloved. Vaughan Williams, meanwhile, employs this texture to depict a tranquil, sunny Sunday morning, also with an element of love.

The verses are also mainly ^{mostly} ~~use~~ melody-dominated-homophony, placing an emphasis on the lyrics and vocals of the song and thus the story it has to tell. Fauré does similar in 'Après un rêve', as does Butterworth in his interpretation of 'Bredon Hill', demonstrating how stories in songs were becoming more & more important in this era and thus showing the revival of ~~the~~ folk song tradition. The ~~ostinato~~ ^{texture} introduced in Verse 3 also demonstrates another influence on contemporary music - that of the East, with gamelan pieces such as 'Bar's Melampayan' revolving around ~~ostinato~~ and influencing Western composers as Eastern culture became more accessible. In Bredon Hill, this texture is employed to further emphasise the idea of tolling bells, with the main ~~ostinato~~ in Verse 3 being that of triplets in the piano part. Finally, in the final verse of the song, containing its climax, there are elements of polyphony, creating a sense of pain and climax mirrored at the end of the recapitulation of Berlioz's 'Rêveries (Passions)', in which polyphony is used to signal both the dramatic

conclusion of this first chapter of the story, and the action still to come.

Overall, in 'Bredon Hill', Vaughan Williams takes inspiration from contemporary vocal music, old English folk songs, the Romantics, and many other sources in order to best paint the beautiful picture of 'Bredon Hill' through his use of melody, harmony, and texture. One can also see his possible influence on those who came after, like the Beatles, when it comes to ~~to~~ depicting a story through music.



Context: Some relevant information but lacks detail and musical information about the composer and set work itself. Positive to have some other repertoire by the composer.

Elements: The three elements have been covered in what is a clear response, if not a controlled discussion. Satisfactory-to-competent use of musical vocabulary. After each musical feature, in a fluent way, there is an explanation of the effect created.

Other music: Well-chosen, a combination of set works and stylistic repertoire frequently throughout the essay and for every correct musical feature. Some are illustrations, but some are justifications.

Level 4

It is on the strength of musical vocabulary and explanations and other music that this essay belongs in this level. It does not fulfil all the requirements of the level though, so reaches the middle of the level.

Total: 22 marks



Always include the date of composition and other relevant musical information about the set work in the opening contextual paragraph.

Try to convert illustrations to justifications by showing knowledge of how the musical feature is used musically in the piece.

Question 6(b)

In this question, candidates were asked to discuss The Beatles' use of harmony, structure and sonority in *Revolver*: 'I want to tell you'.

Candidates often wrote most successfully about the element of sonority with the conventional band instrumentation, piano, double-tracked vocals, and backing vocals being popular responses.

For structure, there was some confusion about the song being identified as verse-chorus form, but otherwise sections were identified correctly.

Harmony was probably the least confidently-handled element, with the dissonance recognised but lacking other features. Often, isolated chords were simply named from the score but were not important harmonic features of the song.

Examples of relevant works included the other Beatles set work and indeed an extensive selection of Beatles songs, songs by The Beach Boys, and songs from other bands from the 1960s. This extended to songs from the Britpop genre of the 1990s to more recent bands.

This is a clearly-organised essay with musical features for the elements of structure and sonority but very little for harmony.

Musical vocabulary is therefore rather mixed but showing signs of being satisfactory.

The contextual paragraph has relevance but lacks detailed information about the composer and set work.

Candidates are encouraged to learn the date of composition for both the listening section and the essays.

There are some examples throughout of other music as illustrations.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

If you answer part (a) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (b) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (c) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (d) put a cross in the box ☒.

The Beatles were a prominent British band that rose to fame during the 1960s, becoming globally renowned celebrities and icons. The Beatles met in Liverpool at around school-age and had a common interest in American music such as blues and country, which had become popular in England after WWII. These influences can be heard in their earlier music with features such as harmonica (mouth organ) which is a staple of country music. As they released more music, their collective sound evolved into its own style, an album that is credited with this significant shift in style was 'Revolver'. During the recording of this album the Beatles had experimented with psychoactive drugs such as LSD. The album touches on the subject on drugs and the Beatles' experience with them, which led to a unique and fresh new sound. Other influences on the album include Indian traditional music and music concrete.

The harmonies in the album 'Revolver' are noticeably more complex and could be attributed to George Harrison's interest in Indian music. In his song 'I want to tell you' on the album there is lots of use of dissonance and suspended chords which create a sound that was unusual to the British.

public of the time. This experimentation of harmony may have influenced George Harrison's later songs such as 'Blue Jay Way' which also features indian scales and dissonant chords.

Another harmonic feature could be the barbershop-quartet style vocals which feature close harmonies and was popular during the 50s and 60s. This is a feature found throughout the Beatles' discography and could be considered a staple of their unique sound. A song that uses this feature pervasively is 'Paperback Writer' in which the vocal parts layer on top of each other in close harmony.

'I want to tell you' features a recognisable verse-chorus structure with a short instrumental introduction. This makes the piece more marketable and appeal to the general British public.

Other popular songs of the time that use this structure could be 'God only knows' by The Beach Boys. This song became very popular and appealed to many people which could be attributed to its simple verse-chorus structure.

'I want to tell you' has an instrumental intro which helps to set the tone and general feel of the track. It is similar to the Beatles' other song 'Day Tripper' which uses an instrumental intro to set the initial feel of the piece and help drive the band.

The verses of the song are strophic and use exactly the same music while changing the lyrics. This repetition creates familiarity with the music and makes it more memorable for

the listener.

The sonority of the piece 'I want to tell you' is quite generic for a popular music song of the time. The introduction of the song features a fuzzy electric guitar and has a fade-in which is an example of the Beatles' use of technology during post-mixing when they would put the track together. Another example of their use of technology is tape-looping in the song 'Tomorrow Never Knows' where tape with recorded sounds were physically altered to be looped, reversed or even sped up and slowed down. These helped to create an unusual, psychedelic sound that they wanted to achieve to reflect their own experiences with drugs.

The end of the piece concludes with a fade-out and an echo, reverbed vocal passage which was used to imitate the melismatic sound of a call to prayer or hindustani vocal music. The same effect is used in the song 'Tomorrow Never Knows' to make John Lennon's ~~voice~~ voice sound like "a monk chanting in the mountains". This achieves an effect of ~~an~~ almost meditative atmosphere and reflects the feelings of the Beatles towards their use of drugs.



Context: Relevant contextual information about the band and musical style but quite general in nature, and therefore lacking detailed information.

Elements: Musical vocabulary is shown for the three elements but explanations, where present, are brief. There is imbalance in the essay, with most features relating to sonority but little about the element of harmony.

Other music: Relevant works by The Beatles and The Beach Boys are used as illustrations where they name the piece but no justifications are provided where they show musical knowledge of the piece.

Level 3

The response reaches Level 3 due to being a clear response rather than general points and with brief explanations. Relevant works are used as illustrations and are not inconsistent. It does not, however, meet all the requirements of the level with the element of harmony lacking.

Total: 15 marks



Always include the date of composition and other relevant musical information about the set work in the opening contextual paragraph. Be able to write about all three of the elements with musical vocabulary.

Question 6(c)

In this question, candidates were asked to discuss Debussy's use of harmony, tonality and texture in *Estampes*: No. 2 'La Soiree dans Grenade'.

This essay shows organisation but is lacking information and use of musical vocabulary. Some features are shown for texture, but harmony and tonality do not contain much information.

The contextual paragraph is general and lacks relevant musical information about the composer and set work, but the date of composition has been included.

Examples of other music show some stylistic choices with piano repertoire by Debussy but are inconsistent throughout the essay.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

If you answer part (a) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (b) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (c) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (d) put a cross in the box ☒.

PLAN

Harmony

- ① pedals → ~~Barrios~~ ^{open strings}
- ② ~~Barrios~~ ^{open strings}
- ③ cluster/spread chords
Barrios - Danza Española
Torreya - Lagrima

Tonality

- ① ~~Barrios~~ Pentatonics → Barrios - for children
- ② Whole-tone scale → Debussy - Voiles

Texture

- ① Wide range of piano/layering → Debussy - Clair de Lune
- ② Octaves → Bach 2
- ③ Spread chords
① Homorhythm → Debussy
→ Reverie

Answer

Debussy was a French composer who composed in the Romantic period, however his music famously ^{focuses} ~~extended to focus~~ on colour and atmosphere ~~of impressions~~ rather than ~~through~~ strict rules of the Romantic era. Debussy was fascinated by the music of other nations and of other cultures, leading him to compose his musical work 'Estampes' to mean 'prints' in 1903. It included in this work is 'La Soirée dans Grenade' which focuses on replicating the lazy atmosphere and moorish lullaby of a night in Grenade. Debussy achieves

this through clever combinations of thick, embellished textures, complicated harmony and his choice of tonality.

The overarching aim of 'La soirée dans Grenade', as previously mentioned, is to represent a night in Granada, characterized by heat and haze, and this is done often through the replication of the guitar sounds. One way Debussy does this is through the first 6 bars of the piece including only open 5ths and octaves, with C# and G# being established. This is very similar to the start of any Spanish guitar music in which the guitarist has to tune, for example in 'Lagrima' by Francisco Tarrega. Therefore, instantly Spanish culture is established, whilst still being relevant to the Romantic impressionist era even though the use of the piano and extreme quiet dynamics. Additionally, throughout the piece, there is evidence of cluster chords as well as spread chords, representing the chordal ability of the guitar. An example of a Spanish guitar piece that uses this is "Danza Española No 5" by Barrios as well as being heard in 'Lagrima' by Tarrega. Through the use of cluster chords and spread chords the atmosphere of a hazy Summer's night in Granada is created, showing how Debussy often crafts his harmony to focus on atmosphere and musical colour rather than for direction.

Debussy continues to replicate the unique sound of the guitar in 'La soirée dans Grenade', probably that of a flamenco guitar which

is so commonly played in Spain, through the texture of the piece.

Debussy uses a wide range of the piano to create different layers in the piece, to create a fairly complex texture that is characteristic of the Spanish guitar playing multiple different notes, or possibly melodies, at the same time. A wide range of the piano can be seen in a lot of other works by Debussy, such as his ~~most~~ arguably most famous piece, "Clair de Lune" in which he uses the extensive range of the piano to depict different emotions and atmospheres. This is also an example of the Romantic Impressionism, due to the era he was composing in, as Romantic music is known for its wide range of the piano.

Additionally, Debussy builds texture in 'La Soirée dans Grenade' by making use of octave doubling, in order to thicken the texture, ~~as this corresponds~~ which relates to the ability of the Spanish guitar to play multiple notes at one time, contributing to a thick texture. Another example of octave doubling being used is in 'Pachmaninoff's' piano concerto number 2' ^{where} ~~is which~~ it is used for a similar reason, to build texture. The pattern with each of these points is that all musical features both texturally and harmonically by Debussy can be ~~be~~ considered a Spanish influence, often ~~not~~ relating to the guitar, ^{but} also a Romantic influence, thus showing how Debussy effectively fuses the Romantic style that is typical of the era he composed in, with ~~with~~ foreign musical cultures which he was so intrigued by.

Additionally, Claude Debussy uses texture through the ostinato habanera rhythm which consistently can be heard throughout the piece. Debussy,

in his aim to replicate the atmosphere of a night in Granada awfully, includes the famous, panging quintessentially Spanish estriato ~~the~~ habanera rhythm, which is often heard in flamenco performances or, for example, Bizet's opera 'Carmen' where the habanera rhythm ^{estriato} is used for similar effect. The aim of the habanera rhythm is to provide a strong base in which melody can be built upon, whilst still achieving the aim of Debussy to create ~~such~~ elaborate Spanish atmosphere and colour.

Finally, Debussy uses tonality in 'La soirée dans Grenade' ~~the~~ when fusing Romantic Impressionism with Spanish musical culture in order to replicate the ^{hazy} mood of a night in Granada. A lot of the tonality in this piece is based on the pentatonic scale, which creates the feeling and atmosphere of Moorish lament. The pentatonic scale is often used ~~in~~ to blur the tonality, thus creating an almost hot, hazy and dazed effect (all adjectives typical of a description of a hot night in Granada). Another example of the pentatonic tonality is in Bela Bartok's 'For Children', which similarly blurs tonality through pentatonicism. Additionally, the use of ~~the~~ the whole-tone ^{scale} ~~scale~~ to blur tonality further contributes to the hazy atmosphere of the piece. Debussy makes use of the whole-tone scale in a similar way in 'Voiles' which also blurs the tonality. This is how Debussy uses tonality in 'La soirée dans Grenade'. 2

In summary, Debussy achieves his goal of replicating the atmosphere and mood of a hot, hazy night in Granada through combining features of Romantic impressionism and Spanish musical culture, particularly through the use of harmony (often evoking a Spanish guitar through chord choices and open 5ths), blurred tonality through polytonality and the whole-tone scale and an embellished texture, describing the complex texture of a Spanish guitar music.



Context: The opening paragraph shows some general features of the context, including date of composition, but is lacking in musical information about the composer, their music and style and the set work.

Elements: The essay is quite light on musical vocabulary, particularly for the elements of harmony and tonality. There is an attempt at musical discussion following each of the features.

Q06 essays are marked positively and incorrect information is ignored. Correct information forms the basis for marking the essay.

Two AO3 features (pedal notes and 5ths) are made in the essay plan only, which is acknowledged, but they do not benefit from discussion within the context of the essay. Musical vocabulary is used but with errors and inconsistency.

Other music: Attempts are made to refer to other works but they are inconsistent throughout the essay, with some incorrect examples or vague examples citing a large work instead of a movement or aria.

Level 2

This essay in every respect fulfils the descriptors of Level 2, without having any features of Level 3 to take it up to the next level. Where work matches the descriptors exactly it achieves a mark at the top of the level.

Total: 12 marks



Prepare a musically relevant and detailed contextual paragraph in advance of the exam.

Check that you can write about all of the elements when choosing your essay option.

Refer to other music throughout the essay and precisely, with composer, title and movement if from a large multi-movement work.

Question 6(d)

In this question, candidates were asked to discuss Saariaho's use of structure, sonority and tempo, metre and rhythm in *Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics*.

This was the most successful essay question choice and there were many examples of well-written essays. These showed detailed contextual paragraphs and examples of stylistic and sophisticated other music, of which candidates often showed knowledge, as justifications.

This is an extremely well-written and fluent essay showing highly detailed contextual information and the composer, style, repertoire and set work.

All three elements are covered with excellent use of musical vocabulary and sustained explanations throughout.

Other music shows stylistic examples and thorough knowledge shown of those pieces through justifications. The only slight weakness is where a couple of the set works are used for other music and they are not as suitable as the other choices.

However, there are so many appropriate examples elsewhere in the essay that this is inconsequential.

It is important to note that to achieve full marks for a Q06 essay does not mean perfection, because this is a piece of writing completed under timed exam conditions.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

If you answer part (a) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (b) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (c) put a cross in the box ☒.

If you answer part (d) put a cross in the box ☒.

Keiji Saariaho was a Finnish composer who was particularly influenced by the spectralist movement and exploring the sonic capabilities of an instrument through the use of composition. She attended university in Helsinki and founded the 'Open Ears' group with some fellow students at the institute. Later in her career, she travelled to Paris and watched a concert by Spectralist composers Murail and Giesy influencing her decision to remain in Paris to study Spectralism at IRCAM. Saariaho has won an array of awards over her career. Most recently she won a Grammy ~~for~~ in 2024 despite her death in 2023. The piece 'Petals' is a sequel to Saariaho's earlier work 'Nymphes' which took influence from the French impressionist movement. The ending material of Nymphes is heard at the start of Petals linking the two together. Saariaho wrote this piece as a way to explore the sonic capabilities of the cello, furthering this exploration with the use of electronics to manipulate the sound. Released in 1988, the ~~the~~ piece was heavily influential in the Spectralist movement and ^{demonstrated} ~~shows~~ the gradual progression of exploration of ^{over time,} ~~sanity through history~~ building on the works of John Cage and other experimental composers.

Saariaho's use of structure is heavily important within the piece as it dictates the overall emotion and tone conveyed to the audience. Firstly,

she uses a bipartite structure comprised of seven sections in order to create distinct contrast between the two. The A sections are characterised by a time-less aleatoric feel and provide a relaxatory sense to the piece while the B sections are more prescriptive and rhythmic with colouristic passages and often intense use of the electronic manipulation. Therefore by using a bipartite structure, Saariaho is able to contrast the ~~large~~ wide range of the cello and aid the sonorous exploration. ~~The use of a bipartite structure can also be seen in the works of Vaughan Williams who uses a bipartite structure in his piece 'on Wenlock Edge' in order to~~ Saariaho then develops this use of structure by superimposing the A and B sections onto each other creating elements of tension and relaxation not only between sections but within them. This was also a technique used by other composers such as Vaughan Williams in 'on Wenlock Edge' where he superimposed the A and B sections to emphasise the heightened drama of the storyline. Bach also used superimposition of structures in this way in many of his choral works such as Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott where he superimposes A and B at the end in his canonic figure at the end of movement 1, this went on to influence the Beatles in their revolver album on the song Eleanor Rigby where the chorus is superimposed on the coda - this was done due to the influence of George Martin ^{in his studies of} ~~the~~ classical and Baroque compositions. ~~and~~ A possible reason why Saariaho chose to do this is due to ~~the~~ John Cage's use of macro-microcosmic structure in pieces such as sonata V, Cage ^{may} ~~could~~ have influenced Saariaho in her superimposition of structures which he also did to explore contrasting ideas. Overall, Saariaho's use of structure is informed by her use of sonata as it enables the piece

to full explore the wide and contrasting capabilities of the cello.

A prominent feature of Petals is Saariaho's use of sonority, she ~~first~~ explores the range of the cello both acoustically and electronically. Saariaho uses a wide range of string techniques such as sul tasto (playing near the fingerboard) and sul ponticello (playing near the bridge) to evoke a different ~~tone~~ ^{timbral} quality from the notes. In addition to this, she uses ~~also~~ a combination of arco and left hand pizzicato concurrently providing a unique ~~sonorous~~ texture achieved through sonorous means. This innovative use of playing techniques may have drawn on influences from Berio in his various *Sequenzas* such as his *Sequenza* for ~~voice~~ violin which also utilises a wide range of string techniques such as S.T and S.P as well as the concurrent use of arco and pizzicato. The ~~the~~ development of string techniques is predominantly dedicated to Vivaldi who developed a wide range of techniques in the Baroque era in order to ~~to~~ exploit the full range of the violin however for melodic qualities rather than purely sonorous like Saariaho. The use of multiple different and changing playing techniques provides the piece with an almost discursive textural effect much like Schumann's use of discursive textures in her piano trio in G minor however through a different medium. Saariaho also uses bow pressure to explore the acoustic range of the cello ranging from *Estremamente flautando* to a thicker, more harsh sound called 'The Noise'. This ranging bow pressure produces unique harmonic qualities that intensify the sonic canvas of the work, ~~that~~ The use of E.F. is ~~still~~ also seen in George Crumb's 'Vox baladeau' which uses the technique in order

to produce a sound that emulates the whale's call. Another instance of this technique can be found in Penderecki's 'Threnody for the victims of Hiroshima' which begins using extremely light bow pressure and extended hills (also a technique used in Piths) to ~~even~~ illustrate the sound of screams from the victims.

Saarialho extends the cello's sonority through her use of electronics which she carefully details in the score on how to set up the equipment. She uses a microphone which is placed near to the cello so that even the lightest of sounds can be amplified. Another composer who used microphones in his work was Steve Reich who used swinging pendulum-like microphones and speakers to create an alectonic piece of music ~~ere~~ where the sound was created by the frequency ^{between the} of the microphones and the amplifiers. Saarialho also used a harmoniser which created horizontal harmony (a spectralist technique) and added a quarter tone above and below the note played to expand the bandwidth of the note. The use of a harmoniser can be seen in more mainstream works such as Imogen Heap's use of a vocoder in 'Hide and Seek' where she uses it in order to explore the harmonics it creates in her voice. Jacob Collier also uses a harmoniser in his improvisatory opening to his cover of 'I Wish' where he creates sustained chords using his voice. Saarialho also uses a reverb ~~unit~~ unit in the piece which is altered throughout to be more or less intense between sections and allows her to blur the changes between rows in the more hincess A sections to provide a more relaxed and alectonic feel. Stockhausen also used a reverb unit and harmoniser in Gesang der Jünglinge allowing him to explore different and

Unlabeled Sonorities

Saariaho's use of tempo, metre and rhythm is another way in which she creates contrast as it is vastly different between sections. The A sections of the piece use timings for bar lines providing the piece with an aleatoric element as they are approximate. This is similar to Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* where he also used timings and players finished when they believed the timings were over providing a more realistic sense to the 'screams'. These sections are commonly made up of long and sustained notes or extended trills which creates a pulseless and timeless feel with no sense of rhythm. The contrast is created between the two sections with the extreme rhythms in the B section. This section features rapid scalar passages with the use of cleptules (similar to Shostakovich's use of cleptules in *The Rite of Spring* creating a chaotic atmosphere) and rushing sequences. The prescriptive and rhythmic elements of the B sections provide a sense of tension and show the extreme range of the cello and the musician.



Context: This was extremely detailed and sophisticated, full of relevant musical information about the composer, her musical training and career, influences, style and other works.

Elements: All three elements were covered thoroughly, with excellent use of musical vocabulary. Explanations were sustained throughout.

Other music: There were highly stylistic examples and knowledge was shown of these pieces as justifications. The salient points from the elements had examples of justifications.

Level 5

This response meets all the requirements of Level 5.

Total: 30 marks



Read this essay carefully as a useful model for context, elements, vocabulary, explanations and other music.

Paper Summary

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

- Listen to the set works regularly, in order to become familiar with them, and be able to recognise different sections of the music
- Learn the key features of each set work for each of the musical elements
- Be able to describe important melodies such as the main themes of pieces. Also be able to describe music at the start of the piece and at the start of main sections
- Know the context of each set work. Learn the date of composition and the most important stylistic features of the period in which it was written or genre to which it belongs
- Practice aural skills regularly. This should include pitch and rhythm dictation, intervals (ascending and descending), chords, keys and cadences. Intervals should always be described both by a numeric description and its musical quality
- Listen to related repertoire for each area of study and set work. Perhaps create a listening list
- Prepare a contextual paragraph in advance for the essays. It should contain relevant musical information about the composer and composition, including the date of composition. It should be sufficiently detailed
- Other music for essays should be referenced by naming the composer, piece and movement or film cue, if from a large multi-movement work
- Try to justify your example of other music by writing a small amount of musical, not programmatic, information to describe how that element is used in the linked piece, therefore justifying why you chose it for that musical feature. Simply naming the piece provides an illustration
- Q05 and Q06 essays should be a discussion, and not a list, of musical features. For each musical feature you should give an explanation and the effect that is created. Then link it to an example of other music, with a short explanation as to how that feature is used musically in that piece
- Develop and practise essay writing skills to produce a well-structured piece of writing that forms a discussion of each element, with musical explanations and examples of other music, throughout the essay. Practise writing timed hand-written essays (if you do not have access arrangements to type) in order to prepare for the examination

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

