2001 HSC
Notes from
the Examination Centre
Music
Music 1

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2001 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre - Music

Music 1

Performance (Core and Elective)

General comments

There is a need for candidates to adhere to the subject rules by ensuring:

- Sheets are filled out correctly and signed, prior to the commencement of the examination.
- No other person attempts to remain in the examination room (this includes sound mixers).

Teachers can assist candidates by ensuring:

- Ensembles are balanced.
- Sound checks are conducted effectively and efficiently. Sound checks should not be treated as a rehearsal, and the time taken must not disrupt the examination schedule.
- Timetabling of candidate examinations is organised logically to minimize disruption.
- Instruments are tuned and volume levels are appropriate to the venue.
- Candidates don't present a performance in which their part is doubled by another ensemble member or duplicated on a backing tape.
- Venue is fully secured in order to minimize outside disturbance during the examination.

Strengths

The better candidates:

- Chose repertoire that highlighted technical strengths
- Displayed detailed expressive techniques and a perceptive stylistic understanding.
- Presented well-rehearsed performances.
- Had good intonation and tuning.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of their relationship with their accompanist and ensemble members and performed with ensembles that were well balanced.
- Had an obvious involvement with the music.

Weaknesses

The weaker candidates:

- Did not take time to tune instruments properly.
- Showed an obvious lack of preparation.
- Chose repertoire beyond their ability.
- Displayed little sensitivity to balance within ensemble.
- Presented repertoire with restricted musical content.
- Played chord progressions of songs but provided no melodic interest.
Musicology Elective (Viva Voce)

General comments

Teachers need to:
• Encourage candidates to focus on musical features in their discussion and to choose relevant examples that support and illustrate the focus of their Viva Voce.
• Ensure candidates understand the concepts of music and their use in the chosen examples.
• Encourage the candidates to spend time developing their viva voce outline summary.
• Remind candidates that they need to practise their viva voce technique as it is not a prepared speech.
• Remind candidates they need to organise and cue their musical examples and to make sure they are familiar with the equipment they will use during the examination.

Strengths

The better candidates:
• Presented clear and well-defined topic areas and demonstrated a depth of knowledge of the chosen topic.
• Demonstrated involvement with the music and clearly understood the musical concepts.
• Chose relevant musical examples which supported their observations.
• Were organised and had well set out summary sheets.
• Were able to illustrate their musical observations through recordings or live demonstrations.
• Led the discussion.
• Displayed excellent aural awareness and appropriate use of terminology.

Weaknesses

The weaker candidates:
• Chose topics which were too broad and did not focus on the music.
• Demonstrated limited listening experience and provided general descriptions which lacked depth of understanding.
• Demonstrated limited ability to discuss area of study or answer questions about concepts listed on the outline summary.
• Had either no musical examples or poorly chosen ones which did not adequately support musical observations.
• Were disorganised and could not locate their musical examples.
• Used musical terminology incorrectly.
• Had inadequate Viva Voce outline sheets, which either lacked detail or contained the entire content on their Viva Voce.

Composition Elective

General Comments

• Candidates need to choose their topic carefully. The topic should allow them the scope to demonstrate their compositional skills.
There was mixed success with computer scoring, eg the user of sampling/unorthodox scoring needs to provide a convincing score.

There was some evidence of inappropriate sequencing programs.

Portfolios need to reflect the compositional processes in detail.

**Strengths**

The better candidates submitted compositions that:

- Showed stylistic security, with a strong structural sense.
- Had well laid out scores.
- Demonstrated interesting and creative use of performing media.
- Included excellent score details, which were an integral part of the composition.

**Weaknesses**

The weaker candidates submitted compositions that:

- Had musical deficiencies, eg poor sense of melodic writing, poor harmonic sense, excessive use of repetition, poorly prepared modulations, extremely limited number of chords, poor balance of structure, lack of musical contrasts.
- Sometimes showed an over reliance on computers to generate score – resulting in mechanical writing.
- May have been overextended, too brief or overly repetitive.
- Had score deficiencies, errors and incompleteness.

**Aural Skills**

**Question 1 - Sapopemba by Comadre Florzinha**

**General Comments**

- The question’s breadth allowed all candidates to respond to the musical stimulus.
- There would appear to be a need to practise organising aural responses into a cohesive whole.
- Candidates need to practise aural responses over a wide range of repertoire.
- While the use of diagrams/graphs is encouraged, candidates need to make them relevant to the question and to explain them adequately.

**Strengths**

The better responses:

- Elaborated, in detail, on the points made within each concept.
- Drew on the total excerpt in their answer.
- Graphed/notated relevant points to add weight to their answer.

**Weaknesses**

The weaker responses:

- Were unclear as to the meaning of ‘concept’.
• Confused points within chosen concepts.
• Did not give specific references to the concepts, but were generally able to describe events in the excerpt.
• Used graphs yet did not draw any points or conclusions from them.

Notes to assist markers:

*Sapopemba* by Comadre Florzinha

| Pitch | • Introduction: rebec improvises around opening two notes of first melody with embellishment.  
• Two ‘pitches’ used on agogo.  
• Drum has slight change of ‘pitch’ with 2nd beat ‘damped’.  
• Use of sustained note in drone-like way.  
• Piano accordion and rebec double voices.  
• Melodies generally have a narrow pitch range, use of 6th and maj 2nd feature.  
• Mixolydian on F.  
• Melody 1: |

| Duration | • Accelerando to entry of voices  
• Simple rhythmically - largely crotchets and quavers in 4 metre  
• Some syncopation in percussion and vocals  
Introduction free rhythmically in melodic parts  
• Drum ostinato:  
• Occasionally: used at the end of 8 bar phrase  
• Triangle:  
• Agogo: |
Structure
- Introduction; melody 1 x 2; melody 2 x 2;
  vocals: melody 1 x 2; melody 2 x 2 and repeat.
- Introduction: piano accordion, rebec, train whistle, ‘maracca’.
- Melodic structure 2 x 2 bars with slightly different ending in second phase for both melodies.
- Vocals follow the same pattern.
- Both melodies have similar pitch and rhythmic material.
- Voices split the melodies: in the first, the vocal 1 maintains a drone; the second is structured as a call and response:
  1. Eu vi ____________________
  2. Eu vi
  3. Acerola empé de jabuticaba
  4. Sapopemba là no pé de macaiba

Tone colour
- Piano accordion, ‘train whistle’, rebec (bowed), female voices (open throat; without vibrato), agogo; triangle, drum (zabumba), rattle/ ‘maracca’

Texture
- Percussion accompaniment made up of ostinati played by drum, agogo, triangle and ‘maracca’.
- Melodies played initially by piano accordion/rebec; double voices when they enter with some slight embellishment.
- Basically homophonic.

Dynamics & expressive techniques
- Dynamics vary according to number of parts.
- Use of accelerando.

Question 2 - Prelude to North by Northwest by Bernard Herrmann

General Comments

The question clearly discriminated between the candidates who understood the concept of rhythm/duration and those who had a superficial understanding only.

Strengths

The better responses:
- Graphed/notated rhythm patterns relevant to their answer.
- Demonstrated higher order listening skills.
- Showed a coherence of thought.
- Discussed many aspects of rhythm and layers, in detail.

Weaknesses

The weaker responses:
- Often confused aspects of rhythm/duration eg tempo, beat, pulse, metre.
- Sometimes answered in terms of contrast and unity, rather than rhythm.
- Described musical events in non-musical terms.
Notes to assist markers:

*North By Northwest* by Bernard Herrmann

Examples of rhythms used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Opening timpani figure.  
   | Mostly used as a repeated note at various pitches.  
   | Opening: builds with the addition of instruments and pitches.  
   | Used as a question in Q/A with low brass in opening.  
   | Provides question in interplay between instruments throughout excerpt.  
   | Played by most instruments throughout excerpt.  
   | Used as a descending figure.  
   | Fragmented and shared between instruments e.g. timpani and tambourine.  
   | Played by muted trumpets, tambourine, xylophone. |
| 2 | Used as a descending figure in response to 1 e.g. brass.                     |
| 3 | Used by upper woodwind and brass.                                           |
|   | Used as an ascending and descending figure.                                 |
| 4 | Used in response to 1.  
   | Used as an ascending figure by brass.  
   | Fragmented as an ascending pizzicato figure by strings.                   |
|   | Used as pitched figure by upper strings and woodwind in response to 1.    |
| 5 | Used in response to 1 in opening; low woodwind with gradual addition of upper woodwind.  
   | This mirrors the treatment of 1 in the opening.                           |
| 6 | Used at various times by timpani, strings and tambourine.                  |
| 7 | Used by low strings and timpani.                                           |
Question 3 - *Te Deum* by Berlioz

**General Comments**

**Strengths:**

The better responses:
- Demonstrated a depth of musical understanding which was related to the question.
- Gave answers which were well supported with musical examples.
- Focused well on the music, and were able to sequence their thoughts coherently.
- Showed a strong aural recognition of the concepts, and how they were used to create a climax.

**Weaknesses**

The weaker responses:
- Demonstrated a lack of understanding of the musical concepts.
- Confused concepts, and had limited supporting examples.
- Often used musical terms incorrectly and unnecessarily eg terraced dynamics, heterophonic.
- Attempted to describe the climax in non-musical ways.
- Seemed unfamiliar with the term ‘climax’.
- Included diagrams which were poorly labeled.
- Used sentence structure which was often difficult to understand.

**Notes to assist markers:**

*Te Deum* by Berlioz

| Duration | Sustained notes of ‘Sanctus’ give way to rhythmic movement of ‘Pleni sunt coeli’.
|          | Overlapping entries of ‘Sanctus’ between male and female voices.
|          | Accompanied by harp playing.
|          | Counter rhythms by wind and organ.
|          | Accompaniment parallels vocal line during ‘Pleni sunt coeli’.

| Pitch    | Harmonic progression of ‘Sanctus’ builds throughout section ‘Pleni sunt coeli’ provides melodic contrast to ‘Sanctus’.
|          | Counter melodies increase activity.
|          | Counter melodies by wind and organ. |
Texture

- Builds during ‘Sanctus’ with addition of accompanying instruments.
- Continues to build through ‘Pleni sunt coeli’ by addition of instruments.
- Quasi-polyphonic texture during ‘Sanctus’ leading to homophonic in ‘Pleni sunt coeli’.
- Addition of low strings in ‘Pleni sunt coeli’.
- Sustained tympani, cymbal and vocal parts at the end to emphasise climax.

Tone colour

- ‘Sanctus’ contrasts male and female voices with harp, wind and organ accompaniment.
- Use of sustained trombone notes during ‘Sanctus’.
- Use of timpani and cymbals to define the climax at the end.
- Use of brass during ‘Pleni sunt coeli’ to emphasise the build up.
- Use of percussion to punctuate ‘Sanctus’ and build tension.

Structure

- Two basic sections – ‘Sanctus’ and ‘Pleni sunt coeli’, different in character but unified by providing a context for the gradual build up throughout the excerpt.

Dynamics & expressive techniques

- Gradual build-up of dynamic level throughout both by indication to performers and textural expansion.

Question 4 - Medicine Man by Mandingo

General Comments

Many candidates were not comfortable with the concept of structure, and were not able to use other musical concepts to support their answer.

Strengths

The better responses:
- Displayed a good understanding of musical concepts which were made relevant to the excerpt.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of the different levels of structural awareness.
- Discerned smaller musical features.
- Used appropriate and informative diagrams.
- Described all the sections.
- Structured their answers well.

Weaknesses

The weaker responses:
- Lacked an understanding of ‘structure’ and how it is achieved.
- Seemed to have a limited listening background.
• Showed a poor understanding of the musical concepts, and were unable to apply relevant concepts to the question.
• Used musical terms inaccurately and without understanding.
• Often supplied very brief and general responses.
• Sometimes used graphs which were difficult to understand.
• Had great difficulty in answering the whole question.
• Lacked organisation in their responses.
• Did not recognise repeating or contrasting sections.
Notes to assist markers:

_Medicine Man_ by Mandingo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>• Motif 1 on synthesizer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sliding pitch, not a clean attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• heard 4 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accompanied by various non-melodic percussion including drum kit, congas, cowbells, cymbals (on beat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All playing own ostinati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lower pitched toms introduced on 4th repetition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|              | • Drums "fill" and lead to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A</th>
<th>• Motif 2 played twice by brass (trumpets)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accompanied by similar percussion to introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Syncopated rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percussion fill and return to Motif 1 at the end of bars 2 &amp; 4 reminiscent of introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dense, busy texture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section B</th>
<th>• Motif 3 - sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• &quot;minor&quot; tonality feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• performing media as before but lighter texture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• accompanying instruments on beat except for cowbell playing on off-beat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Section A | • as before except for repetition in last bar of second time leading to "coda" |

| Bridge (Link) | • Motif 1 heard once |

| Coda | • All performing media in rhythmic unison |
|      | • Motif 4 |
|      | • Syncopation still a feature |
|      | • Tonic/dominant feel throughout |