



## **2005 Music Performance: Solo GA 3: Aural and written examination**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The format of the Music Performance: Solo examination paper was similar to previous examinations, and again comprised of a total of 100 marks. There were nine questions, all of which were compulsory.

Overall, the standard of results for this examination was similar to that of 2004. Students negotiated the various tasks with a fair degree of skill and appeared to possess a reasonable understanding of the necessary procedures for answering the questions.

### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

#### **Section A: Aural comprehension**

The aural section was worth 60 per cent of the total marks. Considerable preparation time obviously went into practising this area. However, students need to:

- become more familiar with the basic rules of music theory, focusing on issues of musical 'grammar', systems and procedures
- develop skills in notating pitch and rhythm accurately. For example, stems and bars on notes should be written so that they are easy to discern
- avoid using pens in this section of the examination, as it is clearly difficult for students to make legible changes or corrections. Also, students should not obscure or re-write the bar lines on the staff (in particular) for transcription tasks, especially if they have used a black pen or a 'fine point', felt-tipped pen
- learn to recognise the four primary cadence types set for study
- learn to identify intervals within melodic contexts
- develop transcription skills in melodic, harmonic and rhythmic applications.

#### **Part 1: Intervals and melody**

##### **Question 1**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	7	9	15	20	19	14	16	3.4

##### **Question 1a.**

- Major 2nd (tone or whole step)
- Perfect 5th
- Minor 2nd (semitone or half step)
- Major 3rd

Most students correctly identified at least two of the intervals. Students should write 'Major'/'Maj'/'Ma' or 'Minor'/'Min'/'Mi' when labelling the quality of Major and minor intervals (2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths).

Students need further practice in identifying intervals in melodic contexts. A useful approach to this type of question is to memorise the melody so that each interval can be treated slowly during the working time at the end of the playings. This also assists students to establish the tonic, work out each of the scale degrees and, thus, identify the tonality.

##### **Question 1b.**

##### **DORIAN MODE**

Pleasingly, a high percentage of students identified the dorian tonality.



Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	2	8	11	10	9	8	7	6	6	5	5	6	4	4	3	6	6.6

A number of students did not transcribe this harmonic minor melody very well. The sustained notes were problematic for many, and the F-sharp (raised leading note of the harmonic minor scale) was the most frequent error. Most students faired reasonably well with the contour of the melody.

Students are encouraged to notate the rhythm as accurately as possible and, if standard (mensural) notation is a significant problem for them, to notate at least the melodic contour of the excerpt, even if this is done using a line graph. A significant number of students would benefit from learning to memorise the melody and then breaking up the more difficult sections into manageable units. In addition, once the melody is memorised it becomes possible to sing/hum (**internally**, not aloud, as this could disturb others) the notes of any leaps in order to check the intervals. Many students would also be helped immeasurably by learning to read bass (F) clef so that the accompaniment parts can be used when transcribing melodies. Students should also have an awareness of some of the fundamentals of harmony.

The following is a list of observations and common problems that were encountered when transcribing this melody.

- The rhythm of the anacrusis figure was a problem for some students.
- In the first complete bar, the length of the 'G' (two-and-a-half beats) seemed to be confusing for some students. Many students wrote a repeat of the 'G' (or even an 'A') instead of an 'F#' for the quaver on the second half of beat three of this bar. Even when an 'F' was written for this quaver, many students neglected the sharp.
- The consecutive steps (whole or half) that ended bars one, two and three (always from the second quaver of the third beat) were commonly incorrect. Some students wrote them as arpeggios and many had intervals of a 4th in these figures.
- Many students did not seem to hear that the notes on the 'and' of the third beats in bars one and two were only a semitone below the long notes that preceded them. In bar three an 'A' (rather than a 'G') was sometimes written on the 'and' of beat three, and it wasn't uncommon for students to notate an interval distance as large as a perfect 5th below the 'B-flat' for this minor 3<sup>rd</sup> interval (which also occurred in bar two, often with two different intervals).
- A surprisingly large number of students had difficulty with the major third ('B-flat' to 'D') between the 'and' of beat four of bar three and the first quaver of bar four, and many students wrote the notes of the stepwise



descending figure of bar four (beats one to three) incorrectly, commonly incorporating leaps of thirds, fourths, even fifths, plus accidentals.

- As might be anticipated, the minor 6th 'leap' in bar four (the crotchets on beats three and four – the 'G' to the 'E-flat') was vexatious for some students.
- The descending perfect 4th ('E-flat' to 'B-flat') of the last bar was commonly notated incorrectly, often as a minor 3rd ('C') or a diminished 5th ('A').
- Many students tried to 'force' the last note down to 'D'; presumably because they believed that melodic transcription tasks must begin and end on the same note and/or that the 'D' was the tonic note of the excerpt.
- A handful of students ended on notes unrelated to the tonic chord (commonly 'E-flat' or 'C'). Given that the melodic excerpt for this question was played six times, students should have been able to establish that:
  - the last note of the excerpt and the first note of the excerpt were different (which could be checked when the melody was played again)
  - the 'cello and the melody part (clarinet in C) ended on the same note. Even if students could not perform in bass clef in 'real time', they should have, at least, been able to work out the notes in the bass (F) clef, especially the last one.

There are many methods for teaching and learning the basic skills necessary to undertake melodic transcriptions. One approach is for students to learn melodic material that they hear regularly (perhaps starting with the music for simple radio and television ads or pop songs and working up from there), using either numbers and/or 'sol-fa' syllables to distinguish scale degrees. At first this may require checking/confirmation using an instrument, but fairly quickly the necessary skills begin to develop. Once the aural elements are well in hand, attempts at notation (probably starting with rhythm) can begin to be incorporated.

## Part 2: Chords and harmony

### Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	8	14	17	19	21	19	3.8

- 1. Minor
- 2. Augmented
- 3. Dominant 7
- 4. (Full) diminished 7
- 5. Major
- 6. Minor 7

This question was answered fairly well, with most students identifying at least three of the sonorities correctly. Almost all students identified the 'Major' chord (chord 5) and only a few had trouble with the 'minor' chord (chord 1). Many students had difficulties with the '(full) diminished 7' and 'Augmented' chords. The 'minor 7' and 'Dominant 7' sonorities were also vexatious for some; the 'minor 7' was most often incorrectly identified as simply 'minor' while the 'Dominant 7' was incorrectly labelled 'Major 7' fairly regularly.

Some students identified chords that are not examinable in this Study Design, even though a list of the examinable chords was printed on the paper. Some students wrote 7ths for every chord, presumably because they expected non-seventh chords would feature arpeggios with only six (three times two – three notes up and three notes down) rather than eight notes. It should be noted that all arpeggios always feature the playing of eight notes. Chords without 7ths will have the note of the octave sounded twice at the top (1–3–5–8–8–5–3–1), while chords with 7ths will have the 7th sounded twice at the top (1–3–5–7–7–5–3–1). Some students would benefit from noting that only one of the chords prescribed for study (the 'Major 7' sonority) has a 'major 7th' (semitone below the octave) and only one of the remaining chords with sevenths does not have a 'minor 7th' (the pitch a tone below the octave) – the (full) 'diminished 7' sonority, which has a 'diminished 7th' (which sounds as a 'major 6th' above the note of the tonic or root note). Despite these considerations being expressed quite clearly on the paper, many students seemed to be unaware of how important they can be for working out the quality of chords. In addition, many students did not seem to be aware of the interval distances for each degree of the given chord.

In order to 'internalise' these sonorities, with the ultimate aim of being able to distinguish them by sound (first when arpeggiated and later when sounded simultaneously), it is suggested that students memorise the order of the 3rds and 4ths of each sonority and learn to sing them. Students can use 'sol-fa' syllables, numbers, or both.

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## Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	4	7	7	7	10	10	8	11	10	11	8	5	1	3	6.2

Either:

1. *C (Major)*      2. G Major – 1st inv      3. A minor 7 (Root)      4. D minor 7 – 1st inv      5. G Major (Root)

or

1. *C (Major)*      2. G Major / B      3. A minor 7      4. D minor 7 / F      5. G Major

or

1. *C (Major)*      2. V<sub>b</sub>      3. vi 7      4. ii 7<sub>b</sub>      5. V

or

1. *C (Major)*      2. V – 1st inv      3. vi 7 / VI min7      4. ii 7 / II min7 – 1st inv      5. V

or

1. *C (Major)*      2. V  $\frac{6}{3}$       3. vi 7 / VI min7      4. ii  $\frac{6}{5}$  / II (min)  $\frac{6}{5}$       5. V

or

Harmonic Grid	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bass Note	C	B	A	F	G
Character/ Quality/ Type	Major	Major	minor 7	minor 7	Major
Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion	<i>C (Major) (Root)</i>	G Major / B or G Major – 1st inversion	A minor 7 - (Root)	D minor 7 / F or D minor 7 – 1st inversion	G Major (Root)

**Cadence:** Imperfect (ii[7] - V)

Responses suggested that much more work needs to be put into preparing for this type of question. In particular, some students continued to show fundamental misunderstandings about the nature of diatonic harmony. When preparing for this question, students are advised to sing and play both the major and harmonic minor scales and then sing and play the triads and seventh chords that can be constructed above each scale degree. Students who took a methodical approach to answering this question (which was evident in their rough workings) often did quite well.

The majority of students used the harmonic grid, which allowed them to demonstrate some of the systematic ‘working out’ of the various components of the chords in the progression. Many students correctly identified the bass line, but many had trouble with the inverted chords (chords two and four) – especially the minor 7 chord in first inversion (chord four). Students are strongly advised not to mix styles of harmonic nomenclature.

The following is a list of observations and common problems.

- The bottom boxes in the harmonic grid require the full chord and position identification, not just the inversion. For example, for chord two (G/B, the dominant chord in first inversion), some students wrote ‘B’ in the top box, ‘Major’ in the middle box and ‘1st inversion’ in the bottom box. Although all of these are correct, full marks could not be awarded as the full chord was not named. Similarly, for chord four, students who did not indicate that the sonority was indeed the ‘supertonic 7’ chord could not score full marks.
- Some students identified non-diatonic chords (for example, ‘B minor’ or ‘B Major’) or chords that are not examinable (for example, ‘B diminished’ – the ‘leading note’ [vii°] chord of ‘C Major’ or ‘E minor 7’ – the ‘mediant 7’ chord).
- The diatonic chord qualities were often confused (for example, ‘F minor’, ‘D Major’ and ‘A Major’ – none of which are diatonic to ‘C Major’).
- Often the last chord (G Major – V) was correctly identified but the cadence was incorrectly named (usually called ‘perfect’ in such instances).
- Some students correctly identified the bass notes but not the chord qualities or the cadence, while a few named the bass notes (in the harmonic grid) and the cadence but not the qualities of the chords (nor their complete names). When using the harmonic grid, students should complete all of the boxes so that nothing of importance is overlooked.
- Many students failed to identify chord three as a ‘minor 7’ sonority. Even students with the correct bass note (‘A’) sometimes identified the chord as ‘A Major’ or ‘A Major 7’. Sometimes the ‘A’ was viewed as the bass note of an inverted chord (commonly ‘F Major 7’ in 1st inversion).



- There was frequent misidentification of the inverted chords (chords two and four – the ‘G Major/B’ and the ‘D minor 7/A’). Some students labelled them as ‘E Major/G’ (or ‘E minor/G’) and ‘F minor 7’ (even ‘B-flat/F’) respectively.
- A number of students identified the last chord as a ‘minor 7’, ‘Dominant 7’, or ‘Major 7’ (or any **two** of these combined) despite its not containing a 7th.
- Many students did not identify the cadence at all. Students should have been familiar with this type of question from previous years’ examinations.
- Some of the labels for the cadence were either not cadence names or not cadences prescribed for study (especially the incomplete labelling of cadences as ‘half’ or ‘full’). It was apparent that many students did not know the characteristics of these cadence types, these being: *Perfect* – V to I/i; *Plagal* – IV/iv to I/i; *Imperfect* – a chord other than V to V (commonly the tonic, supertonic or subdominant to the dominant); and *Interrupted* – V to a chord other than I/i (commonly the dominant to the submediant, supertonic or subdominant).
- A few students used Arabic numbers for both diatonic position and inversion – for example, ‘6/7’, presumably indicating the ‘submediant 7’ chord (vi7 – Am7) in root position. Although there are some very rare examples of this style of nomenclature, students are requested to use ‘standard’ figured notation (featuring Roman numbers for the diatonic position of the chord) when writing their answers for this examination. Students who are not confident using figured notation are advised to use the harmonic grid, and it is suggested that students who use the grid avoid using figured notation (in the bottom boxes, for example) unless they are very confident in both styles.

Students are only required to respond in one format. Where students provided two different responses, marks were only awarded for the first response. Students would be well advised to use the blank manuscript paper (provided in the examination booklet) for their rough working out and then transfer their answers to the preferred and/or most appropriate method of response (the lines **or** the grid).

Higher-scoring students generally used the harmonic grid; however, some students who used it demonstrated some serious misunderstandings about diatonic harmony. The following student response demonstrates the level of confusion that some students seem to be experiencing regarding diatonic chord progressions as well as the nature of chords with 7ths. Only four marks could be awarded for this response (for the bass note for chord two and all parts of chord five).

Harmonic Grid	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
<b>Bass Note</b>	C	B	G	D	G
<b>Character / Quality / Type</b>	Major	minor	Major 7	Dominant 7	Major
<b>Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion</b>	C (Major) (Root)	B minor	G Major 7	D 7	G Major (Root)

**Cadence:** Perfect

In order to deal successfully with diatonic chord progressions, it is essential that students know:

- the names of each degree of both the Major and the harmonic minor scales between three sharps and three flats, inclusive – a total of 14 scales (A Major/F# minor; D Major/B minor; G Major/E minor; C Major/A minor; F Major/D minor; B-flat Major/G minor and E-flat Major/C minor)
- the precise nature of the **sounds** of all chords prescribed for study
- the specific nature of diatonic chord progressions
- the character, quality and chord type for the tonic, supertonic, sub-dominant, dominant and sub-mediants triads and their 7 chords for all of the examinable scales Understanding these fundamental points allows students to approach the task systematically.

## Part 3: Rhythm

### Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	8	10	11	12	12	13	17	16	4.9



Fl. \* (6)

C.A. \*

B.C.

Vc.

Fl.

C.A.

B.C. (tie) (\*)

Vc.

Fl.

C.A.

B.C.

Vc. (\*) (\*)

This question was answered well by a large proportion of students. Of the students who completed the question poorly, most had difficulties with tied notes and/or the insertion of rests to indicate offbeat entries following long notes. Some had too many or too few beats in the bars.

The following is a list of observations and common problems.

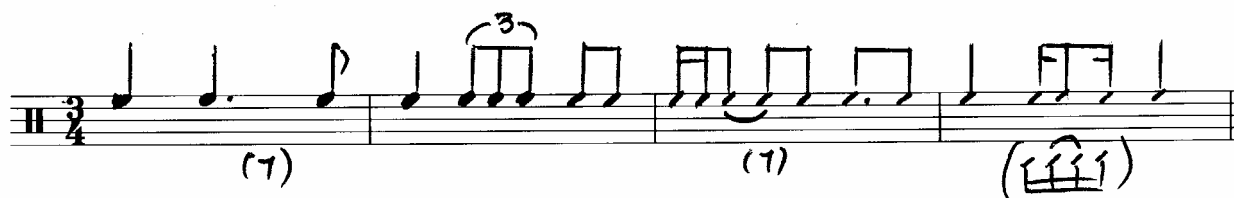
- Bar one (flute): Generally well done. The most common problem was with respect to correct placement of the semiquavers on the 'and' of beat four.
- Bar two (cor anglais in C): The most common errors were the length of the note on the third beat (whether notated as a dotted crotchet, a crotchet tied to a quaver or a crotchet followed by a quaver rest on beat four) in turn affecting the placement of the quaver on the 'and' of beat four.
- Bar three (bass clarinet in C): The most common problem was with respect to a 'tie' to or a rest on the quaver of the downbeat; that is, regarding precise placement of the 'offbeat' semiquavers.
- Bar four (pan flute): The rhythmic figures posed problems for a number of students. In the weaker responses, students seemed to have difficulty with tied notes (or the insertion of rests) followed by 'offbeat' entries; that is, the notation of simple syncopations.



A number of students made their task considerably more difficult by attempting to transcribe the pitches of the notes as well, rarely with complete success.

#### Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	0	2	4	5	5	6	5	7	8	7	6	9	37	8.7



Many students handled this question very well indeed.

The following is a list of observations and common problems.

- Most students transcribed the first bar correctly. Problems were mostly based upon the length of the note on beat two (the dotted crotchet), hence the placement of the quaver on the 'and' of beat three.
- A significant number of students had difficulty with the quaver triplet figure in bar two, especially its placement squarely on the second beat of the bar.
- The tie between the 'and' of beat one and the first half of beat two in bar three was an issue for many, as was the dotted-quaver, semiquaver figure on beat three.
- Some students had difficulty with the 'syn-co-pa' (semiquaver-quaver-semiquaver) figure on beat three of the fourth bar. Indeed, some students wrote on the paper that there weren't enough bars provided in order to notate the rhythm fully – often taking the transcription on to beat one or two of a subsequent (added) bar. This was commonly a result of the semiquaver-quaver-semiquaver ('syn-co-pa') figure being notated as a quaver crotchet and quaver, a quaver-minim-crotchet, or various other short-long-short permutations.

When writing rhythms, students should be encouraged to use note-heads because stick notation was often unclear. Many of the students who used stick notation appeared to have confused themselves regarding the tie in bar three (and sometimes within bar one). This was particularly unfortunate since (quaver) rests might have been used in both instances (that is, quaver rests on beat three of bar one and beat two of bar three).

Students should be encouraged to apportion notes within bars rather than squeezing them to the front and leaving large gaps at the end of the bar. The use of note heads might help to overcome this spacing issue.

With respect to all transcription tasks, students are encouraged to use the blank manuscript paper to work out their answers and then transfer legible versions to the staff that is intended for the writing of the response that they wish to be marked, attempting, as they do so, to make it as legible as possible.

## Section B: Prescribed ensemble works

	Mozart	Holst	Bach	Westlake	Lennon/McCartne
Work chosen (%)	22	14	12	18	34
Average mark (out of 40)	26.8	24.8	27.2	22.9	19.8
Average mark (%)	67	62	68	57	49.5

There was a large number of highly insightful responses to the questions in Section B that often demonstrated students' significant understanding of the set works and issues related to rhythmic characteristics, use of elements and interpretation of performance considerations.

Issues that require particular attention during the examination include the need for students to:

- use the reading time prudently to decide how best to approach written questions with several parts
- use highlighters or underlining to identify the key points of the question
- identify the specific work they had studied



- ensure their handwriting is neat and easy for assessors to decipher; assessors are not able to award marks if they cannot read the response. Also, while marks are not awarded for correct spelling and/or grammar, students should aim to communicate their responses as clearly and accurately as possible
- only use shorthand symbols that are well-known (for example, a triangle to mean 'therefore'). Students should strive to be certain that what they are trying to say is clear, particularly if **any** shorthand is used
- avoid restating the question. This is neither sensible nor necessary, and it wastes valuable time
- use the marks available for each question as an indication of the necessary level of depth/breadth appropriate to their responses
- structure responses clearly. This may include using dot points, underlining key words and/or using subheadings. Some students who wrote in extended paragraphs made it very difficult for the assessors to follow their train of thought
- allocate time carefully. Some students ran out of time in the last question. Students should practise writing in exam conditions and consider **first** addressing the questions in Section B that are worth the most marks, especially any that require a discussion or integrated extended response
- be aware of exactly what each question type requires them to do, the possible correct field(s) of response and the applicable terminology. This includes understanding the characteristics, requirements and components of different response formats; for example, differences between identify, describe, explain and/or discuss
- develop skills in making analytically-based observations that feature musical concepts and terminology.
- be aware of exactly what should and should not have been studied; for example, exactly which songs and movements of the given prescribed ensemble work are examinable. Once again this year, some students' responses focused on or included songs or movements from their chosen work that were not prescribed for study. Marks cannot be awarded for such responses
- focus their responses entirely on the set work only. Note that, from 2006, the prescribed recordings should also be studied
- develop better knowledge and understanding of their chosen prescribed ensemble work.

The following comments relate to the specific prescribed works.

- Students should spend more time studying the chosen prescribed work from various analytical perspectives to achieve a higher standard.
- Some students compared a single performance by a school-based ensemble to a professional recording. Although this approach is acceptable, teachers are advised to present a second (professional) recording as well, so that students can make well-considered comparative comments about some of the more refined issues related to interpretation in performance.
- Some students compared the notated score to only one recording of their chosen prescribed work, instead of **two** interpretations in **performance**. This occurred even in situations where two interpretations in performance had been written in the appropriate boxes on page 19.
- In this part of the study, students should be taught to identify appropriately and knowledgeably in order to describe and discuss an array of relevant musical concepts. In order to deal with 'music in the language of music', students need to know the specific meanings and implications of the significant terms and concepts that are relevant to the music they have studied.
- Students should avoid using the examination as a platform to lecture assessors about their views.

**NOTE:** The following possible responses are a **guide only** and are not exhaustive. The possible responses or characteristics include examples of salient points and/or considerations to be addressed for each of the question's components. A brief discussion about student responses, both overall and with a focus on the specific prescribed work, follows each segment.

**Question 7a.**

Marks	0	1	Average
%	14	86	<b>0.9</b>

Composer	Average mark
Mozart	0.94
Holst	0.85
Bach	0.90
Westlake	0.92
Lennon/McCartney	0.77

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MOZART	HOLST	BACH	WESTLAKE	LENNON/ McCARTNEY
* Violin 1, bars 49-50	* Oboe, 6 bars before rehearsal letter F	* Violin 1, Bar 36/38.	* Violin 1, Bars 239–240.	* Vocals, two bars before rehearsal letter B

As indicated by the mean scores, this question was answered noticeably well by most students. The best responses were those that **notated** the syncopated rhythmic pattern. These students commonly went on to write fine responses for Questions 7b. and 7c. as well.

Although most students identified a characteristic rhythm pattern featuring syncopation, some students were not aware of the meaning of the term. These students tended to select obscure rhythm patterns within the given excerpt rather than the obvious ones. Responses from some students were too vague (for example: 'guitar 2', which is not a rhythm pattern).

## Question 7b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	6	6	16	31	25	16	3.1

Composer	Average mark
Mozart	3.52
Holst	3.42
Bach	3.48
Westlake	3.13
Lennon/McCartney	2.56

Responses to part b. needed to describe **another** characteristic rhythm pattern. Issues regarding preparation for performance might include:

- rehearsal technique(s)
- preservation of integrity (for example, of rhythmic motifs)
- articulation considerations.

Overall, this question was well answered. Most students were able to identify one other characteristic rhythm pattern; however, some students had difficulty describing that pattern. Some students did not read the question properly and wrote about preparation for performance with respect to the rhythm pattern they had given for Question 7a.

Many students referred to issues of preparation for performance by inference, while others did not deal with the issue at all (that is, they simply identified another rhythm pattern). Students must look at the number of marks available per question. In this instance, Question 7a. was worth only one mark, as students merely had to identify a characteristic rhythm pattern featuring syncopation. Question 7b. was worth five marks, as students were required to describe.

Many students struggled to describe the rhythm pattern using musical terminology, and had even more trouble dealing with issues of preparation for performance within a rhythmic context, often referring to pitch and harmony issues almost exclusively.

## Question 7c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	10	4	6	10	14	16	19	13	8	4.5

Composer	Average mark
Mozart	5.26
Holst	5.13
Bach	5.23
Westlake	4.36
Lennon/McCartney	3.58



Students' responses could have included discussion about preparation of several of the following areas:

- registers
- dynamics
- articulations
- tonguing/bowing/phrasing
- matching of qualities when in imitation (or not)
- awareness of the significance of part(s) being discussed (foreground/background – melody/counter-melody/accompaniment)
- breathing
- issues of blend and balance (both throughout the ensemble and within given sections)
- issues of sonic 'placement'
- control/avoidance of 'shout tessitura' (or not)
- ensemble rehearsal practices (conducted/led or not, building up of parts to highlight increases or decreases in density, etc.).

Students who took a strategic approach to all parts of Question 7 handled this part of the question very well; for example, many excellent responses showed clear planning, back to the selection of the two characteristic rhythm patterns for Questions 7a. and 7b., commonly addressing the relationship between the patterns and thus how to prepare them for performance. Useful and accurate descriptions of the characteristics of the rhythm pattern(s) enabled salient issues and considerations regarding the two dot points of Question 7c. to be approached efficiently, effectively and musically, and with a fair degree of focus upon the more discriminating components of the question.

Many responses to Question 7c. dealt with the syncopated rhythm patterns of Question 7a. and failed to address the issues of this question. Because precise characteristics of the patterns were often not articulated well, ways of realising them (both individually and in combination) were often not explored.

Poor responses often included comments such as 'going over the piece slowly' or 'making sure the rhythm is in time'. When discussing issues regarding preparation for performance, students should reflect on their own experiences of preparing works for performance and the strategies that proved successful for them.

Students must ensure that they read the entire question. Despite the statement in the question that "Individual practice" is not a suitable answer, many students dealt almost exclusively with this issue and did not deal suitably with 'details of preparation by the ensemble' (if explored at all).

#### Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	2	2	3	5	6	8	13	11	12	14	12	6	6	7.1

Composer	Average mark
Mozart	7.78
Holst	7.63
Bach	8.09
Westlake	7.23
Lennon/McCartney	6.17

Overall, the standard of responses to this question was fairly high. The question required in-depth knowledge of the selected ensemble work. The better responses were able to describe the musical features (for example, the nature of the texture at a given point) as well as how they were used, manipulated and changed throughout the section. Strong students almost invariably used headings, subheadings and/or dot points to clarify which elements they were referring to.

Marks were awarded for written descriptions that demonstrated knowledge of style considerations that might influence the preparation for a performance of a specific movement, section/segment or song from the prescribed work selected. It was important that the student clearly explained where, when, what, etc. in the selected excerpt/section/segment/movement they were referring to. Generic responses that had obviously been prepared beforehand were very rarely successful.

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**Three** considerations had to be dealt with in a reasonable degree of detail. Students should have known the work well and applied their knowledge relevantly so that assessors could get a sense of where they were in the music.

‘Average’ answers generally described the given element fairly basically; ‘good’ answers might have demonstrated how the given element was used; and ‘excellent’ answers made links between the chosen elements to demonstrate more sophisticated musical awareness.

The following is a list of observations and points to note.

- Some students digressed into elaborate discussions about issues of interpretation rather than describing musical features. While these responses were often very interesting, they rarely answered the question set (although they often would have been fine answers to a Question 8 on a previous paper).
- Relatively few students dealt with balance, harmony, rhythm or texture. In addition, it was fairly common for students to write about a feature that they could not define correctly. Texture, balance and harmony were confused with each other; rhythm was confused with tempo (and vice versa); and phrasing was confused with texture (and vice versa). In particular, many students commented that there was ‘no harmony involved’ in their work (as if only singers present harmony). Students should write about the features that **are** present in their chosen work. For this reason there was a list from which to choose three aspects to write about. A significant number of students referred to texture as if the term was directly analogous to the visual arts, commonly using adjectives such as ‘rough’, ‘smooth’ and ‘thick’. Although this type of evaluation can often work, musical textures are best described with respect to processes and outcomes such as ‘polyphony’, ‘homophony’, ‘heterophony’, etc.
- Students must know the meanings of all terms in the Study Design; their ability to answer questions appropriately and relevantly depends on this fundamental musical knowledge. Where students are able to choose which features, elements of music, components, issues, etc. upon which to focus their responses, they should avoid writing about points whose meaning(s) they are not totally sure of. For example, many students wrote about ‘dynamics’ as if they were ‘tempo’, and ‘rhythm’ as if it was exclusive to the time signature or the pulse. Some such memorable responses included comments such as, ‘the tempo gives you an impression of elephants walking slowly down the road’ and ‘the texture is so thick it’s like listening to cement’. Teachers could give students vocabulary lists and key words for describing various musical features; for example, a descriptive list of melodic terms might include step-wise or scalar movement, movement by leaps, conjunct, disjunct, use of sequence, motifs, modulation, static, cantabile and limited-range. Students should also be given ample opportunity to practise using such vocabulary.
- Some students discussed preparing their selected musical features for performance (as per Question 7c.) rather than how they were **used** in the piece of music.
- Many responses were superficial, even though the question was worth 12 marks. A large number of students did not relate their responses back to their selected ensemble work at all.
- Some students wrote about four or five of the features, which usually resulted in none of the features being explored in sufficient depth.
- Many students only identified the features rather than describing them. This approach was particularly common to responses that were clearly prepared beforehand.

## Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	5	1	2	2	6	6	8	13	9	10	12	9	8	5	4	8.0

Composer	Average mark
Mozart	9.29
Holst	8.24
Bach	9.97
Westlake	7.28
Lennon/McCartney	6.73

Issues/considerations that could have been discussed included:

- the degree to which the composer’s original intention can be known
- limitations of written notation as a reliable method of preserving intentions in the first place
- performance in a different genre (for example, Beatles’ songs done by a ‘cello quartet, Swingle singers arrangements, etc.)



- changes of instrumentation (for example, period versus modern instruments or use of electronic rather than acoustic instruments)
- differences/similarities of balance of instruments in relation to the performance space
- choice of performers (for example, female singer versus male singer)
- decisions made by soloists (particularly with reference to performances of the Westlake, the Lennon/McCartney and the Mozart)
- in score-based scenarios, issues related to 'authentic' versus modern performance practices, 'editor as mediator', 'editorial license' and 'standard editorial practice'
- differences/similarities in technological production/post-production (incorporation of effects, filters, etc.)
- properties of different performance venues and how these affect performance and perhaps performance presentation (indoor versus outdoor, studio versus stage)
- issues of performer-led versus conductor-led performances.

Responses to Question 9 featured many outstanding discussions that presented highly insightful observations on issues of interpretation and 'faithfulness', providing well-written and clear discussions of the works that the students had studied. Students who used a table or dot points tended to handle this question best. Such answers were focused noticeably better upon the question and the considerations chosen for discussion. High-scoring responses at all times linked comments to the quotation at the start of the question.

Overall, most students responded reasonably well to this question and were sufficiently knowledgeable about two different interpretations in performance of the same work. Generally speaking, however, there was fairly limited discussion regarding the notion of whether or not 'the best interpretation is the one that faithfully preserves the composer/songwriter's original intentions'.

Some students did not complete both of the relevant boxes of the chart on page 19, while others did not write anything at all on page 19. This chart is included as a succinct way for students to inform assessors of the two interpretations in performance they will be discussing in their response and as a mechanism to assist students to focus their thoughts and to enhance their formatting/organisation.

A few students tried to deal with more than one prescribed ensemble work. Students and teachers are reminded that there are no extra credit marks available for such an approach.

The following is a list of observations and points to note.

- The best responses tended to provide an integrated discussion of both the musical features and the quote. They often included subheadings that clarified which considerations were being compared, discussed and/or evaluated. These students debated the points of view with great insight and balance.
- The better responses referred to specific points in the music and compared the recordings. Although specific bar numbers were not required, the best responses demonstrated a very thorough understanding of the given work, often down to the segment or passage, and frequently used bar numbers.
- Many answers were highly repetitive, in a sense 'over-written'.
- Some otherwise strong students got sidetracked trying to ensure that they wrote as much as they knew, even if this knowledge did not relate directly to the question. Occasionally these students seemed to have run out of time without really answering the question.
- There were some prepared answers that dealt specifically with Question 9 from the 2003 examination paper. Some of these responses even included the quote from that examination – 'Different interpretations in performance bring new life to the same piece of music'. Such essays essentially approached the question as a 'compare two performances' essay without relating to the 2005 question and its salient considerations for discussion.
- Some students did not read the question carefully and answered it as if it was a comparison of interpretations. These responses were usually out of context or not focused on the question and/or the quote.
- Many students were unable to relate answers back to the context of the question. Often the opening statement was either not referred to, simply re-written at the start (which was not adequate), or written as a concluding sentence in an attempt to somehow tie the response to the question.
- Some students presented obviously memorised tables that compared the recordings they had studied. These were simply written out in the hope that they would somehow meet the requirements of the question. If 'manipulated' cleverly, sometimes the requirements of the question were approached, but usually not. Such answers were almost invariably unclear about which parts of the response related to which specific considerations.

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- Quite a few students wasted substantial time discussing the general issue of whether or not it was worthwhile to preserve the composer's original intentions in the first place. That is, they tried to argue about the 'correctness' of the quote, which is not what they were asked to do.
- A few students failed to write anything for this question. These students had often written large amounts for Questions 7b. and 7c. which, in combination, were worth fewer marks than Question 9. Students must learn to allocate their time wisely with a view to optimising their scores.
- Some answers were incorrect, usually because students confused/reversed the recordings they had studied, and so provided incorrect (that is, reversed) details.