

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

MUSIC

H543

For first teaching in 2016

H543/05 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 5 series overview

H543/05 Listening and Appraising is the written paper for A Level Music. The paper targets two Assessment Objectives (see OCR specification):

Assessment objectives

AO3: demonstrate and apply musical knowledge.

AO4: use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music.

Areas of Study

Candidates needed to analyse, explain and compare styles of music, musical elements and the conditions and context in which music was created in four Areas of Study:

- AoS1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven
- AoS2: Popular Song: Blues, Jazz, Swing and Big Band
- Two other Areas of Study, chosen from:
 - AoS3: Developments in Instrumental Jazz 1910 to the present day
 - AoS4: Religious Music of the Baroque Period
 - AoS5: Programme Music 1820-1910
 - AoS6: Innovations in Music 1900 to the present day.

In the examination, candidates had to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills in answering questions on:

- AoS1 and AoS2:
 - Unfamiliar music and its related background
 - Prescribed repertoire and its related background
- AoS3-6: Wider listening based on the chosen Areas of Study.

Most candidates attempted all the questions. This year there were fewer candidates leaving questions out altogether.

In this session the audio extracts were available as digital downloads only, not as a CD. This appears to have worked well.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • described music clearly and used musical terms accurately • gave the location, lyric or bar number of music examples • knew the context of the music: when and where it was created (dates and locations), its audience, its historical and social background, and how it compares with other music of its time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knew only basic details about the music they had studied. • didn't give examples regularly, e.g. bar numbers, lyrics or location. • could make basic judgements but didn't develop their opinions enough to show that they had listened to the music they were writing about.

Section A overview

Section A had two questions on unfamiliar music from Areas of Study 1 and 2. In addition to the exam paper, candidates were provided with downloadable music extracts and (in a separate insert) a lead sheet of the song and an outline score in two staves of the instrumental extract. In general, Question 1 had shorter questions and Question 2 had longer ones.

The order of extracts and questions may change from one year to the next. This year, Question 1 asked about Area of Study 2: Popular Song (Nancy Wilson singing Rodgers and Hammerstein's 'Happy Talk'). Question 2 featured Area of Study 1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (an extract from the slow movement of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 3*).

Question 1 (c)

- 1 **Track 1** is a recording from Area of Study 2: Popular Song: Blues, Jazz, Swing and Big Band.

The extract is 'Happy Talk' by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, from the musical *South Pacific*. In this jazz arrangement the singer is Nancy Wilson, with Cannonball Adderley on alto saxophone.

- (c) Listen to the melody of bar 5 to bar 12 in the recording and compare it to the lead sheet. The rhythm is different and there are two changes of pitch.

In **Fig. 2** below, re-write the melody (rhythm and pitch) of bar 5 to bar 12 with the changes sung on the recording.

Words: Happy talk, keep talkin' happy talk,
 Talk about things you'd like to do.

5

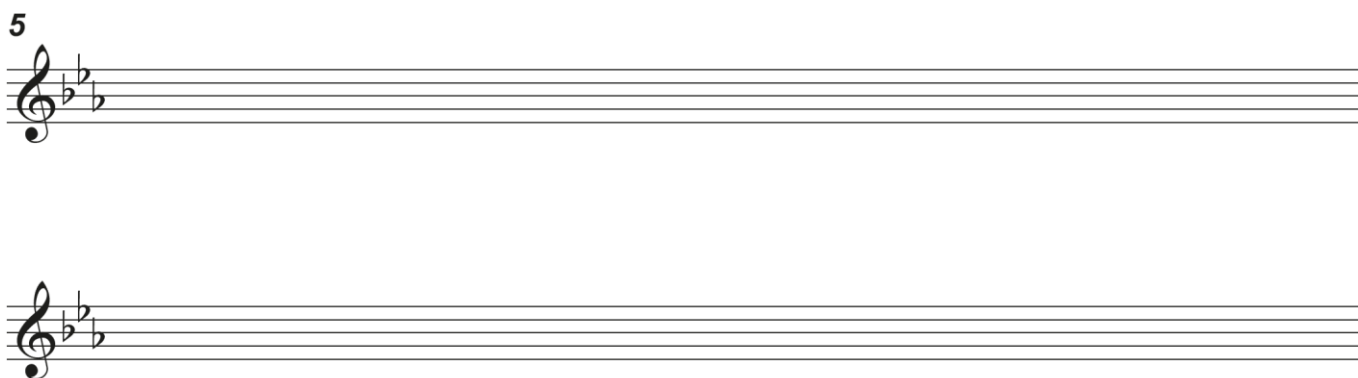


Fig. 2

[5]

Almost all candidates attempted this question. Most were able to adapt the notation in the lead sheet to write out at least a rough version of what Nancy Wilson sings. There were 2 marks for the pitch changes. Most candidates noticed one of the two changes in pitch.

More challenging was notating Wilson's rhythms. Successful candidates found a way to notate the syncopation in bar 6 ('keep talkin' '), the augmentation (lengthening of the notes) of 'happy talk' (bars 7-8), and the syncopated rhythmic figure for 'you'd like to do' (bars 9⁴-11).

Only a few candidates noticed the clear separation of 'Hap-' and '-py' in bar 1. Examiners allowed 1 mark for a staccato first note or a rest separating the two syllables.

Question 1 (d)

(d) The music of bar 5 to bar 22 is Refrain 1. It is sung twice more:

- Refrain 2 is bar 39 to bar 54 (⊙ beginning at 1'04").
- Refrain 3 is bar 71 to bar 85 (⊙ beginning at 1'53").

Identify **two** differences in Nancy Wilson's singing in Refrain 2 and **two further** differences in Refrain 3. Write your answers in the table below.

Refrain 2 bar 39 to bar 54 ⊙ beginning at 1'04"	1
	2
Refrain 3 bar 71 to bar 85 ⊙ beginning at 1'53"	1
	2

[4]

The majority of candidates recognised differences between the two refrains. Most responses included the higher pitch at the beginning of Refrain 2 and again (in a higher key) in Refrain 3. The most successful responses were precise about locations. Lyrics or bar numbers, even timings from the audio, could be used as reference points. Less successful responses were vague about where changes occurred.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 **Track 2** is a recording from Area of Study 1: Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

The extract is from the second movement of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37*.

A skeleton score is provided: **Extract 2** in the **Insert**.

- (a) Briefly describe the writing for the piano from bar 1 to bar 8¹. You should comment on what is added to the melody in the skeleton score.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Many candidates realised that the opening melody is being played in thirds. Some noticed the two hands octaves in bars 4-8. The decoration/elaboration of the outline notation in bar 6 was correctly described as a descending sequence, incorrectly as 'ornamented'.

Question 2 (d) (i) and (ii)

(d) (i) In which year was this concerto first performed? Underline your answer.

1763 1783 1803 1823

[1]

(ii) Identify the main city where Beethoven lived and worked.

..... [1]

Candidates are expected to have a basic knowledge of time and place, certainly to be familiar with the outlines of the careers of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. In Question 2 (d), many candidates identified 1803 and Vienna as the correct responses.

Question 2 (e)

(e) The pianist on the recording plays on a fortepiano, a copy of a piano from Beethoven's lifetime.

Explain the limitations of a fortepiano (for example, compared to a modern piano) and how its construction affects timbre and performance.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [4]

Successful responses were familiar with the type of piano that Beethoven used. They knew that it had a wooden frame, smaller in range than a modern piano and the strings less tightly strung than an iron frame. Its brittle tone could be attributed to felt covered hammers.

Less successful responses often wrote mostly about the modern piano. The fortepiano was sometimes confused with older, harpsichord-like instruments with strings that were plucked rather than struck. Candidates sometimes thought that Beethoven's piano did not have the advantage of a sustaining pedal, although this was an established feature of the classical piano.

Questions on musical contexts

See the specification for what is meant by 'musical contexts'. Section A always has some marks for knowing the context of the music. Questions can be in either or both Areas of Study 1 and 2.

Candidates should be prepared for questions on the backgrounds to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven and to popular song.

Questions are not always on the topics covered in Section B. Sometimes they go a little wider.

- This year there were questions on Beethoven: his piano and the time and place of the music.
- Last year the questions were about Cab Calloway: dance types, the year of recording and the characteristics of songs of the time.

Less successful responses tended to start well, with clear comments on the opening bars but then ran out of ideas. Sometimes there was confusion about details of the score, for example, the pitches that the transposing instruments play. The piano's demisemiquaver broken chords were sometimes treated as a virtuoso solo part which dominated the texture instead of a decorative accompaniment for the winds.

Assessment for learning



The consistent use of musical terminology can be helpful in showing a candidate's understanding of the music. Candidates should be encouraged to apply this vocabulary correctly.

Examples of confusion in Question 2 (a) include:

- 'canon' to describe the exchange of short phrases (e.g. clarinet and oboe, bars 15-16). 'Imitation' would be better
- 'unison' to describe instruments playing in the same rhythm (e.g. oboe and bassoon, bars 1-2)
- 'polyphonic' or 'monophonic' to describe any music which isn't 'homophonic'. Neither term applies to this music.

'Melody dominated homophony' is sometimes used as a convenient term. At this level, more specific detail is needed.

Exemplar 1

his main themes for the movement. The instrumental writing is highly idiomatic, and all the instruments are treated equally and take on both accompanying roles and melodic roles, eg. the transition theme, b. 19-26, where the melody is passed between the clarinet, oboe, horn, then bassoon, while ~~arpeggios~~ broken arpeggios in the piano serve as accompaniment. The winds also accompany the piano in b. 32-35 in the statements of the second subject. This allows Mozart to experiment with different timbres and tone qualities, as the melody covers a wide range across all the instruments. Instruments often work in pairs, eg. the oboe and bassoon's parallel 10th in b. 1-8. The

Exemplar 2

12 years later, Beethoven - under Haydn's guidance as an apprentice - wrote his own quintet for piano and wood. It was [10] very closely modelled after Mozart being in the same key and structure as well as instrumentation. It comes from his early career when was a more conservative and classical composer but you see how he explores more harmony with thick chromatic chords on piano and the piano is more virtuosic than Mozart. His first movement is a sonata - a traditional chamber music form and the last a rondo, another popular form. The style of chamber music is seen in all these pieces is more light and informal as they were composed to often play outside at events, not in a concert hall.

Exemplar 2 is the second half of a longer response which was given 9 marks. The candidate uses the Beethoven quintet as a second example of chamber music. There is an awareness of the context ('under Haydn's guidance ... modelled after Mozart ... from [Beethoven's] early career ... when [he] was a more conservative and classical composer'). The response suggests how the harmony and piano style builds on Mozart's achievement. There is a reference to sonata and sonata-rondo forms and to chamber music for woodwind as an 'outdoor' event.

Section C overview

In Section C candidates must answer two essay questions, one each from two different Areas of Study.

The essay questions in Section C require candidates to 'use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music' (Assessment Objective AO4, A Level specification, page 24).

Most candidates answered one essay from Area of Study 5: Programme Music. The numbers answering from the other Areas of Study were more evenly divided. Many centres have clearly thought-out programmes of listening which provide candidates with a wide range of musical experience within the Areas of Study.

Candidates who did well in Section C generally:	Candidates who did less well in Section C generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wrote accurately about a wide range of music, using detail and technical language understood the background – how the music fits into the society and culture of the time answered the question, consistently making judgements about the significance of the music and its effectiveness organised ideas clearly and concisely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wrote about music that wasn't relevant to the question knew only a limited amount of background – wrote about the story of a piece but not about musical details did not make a judgement or explain an opinion about music they had studied.

Question 5*

Area of Study 3: Developments in Instrumental Jazz 1910 to the present day.

5* Choose **either**:

- bebop and hard bop **OR**
- bebop and cool jazz.

Explain the characteristic features of the two styles of jazz you have chosen and the extent to which the two styles are different. Use examples from **one or more** works in **each** of your chosen styles to support your answer. **[25]**

Most candidates opted for the bebop/cool jazz combination, but there were some successful responses on both. The characteristics of bebop and the role of Charlie Parker were often discussed. 'Koko' and 'Ornithology' were common choices of music. Some candidates wrote about Dizzy Gillespie and 'Manteca'. Discussion of cool jazz was mostly centred on Miles Davis's 'So What'. Hard bop usually featured Horace Silver, sometimes Dave Brubeck's 'Take Five' (who also appeared to represent cool jazz).

Successful responses were able to discuss the music in some detail and show a clear understanding of jazz. They were able to discuss Miles Davis's solo in 'So What', the characteristic timbre of the harmon mute, the construction of the melody, how the phrases are broken up by silences, and his use of swing, anticipation and delay. This made an obvious contrast with Parker's frenetic, hard-driven solos. The most successful responses showed clearly that the candidate had listened to the music several times. Some candidates discussed other key figures of the period (for example, John Coltrane, Gil Evans or Gerry Mulligan) or were aware of how jazz developed on the West Coast. References to memorable details, for example in the solos, persuaded examiners that the candidate really knew the music.

Less successful responses sometimes were clear about features of the styles but there was only a little support from musical examples.

Assessment for learning



Candidates may benefit from studying some jazz music in transcription. Charlie Parker's solos, for example, are often notated for the benefit of performers and students of jazz. This gives an opportunity to consider aspects of the solos in a little more detail and to pick out examples of characteristic techniques.

Exemplar 3

On the contrary, Miles Davis' album 'Kind of Blue' (the best-selling Jazz album of all time) shows ~~as~~ a shift ~~in focus~~ towards a calmer, more precise approach to jazz. In 'So What', the introduction is free-time, with some quiet ~~to~~ double bass notes and piano chords to set the ~~peaceful~~ ^{subdued} timbre of the piece. ~~The~~ While ~~Cool~~ Jazz often also utilises head lines & solos structure, Davis writes such a simple head, that it can continue underneath the solos without the piece becoming to ~~be~~ textually complex, and stay firmly in melody and accompaniment. The head comprises of a simple bass riff, followed by 2 descending chromatic chords. This riff shifts up a semitone from D-Eb the third time, adding a touch of harmonic diversity, before returning. Importantly, we can see the Bop influence in the harmony as this piece is written in the dorian mode, ~~however~~ In fact, ~~this~~ ^{modes} became an established part of Cool Jazz, with the subgenre of 'Modal Jazz' being created because of its popularity. The solos in this piece are simultaneously interesting but simple, and focus on exploring the sounds of the instruments, ~~rather than~~ ^{rather} rather than the capabilities of the musician. Davis does this by playing with a Harmon mute, to mellow and soften the sound of his trumpet, and characteristically, he played close to the microphone, in order to exhibit the full rich sound he was making on the recording. This highly popular style returned jazz to the mainstream, inspiring many young musicians to take up the craft.

Exemplar 3 is part of a longer response to Question 5 which scored full marks. The candidate chose to answer about bebop and cool jazz.

It is clear that the candidate knows the music well. The basic description, including musical detail and adjectives ('free time ... simple bass riff ... shifts up a semitone from D-Eb ... subdued timbre') suggest that the candidate has listened carefully to the work. The candidate knows about the harmon mute and that Miles Davis plays close to the microphone. The candidate makes a judgement of cool jazz in comparison to bebop, for example, that the solo explores 'the sounds of the instrument rather than the capabilities of the musicians'. The response is not perfect: perhaps the candidate misses the opportunity to assess other solos in the work, which might alter this view. Nevertheless, this is assured writing from a well-informed musician.

The response in Exemplar 3 scored 25 marks.

Question 6*

- 6* Choose **one** soloist or band/ensemble you consider has had a significant impact on the development of instrumental jazz. Evaluate their contribution to the genre. Use examples of their music to support your answer. [25]

The question provided an opportunity for candidates to write about a musician or band whose work they knew well. Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Miles Davis were popular choices. Some candidates had a wider view of their chosen musician by knowing more than one work (for example Davis's 'So What' and 'Bitches Brew'). Many were able to explain important contributions and influences, for example, Armstrong's trumpet solos or the Ellington band.

More successful responses were able to refer to details in the music and communicate its quality. This meant going further than general statements to pinpoint moments in the music as examples. For example, successful responses linked Louis Armstrong's hugely influential trumpet playing in the 1920s with the opening solo from 'West End Blues', how it is played, the range and technique which became a model for other trumpeters, the ground-breaking freedom of his phrasing and sense of swing.

Less successful responses tended to know some of the music but were limited in detail.

Question 7*

Area of Study 4: Religious Music of the Baroque Period.

7* Discuss the importance of one or more major centres of religious music during the Baroque period. For example, you could consider their influence on the styles and structures of music for worship or on the education of church musicians.

Examples may include:

- England: Westminster Abbey or the Chapel Royal
- France: the Chapelle Royale, Versailles
- Germany: St. Thomas's, Leipzig or the Court of Saxony, Dresden
- Italy: St. Mark's, Venice or St. Peter's, Rome

[25]

This was the more popular of the two Baroque questions. Candidates often knew the work of composers who had worked at one of these centres. The music was often discussed in detail: Purcell, Bach and Gabrieli were the most common choices. Often their work was linked convincingly to the musical trends of the time. For example, the dotted rhythms in Purcell's *My heart is inditing* is an example of French influence on English church music, correctly linked by candidates to the Restoration of Charles II.

Candidates who did well were able to explain the significance of their chosen centre or centres. The music of Gabrieli and Allegri was used effectively in contrasting the experimentation at St. Mark's Venice ('seconda prattica') with the more conservative habits of St. Peter's ('prima prattica'). The most successful responses on France focused on the centralising power of Louis XIV at Versailles, creating a distinctive style of worship of the 'Sun King', with the motet and Te Deum as preferred forms. Successful responses on centres of music in Germany were able to explain local circumstances, for example the disastrous effects of the Thirty Years War on the wealth of German-speaking lands and therefore, for example, the reduced forces in music by Schütz.

Less successful responses avoided explaining the importance of a centre or to describe conditions there. For example, discussions of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* were sometimes limited to descriptions of the music. There was little knowledge of Bach's position or duties as an employee of the Town Council at Leipzig or the important role of the music in the life of the town.

Question 8*

- 8* Choose **one or two** works written for the Lutheran Church. Explain how the music reflects the style of worship in German churches of the period. [25]

Works by J.S. Bach were most often chosen, usually the *St Matthew Passion*, perhaps *Wachet auf, Ein feste Burg* or another cantata. Some candidates successfully compared Bach's work with that of Heinrich Schütz. Sensibly, candidates opted to illustrate their ideas with a few representative numbers from the larger works. There were discussions of how chorale melodies would have been familiar to congregations and the dramatisation of text through recitative and aria.

More successful responses were able to explain the style of worship in German churches. The use of German for worship was well understood (and the occasional use of Latin). Candidates wrote about the importance attached to music as part of Lutheran worship, Bach's cycles of cantatas for the church year, and the role of the cantata as a commentary on the Biblical texts appointed for each Sunday. The most successful responses were able to make interesting points about Bach's techniques of setting a text, for example, his choice of melodic motif in the accompaniment to illustrate an aspect of the text.

Less successful responses were familiar with the music but had limited knowledge of its role in worship. Some responses knew that a passion setting would be for performance on Good Friday, but more detail was needed, for example, comparing the different resources available to Schütz at Dresden and Bach in Leipzig.

Question 9*

Area of Study 5: Programme Music 1820–1910.

- 9* Discuss the influence of popular literature on programme music. Use examples from the music of one or more composers between 1820 and 1910 to support your answer.

Examples of popular literature could include, for example, work by Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron, Walter Scott or Cervantes. [25]

The importance of literature as an inspiration for programme music meant there was no shortage of music that could be discussed. Popular choices included *Hebrides Overture*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Danse macabre*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and *Don Quixote*. Descriptions of the music were often detailed and linked to vivid accounts of the literature that inspired it.

More successful responses were able to explain some of the cultural and social context of the music. They were aware of the growth of the middle class and the demand for literature and music. Some were able to explain popular themes and ideas that are found in the music, such as the expression of human emotion, and the beauty and power of nature. Successful responses were able to explain, at least in part, the qualities which made the works of Shakespeare and other authors so attractive to composers and audiences of the nineteenth century.

Less successful responses often knew the literary background to the music, sometimes in great detail, but were more limited with features of the music.

Question 10*

- 10*** Explain how composers of programme music made sure that their music both conveyed the programme and had a satisfying musical structure. Use examples of works from one or more composers between 1820 and 1910 to support your answer. **[25]**

This was a popular question. Candidates often chose Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture* and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* to illustrate their ideas on the tension between programme and structure. Many candidates had studied the two works in terms of sonata form. This produced detailed descriptions, often accurate and relevant. Much was made of Tchaikovsky's choice of contrasting themes to illustrate the characters in the story. Smetana's *Vltava* and Strauss's *Don Quixote* were used as examples of works following a more precise programme. The use of overarching themes to connect disparate movements were frequently shown by reference to Berlioz's 'idée fixe' in the *Symphonie fantastique*.

More successful responses were able to explain precisely how composers structured their music. They had a good memory for musical detail. They were efficient in organising their ideas. For example, details of long and complicated stories (such as *Vltava* and *Don Quixote*) were only referred to when there was a musical example to discuss. In that way, successful responses were able to include more musical detail rather than taking up time narrating the story at length.

Less successful responses tended to be distracted by retelling the story. Some were able to include musical detail or refer to sonata form, but writing about each stage of Smetana's river journey in *Vltava* tended to limit how candidates could address the question.

Question 11*

Area of Study 6: Innovations in Music 1900 to the present day.

- 11*** Evaluate the effectiveness of music composed in response to political and social events, for example, revolution, war, persecution or censorship. Refer to the music of one or more composers between 1900 and the present day to support your answer. **[25]**

A wide range of music was chosen for this question. World War II and the Holocaust were often featured, with Reich's *Different trains* and Penderecki's *Threnody for the victims of Hiroshima* the most common choices. The music of Shostakovich was sometimes chosen, either *Symphony No. 5* (and the aftermath of the denunciation in Pravda of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*), or *Symphony No. 7* (and its creation during the siege of Leningrad). Many of the responses included convincing detail on the music and a clear response to the effectiveness of the music.

Successful responses were able to justify opinions about the success of the music in communicating with the audience. There were good explanations of technical features of the music, particularly imaginative or innovative techniques, such as, in *Different trains*, the combination of live and pre-recorded string quartets and the treatment of documentary voice recordings.

Less successful responses were less precise with details. Sometimes the political and social events were taken out of sequence, for example *The Rite of Spring* (1913) treated as a response to World War I (1914-18), when in fact the music came first.

Question 12*

- 12*** Discuss the extent to which neo-classical or neo-tonal music could be considered 'innovative', for example, compared to the music of composers who were writing atonal or experimental music. Use examples from the music of one or more composers between 1900 and the present day to support your answer. **[25]**

This was mostly a question about neo-classical or neo-tonal music. These terms are meant to allow discussion of composers who continued to write in a tonal idiom when others were choosing not to. Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* and Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* were obvious choices as deliberately remodelling earlier styles. The use of 'neo-tonal' hopefully encourages centres to include in this category composers as varied as Shostakovich, Britten, Copland, Hindemith, French composers such as 'Les Six', and others.

Successful responses understood the innovative features of much of the music and commented on its distancing from the scale and gestures of late-Romantic music. References to harmonic innovations (e.g. dissonance and bitonality) were supported with musical examples. Successful responses recognised the increased importance of woodwind, smaller ensembles and clearer timbres. The most successful responses attempted to give an opinion on whether the music deserved to be thought of as innovative.

Less successful responses tended to lack detail on the music. Sometimes the choice of music was unhelpful, such as *La Mer* or *The Rite of Spring*, but examiners gave credit for relevant features where they could.

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