



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2007**

**MUSIC**

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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## **1. General Introduction**

### **1.1 The Syllabus**

The current syllabus for Leaving Certificate Music, introduced in 1999, was designed to enable students to continue their music studies in a school-based context as a culmination of a five-year Post-Primary course of study. It was also designed to provide continuity and progression in the skills acquired through the Junior Certificate syllabus in music, consistent with individual and special needs. In particular, the syllabus emphasises accessibility and is designed to enable students to develop their creativity within the three components of performing, listening and composing (See Syllabus pp.1-3).

The syllabus accommodates individual differences in musical values and experiences and divergence in students' musical needs, interests and ambitions. It is designed to develop knowledge and understanding, skills, and attitudes, and to encourage excellence in a variety of musical activities.

### **1.2 The Examination**

Music at Leaving Certificate is available at two levels – Ordinary and Higher. The three activities of performing, listening and composing are assessed. The performing component is assessed during the two-week examining period in March / April, by examiners appointed by the State Examinations Commission. The listening and composing components are assessed by aural and written examinations respectively. These examinations are held in June and each examination is of 90 minutes duration.

The assessment structure was devised to allow Higher Level candidates to specialise in the component of the course best suited to their aptitude, interest and ability. This structure requires candidates to nominate one of the three components of their choice as their elective. In the case of performing, the elective consists of an extended performance. In 2007, over 97% of Higher Level candidates opted for the elective in performing. Higher Level candidates who choose the elective in performing present either six pieces in one performing activity, or four pieces in each of two activities. A detailed description of the performing options available to candidates is provided in the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Students* that is issued to all school authorities annually. This is also available on the Commission's website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)

The listening elective consists of an examination in which questions of a general nature are set, and students respond in relation to the musical topic that they have chosen to study. In addition, candidates taking this elective present a prepared tape or CD consisting of recordings on their chosen topic.

Candidates taking the elective in composing submit their portfolio of compositions/arrangements/orchestrations for assessment.

There are 400 marks available at Higher Level: 100 for each of the three components, and 100 for the elective.

Ordinary Level candidates do not take an elective. However, the component in which they achieve the highest mark is treated as the weighted component and marked out of 200. The other components receive a weighting of 100 marks each, giving a total of 400 marks for the examination.

All stages of the assessment and marking processes are underpinned by a comprehensive and transparent system of monitoring in each of the three components. This ensures consistency in the application of the agreed marking schemes and evaluation criteria.

This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers and the marking schemes for 2007. These are available for downloading from the website of the State Examinations Commission at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).

### 1.3 Candidature

The numbers taking Music at Leaving Certificate (Ordinary Level) by number and gender is illustrated in the following tables:

|              | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>OL</b>    | 476  | 468  | 472  | 488  |
| <b>%</b>     | 10.9 | 10.0 | 9.9  | 10.1 |
| <b>HL</b>    | 3871 | 4227 | 4291 | 4369 |
| <b>%</b>     | 89.1 | 90.0 | 90.1 | 89.9 |
| <b>Total</b> | 4347 | 4695 | 4763 | 4857 |

Table I: Leaving Certificate Music – Higher & Ordinary Levels; profile by number 2004 – 2007

| Level        | Gender | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>OL</b>    | Female | 350  | 346  | 349  | 358  |
|              | %      | 73.5 | 73.9 | 73.9 | 73.3 |
|              | Male   | 126  | 122  | 123  | 130  |
|              | %      | 26.5 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 26.7 |
| <b>HL</b>    | Female | 2920 | 3128 | 3095 | 3146 |
|              | %      | 75.4 | 74.0 | 72.0 | 72.0 |
|              | Male   | 951  | 1099 | 1196 | 1223 |
|              | %      | 24.6 | 26.0 | 28.0 | 28.0 |
| <b>Total</b> | Female | 3270 | 3474 | 3444 | 3504 |
|              | %      | 75.2 | 74.0 | 72.3 | 72.0 |
|              | Male   | 1077 | 1221 | 1319 | 1223 |
|              | %      | 24.8 | 26.0 | 27.7 | 28.0 |

Table II: Leaving Certificate Music – Higher & Ordinary Levels; profile by gender 2004 – 2007

## 2. Ordinary Level

### 2.1 Introduction

Candidates taking Music at Ordinary Level are assessed in three components – performing, listening and composing. The component in which they achieve the highest mark is treated as a weighted component and marked out of 200. The other components receive a weighting of 100 marks each, giving a total of 400 marks for the examination.

### 2.2 Performance of Candidates

The performance of candidates at Ordinary Level is illustrated by the following tables:

| Grade     | 2004 |      | 2005 |      | 2006 |      | 2007 |      |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|           | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    |
| <b>A1</b> | 4    | 0.8  | 18   | 3.8  | 2    | 0.4  | 1    | 0.2  |
| <b>A2</b> | 22   | 4.6  | 31   | 6.6  | 20   | 4.2  | 22   | 4.5  |
| <b>B1</b> | 48   | 10.1 | 54   | 11.5 | 48   | 10.2 | 54   | 11.1 |
| <b>B2</b> | 70   | 14.7 | 98   | 20.9 | 71   | 15.0 | 70   | 14.3 |
| <b>B3</b> | 86   | 18.1 | 81   | 17.3 | 99   | 21.0 | 99   | 20.3 |
| <b>C1</b> | 65   | 13.7 | 71   | 15.2 | 63   | 13.3 | 82   | 16.8 |
| <b>C2</b> | 66   | 13.9 | 40   | 8.5  | 61   | 12.9 | 56   | 11.5 |
| <b>C3</b> | 37   | 7.8  | 27   | 5.8  | 38   | 8.1  | 38   | 7.8  |
| <b>D1</b> | 34   | 7.1  | 25   | 5.3  | 21   | 4.4  | 23   | 4.7  |
| <b>D2</b> | 20   | 4.2  | 8    | 1.7  | 16   | 3.4  | 14   | 2.9  |
| <b>D3</b> | 14   | 2.9  | 8    | 1.7  | 12   | 2.5  | 16   | 3.3  |
| <b>E</b>  | 9    | 1.9  | 6    | 1.3  | 16   | 3.4  | 10   | 2.0  |
| <b>F</b>  | 1    | 0.2  | 1    | 0.2  | 5    | 1.1  | 3    | 0.6  |
| <b>NG</b> | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  |

Table III: Grade Distribution Leaving Certificate Music 2004 – 2007 (Ordinary Level)

| Grade     | 2004 |      | 2005 |      | 2006 |      | 2007 |      |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|           | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    |
| <b>A</b>  | 26   | 5.4  | 49   | 10.4 | 22   | 4.6  | 23   | 4.7  |
| <b>B</b>  | 204  | 42.8 | 233  | 49.7 | 218  | 46.1 | 223  | 45.6 |
| <b>C</b>  | 168  | 35.2 | 138  | 29.4 | 162  | 34.3 | 176  | 36.0 |
| <b>D</b>  | 68   | 14.2 | 41   | 8.7  | 49   | 10.3 | 53   | 10.8 |
| <b>E</b>  | 9    | 1.8  | 6    | 1.2  | 16   | 3.3  | 10   | 2.0  |
| <b>F</b>  | 1    | 0.2  | 1    | 0.2  | 5    | 1.0  | 3    | 0.6  |
| <b>NG</b> | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  |

Table IV: Grade outcome Leaving Certificate Music 2004 – 2007 (Ordinary Level)

## 2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

### 2.3.1 Performing Examinations

Most candidates chose music of a very high standard and were well prepared. In general, appropriate variety was evident in performances.

The standard of performances generally ranged from good to excellent. Some candidates who opted for the Technology option seemed somewhat unprepared and unfamiliar with the examination requirements. Some lack of fluency and confidence was apparent in relation to candidates who took this option. A number of candidates who presented vocal programmes had intonation problems due to the selection of key choices that were unsuitable for their vocal range.

Very few difficulties were experienced during the examining period. On a few occasions, accompaniments were too loud, leading to an imbalance between performer and accompaniment.

In the Unprepared Tests, Aural Memory Rhythm was the most frequently chosen option and most candidates performed well. Examiners noted that a small number of candidates appeared unsure on the day of the examination as to which option they should attempt and some chose the sight-reading option with varied results. The options chosen by candidates were as follows:

| Aural Memory (Rhythm) | Aural Memory (Melody) | Sight-reading | Improvisation |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 82%                   | 0.3%                  | 17%           | 0.7%          |

### 2.3.2 Listening Paper

In this paper, candidates were required to answer all six questions. In general, the standard of answering ranged from average to good in Question 5 (Irish Music) and Question 6 (Aural Skills). The standard of answering varied, however, in Questions 1 to 4. Questions that required specific information on prescribed works seemed to present a particular challenge to many candidates.

Candidate responses in Question 1 (*Cantata Jesu, der du meine Seele* by Bach) and Question 4 (*Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* by Tchaikovsky) were the least successfully answered, particularly when questions requiring detailed answers or technical knowledge.

Question 2 (*Piano Quintet No 1* by Gerald Barry) and Question 3 (*Bohemian Rhapsody* by Freddie Mercury) were answered reasonably well by most candidates. Sections of Question 5 (Irish Music) and Question 6 (Aural Skills) were well answered, particularly where identification of instruments or musical features was required.

### **2.3.3 Composing Paper**

In this paper, candidates were required to answer one question from each of two sections – Melody Composition (Section A) and Harmony (Section B). The standard of answering by candidates was generally average to good.

The most popular questions were Question 1 and Question 3 in Melody Composition and Questions 4 and 5 in Harmony. Questions 2 (text setting) and Question 6 (adding descant notes and chord indications at cadence points) were attempted by only a small number of candidates.

#### **Section A: Melody Composition**

Question 1: This was generally well answered. The more successful candidates demonstrated knowledge of the given key, continued the opening as appropriate and included phrasing and expression marks. Candidates who answered less well failed to complete the required tasks and did not have a knowledge or understanding of the given key signature and, consequently, did not end the melody on the tonic. A small number of candidates presented compositions with rhythmical inconsistencies.

Question 2: Few candidates answered this question. Candidates who did answer this question made a good rhythmic attempt but frequently did not write a good melody, tended to omit phrasing and expression marks and failed to end on the tonic. Almost all candidates who attempted this question failed to write the lyrics in the appropriate places beneath the melody.

Question 3: Most candidates successfully wrote a good melody in section (a) and demonstrated familiarity with the shape, rhythm and style of the minuet. Very few candidates wrote a good melody in section (b), indicating less familiarity with the rhythm and style of the gavotte.

#### **Section B: Harmony**

Question 4: The chord grid was generally successfully completed by most candidates. In general, the treble and bass notes were correctly inserted with many candidates using the correct rhythm. A few candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the given key and with the notes of the treble and, particularly, the bass staves.

Question 5: The chord grid was generally successfully completed by most candidates. Many candidates recognised the cadences and used the correct chords. However, some candidates did not correctly label the minor chords. Some candidates also had difficulty inserting the correct bass notes.

Question 6: The chord grid was generally successfully completed. This question was generally not well answered as most candidates did not add descant notes and many had difficulty inserting the correct bass notes.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

### **2.4.1 Performing Examinations**

- The standard of performances was generally good and Examiners noted, in particular, the high standard in classical and Irish traditional genres
- There was some evidence of unsuitable key choices in the case of vocalists
- Examiners noted that, in a few instances, candidates had given insufficient attention to the requirements of the unprepared test
- In the case of the Music Technology option, a small number of candidates were unclear with regard to the specific requirements of the examination.

### **2.4.2 Listening Examination**

- In general, candidates demonstrated good aural skills. This was particularly evident in the general Aural Skills and Irish Music questions
- Some candidates had difficulties in questions where detailed knowledge of the prescribed works was required
- Examiners noted that some candidates did not appear to possess the appropriate vocabulary necessary to answer questions on features, textures and style.

### **2.4.3 Composing Examination**

- The standard of answering in the composing paper was generally good
- Some candidates displayed a lack of knowledge or understanding of key signatures
- A small number of candidates presented compositions with rhythmical inconsistencies
- While most candidates attempted the required number of questions, a small number attempted three or more questions
- Recognition and labeling of minor chords and accurate reading of notes in the bass clef presented difficulties for a few candidates
- Candidates who concentrated on two questions, as required, in the examination tended to write better compositions than those who attempted three or more questions.

## **2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students**

### **2.5.1 Performing examination**

- Students need regular practice in preparation for the unprepared test in order to gain familiarity with the format of the examination
- Students opting for technology as a performing activity need to be fully aware of the requirements for this option as specified in the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Students* that is issued to all school authorities annually
- Students need to take care when choosing a programme for performing. Particular care should be taken in the selection of keys for vocal programmes, so as to ensure that the songs chosen lie within the vocal range.

### **2.5.2 Listening examination**

- Students need to listen frequently to the prescribed works. Students need to be familiar with musical features, instrumentation and compositional features of all the prescribed works and to be familiar with the relevant musical and technical vocabulary necessary to answer questions on different musical styles
- In preparation for the aural skills question, students should listen to a wide range of music and acquire the appropriate vocabulary necessary to respond to the questions.

### **2.5.3 Composing paper**

- Basic rudiments of music need to be understood by students especially notation, treble and bass clefs, rhythm, scales and key-signatures
- Students need to be able to complete the chord grids and should be familiar with the cadential chordal sequences in the keys prescribed in the syllabus.

### 3. Higher Level

#### 3.1 Introduction

Candidates taking Music at Higher Level were assessed in the three core components of performing, listening and composing. Candidates were also required to nominate one of the three components of their choice as their elective. A total of 400 marks was available at Higher Level: 100 for each of the three components, and 100 for the elective.

#### 3.2 Performance of Candidates

The grade outcomes in Music at Higher Level are illustrated in the following tables.

| Grade     | 2004 |      | 2005 |      | 2006 |      | 2007 |      |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|           | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    |
| <b>A1</b> | 113  | 2.9  | 202  | 4.8  | 166  | 3.9  | 192  | 4.4  |
| <b>A2</b> | 342  | 8.8  | 503  | 11.9 | 487  | 11.3 | 454  | 10.4 |
| <b>B1</b> | 604  | 15.6 | 735  | 17.4 | 753  | 17.5 | 714  | 16.3 |
| <b>B2</b> | 753  | 19.5 | 805  | 19.0 | 859  | 20.0 | 751  | 17.2 |
| <b>B3</b> | 714  | 18.4 | 734  | 17.4 | 755  | 17.6 | 784  | 17.9 |
| <b>C1</b> | 560  | 14.5 | 515  | 12.2 | 558  | 13.0 | 591  | 13.5 |
| <b>C2</b> | 374  | 9.7  | 366  | 8.7  | 348  | 8.1  | 410  | 9.4  |
| <b>C3</b> | 198  | 5.1  | 187  | 4.4  | 199  | 4.6  | 286  | 6.5  |
| <b>D1</b> | 117  | 3.0  | 88   | 2.1  | 87   | 2.0  | 115  | 2.6  |
| <b>D2</b> | 54   | 1.4  | 55   | 1.3  | 40   | 0.9  | 39   | 0.9  |
| <b>D3</b> | 25   | 0.6  | 25   | 0.6  | 27   | 0.6  | 21   | 0.5  |
| <b>E</b>  | 15   | 0.4  | 9    | 0.2  | 10   | 0.2  | 10   | 0.2  |
| <b>F</b>  | 2    | 0.1  | 3    | 0.1  | 1    | 0.0  | 2    | 0.0  |
| <b>NG</b> | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  | 1    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  |

Table I: Grade Distribution Leaving Certificate Music (Higher Level) 2004 – 2007

|           | 2004 |      | 2005 |      | 2006 |      | 2007 |      |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|           | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    | No.  | %    |
| <b>A</b>  | 455  | 11.7 | 705  | 16.6 | 653  | 15.2 | 646  | 14.7 |
| <b>B</b>  | 2071 | 53.5 | 2274 | 53.7 | 2367 | 55.1 | 2249 | 51.4 |
| <b>C</b>  | 1132 | 29.2 | 1068 | 25.2 | 1105 | 25.7 | 1287 | 29.4 |
| <b>D</b>  | 196  | 5.0  | 168  | 3.9  | 154  | 3.5  | 175  | 4.0  |
| <b>E</b>  | 15   | 0.4  | 9    | 0.2  | 10   | 0.2  | 10   | 0.2  |
| <b>F</b>  | 2    | 0.1  | 3    | 0.1  | 1    | 0.0  | 2    | 0.0  |
| <b>NG</b> | 0    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  | 1    | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0  |

Table II: Aggregate grade outcomes Leaving Certificate Music (Higher Level) 2004 – 2007

### 3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

#### 3.3.1 Performing Examinations - Core

Most candidates presented music of the required standard or higher. Examiners noted the variety of musical genres presented. The majority of Higher Level candidates performed to a high standard.

A small number of candidates presenting Music Technology as one performing activity were unaware of the performance requirement in this option. In addition, a small number of candidates presenting Music Technology displayed a lack of security and accuracy in inputting and in editing.

Examiners noted that the selection of unsuitable key for vocalists was a difficulty encountered. In a small number of cases, there was a lack of balance between soloist and accompaniment.

Sight-reading and aural memory (rhythm) were the most common unseen tests chosen and most candidates performed well. Some candidates appeared to be unsure on the day of the examination as to which option they should attempt. A small number of candidates chose improvisation and the improvisations were generally well presented and executed.

| Aural Memory (Rhythm) | Aural Memory (Melody) | Sight-reading | Improvisation |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 53%                   | 3%                    | 39%           | 5%            |

#### 3.3.2 Performing – Core + Elective

Most candidates presented two performing activities. The standard of music presented was generally high with carefully selected programmes showing variety and balance in evidence. A wide variety of genres were presented including classical, Irish traditional, jazz, rock, and popular.

Candidates were generally well-prepared and confident. Examiners noted that instrumental and singing performances in the traditional Irish genre were of a particularly high standard.

A small number of performances did not meet the requirements of the syllabus. Some candidates incorrectly presented in group performances with more than two candidates per vocal/instrumental line/part.

In a small number of performances accompaniments were too loud resulting in an imbalance between performer and accompanist. A few candidates presented programmes which were above their own level of performing ability resulting in a less satisfactory musical outcome. A few candidates mistakenly presented solo and group performances within the one performing activity. Some singers had problems with intonation, most frequently as a result of unsuitable key choices.

An increasing number of candidates presented Music Technology as one of their performing activities in 2007. The standard of performance in this option was generally good. Some candidates did not fulfill the syllabus requirements for the technology option. Problems encountered included incorrect number of tracks, unmusical edits, misunderstandings of the word 'edit' and not presenting a performance element in the Higher Level Elective (one activity) option.

The majority of candidates opted to perform a sight-reading test. Instrumental sight-reading was generally well performed, and most candidates were generally fluent in their response. The next most popular option was aural memory (rhythm) and here, the standard of response varied somewhat. While some responses were excellent, Examiners noted that some candidates displayed a lack of preparation for this activity. Few candidates took the aural memory (melody) option. Improvisation was chosen by a number of guitarists in particular, and the standard of improvisation presented was generally high.

| Sight-reading | Aural Memory (Rhythm) | Improvisation | Aural Memory (Melody) |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 56.3%         | 41%                   | 2%            | 0.7%                  |

### 3.3.3 Listening Paper - Core

In this paper candidates were required to answer all questions. There was a choice of topic in Question 5B (Irish traditional music).

The best-answered questions were Question 5A (Irish Music) and Question 6 (aural skills), while Questions 2 (*Piano Quartet no 1* by Gerald Barry), Question 3 (*Bohemian Rhapsody* by Freddie Mercury) and Question 4 (*Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* by Tchaikovsky), were reasonably well answered by the majority of candidates.

**Question 1:** Bach – Cantata *Jesu der du meine Seele*.

Section A: This section was reasonably well answered. In part (ii), many candidates correctly identified the oboe as the instrument playing the melody in the excerpt. The answering in relation to the features tended to be quite general and not specific to the melody.

Section B: Few candidates identified the four notes correctly in part (iii).

Section C: This section was reasonably well answered.

**Question 2:** Gerald Barry – *Piano Quartet no 1*.

A number of candidates were unsure of the instrumentation and were also unable to correctly describe the music as played by the instruments. Many candidates failed to give an adequate description of the texture of the excerpt.

**Question 3:** Freddie Mercury – *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

This question was generally well answered by all candidates. Some candidates had difficulty in correctly inserting the three chords in section (iii) above the lyrics.

**Question 4:** Tchaikovsky – *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*.

A significant number of candidates did not identify the section of the work correctly. Candidates were generally more successful in relation to instrumental identification. Candidates wrote reasonably good descriptive answers. However, some candidate responses contained information which was not relevant to the questions asked.

**Question 5:** Irish Music.

Section A was generally very well answered, particularly the questions relating to excerpts 2 and 3. The questions relating to excerpt 1 were less well answered with a number of candidates incorrectly identifying the style and very few candidates correctly identifying the form of the music.

In Section B, most candidates selected the question on the harping tradition. In general, the answering was quite good, but very few candidates referred to more than one harper. Those candidates who wrote about an instrumental group frequently did not refer to musical examples or performers. Candidates who wrote about the céilí band tradition tended to write rather vague and generalised answers and failed to make reference to the music, instruments or to any céilí bands. Some candidates wrote very good accounts of regional styles. However, some candidates mis-read the question and wrote about regional styles in relation to sean-nós singing, rather than instrumental music, as was required.

### **Question 6: Aural Skills**

This question was generally well answered by most candidates especially in relation to instrumental identification. In Section A, few candidates correctly identified the number of bars heard in the introduction and some candidates incorrectly identified the key signature. In Section B, some candidates had difficulty identifying the correct figure in part (iii). Most candidates answered section C very well.

#### **3.3.4 Listening – Elective**

A very small number of candidates chose to take the Listening elective. In general, the answering ranged from good to poor, with only a few excellent responses.

Most candidates prepared tapes or CDs which contained relevant recorded excerpts. Some candidates did not write the name of the recorded excerpts on the tape/CD insert, as was required. A few candidates included recorded excerpts which were considerably longer than that specified.

While most candidates listed some relevant sources, a number of candidates listed sources in a general manner by, for example, citing sources such as ‘the internet’, ‘the library’ etc. Specific identifiable sources, such as the website address or the title of a particular reference book, are required.

Most candidates successfully listed the five pieces of music and their composers/performers.

While most candidates successfully named three correct features, some candidates neglected to relate the music features to their chosen topic. With the exception of some excellent answers, which were clearly the result of significant research on the part of candidates, many candidate responses were generalised, and lacked sufficient focus. There was also little evidence of a personal response to the chosen topic.

#### **3.3.5 Composing Paper**

In this paper, candidates were required to answer one question from each of two sections – Melody Composition (Section A) and Harmony (Section B). The standard of answering by the examination candidates was generally average to good, with a few excellent compositions in evidence.

The most popular questions with examination candidates were Questions 1 and 3 in Melody Composition and Questions 4 and 5 in Harmony. Questions 2 (text setting) and Question 6 (adding descant notes and chordal support) were less frequently attempted.

### **Section A: Melody Composition**

**Question 1:** The modulation was generally well executed and inserted at a suitable point in the melody. Some candidates paid insufficient attention to the anacrusis and this led to subsequent problems in relation to phrasing. The majority of candidates observed the correct key signature. A number of candidates made a reasonable attempt at overall melodic shape and structure. Appropriate dynamics and phrasing were generally inserted correctly.

**Question 2:** Very few candidates successfully attempted word setting. Candidates who had the ability to set the words generally had no difficulty with melody writing. Candidates who experienced difficulty in relation to word setting often also displayed limited technical knowledge. Some candidates did not recognise the minor key.

**Question 3:** A number of candidates adhered to the given structure and to the style of the minuet. Some candidates did not observe the anacrusis and this subsequently affected the phrasing and the structure of the dance. A small number of candidates did not modulate correctly.

### **Section B: Harmony**

**Question 4:** The bass notes were generally inserted correctly. Some candidates continued the melody in the style of the given opening. Examiners noted that any weakness observed in candidate answering tended to be in melodic composition. A few candidates did not recognize the key signature.

**Question 5:** Generally, candidates used good chord progressions and observed cadence points. Many candidates wrote a good bass line in the style of the given opening. A small number of candidates who experienced difficulty in responding appeared to be unfamiliar with the notes of the bass stave. Some candidates incorrectly identified minor chords.

**Question 6:** A small number of candidates attempted this question. The standard of answering in general ranged from very good to poor. Some candidates made very good chord choices and wrote a very musical descant line with good observance of the minor key. Other candidates experienced difficulty composing in the minor key, appeared to have poor technical knowledge and wrote descant lines of limited melodic interest.

#### **3.3.6 Composing Elective**

A small number of candidates took the composing elective option. The standard of composing electives presented was generally very high. Most compositions and/or orchestrations/arrangements displayed a very good degree of creativity and originality, were well constructed with very good musical development in evidence.

## **3.4 Conclusions**

### **3.4.1 Performing Examinations**

- The standard of performances was generally very good. Examiners noted in particular the high standard in classical and Irish traditional genres
- There was some evidence of unsuitable key choices in the case of vocalists
- Examiners noted that, in a few instances, candidates had given insufficient attention to the requirements of the unprepared test
- In the case of the Music Technology option, a small number of candidates were unclear with regard to the specific requirements of the examination.

### **3.4.2 Listening Examination**

- In general, candidates demonstrated good aural skills. This was particularly evident in the general Aural Skills and Irish Music questions
- Some candidates had difficulties in questions where detailed knowledge of the prescribed works was required
- Examiners noted that some candidates did not appear to possess the appropriate vocabulary necessary to answer questions on features, textures and style
- It was also noted that some candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the specifics of some questions. This was particularly the case in Question 5(B). Examiners noted that many candidates did not answer what was asked in this question or omitted to include musical examples/performers, where required.

### **3.4.3 Listening Elective**

- Examiners noted that, while some candidates demonstrated a detailed knowledge and understanding of the musical features of their chosen topic, many responses were rather vague and lacked sufficient focus.

### **3.4.4 Composing Examination**

- The standard of answering in the composing paper was generally good
- Examiners noted that some candidates ignored the anacrusis and consequently, the phrasing and structure of the composition was compromised
- Some candidates were not sufficiently familiar with the rhythmic and stylistic characteristics of the dances in Question 3
- The minor suffix was frequently omitted in the harmony section
- Examiners noted that some candidates appeared to have some difficulty identifying the cadential points in the melody
- A small number of candidates displayed a lack of knowledge or understanding of key signatures

### **3.4.5 Composing Elective**

- The standard of composing electives was generally very high
- Examiners noted that the accompanying description was not always sufficiently detailed. This is a syllabus requirement.

### **3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students**

#### **3.5.1 Performing examination**

- Regular practice in preparation for the unprepared test is recommended in order to gain familiarity with the format of the examination
- Students taking Music Technology as a performing activity need to be fully aware of the requirements for this option as specified in the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Students* that is issued to all school authorities annually. In particular, candidates presenting Music Technology for Higher Level (one activity) or Higher Level Elective (one activity) should be aware of the performing requirement of this activity
- Students need to take care when choosing a programme for performing. Particular care should be taken in the selection of keys for vocal programmes, so as to ensure that the songs chosen lie within the vocal range
- Care should be taken to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the performer(s) and accompaniment, where provided.

#### **3.5.2 Listening examination**

- Students should be familiar with musical features, instrumentation and compositional features of all the prescribed works
- Students should be familiar with the relevant musical and technical vocabulary necessary to answer questions on different musical styles
- In preparation for the aural skills question, students should listen and respond to a wide range of music and acquire the appropriate vocabulary necessary to answer the questions
- In Question 5 (b) (Irish music), appropriate musical examples and/or performers must be listed, as required.

#### **3.5.3 Listening - elective**

- Students should be advised to read the questions carefully and to answer what they have been asked. Students should be familiar with the musical features of the chosen topic and be able to provide a personal response to the topic.
- Candidates should choose their topic carefully. The topic should be sufficiently focused to allow for detailed study.

#### **3.5.4 Composing paper**

- Students should ensure that they are familiar with, and understand the basic rudiments of music especially notation, clefs, rhythm, scales, and key-signatures, as specified in the syllabus
- Students need to be able to complete the chord grids and should be familiar with the chords and harmonic sequences in the keys prescribed in the syllabus.
- Students should practise composing and phrasing in melodies that contain an anacrusis
- Students should practise the identification of cadence points and the use of good harmonic progressions

#### **3.5.5 Composing elective**

- Students should ensure that their portfolio is accompanied by a detailed description of the process, as required in the syllabus.

## 4. Exemplars of Standard

### 4.1 Composing Paper (Higher Level)

#### Section A – Melody Composition

Note: The exemplars have been typeset to protect candidate identity. In all cases, every effort has been made to reproduce the original response of the candidate, including the positioning of dynamics, phrase marks, stems, slurs, articulation and stem direction.

#### Q1 CONTINUATION OF A GIVEN OPENING

Flute       Violin       Oboe       Horn

### Example 1

The musical score for Example 1 is presented in four staves. The key signature is A major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second staff starts with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The third staff starts with a dynamic marking of *mp* and ends with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The fourth staff starts with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, slurs, and phrasing marks.

#### Marks awarded (Total marks available 40. See published Marking Scheme)

Quality of melody: 38

No deductions

Final mark: 38

Q1 CONTINUATION OF A GIVEN OPENING

Flute       Violin       Oboe       Horn

Example 2

The musical score for Example 2 consists of four staves of music in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff begins with a melody marked *mp*. The second staff features a melody marked *f* followed by a section marked *mp*. The third staff shows a melody marked *f*. The fourth staff starts with a melody marked *p* and ends with a section marked *mf*. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

**Marks awarded (Total marks available 40. See published Marking Scheme)**

Quality of melody: 26

No deductions

Final mark: 26

Q1 CONTINUATION OF A GIVEN OPENING

Flute  Violin  Oboe  Horn

Example 3

The musical score for Example 3 consists of four staves of music in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. The third staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*, features a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The fourth staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*, includes a *rit* (ritardando) instruction, and ends with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score concludes with a double bar line.

**Marks awarded (Total marks available 40. See published Marking Scheme)**

Quality of melody: 23

No deductions

Final mark: 23

Q1 COMPOSING TO A GIVEN DANCE RHYTHM OR METRE OR FORM

Flute       Oboe  Piccolo       Violin

Example 4

The musical score for Example 4 consists of four staves of music in 3/4 time, written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and ends with another *mp* marking. The second staff features a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The third staff also features a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The fourth staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests, with some notes marked with accents.

**Marks awarded (Total marks available 40. See published Marking Scheme)**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Quality of melody:                           | 18  |
| Deductions: (modulation, phrasing, dynamics) | - 4 |
| Final mark:                                  | 14  |