



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2012**

**MUSIC**

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

# CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>General Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	The Syllabus	
1.2	The Examination	
1.3	Candidature	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Ordinary Level</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Introduction	
2.2	Performance of Candidates	
2.3	Analysis of Candidate Performance	
2.4	Conclusions	
2.5	Recommendations to Teachers and Students	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Higher Level</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1	Introduction	
3.2	Performance of Candidates	
3.3	Analysis of Candidate Performance	
3.4	Conclusions	
3.5	Recommendations to Teachers and Students	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Appendix - Exemplars of Standard</b>	<b>30</b>
	Melody Writing (Higher Level)	

# LEAVING CERTIFICATE MUSIC

## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Syllabus

The current syllabus for Leaving Certificate Music, introduced in 1999, was 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, understanding, skills and attitudes, and to encourage excellence in a variety of musical activities.

### 1.2 The Examination

Music at Leaving Certificate level 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 at Higher Level was devised to allow 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 2012, over 99.7% 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 by the SEC to all school authorities annually.

The listening elective consists of an examination in which questions of a general nature are set, and candidates 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 of recordings on their chosen topic. Candidates taking the elective in composing submit their compositions for assessment.

A total of 400 marks is available at Higher Level: 100 for each of the three components, and 100 for the elective.

A total of 400 marks is available at Ordinary Level: 100 for each of the three components. Since Ordinary Level candidates do not take an elective the component in which the candidate achieves the highest mark is treated as a weighted component and reweighted to a mark out of 200. The other components having a mark allocation of 100 marks each brings the total to 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 2012. These are available for downloading from the SEC website at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).

## 1.2 Candidature

Data on the candidature for Music in the Leaving Certificate over the last six years are presented in the following tables:

**Table 1: Leaving Certificate Music – Higher & Ordinary Levels  
Profile by Number and % of the total Music cohort: 2007 – 2012**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>OL</b>	488	510	483	493	551	522
<b>%</b>	10.1	10.7	8.8	8.6	9.2	8.5
<b>HL</b>	4369	4770	5002	5261	5427	5644
<b>%</b>	89.9	90.3	91.2	91.4	90.8	91.5
<b>Total</b>	4857	5280	5485	5754	5978	6166

**Table 2: Leaving Certificate Music – Higher & Ordinary Levels  
Profile by Gender: 2007 – 2012**

Gender		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Female</b>	HL	3146	3332	3443	3575	3620	3759
	% of female total	89.8	90.1	91.0	91.4	91.4	91.8
	OL	358	366	340	336	341	338
	% of female total	10.2	9.9	8.9	8.6	8.6	8.2
	<b>Total</b>	3504	3698	3783	3911	3961	4097
	<b>% of overall Music cohort</b>	72.1	70.0	69.0	68.0	66.3	66.4
<b>Male</b>	HL	1223	1438	1559	1686	1807	1885
	% of male total	90.4	90.9	91.6	91.5	89.6	91.1
	OL	130	144	143	157	210	184
	% of male total	9.6	9.1	8.4	8.5	10.4	8.9
	<b>Total</b>	1353	1582	1702	1843	2017	2069
	<b>% of overall Music cohort</b>	27.9	30.0	31.0	32.0	33.7	33.6
<b>Total</b>		4857	5280	5485	5754	5978	6166

## LEAVING CERTIFICATE MUSIC

### 2. ORDINARY LEVEL

#### 2.1 Introduction

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

#### 2.2 Performance of Candidates

**Table 3: Leaving Certificate Music Ordinary Level 2007 – 2012  
Grade Distribution**

Grade	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A1	0.2	0.8	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.4
A2	4.5	6.1	6.2	5.1	4.9	3.8
B1	11.1	12.2	10.8	15.0	10.3	13.2
B2	14.3	15.7	13.0	15.0	12.9	15.1
B3	20.3	16.9	18.4	18.1	18.3	20.3
C1	16.8	16.5	18.0	13.2	16.5	17.4
C2	11.5	9.6	12.4	10.3	15.4	10.5
C3	7.8	9.0	7.5	6.3	7.3	7.9
D1	4.7	4.7	5.4	4.3	6.4	4.0
D2	2.9	3.3	3.3	2.6	3.8	2.5
D3	3.3	2.9	2.1	4.5	1.5	2.1
E	2.0	1.8	1.4	4.1	1.5	2.3
F	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.4
NG	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Table 4: Leaving Certificate Music Ordinary Level  
Aggregate Grades 2007 - 2012**

Grade	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A	4.7	6.9	7.4	6.1	5.4	4.2
B	45.6	44.8	42.2	48.1	41.5	48.6
C	36.0	35.1	37.9	29.8	39.2	35.8
D	10.8	10.9	10.8	11.4	11.7	8.6
E	2.0	1.8	1.4	4.1	1.5	2.3
F	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.4
NG	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Table 5: Leaving Certificate Music Ordinary Level  
Combined Grades 2007 – 2012**

Grade	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A	4.7	6.9	7.4	6.1	5.4	4.2
ABC	86.5	86.8	87.5	84.0	86.1	88.6
D	10.8	10.9	10.8	11.4	11.7	8.6
E,F,NG	2.6	2.4	1.6	4.7	2.2	2.7

## 2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

### 2.3.1 Performing Examination

#### Variety of Music Presented

A broad range of music was presented by candidates but the ‘popular’ genre was the preferred style. A number of candidates presented rap and performed well. The majority of candidates presented either through the use of technology (43%) or solo singing (27%).

#### Overall Standard of Performing

Ordinary Level candidates generally presented performances which varied from good to excellent. A lack of familiarity with the syllabus requirements, particularly in relation to the use of technology, was evident in a number of performances.

Many of the candidates who performed without accompaniment experienced difficulties with intonation. Performances of traditional Irish music were mostly of a very high standard.

### **Common weaknesses**

A lack of confidence was evident in many of the performances. Some of the candidates who took the music technology option were not familiar with the terminology and displayed a lack of understanding of the system. Transposition was a popular choice of edit, however many candidates changed the key signature but not the notes. Backing tracks were occasionally too loud for singers to be heard clearly and poor key choices in songs often resulted in a strained vocal tone in the upper or lower register. Poor breath control marred a number of performances on the recorder. Examiners noted that poor intonation was the most common problem encountered at this Level.

### **Unprepared Tests**

Sight-reading clapping (51%) and Aural Memory Rhythm (48%) were the most frequently chosen unprepared tests. The standard of response varied greatly. The standard of sight-reading was generally very good but the tempo chosen in some cases was so slow that fluency was difficult to maintain. Very few candidates who presented Aural Memory Rhythm achieved high marks. In many cases the candidate only managed to clap back three or four bars.

### **2.3.2 Listening Examination**

In this examination paper, candidates were required to answer all six questions. The general standard of answering in scripts was average to good with a few very well answered scripts. Candidates in many cases did not develop answers and an apparent lack of familiarity with terminology hindered some good responses. Multiple choice questions were the best answered but frequently there was evidence that the candidate had changed their minds many times.



Question 1 (*Bohemian Rhapsody* by Freddie Mercury), Question 2 (*Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* by Tchaikovsky) and Question 6 (Aural Skills) were well answered. Question 3 (*Cantata Jesu, der du meine Seele* by Bach) and Question 4 (*Piano Quartet No. 1* by Gerald Barry) were poorly answered. In general, questions requiring detailed answers or technical knowledge caused the greatest difficulty for candidates.

**Question by question analysis:**

Q1 Excerpts 1 & 2 were, in general, well answered. Most of the questions here were multiple choice questions. Excerpt 3 was, in general, poorly answered or left blank. This section contained two questions that required explanation or description.

Q2 Sections (i) and (iii) were well-answered. Sections (ii) and (v) were poorly answered. Candidates heard the fragments of the Strife theme and incorrectly chose it as the main theme heard in the excerpt.

Q3 Sections (ii), (iii) and (iv) where candidates were asked to identify voices, instruments and features were well-answered. Sections (i), where candidates were asked the more detailed question i.e. identify the movement and (v) where they were asked to describe a feature, were poorly answered.

Q4 Sections (i), where candidates were asked to identify the part of work and (iii) where they were asked to identify instruments, were well answered. The majority of candidates did not attempt sections (ii), where they were asked to explain time signatures and (v), where they were asked to describe a feature.

Q5 Candidates answered well in questions where they could list features of Irish traditional music but were less successful in identifying melodic and rhythmic instruments.

Q6 Excerpts 1 and 2, where candidates were asked to identify instruments and features, were answered well. Very few candidates responded well to the more detailed listening required in Excerpt 3.

### **2.3.3 Composing Examination**

In this examination paper, candidates were required to answer one question from each of two sections – Melody Composition (Section A) and Harmony (Section B). The most popular questions with candidates were Questions 1, 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 seldom attempted.

Examiners noted that in general the harmony section was answered well. However, in the Melody writing section the answering was considerably weaker and frequently displayed a lack of basic technical knowledge. The better melodies had a sound harmonic structure and good approaches to the cadence points. Questions 4 and 5 in the harmony section of the examination were the best-answered questions. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6 were the least well answered questions.

#### **Question by question analysis:**

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

Q1. In general melodies were rhythmically accurate though a number of candidates had difficulty maintaining the metre. Candidates frequently confined the rhythm patterns in their melodies to those given in the opening phrases but had difficulty coping with the dotted-crotchet quaver rhythm. Most attempts were weak melodically. Many displayed little awareness of the key and frequently did not end on the tonic. These melodies tended to hover around two or three notes or else presented wide ungainly leaps. A significant number of candidates did not insert phrasing or expression marks.

Q2. Few candidates answered this question. Where it was attempted, little or no effort was made to set the words. Rhythm patterns were inaccurate and bore little relationship to the text.

Q3. This question was poorly answered. In most examples the dance rhythm was not maintained and the melodies themselves were weak.

## **Section B: Harmony**

Q4. The majority of candidates attempted this question. In most cases the chord grid was completed correctly, treble notes were correctly inserted and the given rhythm was used. Few candidates managed to complete the bass line correctly.

Q5. The chord grid was generally successfully completed. Many candidates recognized the cadences and used the correct chords. As in Question 4, candidates had difficulty inserting the correct bass notes.

Q6. There were very few attempts at this question and they were generally very poor. In most cases chord choices did not correspond to the given notes and there was no attempt at writing a descant.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

### **2.4.1 Performing Examination**

- The standard of performances was generally very high. This was evident across all genres.
- Music presented exceeded the required standard in many cases. A number of candidates performed their own compositions.
- There was evidence of unsuitable key choices in the case of some vocalists.
- A small number of candidates who presented using technology were unfamiliar with the requirements of the examination.

### **2.4.2 Listening Examination**

- The standard of answering was higher in general aural skill questions than in questions on set works where more detail was needed.
- Candidates responded well in questions where a choice of answers were presented to them but experienced difficulty in questions requiring descriptive or explanatory answers.

### **2.4.3 Composing Examination**

- Answering in the harmony section was better than that in the melody writing section.
- In weaker responses, a lack of technical knowledge was in evidence.

- Candidates who concentrated on two questions (i.e. one melody question and one harmony question), as required in the examination tended to write better answers than those who attempted to answer all six questions.

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

### **2.5.1 Performing Examination**

#### **Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should encourage regular practice in all aspects of the performing examination in order to be fully comfortable on the day of the examination.
- Teachers should ensure that students are familiar with the requirements of the examination as specified in the syllabus and in the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Candidates* issued annually by the SEC
- Teachers should ensure that the computer/version of software used by candidates on the day of the examination is the version with which they are familiar.

#### **Recommendations to Students**

- Students should take care when choosing a programme for performing. Those who intend to present singing as their performing activity need to ensure that the songs chosen lie within their vocal range and technical ability.
- Vocal performances should be accompanied, where possible, to avoid problems with intonation. If using backing tracks as accompaniment, it is important to ensure that the volume level is set correctly.
- Students who intend to present using technology as a performing activity should be completely familiar with the requirements of the syllabus and examination format as specified in the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Candidates*. They should also be completely familiar with their chosen medium (sequencer/computer software).

## **2.5.2 Listening Examination**

### **Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should stress the need for students to be familiar with musical features, instrumentation and compositional features of all set works
- Teachers should ensure that students are provided with the vocabulary necessary to answer questions on different musical styles.

### **Recommendations to Students**

- Students should listen frequently to the prescribed works. In preparation for the aural skills question, students should listen to a wide range of music and acquire the vocabulary necessary to answer the examination questions.

## **2.5.3 Composing Examination**

### **Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should encourage students to be fully familiar with all aspects of notation as specified in the syllabus. Students need to have an understanding of tonality and the importance of ending on doh. Students need to be able to complete the chord grids and to use the correct chord symbols for both major and minor chords.
- Encourage students to respond fully to one melody question and one harmony question as required.

### **Recommendations to Students:**

- Students should be familiar with all of the requirements in the composing paper and to read the questions carefully. In particular, they should concentrate on the questions relating to areas in which they have a particular strength.
- Students should know the names of the notes in treble and bass clefs, to have a good understanding of key signatures and to be able to end melodies on doh.
- Students should understand all time signatures and rhythmic values and ensure that there is the correct number of beats in every bar.
- Students should remember to insert phrasing and expression marks as appropriate.

- Students should complete the chord grids and use the correct chord symbols for both major and minor chords.
- Students should have an understanding of good cadence progressions.

## LEAVING CERTIFICATE MUSIC

### 3. HIGHER LEVEL

#### 3.1 Introduction

Candidates taking Leaving Certificate 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

**Table 6: Leaving Certificate Music Higher Level 2007 – 2012  
Grade Distribution**

Grade	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A1	4.4	3.8	4.5	4.2	5.1	3.4
A2	10.4	10.8	10.4	11.5	12.6	11.1
B1	16.4	15.4	15.0	17.3	16.6	17.1
B2	17.1	19.5	19.3	19.0	16.9	19.3
B3	17.9	17.1	18.7	16.5	16.1	17.6
C1	13.6	14.7	13.8	12.7	12.8	12.9
C2	9.3	9.2	9.5	8.5	9.3	8.1
C3	6.5	4.8	4.9	5.3	4.8	5.0
D1	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.4	3.1	2.9
D2	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.5
D3	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.5
E	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.4
F	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NG	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Table 7: Leaving Certificate Music Higher Level 2007 – 2012  
Aggregate Grades**

Grade	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>A</b>	14.8	14.6	14.9	15.7	17.7	14.5
<b>B</b>	51.4	52.0	53.0	52.8	49.6	54.0
<b>C</b>	29.4	28.7	28.2	26.5	26.9	26.0
<b>D</b>	4.0	4.4	3.9	4.6	5.6	4.9
<b>E</b>	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.4
<b>F</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>NG</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Table 8: Leaving Certificate Music Higher Level 2007 – 2012  
Combined Grades**

Grade	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>A</b>	14.8	14.6	14.9	15.7	17.7	14.5
<b>ABC</b>	95.6	95.3	96.1	95.0	94.2	94.5
<b>D</b>	4.0	4.4	3.9	4.6	5.6	4.9
<b>E,F,NG</b>	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.4



### **3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance**

#### **3.3.1 Performing Examination – Core**

##### **Variety of Music Presented**

Only a very small number of candidates (19 candidates; 0.3% of the total Higher Level candidature) took the option of presenting a Higher Level non-elective performance; these candidates took their elective in either listening or composing. Solo singing, solo performance and technology were the most frequently presented activities.

##### **Overall standard of performing**

The majority of performances were of a high standard. Lack of confidence was evident in a number of the performances.

##### **Common difficulties demonstrated by candidates**

Lack of familiarity with the requirements of the technology option was the most common difficulty encountered by examiners.

##### **Unprepared Tests**

Sight reading (71%) and aural memory rhythm (28%) were the most popular unprepared tests chosen. The standard ranged from fair to very good.

#### **3.3.2 Performing Examination – Core + Elective**

##### **Variety of Music Presented**

Examiners reported a very wide range of genres and instruments, with very well-chosen programmes reflecting a great deal of thought and preparation. Some candidates performed their own compositions. Although the standard orchestral and traditional instruments were the most commonly presented, there were many examples of more unusual instruments such as the didgeridoo, ukulele, fife, a native Lithuanian instrument and a pipe band.

### **Overall Standard of Performance**

The overall standard of performance was very high to excellent in almost all cases. Many examiners reported experiencing performances of music which they considered to be above the standard required. Candidates in general were well-prepared, secure and confident. Candidates who performed in rock groups, in particular drummers, seemed very much at ease with performing.

An increasing number of candidates entered as solo performers.

Standards of proficiency shown by candidates who presented using technology varied with some candidates performing to a very high standard. Most candidates chose to input one 4-part score and executed their edits on the score input on the day of the examination. Many candidates who presented HE1 technology were not as proficient at the other performing element of the examination as they were at technology.

### **Common Weaknesses**

A few candidates who sang/performed to backing tracks experienced difficulty with entries and in keeping in time with the backing track. Others appeared to be unfamiliar with the accompaniment for their songs/pieces resulting in a somewhat uncertain performance. Some singers chose inappropriate keys for their songs.

A small number of candidates misunderstood the requirements for the examination and presented more than two performing activities.

Some singers/instrumentalists incorrectly performed in groups of more than two per examinable part. Others included solo songs/pieces in a group performance or *vice versa* and there were a few instances of the same music being presented in two different activities.

Difficulties experienced by candidates presenting music technology included the inability to set up the score correctly or to execute some or all of their edits. Some candidates used demonstration versions of the music software and consequently were unable to save and retrieve the music presented for the performing

examination. Others minimized the file instead of closing. Candidates presenting two 2-part scores encountered more problems than those presenting one 4-part score.

### **Unprepared Tests**

The majority of candidates chose sight-reading for their unprepared test. Instrumental sight-reading was generally well performed as was sight-reading rhythm, most candidates being generally fluent in their response. The dotted crotchet-quaver rhythm and the crotchet rest caused the greatest difficulties. Candidates frequently either halved or doubled the time value of quavers or semiquavers and many candidates paused between bars.

A number of candidates chose aural memory (rhythm). The standard of response varied. While some responses were excellent, others displayed a lack of preparation for this activity. Few candidates took the aural memory melody option. A tiny minority of candidates chose improvisation. One or two of the responses were excellent, but others lacked a sense of direction and had little musical outcome.

The table below shows the breakdown of uptake of the options available for the unprepared test.

**Table 9: Unprepared Tests information**

<b>Sight reading</b>	<b>Aural Memory Rhythm</b>	<b>Improvisation</b>	<b>Aural Memory Melody</b>
76.3%	23%	0.99%	0.01%

#### **3.3.4 Listening Examination - Core**

In this examination paper candidates were required to answer all questions, with a choice of topic in Question 5B.

The best-answered questions were Question 5A (Irish Music) and Question 6 (aural skills). In these questions candidates were not required to have detailed

knowledge of the music played. In general, questions where candidates were asked to “identify” (themes/instruments/texture) were quite well answered.

Questions 1 – 4 (set works) were not well answered. Answering was particularly weak in sections where candidates were required to “describe” or “explain”, with the majority making general statements which lacked detail. Questions where candidates were required to fill in missing pitches and rhythms were also not well answered.

### **Question by question analysis**

Question 1: Mercury – *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Identification of themes, features and section of work were well answered.

Dictation and the description of the bass guitar part were weak. Most candidates gave a generic description of ballad style in Excerpt 2 (iii) and generic explanation of antiphonal in Excerpt 3 (ii) without referring to the extract.

Question 2: Tchaikovsky – *Romeo and Juliet* (Fantasy Overture).

Sections requiring identification of themes, tonality and instruments were fairly well answered but most candidates gave a generic description of Programme music without referring to the set work.

Question 3. Bach – Cantata *Jesu der du meine Seele*.

Sections (i), (ii), and (iii) – identification of movement, voice, instrument and texture - were fairly well answered but the explanations of “polyphonic” and “chaconne” were weak and in general not linked to the extract.

Question 4. Gerald Barry – *Piano Quartet no 1*.

Multiple-choice sections in this question were well answered but very few candidates managed to insert the correct time signatures and many omitted this part of the question altogether. The explanation of “retrograde” and the description of the texture were generally weak in relation to the extract.

Question 5: Irish Music.

Section A was generally very well answered. A number of candidates had difficulty identifying the dance as a slip jig.

In Section B the answering was spread over the four topics. In general the answering was quite good but in the question on regional styles many candidates neglected to refer to both elements of the question (instrumental and *sean-nós* styles).

Question 6:

This question was generally well answered by most candidates, in particular the questions on Excerpts 1 and 3. The answering on Excerpt 2 was weak. Very few candidates identified the time signature or rhythmic figure correctly and most descriptions of the texture did not refer to the extract.

### **3.3.5 Listening Examination – Elective**

A small number of candidates chose to take a Listening Elective. Answering ranged from good to poor with only a few very good answers.

#### **Recordings**

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 required. A few candidates included recorded excerpts which were considerably longer than that specified for the Listening Elective.

#### **Sources**

While most candidates listed some relevant sources, a number of candidates listed sources inadequately by stating sources such as ‘the internet’, ‘the library’ etc. The examination paper directs the candidates to list specific sources.

#### **Names of pieces and composers/performers**

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

#### **Musical features and discussion of topic**

Most candidates successfully named three correct features but with the exception of some excellent answers most candidates provided answers which were vague, without focus and without a personal response.

### **3.3.6 Composing Examination – Core**

In this examination paper candidates were required to answer one question from each of two sections – Melody Composition (Section A) and Harmony (Section B). The most popular questions with candidates were Question 1 in Melody Composition and Question 5 in the Harmony section. Questions 2, text setting, and Question 6, adding descant notes and chordal support, were less frequently attempted.

The standard of answering by the examination candidates was generally average to good. The answering in the Harmony section was generally better than in the Melody Composition section. In the Melody Composition section most melodies had a good sense of structure and phrasing. However, dynamics were not always consistent or musical and in general candidates had difficulty with minor tonality. In the Harmony section cadences were handled well.

#### **Question by question analysis:**

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

Question 1: Most candidates managed the 6/8 time signature well but many had difficulty handling the minor key. Although often underpinned by a sound harmonic structure the musical outcome of many of the melodies was weak. There was some lack of ability to develop the opening material and the range of many of the melodies was limited. In many instances candidates simply changed the given rhythms and motifs around, which gave rise to poorly developed melodies.

Question 2: Very few candidates answered this question. Of those who did, only a minority was well prepared to set a text and had an understanding of the key. Simple but effective settings of the words were evident in these answers with a nice shape to the melodies and a feeling of balance within the phrases.

Question 3: This question was not well answered. Candidates, though ending with a sixteen bar melody as required, lost the sense of a Gavotte style. This was especially evident in the third and fourth phrases which required candidates to be

more inventive. There was generally a poor understanding of how best to handle the two-beat upbeat of a gavotte dance rhythm, which gave rise to poorly balanced rhythms and phrases.

### **Section B: Harmony**

Question 4: Fewer candidates attempted this question than in previous years. The minor tonality caused problems which resulted in unmusical areas within the melody. Melodies often lacked very good points of climax and a sense of flow and were stilted somewhat by the parameters of the chordal outline. There were some good attempts at maintaining the style of bass.

Question 5: Candidates in general chose chords well and observed cadence points. Many candidates wrote a good bass line in the style of the given opening. Some candidates were unfamiliar with the use of ii in a minor key – many made the mistake of using it in root position. A frequent problem in the bass was the incorrect handling of the raised 7<sup>th</sup> and a poor grasp of how to complete the final bar using the correct number of beats.

Question 6: Very few candidates attempted this question. In general, good chord choice and identification of cadence points was evident, however, the descant line tended to be triadic and lacked sense of direction.

### **3.3.7 Composing Elective**

A small number of candidates (0.03%) took the composing elective option. The standard of composing electives presented was excellent. All compositions and/or arrangements displayed a very good degree of creativity and originality, and were very well constructed with very good musical development. The accompanying documentation included a very good detailed analysis of the compositions by the candidates.



### **3.4 Conclusions**

#### **3.4.1 Performing Examination – Core and Core + elective**

- The standard of performances was generally very high. This was evident across all genres.
- Music presented exceeded the required standard in many cases. A number of candidates performed their own compositions.
- There was evidence of unsuitable key choices in the case of some vocalists.
- A small number of candidates who presented technology were unfamiliar with the requirements of the examination

#### **3.4.2 Listening Examination**

- The standard of answering was higher in general aural skill questions than in questions on set works where more detail was needed.
- Candidates frequently gave generic answers to questions and neglected to refer to the musical excerpt which was played.

#### **3.4.3 Listening Elective**

Examiners noted that many answers were vague and lacked focus.

#### **3.4.4 Composing Examination**

- Answering in the Harmony section was better than that in the Melody Composition section.
- Many candidates had difficulty handling the minor key.
- In the better melodies, flair and imagination were in evidence.
- In weaker melodies “manipulation” rather than development of the given material was in evidence.
- In the Harmony section, most candidates handled the bass well.

#### **3.4.5 Composing Elective**

The standard of composing electives was very high. Examiners noted that creativity and originality were evident. The accompanying descriptions included detailed analyses of the compositions by the candidates.

## **Recommendations to Teachers and Students**

### **3.5.1 Performing examination - Core and Core + elective**

#### **Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should stress the requirements of the performing examination as laid out in the syllabus and in the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Candidates* that is issued to all school authorities annually by the SEC
- Teachers should ensure that the computer/version of software used by candidates on the day of the examination is the version with which they are familiar
- Teachers should advise students that there should not be more than two per part in group performances, regardless of genre. This is to ensure that the Examiner can accurately ascertain the input of each member of the group and award marks accordingly
- The format of the technology examination should be brought to the attention of students. It is as laid out on page 5 of the *Notes for the Information of Teachers and Candidates*. In the examination candidates are required to perform each task in the order listed therein when directed by the examiner to do so
- Teachers should advise candidates that the State Examinations Commission does not recommend any particular equipment or software for use in the examination – any sequencer or software that fulfills the requirements of the syllabus may be used. There is an abundance of suitable freeware available for downloading from the internet. As Leaving Certificate Music Technology is a performing option, it is important that students are aware that the music they are inputting is a performance – it should be audible both during the examination itself and during practice.

**Recommendations to Students:**

- Students should be familiar with all of the requirements in the performing examination and to choose programmes with care
- It is important that students choose musical genres with which they are comfortable
- Singers should take care that the pitch of songs lies within their vocal range – notes that are too high or too low can result in a forced tone or bad intonation which could mar an otherwise excellent performance
- Instrumentalists should present music that is within their technical ability
- Students presenting technology should choose music with similar care. Due to time constraints, it is not always possible to input a complete piece of music. Music in which all parts to be input start in the same bar tends to work best for most candidates
- Students should be completely familiar with the equipment that is to be used on the day of the examination.

**3.5.2 Listening examination - Core****Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should advise students to be familiar with all aspects of their prescribed works and Irish music and to have an adequate vocabulary in order to describe musical features, textures and style
- More attention needs to be paid to dictation.

**Recommendations to Students**

- Students should listen frequently to the prescribed works.
- In preparation for the aural skills question, students should listen to a wide range of music and practice using the vocabulary necessary to answer the examination questions. It is important to read all questions carefully.

- Unless otherwise stated, all answers should refer to the excerpt heard.

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

#### **Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should advise students to read the questions carefully in the examination and to answer what they have been asked.

#### **Recommendations to Students**

- Students should choose their topic carefully and undertake a detailed course of listening and study in relation to that topic which would enable them to describe musical features that relate directly to that topic.
- Students should be aware that a personal response is required in the examination.

### **3.5.4 Composing examination**

#### **Recommendations to Teachers**

- Teachers should advise students to focus on aural training in order to develop a keen sense of melodic writing. The ability to develop a given phrase, both melodically and rhythmically, is very important. Many candidates make the mistake of “manipulating” the given material rather than developing it.
- Teachers should guide students in relation to the level of practice required to be comfortable writing in both simple and compound time and in both major and minor keys.
- Teachers should stress the importance of being able to label a minor chord correctly and also to recognise and observe cadence points.
- Teachers should familiarize students with the use of strong chord progressions.

### **Recommendations to Students**

- Students should understand how to write a melody with or without an upbeat and to be comfortable writing in all major and minor key signatures, in simple and compound time as outlined in the syllabus
- In the melody writing section, questions should not be chosen because of their tonality but rather on the composition skill that has been studied and practiced (i.e. continuation of a given opening/text setting/composing to a given dance rhythm and form)
- In the harmony section students should observe cadence points and use good progressions. Students should take care in completing chord grids and ensure that the correct label is used for minor chords.
- Students should be familiar with the notes of both the treble and the bass staff. Students should read each question carefully and follow the instructions given in the question chosen.
- Students are advised to take the time allocated in answering two questions well rather than attempting to answer extra questions.

## 4 APPENDIX 1 - EXEMPLARS OF STANDARD

### COMPOSING PAPER (HIGHER LEVEL)

#### SECTION A – MELODY COMPOSITION

*Examples 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

##### EXAMPLE 1 – “A” standard melody

Flute       Violin       Clarinet       Descant recorder

Allegretto

5 *mf*

9 *mp*

13 *ff* *rit.*

- Style and imagination in evidence
- Melody grows naturally out of the opening phrase
- Excellent sense of direction and climax
- Dynamics (apart from their omission by the candidate at the opening) follow the natural flow of the melody from that point on.

## Q1 CONTINUATION OF A GIVEN OPENING

### EXAMPLE 2 – “B” standard

√ Flute       Violin       Clarinet       Descant recorder

*Allegretto*

*mp*

5

*f*

9

13

*mf* *f*

- Very good melodic development in answering phrase but no rhythmic development whatsoever.
- Very good sense of shape and structure
- Melody loses sense of direction at beginning of last phrase but recovers well.

## Q1 CONTINUATION OF A GIVEN OPENING

### EXAMPLE 3 – Low “D” standard

Flute       Violin       Clarinet       Descant recorder

*Allegretto*

5

9

13

#### Points for consideration:

- Unmusical use of augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> in bar 5
- Unmusical use of augmented 4<sup>th</sup> in bars 6 and 10
- Incorrect number of beats in bar 5 (4/4), bars 6, 7, 11 and 14 (7/8) and bar 15 (4/4)
- Rhythm not indicated in bar 13
- Incorrect final note
- Dynamics not indicated



## Q3 COMPOSING TO A GIVEN DANCE RHYTHM OR METRE OR FORM

### EXAMPLE 4 – High “C” standard

Violin     Clarinet     Flute     Violin

Moderato

*mf* *mp*

5 *mf* *f* *mp*

9 *mf* *f* *ff* *subito mp*

13 *mf* *dim.* *e* *rit.*

#### Points for consideration:

- Gavotte style maintained throughout but *rit* in last two bars not consistent with a dance.
- Weak melodic opening to second phrase – L.N. not resolved
- Good modulation to dominant
- Range good but no real sense of climax
- Fussy introduction of triplets in third and fourth phrases
- Choice of dynamics unusual at times  
(*mf* in bar 6, *f* after note in bar 8, sudden *ff* in bar 12)
- Good attempt at adhering to given form (the use of the same melody in bars 7 and 11 detracts slightly)
- Instrument not indicated

### Q3 COMPOSING TO A GIVEN DANCE RHYTHM OR METRE OR FORM

#### EXAMPLE 4 – Mid “D” standard

Violin     Clarinet     Flute     Violin

The musical score is written for a flute in 4/4 time, key of D major. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second staff, starting at measure 5, features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The third staff, starting at measure 9, is marked forte (*f*). The fourth staff, starting at measure 13, is marked fortissimo (*ff*). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

- Gavotte opening style maintained in phrases two and three but rhythmic integrity of the dance not maintained in phrases three and four
- Good modulation to the dominant
- Significance of crotchet rest as a rhythmic feature not understood – use in bars 7 and 12 not in keeping with style of given opening
- Awkward melodic line in bars 14 and 15
- Range restricted – range of given phrase only extended by a 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Placing of crescendo under rests in bars 7 and 12 weak