



LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

1999

MUSIC

**HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT
ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	1
1.1	Assessment structure	
2	PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES	3
2.1	Participation	
2.2	Grade Distribution	
3	ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATIONS – HIGHER LEVEL	6
3.1	Performing (core)	
3.2	Performing (elective)	
3.3	Listening (core)	
3.4	Listening (elective)	
3.5	Composition (core)	
3.6	Composition (elective)	
4	ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATIONS – ORDINARY LEVEL	14
4.1	Performing	
4.2	Listening	
4.3	Composition	
5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS	17
5.1	Performing	
5.2	Listening Elective	
5.3	Composition Elective	

1. BACKGROUND

A new Leaving Certificate Music syllabus was examined for the first time in 1999. The new syllabus is 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 is 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 new syllabus emphasises accessibility and enables students to develop their creativity within the three components of performing, listening and composing.

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

1.1 Assessment structures

Music at Leaving Certificate level is available at two levels – Higher and Ordinary. 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 Department. The listening and composing components are assessed by aural and written examinations respectively. These examinations are held in June.

The assessment structure allows Higher level candidates to specialise in the component of the course best suited to their aptitude, interest and ability. Essentially, this structure requires candidates to nominate one of the three components as their elective. In the case of performing, the elective consists of an extended performance: 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.

The listening elective consists of an written 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 to presenting a prepared tape.

Candidates taking the elective in composition submit two compositions for assessment. These are submitted at the time of taking the core composition examination in June.

There are 400 marks available for the examination. At Higher level, 100 marks are allotted 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 weighting of 100 marks each, giving a total of 400 marks for the examination.

The quality assurance process is underpinned by a comprehensive and transparent system of monitoring of the assessment processes in each of the three components. This ensures consistency in the application of the agreed marking schemes and evaluation criteria.

2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

2.1 Participation

There has been a steady increase in the number of candidates taking Music at Leaving Certificate level over the past three years. This can be attributed to a number of factors, including the greater accessibility of the subject due to the introduction of the Interim Arrangements in 1996, and the new syllabus being examined for the first time this year.

Leaving Certificate Music – Higher & Ordinary Levels

Profile by Number: 1997 – 1999

	1997	1998	1999
Ordinary level	232	277	444
%	14.5%	15.4%	14.8%
Higher level	1367	1522	2551
%	85.5%	84.6%	85.2%
Total	1599	1799	2995
% Increase	-	12.5%	66.6%

Leaving Certificate Music – Higher & Ordinary Levels

Profile by Gender: 1997 – 1999

Level	Gender	1997	1998	1999
Ordinary	Female	124	181	356
	%	72.1	77.0	80.1
	Male	48	54	88
	%	27.9	22.9	19.8
Higher	Female	1119	1269	2082
	%	69.9	70.5	81.6
	Male	244	252	469
	%	15.2	14.0	18.3
Total	Female	1300	1488	2438
	%	81.3	82.7	81.4
	Male	298	305	557
	%	18.6	16.9	18.5

2.2 Grade Distribution*

Leaving Certificate – Music

Higher Level Grades: 1997 - 1999

Grade	1997		1998		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A1	36	2.6	43	2.8	112	4.4
A2	87	6.4	74	4.9	353	13.8
B1	114	8.3	125	8.2	516	20.2
B2	156	11.4	156	10.2	545	21.4
B3	169	12.4	192	12.6	424	16.6
C1	181	13.2	204	13.4	298	11.7
C2	173	12.7	222	14.6	167	6.5
C3	153	11.2	180	11.8	73	2.9
D1	126	9.2	135	8.9	33	1.3
D2	99	7.2	92	6.0	18	0.7
D3	49	3.6	52	3.4	10	0.4
E	20	1.5	45	3.0	1	0.0
F	4	0.3	2	0.1	1	0.0
NG	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

* It should be noted that statistical comparison of grade distribution pre and post 1999 involves comparison of substantially different syllabi and assessment criteria.

Leaving Certificate – Music
Higher Level Aggregate Grades: 1997 - 1999

Grade	1997		1998		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	123	9.0	117	7.7	465	18.2
B	439	32.1	473	31.1	1485	58.2
C	507	37.1	606	39.8	538	21.1
D	274	20.0	279	18.3	61	2.4
E	20	1.5	45	3.0	1	0.0
F	4	0.3	2	0.1	1	0.0
NG	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Leaving Certificate – Music
Ordinary Level Grades: 1997 - 1999

Grade	1997		1998		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A1	2	0.9	0	0.0	10	2.3
A2	0	0.0	0	0.0	59	13.3
B1	11	4.7	3	1.1	102	23.0
B2	30	12.9	13	4.7	100	22.5
B3	35	15.1	25	9.0	74	16.7
C1	34	14.7	26	9.4	55	12.4
C2	32	13.8	37	13.4	29	6.5
C3	36	15.5	42	15.2	6	1.4
D1	23	9.9	39	14.1	5	1.1
D2	6	2.6	35	12.6	1	0.2
D3	7	3.0	23	8.3	1	0.2
E	14	6.0	27	9.7	1	0.2
F	1	0.4	5	1.8	1	0.2
NG	1	0.4	2	0.7	0	0.0

Leaving Certificate – Music
Ordinary Level Aggregate Grades: 1997 - 1999

Grade	1997		1998		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	2	0.9	0	0.0	69	15.6
B	76	32.8	41	14.8	276	62.2
C	102	43.9	105	37.9	90	20.3
D	36	15.5	97	35.0	7	1.5
E	14	6.0	27	9.7	1	0.2
F	1	0.4	5	1.8	1	0.2
NG	1	0.4	2	0.7	0	0.0

3. ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATIONS – HIGHER LEVEL

3.1 Performing Core

- Standard of Performance:** 431 students presented for examination at Higher level (non-elective), with 255 offering one activity, and 176 offering two activities. In general the standard was very good, with many excellent examples of music making in both solo and group performing. Good interaction and enjoyment was in evidence amongst group performers and many performances were above the required standard. A small number of students presented pieces that were beyond their capabilities.
- Frequently Encountered Options:** Solo performing was the most popular option. The most common instrument was the piano, while the recorder and other wind instruments were also popular. Solo and group singing were very popular with those who chose two activities as were recorder, popular and traditional groups. A small number of candidates opted for the music technology option. The options chosen by Higher level (core) candidates is as follows:

Solo Singing	Group Singing	Solo Performing	Group Performing	Technology	Conducting	Improvisation
119	114	260	76	10	0	1
20%	20%	45%	13%	2%	0%	0%

- **Pieces - type, choice and balance:** Programmes presented were imaginative in choice, well balanced and varied. Styles ranged from classical to popular to traditional. Many students opted to sing/play their own compositions. A small number of students performed pieces that were below standard, or their programmes contained pieces that were too similar in tempo, mood etc.
- **Unseen Tests:** Aural memory (rhythm) was by far the most popular option and was attempted mainly by singers. The second most popular option was sight-reading, which was frequently attempted by instrumentalists including traditional players. In general, the standard was very high. The students who attempted the melodic aural memory tended not to score as well. Some students had problems with the last two bars in the aural memory and a few students were not prepared for the options. The unseen test options chosen by Higher level (core) candidates may be summarised as follows:

Aural Memory Rhythm	Aural Memory Melody	Sight reading	Conducting	Improvisation
305	22	98	0	4
71%	5%	23%	0%	1%

3.2 Performing elective

- **Standard of Performance:** 2097 students presented for examination at the Higher Level (elective), with 810 offering one activity and 1287 offering two activities. In general the standard was excellent, with many students performing above the required standard. Traditional performers, in particular, excelled. Examiners commented on the impressive range and quality of music making taking place in schools. The standard of singing was very high with many students showing excellent commitment in communication and expression.
- **Frequently Encountered Options:** Solo performing was the most popular option with the piano, recorder and guitar the more popular instruments. Solo and group singing closely followed, especially in schools where there is a strong choral tradition. Recorder, rock and trad groups also featured strongly. Solo performing or solo singing was the most popular option for those students who performed one activity. A small number opted for the music technology option. The options presented by Higher level (elective) candidates is as follows:

Solo Singing	Group Singing	Solo Performing	Group Performing	Technology	Conducting	Improvisation
637	618	1491	433	14	0	4
20%	19%	47%	13.5%	.5%	0%	0%

- Pieces - type, choice and balance: Programmes presented were well chosen, balanced and varied, and in general highlighted the musical strengths of the candidates. Styles ranged from classical to pop to rock to traditional with many students performing in a mixture of styles. Some students prepared too many or too few pieces or pieces that were too difficult or too long.
- Unseen Tests: Aural memory (rhythm) was the most popular option, followed by sight-reading. The aural memory (melody) was least popular. In general the students coped well and the standard was high. Some students found the sight-reading difficult. Some students had problems with the last two bars in the aural memory. The small number of candidates who chose the improvisation option succeeded very well. The unseen test options chosen by Higher level elective candidates is as follows:

Aural Memory Rhythm	Aural Memory Melody	Sight reading	Conducting	Improvisation
1151	76	855	0	12
55%	3.6%	40.8%	0%	.6%

3.3 Core Listening Paper

- **Participation**

2543 candidates sat the Higher level paper.

- **Answering**

In this paper candidates were required to answer all questions. In general, questions five (Irish Music) and six (aural skills) were generally very well answered. The questions on the set works were less successfully answered.

Q.1 This was a low-marking question. Problems occurred in Section A (ii) where many candidates only identified one characteristic instead of two, Section C (ii) where differences other than in the melody were named, and Section C (iii) where either the answering tended to be vague, or comparisons were not made between the two themes.

- Q.2 The answering here was better than in Question one. However, many candidates had difficulty identifying the word at which the pedal note changed.
- Q.3 This question was generally well answered and many candidates received full marks. Some candidates confused production techniques with instrumental techniques, while others had difficulty explaining the identified techniques.
- Q.4 Question four produced some uneven answering. In part (i), most candidates identified the violin, but many incorrectly named the viola rather than the cello. In part (iv), the term "clusters" was named by most candidates, but generally the explanation, when given, was unsatisfactory. In part (v) many candidates mis-read the question and named instrumental techniques that occurred in the section quoted. Others confused instrumental technique with compositional technique. *Flautando* and *harmonics* were the instrumental techniques most frequently named.
- Q.5 This question was very well answered generally, particularly section A where the majority of candidates successfully identified the instruments played. They were less successful in outlining the treatment of the tune, its influences and style. In section B, candidates who answered parts (i) or (ii) tended to score higher marks. However, a number of candidates misinterpreted "recent decades" for "recent centuries" in part (i), with a number making reference to the Belfast Harp Festival.
- Q.6 Question six produced excellent answering, especially in section C (iii), where the candidates were required to fill in the missing pitches and in section C (iv) indicating the points of chord change. However, very few candidates identified the triplets of section B (iii).

3.4 Listening Elective

- **Tapes**

Some candidates prepared their tapes well, with each excerpt introduced, and in many cases explained why the extract had been chosen. In other cases, however, the extracts were very long and were not connected with the chosen topic. Some tapes had no title, and the excerpts were not listed on the inlay card.

- **Sources**

Some candidates gave detailed sources, some offered very vague references, and a small number did not seem to have undertaken the study required. Most candidates named five relevant pieces of music.

- **Chosen Topic**

The topics chosen were varied and interesting on the whole. Many candidates wrote a well-developed account of their chosen topic indicating much research and listening. In a small number of cases, evidence of research or listening was scanty and reference to musical features was minimal. The topics are listed below, according to genre.

Art Music

Gregorian Music	Music from the Romantic Era
Baroque Devices and Characteristics	Romantic Music in Europe and Russia
Handel's Oratorios	Chamber Music
Classical Music	Death in the Music of Mahler
Classical Symphonies of Haydn, Beethoven & Mozart	Symphony Fantastique
The Classical Symphony	The Rite of Spring
The Form of the Classical Symphony	The Four Seasons
Beethoven – the Composer and his Music	Die Schöne Mullerin
19 th Century Romanticism – The Masters of Change	Impressionistic Music
Romantic Composers Beethoven and Tchaikovsky	Strauss – Dance Music for Dressage
The Solo Concerto	
The Development of the Concerto from Vivaldi to Bartok in contrast with the Symphony	

Opera, Musicals and Film Music

Opera	Film Music
Opera Music	Music for Silent Movies
Opera: early opera – modern opera	Music for Silent Movies & Bernard Herman
Italian Opera (1800 – 1900)	Music from Walt Disney's Films
The Savoy Operas by Gilbert & Sullivan	Music composed for films
Musicals	The Importance of Music in Film
The Musicals of Andrew Lloyd-Webber	Film Music 1960 - 1998
Music from Film Musicals	The Film Music of John Williams
A Contrast between Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Musicals and Opera	
Contemporary American Film Music in contrast to Silent Classical Film Music	

Ethnic Music

African Music	The Flamenco Guitar
African Music & Instruments	East European Folk Music
Javanese Music	Indian Classical Music
The Influence of Flamenco on the Spanish Romantic Composers	

Irish Music

Irish Traditional Music	Modern Irish Music in the 70's & 80's
Irish Traditional Music from My Area	Contemporary Irish Art Music
Irish Traditional Music in the region of Borrisoleigh	The Irish Bagpipe
The Composition of Paddy O'Brien	Celine Dion and Sean N3s
C3il3 Dances & Music in the 90's	The Music of Clannad
The Boomtown Rats – A New Wave of Irish Music	The Music of The Corrs
A study of U2's musical style, influence, background and approach to writing	

Popular Music

An Introduction to Gospel Music & It's History	The History of Jazz
Gospel Music	Early Jazz
New Country Music	Modern Jazz
Latin American & Modern Dancing	New Orleans Jazz
Popular Music of the 60's and 70's	Irish Jazz
The Beatles	Hip Hop and Gangster Rap
The Music of the Beatles (Early Music)	Megadeth
George Martin – The Fifth Beatle	The Doors
Are Oasis the Next Beatles?	Rock Music
Themes and Variations in Classical Music and Jazz	Women in Popular Music
The Rise and Rise of Black Women in Music in the 20 th Century	

3.5 Composition (Core)

- **Participation**

2539 candidates sat the Higher level paper.

- **Answering**

In the Composition Paper, candidates were required to answer two questions, one from Section A and one from Section B.

- **Section A – Melody Composition**

Q.1 This question was by far the most popular and was quite well answered on the whole. In many cases, the quality of the melody was affected by lack of attention to shape and climax. Although most candidates included a modulation, the ability to approach and quit the change of key in a musical manner proved more difficult.

Q.2 There was a wide range of standards evident in the answers here. A number of candidates scored well with an imaginative melody and a good marriage of words and music. However, the weaker candidates tended to produce melodies with a very small range. They also had difficulty identifying the stressed syllables in the text.

Q.3 There were some very good responses to this question. Candidates who scored well coped well with the compound time. The less successful candidate tended to write in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and also frequently failed to maintain the structure of the gigue. Phrasing also proved to be a problem here, with many candidates missing the significance of the upbeat quaver in the given opening.

- **Section B – Harmony**

Q.4 In general, this question was not well answered. Although inserting the bass notes caused few problems, most candidates had difficulty in producing a good melodic line. The chords of Bb/D and F/A posed particular difficulty and the bass line tended to be repeated several times in the melody at these points. In general the harmonic implications were given insufficient attention.

Q.5 This question was the choice of the majority of candidates and some excellent work was in evidence. In most cases, over 75% of the chords inserted were correct and there was a good awareness of key. However, a number of candidates omitted to indicate the minor tonality of chords. This occurred not only where chord symbols were used, but also involved the use of Roman numerals. Continuing in the style of the given part also proved an obstacle for some.

Q.6 Very few candidates attempted this question. Of those who did, some had difficulty with the melodic line, which tended to be repetitive and within a limited range. The descant aspect was also largely neglected.

3.6 Composition Elective

Some very impressive compositions were submitted in this elective. The successful candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of compositional techniques. The styles of composition varied from the traditional and conventional to the more contemporary. There were some interesting and varied combinations of instruments and voices employed. A number of candidates submitted a tape with the score.

4. ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATIONS - ORDINARY LEVEL

4.1 Performing

- **Standard of Performance:** 423 students presented at this level. The standard at this level was generally very good to excellent, especially in solo and group singing.

Candidates were well prepared and they exhibited a sense of enjoyment in their performances. Many students performed well above the required standard.

- **Frequently Encountered Options:** Solo and group singing were the most popular options, followed closely by solo performing on piano, recorder and guitar. Those who performed in groups participated well especially in the rock and recorder groups. Many solo singers choose to perform with backing tracks, and in some cases, there were some entry and pitch problems. It was evident in a small number of cases, that there was a lack of adequate rehearsal and preparation. The options chosen by Ordinary level candidates are as follows:

Solo Singing	Group Singing	Solo Performing	Group Performing	Technology	Conducting	Improvisation
143	120	109	50	0	1	0
34%	28%	26%	12%	0%	0%	0%

- **Pieces - type, choice and balance:** Examiners noted that care had been taken with the choice of pieces ensuring that the students performed to their strengths. Most programmes were well balanced and contrasting. The styles presented included classical, pop, folk/traditional, jazz, musicals and pieces from the choral repertoire. Some students performed their own compositions. A few songs were chosen to suit the accompaniment rather than the singer.
- **Unseen Tests:** Over 90% of candidates presenting at Ordinary level chose the aural memory (rhythm) option. Most students were well prepared and achieved high marks. Students did not cope so well with the aural memory (melody) or sight-reading options. Some students had problems with the last two bars in the aural memory when they had responded well to the first 6 bars. The unseen test options chosen by Ordinary level candidates are as follows:

Aural Memory Rhythm	Aural Memory Melody	Sight reading	Conducting	Improvisation
395	6	21	0	0
94%	1%	5%	0%	0%

4.2 Listening

- **Participation**

439 candidates sat the Ordinary level paper.

- **Answering**

In this paper candidates were required to answer all questions. On the whole, the paper was well answered by the majority of candidates.

Q1: This question was generally well answered, with section A (iii) receiving almost completely correct responses. This was in contrast to section A (i), where candidates often confused the sound of clarinet and oboe. Very few candidates scored full marks for section B (ii).

Q2: Candidates scored well in this question, with above average scoring in evidence.

Q3: This question was also well answered and many candidates achieved over 50% of the marks allocated.

Q4: This question produced mixed results. Sections (ii) and (iv) were well answered, but few candidates recognised "staccato" in section (iii), and the explanations for "hand clusters" in section (v) were inadequate on the whole.

Q5: This question proved difficult for many candidates, with very few achieving full marks. The identification of "hornpipe" in section A (i) was generally incorrect, and many candidates did not attempt section C (ii) where two reasons had to be given for choice of influence in section C(i).

Q6: This was very well answered, except for section C (iii) where a number of candidates had difficulty with the word "omitted".

4.3 Composition Paper

Section A – Melody Composition

- Q.1 This was a popular choice and the answering was generally satisfactory. Some melodies had little sense of contour, but most candidates were successful in finishing on the tonic.
- Q.2 A very small number of candidates attempted this question. Composing a rhythm to match the given text proved problematic, and the resultant melodies tended to lack shape.
- Q.3 Many melodies here had a limited sense of shape, and in general, the style of the minuet or gavotte was not adhered to. However, a good sense of key was maintained throughout.

Section B – Harmony

- Q.4 This was a popular choice of question and most candidates provided accurate information in the grid. The cadences were well handled although unwieldy leaps in the melody occurred frequently. Most candidates followed the given rhythmic pattern.
- Q.5 The answering was less successful here. Many candidates failed to match the chord symbol and bass note, which resulted in unusual sounding cadences. There was also much unmusical leaping in the bass line.
- Q.6 A small number of candidates attempted this question. Lack of control was in evidence at the cadence points and the descant notes tended to be selected without reference to the relevant chords.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

5.1 Performing

- Teachers and students are advised that the time allocation for each candidates for the Leaving Certificate Music Practical Examinations in 2000 are as follows:

Ordinary level	10 minutes
Higher level	15 minutes
Higher level (elective)	25 minutes

- Requirements for the Practical Examinations, as outlined in the Supplementary Assessment information issued to schools during the school year 98/99, may be summarised as follows:

Ordinary Level

Two songs or pieces One unprepared test

Higher Level (core, one performing activity)

Three songs or pieces One unprepared test

Higher level (core, two performing activities)

Two songs or pieces *in each performing activity* One unprepared test

Higher Level Elective (one activity)

Six songs or pieces One unprepared test

Higher Level Elective (two performing activities)

Four songs or pieces *in each performing activity* **One** unprepared test

- A performing activity may consist of any one of the following:
 - Solo singing
 - Group singing
 - Harmony to be an integral part of this activity, where appropriate
 - No more than two candidates per part will be allowed in each group
 - The contribution of each candidate to the performance must be identifiable to the examiner.
 - Solo playing
 - Group playing (as group singing above)
 - Technology

- f) Conducting
- g) Improvisation
- These categories may not be mixed *within one performing activity*
- The standard required for both Ordinary and Higher level performances is that which can be achieved as a result of five years class-based activity.
- It is essential that students have the necessary facilities for their performing requirements. Examinations Branch should be notified in advance if facilities are not available.

5.2 Listening Elective

- It is advisable that candidates monitor their tapes before submitting them for examination. The following should be noted:
 - The candidate's examination number should be written clearly on the tape and on the inlay card.
 - All recorded excerpts should be listed on the inlay card
 - Each excerpt should be no longer than thirty seconds.
 - The tape should be rewound and ready to play.
- The Listening Elective is intended to assess the personal response of a candidate to the topic of his/her choice (see Syllabus, page 12, 2.3.5). It is not envisaged, therefore, that the same recording be utilised by more than one candidate; i.e. the copying/dubbing of tapes by groups of students should not be encouraged.

5.3 Composition Elective

The following requirements for the Composition Elective should be noted (Leaving Certificate Music Syllabus, page 9, 2.2.3):

- A full written description of the composition should accompany each elective when submitting it for examination.
- Where electro-acoustic music is being submitted, a prepared tape is a necessary requirement.