

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

**JUNE 2005**

**MUSIC**

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**MUSIC  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION  
JUNE 2005**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

**Introduction**

Four hundred and eleven candidates from 79 centres in ten territories wrote the 2005 CSEC Music examination. This represents a 20% increase in candidacy, over the previous year. The examination is offered at the general proficiency level only.

The syllabus offers three papers in three profiles - Listening and Appraising (LIAP), Performing (PERF) and Composing (COMP) - which are organised as seen in the table below.

PAPER	PROFILE/SECTION/OPTION				
<b>01</b>	LIAP (Profile 1) Section I - Musical Perception	LIAP (Profile 1) Section II - Musical Literacy			LIAP (Profile 1) Section III - Set Works
<b>02</b>	PERF (Profile 2) Section I - Performing		COMP (Profile 3) Section II - Composing		
<b>03</b>	SBA (Profile 1)				
	LIAP I Worship	LIAP II Live Performance	LIAP III Musical Advertisements	LIAP IV Caribbean Performer/Composer	LIAP V Caribbean Folk Form/Practice

Paper 01 comprises three compulsory sections based on the listening profile – Musical Perception, Musical Literacy, and Set Works. Paper 02 is a practical paper comprising two profiles, Performing (PERF) and Composing (COMP). Paper 03 is a School-Based Assessment (SBA) with five options based on the listening and appraising profile.

**Paper 01**

Paper 01 assesses candidates' ability to respond to the structural and expressive elements of music, using appropriate musical vocabulary. Candidates discuss the application of these elements to different genres and styles and develop a critical ear to the sound of music. Section I (Musical Perception) is assessed by short-response and multiple-choice questions based on unprepared recorded excerpts. Section II (Musical Literacy) requires the application of practical and theoretical knowledge in responding to questions based on a printed score with corresponding audio. Section III (Set Works) presents questions based on three prepared musical works, which candidates study over an extended period. Candidates are required to answer questions based on one set work only. Detailed study of a single major work can provide candidates with analytical skills and insights applicable to a wide variety of musics.

Excellent performance was seen in Paper 01 responses, with 76% of the candidates gaining marks ranging between 22 and 46 out of a total of 50. The 24% who fell below this score were unprepared for the paper. One hundred and thirty-one candidates (43%) scored less than 30 marks. These candidates seldom used appropriate musical vocabulary to communicate their responses. They appeared to need more practise and experience in analysing music. Greater application could significantly improve performance in both sections two and three.

Teachers should provide more opportunity for students to gain experience in analysing music other than the set works, in order to broaden their experience in appraising music of different styles and idioms.

## **Paper 02**

Paper 02 comprises two practical components, profile two (Performing) and profile three (Composing). The performing (PERF) profile assesses candidates' technical competencies in playing an instrument or singing, which are assessed at three levels - elementary, intermediate and advanced. Candidates are required to demonstrate understanding of interpretive detail and convey meaning through the use of expression, articulation and nuance. Candidates are assessed on a live presentation in which trained territorial examiners award marks based on a prepared programme. Composing is marked by the examining committee, by means of portfolios (manuscripts or printed scores) and audio recordings submitted by candidates. During the performing examination, candidates present one of their two main compositions in a live performance. This encourages the creation of realistic compositions and allows candidates to demonstrate ownership of their work. Both profiles involve candidate participation in a *viva voce* discussion to further substantiate the validity of their work in the two areas.

Paper 02 results reflect a mixed response to the two profiles (PERF and COMP). Candidates displayed a typically high level of performing skills in the PERF component, reflecting the high level of performing skills existing among candidates, and the people of the Caribbean in general. Approximately 82% of the candidates achieved grade ranges of 1-3. In the composing examination, many candidates submitted exemplary work for assessment. There were others, however, who needed to apply more technical knowledge and originality in order to achieve better results. Careful monitoring and guidance from teachers should encourage a more systematic and methodical approach by the candidates for examination.

## **Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)**

Paper 03 (the School-Based Assessment) provides opportunity for candidates to reinforce their work in the listening and appraising profile (LIAP). The assignments are intended to be interactive, rather than being mainly data-research based, and marks are awarded largely for musical analysis. The paper offers five options, as shown in the following table. Teachers mark candidates' scripts using criteria established by Council, and submit a sample of their marked scripts for moderation by the examining committee.

<b>LIAP I</b>	<b>LIAP II</b>	<b>LIAP III</b>	<b>LIAP IV</b>	<b>LIAP V</b>
Worship	Musical Performance	Musical Advertisements	Caribbean Performer/Composer	Caribbean Folk Form/Practice

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **PAPER 01 - LIAP**

#### **Section I – Musical Perception**

#### **Question 1**

This question required candidates to identify texture, timbre, genre and performance technique in an excerpt played four times. Timbre, in this context, was related to the ethnographic classification of musical instruments

(aerophones, membranophones, etc.), and was a challenge for candidates who were unfamiliar with this aspect of the syllabus.

### **Question 2**

Question two was based on a traditional folk music excerpt, which tested candidates' ability to recognise the predominance of different musical features and to identify broad categorisations of musical instrumentation/texture.

### **Question 3**

One of the most broad-based questions in this section of the paper, question three addressed a mixed range of abilities among candidates. The majority of candidates performed well in Question 3 (a), focusing on the application of major/minor tonality. Question 3 (b) (i) dealt with instrumental classification. Candidates responded very well in identifying the family to which the solo instrument belonged. There was limited logical follow-through. In Question 3 (b) (ii), candidates were asked to name another instrument belonging to the same family as the solo instrument. Quite a number of persons named the solo instrument instead of another member of the same family. Question 3 (c) separated the more casual candidates from those with more competent visual/aural skills. It required candidates to identify, from among three visual representations, the main theme heard in the excerpt. Candidates with the requisite level of musical literacy skills were able to cope easily with this part of the question. The more competent candidates were able to perform well in Question 3 (d), which focused on knowledge of musical structure.

### **Question 4**

This question challenged students' working knowledge of the Jazz/Blues idiom. Although many persons were able to identify the solo instrument [4 (a) (ii)], fewer were able to name the kind of scale used [4 (b)], suggest a dominant feature of thematic treatment [4 (c)], or describe the articulation of the first solo instrument heard [4 (a) (i)]. This made it evident that more emphasis was needed on the exploration of the idiom at the upper-secondary level.

### **Question 5**

Many candidates found the question rather challenging - particularly 5 (b), where the emphasis was on analysing the formal structure of the excerpt. The responses to the first part of the question [5 (a) ] were very positive, while 5 (c) clearly separated the musically literate from the non-readers, despite its intention to use simple note values.

## **Section II – Musical Literacy**

Music literacy questions allow candidates to respond to audio and print music through the application of theoretical skills within a holistic framework (there is no examination of isolated theory). Candidates make predominant use of their reading, writing and interpretive skills. This section has often been a weak one for the more intuitive student musician who plays well but has never learnt to read and write music. Successful candidates are those whose musical literacy keeps pace with the development of their practical skills.

## Question 6

Question 6 was based on a recorded excerpt with a corresponding printed score, requiring candidates to respond to both the score and the audio. Several candidates were unable to insert the appropriate time (metre) signature in question 6 (a) (i), despite the presence of the score, which should have served to make the bar grouping quite evident. Teachers, as well as students, should be aware that, apart from regular 2-pulse 3-pulse and 4-pulse measures, irregular groupings, such as quintuple (5-pulse) and septuple (7-pulse) measures (as in Greek music) also exist.

Question 6 (a), (ii) was challenging for more candidates than anticipated. It required the insertion of a suitable dynamic symbol at a point indicated in the score, based on the actual audio. Question 6 (b) and (c) related to tempo and form; candidates were asked to select from a list, in each case, the most appropriate term to identify these two elements. Responses to tempo were more successful than those to form, suggesting that structural analysis may be a weak instructional area in candidate preparation.

Question 6 (d), (e) and (f) tested candidates' understanding of major-minor tonality, tonic-dominant relationships, the use of expression symbols and intervallic structure. Candidates scored well in some areas, but the obviously weaker areas were tonic-dominant relationships and intervallic structure. It was always easy to identify the size of an interval, but candidates found it difficult to determine the quality of these intervals (e.g., major, minor, perfect).

In question 6 (g), the task was to compare two melodic phrases (by examining the score) and identify two differences. In many instances candidates gave two responses that pointed to a single factor, instead of naming two independent differences. Knowledge of cadences was less satisfactory than expected; less than half the responses were correct. The transposition exercise (question 6 (i)) had a wide range of responses. Candidates whose knowledge of intervals was secure had no difficulty finding the new key (down a minor 3rd from the original). Some persons successfully identified the new key, but wrote the wrong intervals for the melodic excerpt, while obvious confusion caused others to write the correct key-signature yet use superfluous accidentals in the transposition.

## Section III – Set Works

### Question 7 – “Pictures at an Exhibition”

Approximately 29% of the population attempted questions based on this set work. Responses were largely encouraging. Candidates responded well to question 7 (a), in which they were asked to appraise elements of programme music (music portrayal of story characters). A number of persons did not understand that the term, *non-traditional instruments*, in question 7 (b), was used in relation to the symphony orchestra. Teachers need to address this by examining musical aggregations in different musical eras (wind orchestra, string orchestra, symphony orchestra, etc.). Candidates found question 7 (c) the most challenging, as it called for memory of detailed analysis of the work. The question required candidates to identify a number of statements with the appropriate sections of the work. Question 7 (d) and (e), based on the *promenade* (a recurrent theme) required candidates to compare different appearances of the promenade and state its significance to the work. These were answered correctly by the majority. The last two questions related to the origin and instrumentation of the composition. While many candidates answered correctly, it was surprising that there were those who could not name one melodic and one non-melodic percussion instrument used in the orchestration.

### Question 8 – “Gospel Mass”

The most popular of the three set works, *Gospel Mass* was done by 51% of the examination population. One reason for its popularity may be that it is the most accessible of the pieces. Candidate performance on this

question was commendable, the main difficulties were in 8 (d) and (i). Question 8 (d) is both a visual and an aural question; candidates should recognize the figure from seeing the score as well as listening to the excerpt. In this context, seeing is also 'hearing,' therefore those who have limited facility in deciphering a score would benefit less from the aural impact of the visual presentation. Question 8 (i), similar to the previous set work [7 (c)], was also challenging for candidates who were unprepared for the details of analysis required.

### **Question 9 – “Faces of Trinidad and Tobago”**

Feedback has indicated that this set work (score and audio) is the least accessible of the three. This could account for the smaller number (about 20%) that responds to questions based on the work, which is studied mainly within its country of origin. Candidate response to the work has continued to improve over the years, however, as teachers become more familiar with the demands of its analysis and the nature of the questions. The majority of candidates performed well in Question 9 (a), (b), (d) and (e). Their main challenges, however, came in relation to 9 (c), (f) and (g). These questions demanded more than a cursory understanding of the work. All three questions tested a more detailed analysis of the rhythmic/melodic, harmonic and expressive features of the composition.

## **PAPER 02**

### **Profile II – PERF**

Candidates must present a single instrument for examination, rather than playing one solo piece on one instrument and a second solo piece on a second instrument. In other words, candidates must commit themselves to one instrument and try to achieve greater competencies, instead of making a mediocre presentation on two instruments. Candidates must adhere to syllabus guidelines. There was evidence of departure from the guidelines in some territories.

Performing usually shows a wide range of candidate competencies, varying from very elementary skills to advanced technical proficiency. The PERF profile is therefore assessed at three levels - elementary, intermediate and advanced. Some teachers enter intermediate and elementary candidates at a higher level in the hope that the candidate could gain an advantage. It is, however, the repertoire that the candidate is able to manage that determines his or her competence. Examiners make the final decision about candidates' competency, based on the music presented. Those who are entered at the wrong level are reassigned.

More than 80% of the candidates attained a passing grade for the performing profile. Sixty-six persons (22% of those graded) achieved top scores of 45-59 out of a possible 60 marks; another 91 persons (30.33%) scored 36-44 marks; and 31.33% (94 persons) scored 27-35 of the available marks. The remaining 16.34% (49 candidates) did not achieve a passing score for the profile.

File preparation is an obvious problem in the examination. Candidates enter the examination room with pieces of paper (scores) from which they perform, and no provision is made to give the examiner access to copies of the music. There are others who, having no scores (or being unable to read the music), perform from memory, thus leaving examiners to guess whether their performance is an accurate representation of an actual score. It is impossible to make fair judgement in such cases, because intended articulation and expressive detail cannot be determined without a score.

Some candidates fail to present a PERF repertoire to the examiner, and put themselves at the disadvantage of losing valuable marks. Marks are awarded, based on the repertoire covered over the two years of preparation. The file should reflect solo as well as ensemble pieces, and there are specific guidelines governing the allocation of marks. Examiners should grade the PERF files and return them to the candidates; they should not forward these files to the Registrar.

### **Profile III – COMP**

Candidates achieved an exemplary standard in the 2004 examination but this trend became less evident in the 2005 examination. There was evidence that the lack of experience by some teachers impacted on the standard of the examination. Teachers are encouraged to read syllabus guidelines carefully and to collaborate with colleagues who have more experience in preparing candidates for the examination. Seventy-one percent (213 candidates) gained passing marks in the COMP profile (as compared with 76% in 2004), with 14.7% at the top level (37-49 marks), 24.7% at the next level (30-36 marks), and 31.7% (22-29 marks) just above the required standard.

Many of the problems have been recurrent ones, indicating that some teachers pay little attention to feedback given in the schools report. It is recommended that teachers read the 2004 as well as previous reports to gain insights into common problems encountered over the years. It has been clearly stated that candidates who offer their own compositions as solo performance items will be penalised. There are even further penalties for the duplication of items between different sections of the examination - e.g., a piece offered simultaneously for COMP, and PERF, COMP and ensemble or solo and ensemble. No single examination item can be awarded more than one set of marks; the duplicated item will, therefore, be disqualified from one of the sections in which it appears.

Compositions that are isolated melodic lines (no instrumentation indicated) cannot be assessed in timbral context, and candidates will therefore forfeit the available marks, except for those given for rhythmic/melodic development. Candidates are reminded that songs represented only by lyrics cannot be treated as music, and will be disqualified. Arrangements of copyrighted material should carry an indication of the source, and the original score must be included in the COMP file. In addition, compositions and SBA projects submitted on micro cassettes and video tapes WILL NOT BE MARKED. The accepted formats are audio cassettes or CDs.

It is important for teachers to note that the improved exploration of alternative composition modes (sound collages, Veitch compositions, etc.) evident in the 2004 examination was the correct procedure. As candidates continue to investigate these modes, greater efforts should be made to bring the compositions to a worthwhile standard showing some development and achievements. Elemental fragments are not adequate for the expected standard at this level. Teachers should try to create their own compositions, in order to improve their ability to determine realistic standards in candidates' work and gain better insights into the requirements of the process.

Most persons have started to take the Declaration and the Composition Profile Analysis forms more seriously. It seems however, that only the new Composition Profile Analysis (CPA) forms were distributed, and not the Declaration form, which had considerably improved the administration of the 2004 examination. The CPA form seemed to have been used as a replacement for the Declaration form, although this was not required or stated. Candidates must include both forms in their COMP portfolio either lose valuable marks or cause their work to remain ungraded. It should be absolutely clear that **NO COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO WITHOUT A DECLARATION WILL BE GRADED.**

### **PAPER 03 – SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)**

A number of excellent SBA samples were received for moderation, some of them far in advance of the standard expected at this level. The positive consistency seen in teacher's marking in 2004 declined, however, in the 2005 examination. Again, this problem seemed mainly to have resulted from the lack of experience of new teachers in the system. Choice of project followed the usual pattern of preferences, with project III (Musical Advertisements) attracting the greatest interest, and project II (Musical Performance) attracting the least number of candidates.

Project III seems to be the most popular due to its accessibility for candidates who find it convenient to work at home, at their own pace, with brief musical sketches that they can discard and replace as preferred. Comparatively, public concerts (as required for Project II) may not always be available at times convenient to the candidate. Moreover, it may be more challenging to arrange for a recording of the programme, and the music to be analysed is longer and often more technical. Both kinds of experiences and abilities are needed regionally, therefore the examination has provided opportunity for those who prefer these options.

Projects I, IV and V were moderately popular, in the same order as last year. The most “bookish” presentations were seen in Project V (Caribbean Folk Form/Practice). Candidates lost marks for lifting extraneous material from published sources and sites and then followed through with superficial analysis. A general shortcoming was the lack of adherence to the syllabus guidelines for the submission of projects. One common error seen in Project I (Worship) was candidates’ submitting general dissertations about two denominations without basing their investigation on an actual visit to different places of worship. In such cases, musical examples were selected from audio or print publications and comments were disembodied from actual performance practice, as seen in the field. Projects based on studio recordings, where music should have been collected ‘in the field’ (e.g., in Projects I and II) had to be rejected. Isolated incidences of collusion and submission of projects in unacceptable recording formats (video tapes) caused others to be disqualified. Candidates are reminded that the projects are intended to be interactive and investigative. They should also recognise that the focus of these projects is musical analysis, and be guided by the criteria set out in the mark scheme. In order for CXC to provide maximum support and guidance for those teachers and their candidates who use CXC guidelines for SBA projects, amplified guidelines will be circulated throughout the region well in advance of the 2006 examination.

## CONCLUSION

Significant growth in the examination population over the past years has brought to the fore three concerns about quality control. Examination requirements and guidelines must be clear and unambiguous; syllabus support material (such as set works) must be more accessible to all patrons; and many school administrators are now using candidate performance in the examination as a standard.