

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2010

**MUSIC
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

**Copyright © 2010 Caribbean Examinations Council
St Michael, Barbados
All rights reserved.**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The May/June 2010 examination in Music was the 12th sitting of the examination at the General Proficiency level.

The Music Examination comprises three papers which assesses three profiles. Paper 01 consists of three sections and assesses Profile 1, Listening and Appraising (LIAP). Paper 02 is divided into two sections, comprising Profile 2, Performing (PERF) and Profile 3, Composing (COMP). Paper 03, the School-Based Assessment (SBA), contains five optional questions based on the LIAP Profile.

The examination assessed nearly 600 candidates this year. However, registration of approximately 800 candidates indicates that there is a significant attrition between registration and candidates who sit all sections of the examination.

The overall performance of candidates declined when compared to 2009. Fifty-two per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III compared to 56 per cent in 2009. Candidates were not sufficiently prepared in all aspects of the examination and did not apply musical skills and knowledge across the various profiles and sections of the examination. Hence, teaching strategies need to be more holistic, whereby candidates can experience the inter-relations among the three main profiles of Listening and Appraising, Composing, and Performing. Teachers are reminded that their students need to experience and perform music outside the confines of the classroom. An organized, stimulating musical environment would allow students to develop their musical skills over an adequate time period. There are too many candidates who seem to have only basic musical knowledge and experience on an instrument. Teachers should pay close attention to the prerequisite skills that must be formed at Grade 9 or Form 3 to allow candidates to adequately manage all segments of the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Listening and Appraising

Paper 01 consists of three compulsory sections: Section I – Musical Perception; Section II – Musical Literacy; Section III – Set Work (an option of one of three works). This paper tests candidates' ability to listen, analyse and apply theoretical musical knowledge and musical vocabulary to music played in the examination. A total of 50 marks are scored in this paper. In the first section, candidates are required to respond to questions based upon brief musical excerpts played two to four times depending on the demand of the questions. It uses short-response and multiple-choice tasks relating to general musical elements, such as pitch, duration, timbre, dynamics, expression, texture, structure and style. In Section II, Musical Literacy, questions are based on a musical example presented both visually and aurally. Candidates are expected to apply their theoretical understanding to an actual piece of music. Section III, Set Works, carries three optional questions relating to three Set Works studied over an extended period. Candidates are expected to respond to one Set Work only. The Set Works allow for candidates to engage in a more in-depth musical analysis of a musical work which they have had time to explore and discuss with their peers and teachers.

Candidates performed moderately in Paper 01, with 35.95 per cent gaining marks ranging between 22 and 36 out of a maximum of 50 (a slight improvement over the previous year). The mean score was 20 marks. No candidate achieved a Grade 'A' for this paper which suggests that there is great room for improvement in the quality of preparation of candidates. This means too that 64 per cent of the candidates were unprepared for the paper and were less likely to perform well in other papers. Students would greatly benefit from regularly structured classroom practise in answering questions, whilst developing both aural and visual understanding of a broad spectrum of musical genres. Students must be prepared to cope with the higher-order demands of structured musical analysis, and to recognize that musical experience begins before starting the syllabus.

Section I – Musical Perception

Question 1

Candidates were required to listen to brief musical sketches and to identify the changing genres in the sequence. Candidates were able to select their options which were stated in the question. Their task was to identify the order played in the recording. Candidates responded very well to this opening question, which was designed to be manageable to the most elementary and to provide a positive platform for the rest of the paper.

Question 2

This was based on an excerpt from the Jazz and Blues idiom. Candidates were required to (a) identify the ethnographic instrumental category of the opening instruments and name the device used to change the sound of the solo instrument; (b) identify the texture of the main instruments heard in the introduction; (c) identify two features heard in the excerpt. Part (a) (i) was done fairly well and showed an increasing knowledge of the ethnographic terminology among candidates. Many candidates, however, had difficulty identifying ‘the mute’ as the device that changes the timbre of an instrument. Parts (b) and (c) were responded to fairly well. Candidates who did not respond correctly were those who did not understand the meaning of the terms that could have allowed them to apply to the music heard. Teachers need to ensure that their students get a sound knowledge of the vocabulary of music and that they gain enough practise applying the vocabulary to music heard.

Question 3

This question tested candidates’ ability to distinguish major/minor tonality; identify accompaniment patterns and formal structures; recognize instruments heard; perceive the speed of a piece and recognize musical vocabulary relating to tempo. Part (a) was well done by most candidates. Parts (b) (i) and (ii) were done fairly well. However, weaker candidates seemed unable to recognize the structural terms given in the options in (i). In (c), most candidates recognized the timbre of a guitar but weak candidates were not able to aurally distinguish this well-recognized stringed instrument from others of the stringed family. Part (d) had fairly good responses. Most candidates recognized the elementary terms applied to tempo.

Question 4

This question tested candidates’ ability to aurally perceive pitch movement of a melodic excerpt; aurally perceive and visually identify a given rhythmic pattern and their capacity to distinguish vocal and instrumental timbres. In (a), most candidates were able to identify the option that graphically represented the melodic contour of the excerpt played. Part (b) was a bit more challenging in that candidates would have needed to be able to read rhythms. The stronger candidates were able to select the correct response. In (c) (i)–(v), many candidates were able to identify at least one of three of the correct timbral responses. A more correct response to (iv) would have been ‘male vocals’. Teachers should be careful to lead students to be more specific in their answers. For example, to be able to specify a male or baritone vocal as opposed to ‘voices’ which suggests neither male nor female timbres/ranges.

Question 5

This question was based on an excerpt of “Jean and Dinah”, a popular calypso standard, which allowed for candidates to apply their knowledge of the metre and chord progressions commonly associated with this idiom. Most candidates were able to identify the metre as ‘simple duple’. Parts (b) (i), (ii) and (iii) allowed the most perceptive candidates to use the already given chords as a basis to hear as a repetition in (i) and to hear the move to the subdominant or the IV of the scale in (b) (ii). Unfortunately, the omission on the recording did not allow some candidates to answer (b) (iii). Candidates’ responses have shown, however, that most candidates got this answer correct either by guessing from the clues established in the second line of the recording, or by being able to guess the ‘perfect cadence’ or V–I relationship at the end of the excerpt, which is a well-known song.

Question 6

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the gospel genre and its characteristic features based on a given excerpt. In (a), very few were able to identify the gospel style as 'traditional gospel'. In teaching styles within the gospel idiom, teachers should ensure that their students become aware of the differences between various gospel styles, for example, 'traditional gospel' and modern gospel. Part (b) was well answered with most candidates getting at least one of the answers correct. Teachers can help their students by exposing them to a wide variety of genres and styles of music and guiding them to appreciate various characteristic features in each of these genres and styles.

Section II- Musical Literacy

This section of the paper seeks to assess candidates' musical literacy skills and knowledge. Questions are based upon a printed score that is accompanied by an audio recording of the music. The major task of candidates is to interact with the score. Listening to the audio recording would help to support candidates' ability to interface with the printed score. There are two playings of the audio (five minutes apart). Candidates who excel in this section are those who have achieved the prerequisite musical competencies for the syllabus, with respect to reading and writing musical notation. Many musically talented students who play only 'by ear' may have difficulty with this section, since they have not been as exposed to developing their musical literacy skills as other successful candidates who develop both literacy and performing skills simultaneously. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that their students have a progressive programme in developing musical literacy competencies which advance students beyond the prerequisite competencies of the syllabus.

Question 7

Question 7 comprised eight major subdivisions, (a) to (h). In (a) (i), candidates were required to describe the metre which was given in the score; in (a) (ii), candidates were expected to select from a given list the most suitable tempo indication. This question depended on the audio to some degree. However, where there may have been a problem with the audio, candidates may have been able to recognize, from the shorter note values on the score, that the excerpt was most likely 'allegro'. Candidates' responses to these two questions were satisfactory. Parts (b) (i) and (ii) which required candidates to apply their knowledge of keys, tonality and modulation proved difficult for average and weak candidates who were unable to recognize the relative minor-major relationship between the opening key and the new key. Teachers may wish to give students more practise in recognizing keys, tonalities and shifting key centres. Part (c) (i) challenged candidates to consider the overall form of the musical excerpt. Some candidates did not consider the overall binary structure, hence many responded with 'ternary' as their answer. Most were able to identify one ornament in the work, with the 'trill' being the most popular answer. Candidates sometimes confused the 'appoggiatura' with its similar counterpart, 'the acciaccatura', the latter being the wrong answer. Part (d), a common musical symbol of expression, was well answered by most candidates. Responses of 'accent' and 'get louder' were not accurate. Some gave the Italian term in (d) when the English meaning was asked for.

Part (e) (i) and (ii) showed that some candidates were unable to identify the quality of the interval. Some wrote the interval quality as 'Major' in (ii) rather than 'Perfect'. Teachers should introduce their students to the concepts of 'major, minor, diminished, augmented,' as they relate to intervals and their quality. Part (f) required candidates to rewrite a short passage in notes double the value of the original. The majority responded well to this question, though many forgot to include the rest at the end. Responses to Part (g) were generally poor. Many candidates seemed not to be very acquainted with the topic of cadences. Only a small percentage was able to identify 'a perfect cadence'. Some offered a response of 'V- I'. This answer was not accepted since candidates were asked to identify the *cadence* and not the chord progression. The section ended with Part (h), which required candidates to transpose an identified passage down a Perfect 4th and to affix the new key signature. This question elicited a wide range of responses. Most candidates were able to move the pitches down 4 degrees. However, many were not able to cope with the accidental or affix the correct key signature, thereby not accounting for the quality of the intervals in the transposition.

Teachers should give students more opportunities to practise this competency. In general, many candidates lost marks by not reading the questions carefully and by not responding to what was asked in the questions.

Section III – Set Works

Question 8 – Pictures At An Exhibition

Only 17 per cent of the population attempted this question. Generally, candidates' responses were fairly good with a mean of 51 per cent. Parts (a) and (b) tested candidates' ability to relate to the socio cultural context of the work. Parts (c) and (d) required higher-order thinking as candidates were asked to make comparisons and make references to the composer's use of structural musical devices. Parts (e) (i) and (ii) and (f) were questions of instrumentation; Part (g) posed questions on the composer's use of musical characterization. The candidates who performed well on this question were those who had a full grasp of the socio cultural context of the work; were able to apply higher-order thinking by making comparisons between sections of the work; had a sound grasp of the instrumentation and understood through analysis, the composer's use of structural and expressive elements in the work.

To improve performance, teachers should try to engage students in a more profound analysis and synthesis of the musical features contained in the work in such a way that students will be able to compare and contrast each movement with its counterparts, in terms of structure, tonality, articulation, mood or character, and instrumentation, whilst relating these elements to the 'programme' of each movement.

Question 9 – Gospel Mass

Gospel Mass has remained the most popular of the three Set Works chosen. In spite of its popularity, candidate performance was the worst, with a mean of 36.4 per cent. Candidates displayed a lack of intimate knowledge of the work and seemed not to have carried out any in-depth musical analysis. Many candidates applied responses to questions that were inappropriate, suggesting that they either did not understand the musical knowledge within the question, or they simply learnt bits of information by rote which were supplied ad hoc. The 2010 sitting is the last year *Gospel Mass* will be studied for examination.

Parts (a) (i) and (ii) tested candidates' understanding of the nature of the work. Many candidates identified the rhythmic style as 'jazz' which is inaccurate. Similarly, there was a general misinterpretation of (ii). Candidates were expected to refer directly to 'Performance directions' found in the work that related to the gospel style such as 'vamp as necessary' or 'glissando in vocals'. Candidates who gave answers that were close to the directions given in the work such as 'vamping' or 'hand clapping' were given credit for their responses. Weaker candidates gave responses such as '*mp*' and other symbols of performance expression. Parts (b) and (c) required candidates to identify features of a piece to specific movement and vice versa. Part (d) (i) tested candidates' familiarity with the musical score and with the tonality of various musical themes in the work. Parts (e) and (f) posed some difficulty for many candidates who seemed not to have been prepared to identify musical structures within the work. Hence, very few candidates were able to specify a rhythmic and melodic feature of the piece, or the musical form of the "Agnus Dei". Identification of percussion instruments used in the work in (g) created an unanticipated number of ways to mark this question. The work specified parts of a drum set which was accepted singly. However, candidates who responded with drum set were left with no other choice but to also include 'handclapping' (body percussion). Part (h) required candidates to have specific knowledge of musical structures and characteristics as they relate to various movements. Whilst some candidates were able to respond excellently, many resorted to guessing the options provided.

Gospel Mass which has become the popular choice of many centres will be replaced in the new syllabus. Teachers are however reminded that an in-depth musical analysis of how various musical devices are used in conjunction with an understanding of the musical score, as well as having a good grasp of the socio-historical context of the work, is vital for candidates to do well in this section. Teachers should expose their students to careful musical analysis rather than engaging in a practice to respond by rote to questions that lead only to a superficial learning experience. This may explain why some candidates seem to provide answers that do not correspond to questions asked.

Question 10 – *Faces of Trinidad and Tobago*

Faces of Trinidad and Tobago is also in its last year of examination. Although second in popularity, it is noted that the work is attempted by only one territory, that is, the country of its origin.

This question had a mean of 53 per cent. This represents an improvement over previous years. Parts (a) (i) and (ii) were questions on the socio cultural influences on the work. These questions were well responded to by candidates. Few identified the ‘musical elements’ as requested in (b), which asked that they specify musical elements used to differentiate the ‘Faces’. Instead, many responses identified specific aspects of musical elements stating ‘key signatures, time signatures, and drums’ which were accepted. Weak responses included specifics that had no bearing upon the question asked. Stronger candidates were able to identify the musical ornaments used in the work in (c); however, less strong candidates identified various musical symbols as ornaments. Part (d) posed some amount of challenge to candidates who have weaker theoretical backgrounds who were unable to identify the types of scales used in the work. Most did not give focus to the question of ‘types’ of scale, and proceeded to name scales such as ‘D major’. Many did not consider ‘diatonic’ scales that include both minor and major scales along with pentatonic and chromatic scales used in the work. Part (e) required candidates to identify the metres that appear in the work. Most responded well. Parts (f) (i) and (ii) posed possible duplication in the answers referring to structure/type of scale used in the ‘Chinese Face’. The expected answer for (f) (i) was the use of parallel fourths which very few candidates got correct; whilst the answer for (ii) looked for a response regarding the use of the pentatonic scale. The last question, (g), invited candidates to identify four statements that were true of the work. This question was answered quite well, most candidates gave correct responses.

Teachers are advised to become thoroughly acquainted with all the Set Work options and where possible, to expose their students to other Set Work options to broaden their musical experience. Developing students’ analytical skills and musical understanding is the primary objective that all teachers should have in preparing to teach the Set Works.

Paper 02 – Performing and Composing

The performance of Paper 02 was similar to that of 2009, though overall there was a slight decline.

Profile 2 – Performing

The Performing examination assesses candidates’ ability to perform on a musical instrument of their choice, playing two solo pieces. One ensemble piece allows the examiner to assess the candidates’ ability to play a significant part with others, whilst paying attention to balance, cues and coordination. Candidates have the ability to share with the external examiner in a ‘viva voce’, their understanding of the pieces prepared and performed leading up to the examination.

Candidate performance in Profile 2 has dropped significantly over the past three years (80 per cent of the candidates in 2008 gained at least 27 of the 60 marks compared with 55.73 in 2010). This is cause for concern as the Performing Profile has been, in the past, the strongest area of candidate response in the examination. Only 11.46 per cent of candidates scored between 45 and 60 marks, which is also comparable to the 2009 performance. The remaining 44.26 per cent of the graded population did not achieve a passing score.

It has been observed that a number of candidates are performing at less than the technical demands of the most basic or 'elementary' level of proficiency. Many candidates seemed ill-prepared in performing the scales and arpeggios or the technical study as required by the syllabus. Teachers should ensure that their students develop technical skills over time on the solo instrument as a regular feature of classroom activity. Candidates need to be developed beyond the rudimentary requirements of two scales and arpeggios related to the selected pieces for performance. File preparation continues to be a problem. Many candidates only present the scores of the examination pieces. Candidates and their teachers are reminded that careful file preparation is important and should reflect a range of musical selections studied and performed over the two-year preparation period. The PERF portfolio/file should reflect solo, technical studies as well as ensemble pieces. Candidates are reminded that the PERF portfolio is graded.

Candidates are reminded that they must enter the examination room with examination scores, as well as one copy for the examiner. Without scores, the examiners are left to guess whether the performance is an accurate representation of an actual score, as marks are given for rhythmic or melodic accuracy, expression and other musical details. A fair judgment of the performance is impossible without a score to which the examiner may refer. Some candidates' work cannot be graded because of failure to indicate their level of proficiency. Candidates are required to submit their main examination pieces (two solos and one ensemble work, including SBA pieces) for assessment by the examining committee for the 2011 examination. Territorial examiners will continue to grade the PERF portfolios (additional pieces) and return them to the candidates.

The 2010 examination was the last one in which the PERF profile was carried out. Please see the 2011 syllabus for the changes.

Teachers are asked to ensure that candidates are well prepared for the performing examination by paying attention to the standards of performance repertoire and the expected technical proficiencies on instruments as outlined in the 2011 syllabus. Every effort should be made to take students beyond the 'foundation' level of performance. Teachers are reminded too, that their students' portfolios should encompass pieces performed over the two-year process of preparation. Successful candidates play and practise on their instruments on a regular basis. Many candidates are extremely nervous because of ill preparation and lack of performing exposure. Teachers are advised to plan a programme of instrumental development for each of their students that will expose them to a variety of musical genres and technical musical challenges, whilst developing musical literacy and performing skills.

Profile 3 – Composing

Candidates performed much better on the COMP Profile than on the PERF Profile. This was also the case in 2009. However, there was a slight decline in performance in the number of students who gained grades A–C for this profile when compared with 2009. Significantly, an increased number of candidates gained scores ranging from 30 to 46 of the available 50 marks. There were more outstanding creative compositions this year, which suggests that more attention is being paid to this relatively new area of musical activity in the classroom. However, there has also been a significant increase in 'poor' and 'weak' submissions. Teachers too need to pay special attention to students who have not assimilated the elements of both the LIAP and PERF Profiles, as the most likely result would be that candidates are not able to meet the standards of the COMP profile.

Many candidates have demonstrated superior creative ability in the process of organizing musical elements and using expression to communicate their musical intentions among four compositions, as required by the syllabus. This high performance by some candidates suggests that teachers are able to model and guide students to explore their creative abilities, whilst assimilating the elements of the LIAP and the PERF Profiles.

However, there are still many areas of weakness seen in some candidates who demonstrate little ability to use musical devices (for example, call and response; imitation, sequences; part-writing; motivic development, expressive devices) identified in the LIAP and PERF Profiles to develop their compositions beyond an initial statement of an idea.

The 'Arrangement' composition type has raised some concerns. There is a misunderstanding by some teachers and candidates regarding what constitutes an 'arrangement' as a composition. Many candidates are prone to offer musical 'transcriptions' of a given melody and harmony transcribed for various instruments. Should little new (melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, expressive features) material be added to the original piece, then the composition/arrangement would be considered weak. Both teachers and candidates are advised to *pay attention to the mark scheme contained in the syllabus*. A candidate who simply changes a key or transcribes the original of a song to a different instrument or instruments, will gain few marks. In addition, the originator of the piece must be acknowledged. The arranged score must be accompanied by a copy of the original version or a lead sheet.

It has been heartening to see candidates explore non-traditional compositions such as 'veitch compositions', 'sound collages', 'sprechung' and other exploratory types. Some candidates are careful to ensure that these composition types have developmental, structural and expressive features, communicating clearly how the composition is intended to be performed, and are accompanied by an audio recording. However, a number of candidates have submitted graphic representations that are clearly not performable, with little or no musical structure suggested, thereby rendering the work poor to moderate. Sound collage compositions require more than a linear collection of acoustic or electric sounds listed on a recording. Candidates are advised that these composition types require as much musical thought and creativity as the compositions using traditional notation.

Too many composition submissions were plagued with a number of irregularities. For example, some candidates submitted audio CDs or cassettes with their compositions that were totally blank. In addition, candidates are asked to ensure that the submitted CD is in a format that is readable by CD players (wave files/CD-R). The quality of the audio recording to support the compositions submitted was assessed. Another irregularity was that of candidates offering the same selection across two Profiles. Teachers and candidates are reminded that compositions may not be offered as performing pieces whether as a solo or for the ensemble.

The matter of plagiarism is a serious one. Some candidates offered 'wholesale' bass riffs of popular pieces with perhaps another composer's melody layered above. In other cases, there is evidence of collusion, suggesting that candidates may be working together and offering the same or very similar compositions. Candidates are asked to desist from these practices. Meanwhile, teachers are advised to monitor more carefully the work of their students and to understand the implications of signing 'the declaration' form when candidates have offered the work of someone else as their own. Some candidates' marks suffered due to the various irregularities found by the examining committee. Teachers could assist in reducing these irregularities through careful monitoring and guidance.

The 2011 examinations and thereafter, will require candidates to offer only two compositions. One composition will be an arrangement type and the other will be of a more original free type. The new mark scheme will indicate to teachers and their students that more developed compositions are required to meet the standards of competent to outstanding. This, therefore, is an area in which teachers should plan to guide and monitor students, long before the date of the practical examination.

Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

Candidates' overall performance on Paper 03 (SBA) was very good, with 77.35 per cent of those graded receiving no less than 45 per cent of the available marks. Project III (Musical Advertisement) continued to be the most popular option, while Projects I and II were among the least popular.

Many candidates continued to demonstrate a misunderstanding of or total disregard for the requirements of the Projects as outlined in the syllabus. Requirements have been clarified in previous School Reports (2006, 2007).

Although there were outstanding projects in each of the SBAs, there were also too many submissions where candidates did not provide thorough musical analysis. The growing trend to analyse musical examples by applying ‘one’ or ‘two’ words rather than giving a more in-depth musical analysis, will render SBAs with only the minimum marks. An example is given below:

“Harmony: “Cadences, V-I progression”. “The piece has consonance.”

This is a weak response/analysis of a given piece of music; there is no way that the entire piece will have only one cadence or chord progression from the dominant to the tonic chord. All chords in a piece most likely would not be ‘consonant’ in nature. Clearly, this minimalistic approach to musical analysis could not be adequate in describing a piece of music listened to, that goes beyond two-three measures.

Projects I (Worship) and V (Folk Form Practice) were among the least popular options. Many candidates resorted to lifting information from a book rather than conducting field research and interviews to gain knowledge in Project V. Candidates need to meet the requirements as stipulated in the syllabus.

Project II (Live Performance) expects that candidates will attend an actual ‘live’ performance. Some SBA submissions seemed to be hybrids of Projects II and IV. Project IV (Caribbean Performer or Composer) requires that candidates conduct an interview with the performer or composer. Submissions that feature dead individuals are **not** acceptable. Teachers should advise candidates to be careful of their selection of individuals, to ensure that those interviewed fit the criteria of a ‘prominent Caribbean composer or performer’ as opposed to a school mate who may be performing in a show.

Teachers and candidates should note the changes (CXC Music Syllabus 2011, pp. 29–33) that will be made in the next sitting of the examination in 2011. Candidates will now select one of three options only. Teachers are encouraged to use the mark scheme provided in the syllabus or any other addendum material provided by CXC to grade their students’ SBA submissions.

GENERAL REMINDERS TO TEACHERS AND CANDIDATES

As the examining committee anticipates the implementation of the 2011 syllabus and a general improvement in the performance of teachers and candidates, the following reminders are given:

- All stakeholders should read the new syllabus guidelines (2011) carefully.
- Teachers are encouraged to attend or request any available local music workshop to become conversant with the syllabus changes as well as to understand the requirements in preparing candidates.
- Teachers need to become acquainted with the new Set Works and to ensure that their students have access to the musical scores of the selected Set Work. (See page 9 of the syllabus.)
- New teachers should consult with other experienced teachers or their curriculum officer, to receive guidance on the marking of the SBA project, and attending to the new mark scheme.
- Teachers, SBA moderators and external examiners must indicate the candidates’ level of proficiency on the PERF /SBA PERF mark sheet, based on guidelines in the syllabus for determining these levels.
- SBA projects (I–III) should not be approached as ‘group work’. Candidate submissions should reflect each candidate’s individualized input into his/her SBA written project.

- SBA (PERF/solo and ensemble) will be conducted at a time prior to the practical examinations, which are usually held in May. A locally appointed moderator will moderate the SBA (PERF) of a sample of five candidates. This will be coordinated at the local level.
- External examiners/moderators should ensure that totals are entered correctly in the final box of the mark sheet. All final totals with a digit less than one should be rounded off to the nearest whole number.
- Candidates should submit one copy of their examination performance solo and ensemble pieces to the examiner who will submit them along with the candidates' compositions. These performance pieces should be clearly indicated in the file as 'Performance Pieces'.
- Teachers need to provide an environment which allows students to perform on instruments (solo and in ensemble) at regular intervals, both in the classroom and in the wider school or community. This would improve candidates' ability and self-confidence to negotiate the performing examination.
- Teachers and candidates should ensure that COMP and SBA portfolios (print and audio) are clearly labelled and itemized in the order in which the contents are arranged. Sticky tapes should not be placed across CDs, as this can result in serious damage to the CD.
- CDs must be submitted in a format that is accessible to CD-R players. Students should get advice on the format of storage.
- All compositions must be for a specific medium. When there is no clear indication of instrumentation, the composition cannot be assessed in a timbral context and candidates will therefore forfeit valuable marks.
- Songs represented only as lyrics cannot be treated as music and will be disqualified. Similar treatment will be given to graphic scores that are tantamount to drawings that indicate no medium of sound and are not accompanied by a related audio recording.
- Arrangements of copyrighted material should carry an indication of the source, and a copy of the original score must be included in the COMP portfolio.
- Compositions and SBAs submitted on DVDs, video tapes or micro cassettes WILL NOT BE MARKED. The accepted formats are standard audio cassettes or CDs.
- Declaration forms, composition profile analysis (CPA), audio recordings of compositions must accompany ALL composition submissions. Territorial examiners must sign off on candidate submissions. No composition portfolio will be graded without a declaration signed by the student, music teacher and principal of the school.

CONCLUSION

The Music Examination has been available for the past 12 years. Significant improvements have been seen over the years in the quality of the examination. However, the statistics have generally shown a decline in performance over the past three years. Under-preparation of candidates seems to be the main factor that has impacted the 2010 performance of candidates. The selection of candidates to prepare for and sit the examination must be done carefully and in relation to the pre requisite skills outlined before the two-year preparation period. This suggests, therefore, that the Music Curriculum at the lower levels (Forms 1–3) must be designed to feed well-grounded and highly motivated music students into the CSEC Music syllabus. As the new 2011 syllabus is being implemented, teachers are urged to become conversant with any changes and to seek guidance from other colleagues and musical resources where necessary. High standards in the preparation of students are paramount if the desired result of improvement in performance is to be realized and sustained.