

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2013

**MUSIC
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2013 examination was written by 670 candidates compared to 617 in 2012. The Music examination is based upon three profiles - Listening and Appraising, (LIAP), Performing (PERF), and Composing (COMP). The exam comprises the following papers:

- Paper 01- Listening and Appraising
- Paper 02- Performance and Composition
- Paper 03- SBA: Performance and LIAP Written project.

Seventy-one per cent of candidates received acceptable grades (Grades I – III) compared to 62 per cent in 2012. Candidates showed improved performances in Profile 2 (PERF) and Profile 3 (COMP) whereas Paper 01 Profile 1 (LIAP) showed a decline.

Teachers should carefully plan the music coursework to ensure that all music profiles are adequately covered in a sequential and timely manner. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that candidates grasp the key musical vocabulary required for analysing; teachers should ensure regular practice in responding to aural and visual musical stimuli through music perception and theoretical exercises. This includes exposing their students to a wide range of musical genres and appraising musical literature through application of the musical elements. Teachers should be encouraged to plan and provide a range of musical and non-musical stimuli to enhance the development of creative ideas for the musical composition.

Teachers are encouraged to continue to provide strategies to help their students perform to the best of their ability. These strategies would include providing opportunities for students to perform for peers, the school and the wider community on a regular basis; to expand their performance repertoire and skills; to be exposed students to a wide variety of artistes and musical performances so as to develop an appreciation of a variety of musical genres; to link practical application to theoretical knowledge and musical concepts.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 1 – Listening and Appraising

Paper 01 consists of three compulsory sections and assesses Profile 1, Listening and Appraising. A total of 55 marks may be earned in this paper. Section I, Musical Perception, contains five questions for a total of 20 marks. This section tests candidates' ability to listen, analyse and to apply theoretical musical knowledge and understanding to music played in the examination. The paper consists of short-response and multiple-choice tasks relating to general musical elements. Section II, Musical Literacy, carries 15 marks. This section tests candidates' music theoretical knowledge and is applied to a given musical score. Section III, Set Work carries three optional questions relating to three set works for a total of 20 marks. Candidates are expected to respond to only one set work. The set work allows candidates to participate in a longer and more in-depth study of a musical work, to gain insights into compositional devices, and to gain appreciation of the socio-historical and cultural context of the music that has been studied. Questions require candidates to synthesize the elements of the work and to recognise excerpts of music studied from the score.

Candidate performance on Paper 01 was below satisfactory. The overall mean for Paper 01 was 23.65 marks out of a total score of 55, or 43 per cent.

Section I: Musical Perception

Question 1

Candidates were required to listen to and identify the genres of the brief sketches of music played in the sequence. Candidates were able to select their option from a given list in the question. Candidates responded very well to this question, which had a mean of 2.84 out of a total of 3 marks, or 94 per cent.

Recommendation: Candidates should be encouraged to listen to a variety of genres of music. Candidates should also become familiar with the folk music of various regions.

Question 2

This question consisted of three parts and was answered poorly with a mean score of 2 out of 5 marks. Twenty-three per cent of candidates scored zero for the entire question. Candidates had difficulty with Part 2 (a) (i), i.e. which required them to identify the main solo instrument in the excerpt as a cello. Some candidates recognised the instrument as a stringed instrument but many could not distinguish the range and timbre of a cello from that of a violin or viola. Some candidates incorrectly offered the flute as a response. Similarly, for Part (a) (ii), candidates had difficulty identifying the muted trumpet as the aerophone in the excerpt.

Part (b) required candidates to discern the two sections of the musical excerpt and identify the tonality of the music heard. Some candidates had difficulty identifying the minor and major tonality of Section A and Section B, respectively.

Part (c) required candidates to identify the contour of the melody of Section B. The multiple-choice type question enabled candidates to listen and follow the pitches of each of the options given. The options were quite discreet.

Recommendation: Candidates should be taught to distinguish between instruments of the orchestra family through many available media. Understanding the commonly used term, 'tonality' with reference to major and minor along with aural practice is recommended. Candidates require more ear-training experience in the classroom.

Question 3

Candidates responded satisfactorily to the questions of excerpt C, with a mean score of 2 out of 4 marks, or 50 per cent.

Part (a) required candidates to identify two features that were true of the excerpt. Most candidates were able to identify correctly the 'verse and chorus' structure, with fewer candidates correctly identifying the 'countermelody by the aerophone'.

Part (b) elicited myriad responses. Weak candidates were unable to state particular characteristics of the genre and instead proposed to identify the genre. Candidates had several options, some of which included the following:

- Acoustic instruments
- Use of folk instruments
- Narrow vocal range
- Repetition of melodic and rhythmic phrases

In Part (c) candidates responded fairly well to identifying the rhythmic pattern of the idiophone heard in the excerpt.

Recommendation: Teachers are encouraged to familiarize their students with the general characteristics of particular genres of music, including folk and other genres and styles.

Question 4

The overall response to question 4 was less than satisfactory, with mean score of 2 out of 5 marks or approximately 40 per cent.

It was expected that candidates could readily supply the orchestral family name. Some candidates carelessly wrote 'wind' as opposed to 'woodwinds'.

Part (b) (i) proved more difficult to answer as it required candidates to apply their knowledge of harmonic devices. Candidates provided better responses to Part (b) (ii), on the question of harmonic texture as it related to the latter section of the excerpt. Strong candidates were able to correctly select 'contrapuntal' from the options given. Candidates responded fairly well to Part (c) which required them to identify two rhythmic devices heard in the excerpt. Most candidates were able to give at least one correct response to the question that is, 'off-beat ostinato'.

Recommendation: Candidates need to become more familiar with harmonic concepts and to expand their knowledge to include a working understanding of terms such as 'harmonic devices', 'harmonic texture'-contrapuntal, and rhythmic devices such as 'augmentation' and 'diminution' and off-beat. Candidates should be encouraged to use these ideas in other profiles such as Composing and within the SBA analysis.

Question 5

Part (a) (i) required candidates to perceive the predominant melodic movement of a small portion of the text. Candidates would have needed to consider all options and determine the best answer, which is 'ascending by leaps'. Part (a) (ii) required candidates to identify the interval heard on two specific intervals. Candidates responded fairly well to this question, recognising the Perfect 4th interval as the correct response. Part (b) required candidates to identify the perfect cadence at an identified spot towards the end of the excerpt. The overall response was fairly satisfactory with most candidates earning one mark of three marks available for this question.

Recommendation: Teachers are encouraged to involve their students in aural training exercises in conjunction with the teaching of musical concepts, such as melodic movement and contours, interval recognition, and identification of cadences.

Music Literacy

Question 6

This question was sub-divided into parts from (a) to (h) that were based upon the piano score entitled "Go to Sleep" by Gustave Sandre. Part (a) (i) required candidates to insert a suitable time signature in the appropriate place in the score. The response to this question was poor. Some candidates seemed unaware of the correct placement of the time signature on the score. Many candidates were not able to discern that the piece was in compound time, 6/8. Responses to (b) and (c) were quite good. The minor key relationship and the overall ternary form respectively were easily recognised. The ability to differentiate the ornament and name it was a challenge for some candidates. The transposition up a perfect 5th in (d) seemed challenging for weaker candidates; some had an idea of moving the pitches up a 5th, but did not know the correct key signature to make the pitches correct. The changes in expression for (e) were fairly well done; weak candidates, however, were unfamiliar with the symbols 'rit', and 'dim'. It is important for candidates to have a good grasp of the concept of intervals as this is fundamental to melodic analysis and aural responses and sight reading. This type of question continues to be a challenge for average candidates. Similarly, the concept of cadences must be well taught by teachers from a visual as well as aural perspective. The more able candidates would have recognised that the correct response was that of an imperfect cadence or half cadence or II to V relationship. Part (h) required candidates to rewrite notes double their note values. Though this task was quite elementary, weak candidates omitted to insert bar-lines at the appropriate places and did not differentiate between crotchets and quaver notes.

The mean score on this question was 5 out of 15. This means that performance on this section was quite weak and only a small percentage of candidates were able to score between 10 and 15 marks. It is of concern that approximately 7 per cent of candidates scored zero marks for this section indicating that there were a number of candidates who had a poor grasp of the fundamental concepts of music theory.

Recommendations: Teachers are encouraged to pay more attention to teaching the objectives and concepts of this section of the Paper 01. Developing music literacy among young musicians is key to their musical development. Regular practice in doing music theory alongside aural training exercises in various music topics would help to sharpen candidates' responses to this question.

Set Works, Pictures at An Exhibition

Question 7

Question 7 had the best performance of each of the three optional questions. The mean score was a satisfactory score of 10 out of a total of 20 marks. Candidates should be encouraged to be discerning about the slant of a question which may appear to be similar to another question that may have been set in a previous paper. An appropriate response to the question on, what event inspired Mussorgsky to compose "Pictures at an Exhibition: would be:

"Attending an exhibition of Hartmann's paintings or designs after his death".

Candidates had several options to respond to Part (a) (ii) such as, "thick chordal textures"; "wide dynamic range"; "experimentation with new instruments in the orchestra", "programme music".

Candidates should be encouraged to compare and contrast similar parts of the work and to have a detailed knowledge of various features of the work as required in Part (f).

Let These Things Be Written Down

Question 8

Question 8 continued to be the most popular of the three options. However, the mean score of 8 of 20 marks, or 41 per cent, indicated that candidate performance was unsatisfactory. Candidates had difficulty responding appropriately to a number of the open-ended questions. Part (c) was widely known as was Part (g) (i), but Part (e) proved difficult for some candidates. Strong candidates were able to recognise that the scale type employed in "Herdsman haieing cattle" in the 'Bound' was a 'pentatonic scale'. The comparison of the vocal textures of the "Slave Singing at Midnight" and "Jane and Louisa" in the next question was poorly done. Candidates seemed to be unaware of the details of the work and some were unable to interpret the term 'vocal textures'. An appropriate response would be:

" 'Slave Singing at Midnight' is homophonic in texture throughout the movement, whereas 'Jane and Louisa' has sections that are both polyphonic and homophonic in texture."

Whereas (g) (i) was well recognised to be an excerpt from "Jane and Louisa", many candidates fell short on Part (ii) and were less successful with recognizing the music of "One people".

The Nutcracker Ballet Suite

Question 9

The smaller number of candidates opted to answer questions set on this work and. The mean score of 7 marks out of 20, or 37 per cent, which was unsatisfactory.

Candidates seemed underprepared to answer correctly questions pertaining to the socio-historical context of the work. Parts (a) (i) (ii) and (iii) were based upon the background of the work studied. However, many candidates seemed unaware of the details pertaining to birth, the basis of the work, and the reason for creating the suite from the ballet.

Part (b) required candidates to identify from a few options the structural device that is not present in the work. Candidates first of all must be familiar with the structural features of the piece and aware of classical structures to be able to interpret the question. Part (c) addressed candidates' familiarity with the orchestration of three of the movements.

Part (d) required candidates to identify the movement from which musical excerpts were extracted. Candidates who have had regular interaction with the score were able to successfully identify the extracts.

Part (e) required candidates to complete a table that matched the musical movements with their key and tonality and the tempo of the piece. Part (f) required candidates to match two correct statements dealing with the character of two movements. Part (g) required candidates to match the correct statement of features of the work with the correct movement. These parts of the question were challenging to the candidates.

Recommendations:

It is highly recommended that teachers allow candidates sufficient time to assimilate the information related to the set work. Although there is some merit in acquainting candidates with each of the set works, it was noticeable that a growing number of candidates had attempted to do more than one option during the examination, possibly because they may not have been sufficiently knowledgeable of any one work.

Teachers are encouraged to approach teaching of the selected work thoroughly. Candidates ought to have an in-depth knowledge of how the various musical elements are used for creative effect in the work and to understand the socio- cultural and historical underpinnings in which the work was created. Candidates must be able to synthesize the information and be able to compare and contrast the effect of musical elements between movements. Candidates must develop these skills through practice in answering questions that may cause them to think critically about the work they are studying.

Paper 02 — Performing and Composing

Paper 02 comprises Profile 2, Performing (PERF), and Profile 3, Composing (COMP). The performance on Paper 02 (PERF and COMP) showed a slight improvement compared to the two previous years.

Profile 2 — Performing

The candidates scores on Profile 2 include the marks obtained in both the SBA performance assessment and the Performance examination. The performance examination (PERF) assessed candidates' ability to perform on a musical instrument of their choice, playing one solo piece, a technical study or scale and arpeggio in the key in which the solo piece is set. Candidates demonstrate their understanding of the pieces studied and performed during the preparation period in a viva voce with the examiner. Paper 2 (PERF) comprises a total of 24 marks.

Profile 2 is also tested in the SBA which is a moderated assessment of the teacher's evaluation of students in performance. Candidates present a solo piece which is expected to be different (in genre and style, key, mood etc) from the one performed in Paper 02, along with the scale and arpeggio. In addition, candidates must present an ensemble piece for moderation.

Performance on Profile 2 showed marked improvement, with almost 90 per cent of candidates receiving A-C grades, and a significant increase in the number of candidates receiving Grade A for this profile.

However, teachers are encouraged to ensure that their students are meeting the benchmark standards stipulated in the syllabus. Less successful candidates were underprepared on their instruments, with a significant number having presented a repertoire below the "foundation" or "Grade 2" level. Teachers should avoid having candidates play a repertoire that is below the minimum standard as they will be subjected to a disqualification by moderators and examiners.

Teachers should plan a programme for each of their students to ensure that they have performed an adequate number of solo and ensemble repertoires which would ensure their students' development and progress over the two-year study period whilst meeting the minimum standards set in the syllabus.

Profile 3- Composing

Profile 3 (COMP) requires candidates to demonstrate their ability to select and sequence sound in order to express and communicate musical ideas, thoughts and feelings. Candidates submit one original composition and one arrangement composition, which requires candidates to include adding new parts or ideas to an existing piece. Candidates are expected to submit an analysis of their compositions and participate in a *viva voce* discussion to demonstrate their knowledge and ownership of their creative work. The Composition paper has a total of 44 marks.

Candidate performance in the Composition profile had improved slightly compared with the previous year. Sixty-six per cent of candidates gained grades A-C in 2013 compared to 62 per cent in 2012.

Compositions submitted by candidates should demonstrate their ability to focus upon at least two of the following musical elements as compositional features: timbre, rhythm, melody, texture, harmony, structural devices, musical expression (articulation, dynamics, tempi). Candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate a sense of creativity and purpose in ordering and manipulating the raw material of sound contained in the musical elements listed above. Candidates should be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate structure, balance and unity as well as expression as it relates to the style of the piece. Candidates should be guided by their teachers in selecting appropriate styles and genres that may reflect how musical elements may be manipulated to creative effect. Candidates are expected to document their reflections on the composition process as well as to communicate their intentions in developing their creative work.

Candidates showed some weakness in the area of arranging, as it is often less understood that candidates are awarded for creative development of NEW ideas to a given original piece. Candidates should be aware of structural and other compositional devices that may assist in developing ideas within a composition; how to develop melodic and rhythmic motives; explore textural and harmonic features; experiment with timbral possibilities and to use expressive devices effectively to create a new character and mood to an original piece. Arrangements that are mere transcriptions of timbre without the infusion of other devices to create NEW musical ideas have been considered as weak submissions.

Teachers are expected to guide their students in the selection of the original piece for arrangement. Some candidates run into difficulty by selecting popular works which are too difficult for them to arrange, due to the style of the piece or the already overly composed accompaniment heard in the recording. Some candidates resort to attempting to 'arrange' a piece by changing a few notes to the melodic line through performance variations or 'styling', with all other content, such as piano accompaniment, harmonic progression and expression, remaining the same as the original.

Teachers are expected to facilitate the composition classroom. Through critical listening experiences and modelling provided by teachers, students should be led to develop their ideas. Teachers however, are warned that they should exercise professional ethics and not become so engaged in their students' work as to do it for them. Teachers are encouraged to desist from preparing the 'composition profile analysis' for their students as this will defeat students' ability to develop critical thinking skills, which are so necessary in the creative process.

Teachers and candidates are reminded that the arranged score must be accompanied by a copy of the original version or lead sheet. There was some improvement in response to this requirement. Candidates should be advised to resist making submissions of the arrangement composition where they are not able to submit an original score/ lead sheet.

Candidates must not use professional accompaniments or tracks that may be available on-line, or otherwise created, with their original or as accompaniment for the composition. This may lead to disqualification of the piece as it is the work of others. Original compositions inspired by the work of others as 'musical stimuli', should be indicated in the profile analysis and in the sub-title of the work.

Candidates require sufficient time to reflect, re-work and develop compositions over time. Teachers should encourage candidates to explore various types of compositions and styles to broaden their perspective on their best possible individual creative work.

Guidelines and regulations established in the previous reports of 2011 and 2012 along with those posted in the CXC website should be revisited and embraced.

Paper 03 – School Based Assessment (SBA)

Overall, candidates' performance on Paper 03 (SBA) was good, with 82 per cent of those graded receiving 45 per cent or more of the available marks. Performance on Paper 03 was based on a combined score of marks from the LIAP projects and the PERF – solo, ensemble and technical performance.

Candidates had one of three options for the LIAP project. The SBA PERF component comprised a solo and ensemble performance and the presentation of a technical piece or scale and arpeggio related to the solo piece performed. Both components were marked by the teacher and locally moderated.

The LIAP project required candidates to select one of three options for investigation and to conduct primary research. Candidates were expected to discern information based primarily upon attending live performances and becoming acquainted with the performing artiste (s) by way of an interview or programme notes; or by listening to recorded radio and TV advertisements or by conducting an interview with a performing artiste or composer.

Information gathered on either of these projects should be well summarized with all pertinent detail included. In addition, candidates were expected to focus on careful analysis of the musical extracts to demonstrate skills of musical perception, analysis, critical thinking and application of musical vocabulary similar to that of a music journalist. Successful candidates were able to communicate effectively through a well-organised report that used appropriate and accurate musical vocabulary to identify key features of the music analysed. Illustrations were used appropriately and musical analysis was thorough and accurate.

On the other hand, less competent candidates submitted projects that communicated less effectively background details and analysis of music. Candidates must be taught musical concepts and to use musical vocabulary accurately and appropriately. Some candidates needed to be more thorough in their analysis recognizing that musical expressions, for example, might vary within a longer piece; harmonic progressions might change in various sections; the tonality might change in various sections and so forth.

For the first time this year, teachers and their candidates were introduced to an 'SBA data capture form' for the SBA (PERF). This is designed to support the development of the performance portfolio and it helps all stakeholders to keep track of the performance pieces done by each of the candidates. It is intended that each teacher would keep this as part of their records and pass it on to the moderator and eventually to the performance examiner.

Teachers are reminded that regular assessment of each their students' performances of solo, technical and ensemble work should be done over the two-year period. For reliability of teachers' scores, teachers should consistently use the CXC mark scheme found in the syllabus. Candidates who presented weak performances for assessment seemed to suffer more from performance anxiety due to a lack of practice and regular exposure to assessment. Teachers are encouraged to find various ways to improve the quality and variety of student performance.

Conclusion

There was an overall slight improvement in this year's music examination results. However, each centre is encouraged to examine areas of weakness and seek to improve the teaching and learning for potential candidates. Special attention must be given to improving the skills and knowledge required to respond successfully to the tasks on Paper 01. Candidates may benefit if some attention is given to aural development alongside the teaching of music theory at all levels of the music programme in schools. More attention should be paid to improving the foundational pre-requisite knowledge and skills expected at the lower grades in secondary school, particularly in music literacy.

In addition, there has been some improvement in the composition profile. Though there may be improvements overall, there is still much misunderstanding of the requirements to meet the standards of a competent level composition. Territories are encouraged to develop programmes to improve composition teaching among teachers and to develop composition and arranging skills among students.

The improvement in the overall results of the performance on this profile be noted. Teachers should continue to provide the necessary support for all their candidates to meet at least the minimum standard and to ensure that candidates' performing repertoire is as varied as possible.

It is envisioned that through careful preparation and planning and effective teaching of the music syllabus, the results of the CSEC music exam can continue to improve by even larger intervals. Each of the music profiles (LIAP, PERF, and COMP) should get adequate attention for teaching from the foundation classes in secondary school and well into the final preparations for the examination. Teachers will be effective should they seek to demonstrate the linkages between each of the profiles as concepts are taught, to provide a platform for candidates to analyse and synthesize musical concepts.

Teachers are encouraged to read previous subject reports (2010, 2011 and 2012) for further detailed guidelines. New teachers should be well supported and monitored to ensure that the correct information is passed on to their students. Finally, teachers are encouraged to seek support from each other as well as subject administrators by developing communities of learning in their territories and through social media networks. All candidates deserve the commitment and dedication of their music teacher to provide a platform for success at these CSEC Music exams.