

Assessment Report

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Level 2 Music 2018

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Part A: Commentary

Candidates who achieved in the higher range showed a sound grasp of musical terminology, a clear and often perceptive understanding of musical elements and features and their use, as well as the ability to read, write and interpret musical notation accurately. They were also able to describe the effect on the music of various musical features.

Candidates who achieved less well often provided generic or highly descriptive responses, had a limited ability to use musical terminology accurately, and were unclear on the definitions of, and in particular the differences between, musical elements and features (eg timbre and texture were often confused). They also showed a lack of fluency and/or accuracy in both reading and writing musical notation. There was at times a lack of ability to provide musical evidence to support the candidates' responses.

Both teachers and candidates are advised to the Achievement Standards and the Assessment Specifications, as well as to the Aural Skills and Conventions documents in preparation for these examinations. These can be found on the

Music [Subject Resources page](#).

Part B: Report on standards

91275: Demonstrate aural understanding through written representation

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- transcribed some melodic contours or rhythmic patterns correctly
- identified isolated chords correctly
- identified elements/features and/or compositional devices correctly.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not transcribe melodic contour or rhythmic patterns correctly
- did not identify chords accurately
- did not know the meaning of specific terms e.g. timbre, compositional devices
- did not identify elements/features correctly.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- transcribed phrases with few errors
- accurately identified adjacent chords
- supported identification of elements/features and/or compositional devices with musical evidence.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- transcribed phrases to a high degree of accuracy
- accurately identified chords in two or more phrases, as well as the cadence
- explained the effect or relevance of specific elements/features and/or compositional devices that they had identified and described, and supported their responses with accurate musical evidence.

Standard specific comments

- Candidates must clearly understand the difference between elements/features and compositional devices and know how to describe them using relevant musical terms (frequently detailed evidence from the music was missing).
 - Knowledge must be applied to the specific extracts rather than regurgitating stock definitions.
 - 'Timbre' and 'texture' were often confused. Texture types were often mixed up and the term 'polyphonic' was often misused.
 - A surprising number of students did not recognise the sound of a bassoon – perhaps indicating less familiarity with orchestra music of a classical nature
 - Students frequently wrote in 4/4 rather than 3/4 when required.
 - The handwriting of some candidates was illegible (either because it is very small or untidy), and candidates frequently did not go over their answers in pen.
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91276: Demonstrate knowledge of conventions in a range of music scores

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified some relevant evidence but were unable to describe the context or effect
- understood the basic principles of transposition but could not apply the correct ones for the context, and often failed to deal with the key signature
- understood basic musical concepts such as clefs, key signatures and time signatures
- showed a basic understanding of the difference between musical elements and compositional devices
- identified chords correctly but did not understand inversions/7ths
- identified the quantity of intervals
- identified and notated some articulation and performance markings

- identified some basic compositional devices relating to the given musical extracts
- identified some musical textures and their features.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not understand the difference between, or meaning of, musical elements and compositional devices
- identified chords inaccurately and made mistakes in Jazz/Rock notation
- were unable to understand intervals, musical notation, tab notation
- did not understand the basic principles of transposition
- showed insufficient understanding of basic music concepts and compositional features
- could not recognise or notate articulation and performance markings
- misread what the question required from them or provided answers that were irrelevant.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- transposed for one or more instruments with general accuracy
- identified chords accurately
- understood musical notation and conventions
- identified and notated most performance markings correctly
- identified and described compositional devices, textures, elements and features
- showed knowledge of appropriate terminology regarding texture, compositional devices, and musical contexts
- referred in detail to the score examples
- identified and provided evidence justifying the labelling of key signatures and modulations
- described or notated accurately both the quantity and quality of intervals.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- identified and explained a range of musical textures and compositional

devices, including their effect on the music

- referred in detail to the score examples and analysed them comprehensively
- transposed accurately for three instruments
- identified and notated specific performance markings correctly
- understood intervals, chords, keys and key relationships
- identified seventh chords and inversions
- described and notated accurately both the quantity and quality of intervals
- provided evidence accurately, precisely and concisely.

Standard specific comments

- in the question on texture many candidates tried to use homophonic/polyphonic/monophonic, leading many down the wrong path as actually they needed to look at thickness/thinness/density/complexity – candidates should be aware that they can use other terminology for texture.
- very few candidates identified a cadence/chord progression as evidence for a modulation – this suggests many are not aware that they need to look for this evidence.
- many candidates did not understand inverted/slash chords
- transposition was often done in the wrong direction
- many candidates lacked detail when explaining time signatures, and few managed to use 'compound' and 'simple'.
- many candidates struggled on the longer analysis questions – they often omitted to describe the effect of devices and features on the music and their responses were lacking the depth necessary to gain Excellence in these questions.
- many candidates were unable to recognise the non-pitched notation.
- the notation of bass guitar tablature was generally of a good standard.

91277: Demonstrate knowledge of two substantial contrasting music works

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- gave similar answers to multiple questions
- did not provide specific musical evidence
- were limited in their comparison between musical works
- wrote about works that had limited notated musical evidence and tended to be recent popular culture. (These works may not allow for thorough analysis to be reflected in the answers)
- found it difficult to express an argument cogently
- displayed a good understanding of the works but not always of the historical setting/context
- demonstrated simple, side-by side comparison but did not explicitly compare works
- displayed a limited understanding of musical elements and features and their use within the works
- presented simple musical evidence mostly in the text, and also on the manuscript provided.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not relate the works to the historical context in which they were composed or performed
- did not have a clear understanding or knowledge of musical elements and features
- did not provide relevant or specific musical evidence
- did not provide a comparison of the works.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- wrote about works for which they had a sound understanding of both context and musical elements
- made comparisons that were limited or did not extend beyond the obvious eg instrumentation
- used specific musical evidence but did not necessarily refer to it with precision
- were inconsistent in the quality of answers across all 3 questions

- showed a high level of understanding of the historical context in which the works were composed or performed and compared these thoughtfully
- could support their points with relevant musical evidence either in the text or on the manuscript provided
- made some connections between aspects of the music and external influences/aesthetics.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- had a substantial knowledge of the musical works including context and analysis of the works and answered all parts of the paper with perception
- clearly understood how comparison between the works was both similar and different
- were articulate in their answers both in the construction of the answer and quality of thought
- studied works of significance, including NZ works
- were perceptive and were able to alter course to suit the question
- appeared to enjoy the works they studied
- made direct and perceptive comparison between the historical contexts of the works, and wrote in a clear and generally concise style
- supported their answers with well-chosen musical evidence both in the text and the manuscript provided
- made insightful connections between aspects of the music and external influences/aesthetics.

Standard specific comments

Successful candidates had chosen substantial works with scores, which enabled them to develop a robust response to the exam paper. The students who answered this paper well had drilled beyond the surface features of the work to the less obvious and were writing like musicians, with perception and insight. They also tailored their response to the specific question. These candidates demonstrated not only a sound contextual and musical understanding of the works, but also clearly demonstrated the ability to compare the works. The skill of comparison is essential for success in this standard.

In contrast, candidates who did not perform well tended to answer with descriptions of the elements of music, (often instrumentation), and may or may

not have woven that back into the context. Whilst most candidates displayed a clear understanding of composition/melodic devices as well as timbre/instrumentation, harmony/tonality and texture were commonly confused or not clearly understood, which lead to some questions being insufficiently answered. Comparison was weak or missing.

Many candidates were limited by a poor choice of works. A great number of pop/rock/hip hop songs were studied this year and while this may pique student interest in the standard, the lack of deeper understanding and perceptive thinking surrounding these works was evidenced by the inability to provide clear contextual and musical understanding. Of utmost importance is the realisation that seminal works are not necessarily substantial works.

Another growing concern is the inclusion of entire operas, musicals, or albums as substantial works. There is simply too much involved in these large scale works for the analysis to be meaningful and applicable to this standard.

Selection of substantial works, with at least one of these works having an accurately notated score is vital to success in this standard. Some successful selections were:

Baroque

- Brandenburg Concerto No.5 (J.S. Bach)
- “When I am Laid in Earth” (Purcell)

Classical

- Symphony No.40 in G minor – 1st movement (W.A. Mozart)
- Symphony No. 104 in D Major – 1st movement (Haydn)

Romantic

- *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture (Tchaikovsky)
- “Die Erlkonig” (Schubert)

20th Century

- Rhapsody in Blue (Gershwin)
- Five Pieces for Orchestra – No.3 – “Farben” (Schoenberg)

New Zealand Music

- *Waiting for the Aeroplane* (John Psathas)
- *Ghosts of Denniston* (Dorothy Buchanan)

Further to this, a suitable pair of pieces should be selected. Some successful pairings in 2018 were:

- “All You Need Is Love” (The Beatles) AND Requiem – Introit et Kyrie (Faure)
- Piano Concerto No.3 in C Minor (Beethoven) AND *Omnifenix* (John Psathas)
- String Quartet in E Minor (Ethel Smyth) AND *Poroporoaki* (Gillian Whitehead)
- *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture (Tchaikovsky) AND “Bohemian Rhapsody” (Queen)

[Music subject page](#)

Previous years' reports

[2017 \(PDF, 57KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 248KB\)](#)