

## Assessment Report

### Level 2 Music 2017

Standards [91275](#) [91276](#) [91277](#)

#### 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.

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. They also showed a lack of fluency and/or accuracy in both reading and writing musical notation.

Teachers and candidates are advised to refer to the Achievement Standards and 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: <http://www-test5.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/music/levels/>

#### Part B: Report on standards

##### 91275: Demonstrate aural understanding through written representation

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- notated isolated details on the score with accuracy
- identified isolated chords correctly
- transcribed melodic contours and/or rhythms correctly with no reference to the line of music already provided
- identified some elements/features or compositional devices correctly without supporting them with correct definitions or other details.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not notate details on the score with any accuracy, and were often unable to complete answering the question

- could identify few chords correctly, often providing seemingly random answers
- could not identify the melodic contour or transcribe rhythmic patterns with any accuracy
- lacked familiarity with the terminology of musical elements/features and compositional devices, writing answers which were highly descriptive in content or vague e.g. "Harmony is upbeat".

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

- notated some details on the score accurately
- identified adjacent chords accurately
- transcribed some melodic phrases with some errors of pitch and/or rhythm
- identified elements and/or features of the musical extracts and supported answers with brief definitions
- understood the difference between elements/features e.g. tempo, rhythm and compositional devices e.g. sequence, imitation.

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

- notated details on the score with precision
- identified chords and cadences with a high degree of accuracy
- transcribed whole melodic phrases with a high degree of accuracy
- supported accurate identification of elements, features and compositional devices with correct definitions and coherent, detailed explanations in response to the questions.

### **Standard specific comments**

In general, candidates were better prepared for this exam, continuing an improving trend compared with 3-4 years ago. In particular, candidates at Excellence level completed the first two questions better than the final analysis question, perhaps reflecting the availability of teaching resources for transcription-type questions.

There was a noticeable trend in N and A papers (but sometimes M) of students providing highly descriptive answers for Extract 6!

Some specific areas of misunderstanding or difficulty:

- 6/8 as a time signature – the underlying beat being a dotted crotchet.
  - minor keys – leading notes in transcription.
  - identification of cadences.
  - identifying specific instruments.
  - many candidates (probably around 50-60%) used "call and response" instead of imitation for Qu. 3 Extract 1.
  - musical elements/features e.g. tempo, harmony were often used for compositional devices.
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## **91276: Demonstrate knowledge of conventions in a range of music scores**

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- did not understand the more specific terminology of compositional devices or elements of music

- did not understand Jazz/Rock notation but could often identify chord roots and recognize when a chord was inverted
- understood what transposition is but did not know the correct interval for alto saxophone
- understood the point of a score reduction but did not necessarily understand the conventions of a keyboard reduction
- were aware of what tab notation means but struggled to render this accurately
- performed well on one or two questions
- generally struggled with question 2.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- struggled with specific musical terminology
- did not understand what many of the questions were asking, but were able to answer a few parts of the paper requiring more simple understanding such as dynamics or the quantity of intervals.

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

- gained E7 or E8 on one question but gained a lower level of achievement on the other two questions
- lacked the ability to articulate the effect on the music of compositional devices
- were able to analyse the scores, but could not explain the musical effect of different techniques
- made too many small errors
- gave good general musical detail and definitions on the longer answers, but lacked that last detail for an Excellence mark.

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

- answered extremely well across all questions – there were a notable number of papers receiving 23/24
- were able to demonstrate ability/knowledge across all areas, e.g. Jazz/rock notation, guitar tab transcription, syncopation alongside the more traditionally ‘classical’ areas of transposition, key relationships, compositional devices and keyboard reductions
- understood specific musical terminology and techniques alongside their definition and application
- gave extensive detail in their answers.

### **Standard specific comments**

Some specific areas of misunderstanding or difficulty:

- A large number of candidates confused swing and syncopation and treated them as the same thing, or interchangeable.
- Many candidates struggled with writing notes on an adjacent line and space in the piano notation.
- Many candidates failed to correctly understand Jazz/Rock notation and attempted to express chords in roman numerals.
- Many candidates answered the interval question using major/minor 4ths and 5ths.
- A common mistake in the intervals questions was a failure to take into account the key signature.
- Many candidates had problems with the keyboard reduction, particularly with stem directions and correctly connecting the notes as piano chords. They tended towards a short score reduction or a mixture of the two.
- There was quite often some confusion about homophonic texture; usually by not recognising chords without an overlying melody as being homophonic in texture.
- A few candidates confused tremolo with vibrato.

## 91277: Demonstrate knowledge of two substantial contrasting music works

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- displayed a limited understanding of elements and features used within the works
- displayed a limited understanding of the historical contexts within which the specific works were composed/performed
- showed simple, side-by-side comparison but did not explicitly compare
- displayed a good understanding of the works but not necessarily the genre/era or general historical setting.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not have a clear understanding or knowledge of musical elements and features
- did not fully understand the context in which the pieces were written or performed
- provided generic answers regarding the reasons for composition
- did not complete all sections of the paper.

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

- showed a high level of understanding in either the use of musical elements in the works, or the historical context of the works
- displayed the ability to thoughtfully compare and contrast works
- could support their points with relevant musical evidence either in the text or on manuscript.

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

- made direct comparison between the works, supported with well-chosen musical evidence either in the text or the manuscript provided
- wrote in a style which was generally concise, and made clear comparisons regarding the musical elements as well as the historical context of the works
- clearly discussed the presence of the selected musical elements, as well as the significance, providing clear, relevant musical examples either in the text or the score provided
- revealed understanding of historical context and genre relevant to both works.

### Standard specific comments

There was a tendency to overwrite in this standard in 2017. Many scripts were filled with writing but lacked any clear comparison, discussion, or description. Teachers need to emphasize that quality over quantity is key to good writing in this standard, and that this also displays clear understanding of what is being asked.

The ability to clearly compare and contrast the works was vital to achieving at the Merit or Excellence level in this standard. As well as being able to compare and contrast, the candidate must attempt to gain a wider understanding of the genre being studied, as well as the historical context so they may fully understand the musical, political, social, cultural, personal, and technological climate in which the works are being performed and written. This opens up many more opportunities to compare and contrast the works holistically, and for the candidate to show insight into why the music was created in a particular way.

Most candidates displayed a clear understanding of melody and composition/melodic devices. However, rhythm, tonality, timbre, and texture were all commonly confused or not clearly understood, which lead to some questions being insufficiently answered.

Selection of substantial works is vital to this standard and, further to this, a suitable pair of pieces should be selected. Some successful pairings in 2017 were:

*Yellow River Piano Concerto* by Xian Xinghai & *Drum Dances* by John Psathas

Piano Concerto No. 3 by *Beethoven* & *Omnifonix* by John Psathas

*Kembang Suling* by Gareth Farr & *Rhapsody in Blue* by G Gershwin or *View from Olympus* by J Psathas

*Concerto de Aranjuez* by Rodrigo & *Concerto for Orchestra* by B Bartok

*Requiem in D minor* by G Faure & *All You Need is Love* by the Beatles

*Dance of the Maenads* by J Psathas & *Young Persons guide to the Orchestra* by Benjamin Britten

## **Music subject page**

### **Previous years' reports**

[2016 \(PDF, 0KB\)](#)

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