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91423



914230



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SUPERVISOR'S USE ONLY

Level 3 Music Studies, 2017

91423 Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work

9.30 a.m. Tuesday 21 November 2017
Credits: Four

| Achievement | Achievement with Merit | Achievement with Excellence |
|---|--|--|
| Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work. | Examine in depth the influence of context on a substantial music work. | Examine perceptively the influence of context on a substantial music work. |

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

Write ONE essay in this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Excellence

TOTAL

08

ASSESSOR'S USE ONLY

INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay on a substantial music work that you have studied, in response to ONE of the questions below.

Give the details of the work in the box at the top of page 3.

QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

1. Great composers work within the limitations of their society's cultural norms and conventions while also pushing back against them, resulting in the composition of fresh and interesting works.
Examine how the composer has balanced convention and innovation in the conception, production and interpretation of your chosen work.
Handwritten notes: "Balanced" (circled), "Pushing back", "Modern", "workday in composition", "choice", "hum", "rich and"
2. To what extent can the influence of a particular person and/or historical event be identified in the conception, production and interpretation of your chosen work?
Handwritten note: "rich and"
3. Some composers' music reflects their personality and disposition in a way that makes it uniquely recognisable as theirs.
Examine the specific qualities of your chosen work that bear the composer's individual mark, focusing on its conception, production and interpretation.
Handwritten notes: "rich", "deary", "Schubert"
4. A response to geographical influences – those of the composer's place of birth, or of a particular country or location – may affect the musical resources used in a composition.
Examine how a response to geographical influences is evident in the conception, production and interpretation of your chosen work.
Handwritten notes: "geographical", "no"

Work title(s): Concerto Grosso No.1 - Rondo (4th Movement)

Composer(s) / performer(s): Alfred Schnittke

Genre/style/period: 20th Century concerto grosso

ANSWER THE QUESTION

PLANNING (OPTIONAL)

Polystylism

Consider the following aspects of the work:

- its conception
- its production
- its interpretation.

Conception — Play of three spheres — Musical utopia — built out of established forms ideas
— Break down what is normal

Production — Prepared piano
— Schnittke — Eastern Bloc

Interpretation — Audience is CHALLENGED
— Incongruous
— Decay

"Rust"
quote

Intro — Background. Soviet music, 'shorty' ~~Kremer~~ ~~Prokofiev~~

Tesis

Conception — Kremer, Gidon Kremer
— play of three spheres.

— context for

opening
how

Takes it off-line

Gr. comp.
Ability

yes
T T T S D R M H
low

You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750 words. The quality of your ideas is more important than the length of your essay.

Support your response with musical evidence from the work(s). Manuscript paper is provided on page 9 in case you wish to include musical quotations.

Begin your essay here:

Question number: 1

Great composers have the wonderful ability to take ~~existing~~ existing ideas and conventions and transform them into something new and exciting. Alfred Schnittke ~~the~~ wrote his Concerto Grosso No. 1 during a time of cultural censorship, but his remarkable ~~transformation~~ transformation of the centuries-old form of the concerto grosso is truly innovative and challenging //

The Concerto Grosso ~~was~~ was composed in response to a request by the violinists Gidon Kremer and Tataru Gradenko. ~~Schnittke~~ Schnittke saw the concerto grosso form as a challenge - what relevance does a Baroque form have in the modern world? ~~He~~ He wanted to unify ~~the~~ serious music and popular music in a "musical utopia" and, in doing so, created a "play of three spheres - the baroque, the modern, and the banal". The result is a stunning juxtaposition of a remarkable variety of styles - film music, Baroque music, tango music and even nursery tunes are effortlessly linked by stylistic "modulations" and are all infused with ~~20th~~ 20th - century dissonance and ~~total~~ freedom //

The "Rondo" fourth movement is perhaps the most ~~strikingly~~ strikingly unusual of all the six movements. The structure, while ~~initially~~ initially ~~seemingly~~ ~~typical~~ typical of a rondo, devolves into near-anarchy by the end //

of the movement. The initial presentation of the main theme is ~~in~~ in a fairly conventional Baroque style, with the harpsichord providing a continuo-like accompaniment for the two soloists and giving the impression of a trio sonata - ~~though~~ though the dissonant ~~an~~ intervals between the violin parts remind us that this is undoubtedly a 20th-century work. (Theme shown in Quotation A, page 9). ~~The~~ The entry of the string orchestra ~~transform~~ transforms the theme, with ~~sketch~~ imitations creating a thick, chaotic texture. This texture is ~~contained~~ ~~throughout~~ throughout the tense, atonal first episode. The subsequent return to the theme ~~re-establishes~~ re-establishes both tonality and order. However, Schnittke ~~does~~ does not linger in the Baroque style - instead, he abruptly ~~jump-cuts~~ jump-cuts to a tango, incongruously played on ~~the~~ the harpsichord. (Quotation B) This is where the real intermingling of styles begins - the "band" tango theme is combined with huge cluster chords and played in eight ~~different~~ ~~keys~~ simultaneously - all while the Baroque main theme makes occasional appearances. Schnittke's "three spheres" - modern, baroque, and popular - collide with each other, overlapping and jostling for the listener's attention. This chaotic episode ~~is~~ is ended by a sudden ~~return~~ ~~to~~ completely consonant, tonal Baroque passage, ~~which~~ which is in turn cut off by a ~~sudden~~ sudden bell-like low C in the prepared piano. The movement concludes with a statement of the eerie prepared piano "nursery theme" from the very start of the first movement. //

~~Schnittke~~ Schnittke wrote the "Rondo" with the concept ~~of~~ of unifying the conventional and the unconventional in mind. This has been skillfully achieved - ~~the~~ the basic themes are not overly unusual, but the twentieth-century compositional techniques ~~are~~ employed by Schnittke make them new and interesting. ~~If~~ If his compositional style, the composer himself said that "I put a ~~little~~ beautiful //

chord down on paper, and it rusts." Familiar, conventional themes, styles and ~~harmonies~~ harmonies decay into a strikingly original maelstrom of ~~polytonality~~ polytonality. //

~~Examining the production of the Concerto Grosso~~ Examining the production of the Concerto Grosso provides further insight into Schnittke's innovation and experimentation. Unusually for a 20th-century composer, Schnittke requires a harpsichord. Even more unconventionally, he ~~asks~~ asks the harpsichordist to move to a prepared piano at several points during the work. The ~~piano~~ piano has been prepared by inserting coins between the strings in the upper register, altering the piano's sound to become metallic and dull. By having one keyboardist play both the harpsichord and prepared piano, representative of two completely different eras, Schnittke provides the audience with a visual contrast as well as an aural one. The audience see the keyboardist move between the two ~~instruments~~ instruments, signalling a change of style. Once again, Schnittke juggles the conventional and the unconventional - the harpsichord and piano are not unusual ~~instruments~~ instruments per se, but the piano is timbrally altered while the harpsichord is placed in an unexpected context, playing tango and 20th-century music as well as more conventional Baroque music. //

One particular performance illustrates the censorship and control which Schnittke sought to rebel against in writing the ~~Concerto~~ Concerto Grosso. Gritsenko and Kremer, the violinists who originally commissioned the work, were performing in Europe. Schnittke, however, was not allowed to leave the ~~Soviet Union~~ Eastern Bloc to attend. ~~He~~ He was only given permission to leave the Soviet Union when he agreed ~~to be~~ to be the keyboardist for the performance. //

This restrictiveness imposed by the Soviet government profoundly affected the course of Russian music in the 20th century. Composers such as Shostakovich and even Schnittke himself ran the risk of ~~severe~~ censure when writing progressive, Western-influenced music. In this context, the free interplay of ~~East and~~ East and West in the Concerto Grosso makes a bold statement. However, Schnittke never abandons "acceptable" tonality for too long, often ~~hovering~~ hovering on the edge of convention. //

The Concerto Grosso provides a wonderful, provocative challenge to audiences, and is open to much interpretation. Though the wild ~~and~~ and often abrupt changes of style and mood are sometimes jarring, ~~the~~ ~~use of~~ Schnittke's skilful use of unusual structures ~~means~~ means that the changes never seem illogical. However, ~~the~~ ~~use of~~ Schnittke is not afraid to make the audience uncomfortable at times. ~~For~~ For example, during the second episode of the Rondo, the tango theme — a ~~straightforward~~ straightforward, tonal theme played in a familiar style (though, disconcertingly, on the harpsichord) — is taken over by the string ensemble and played ~~in~~ in ~~stretto~~ canon in many keys at once. It is transformed into a slithering, chromatic mass (shown in Quotation C on page 9). ~~This~~ This harmonic decay is disconcerting to the audience, and is a recurring idea throughout the movement. Much of this discomfort comes from the fact that ~~the~~ conventional ideas are being corrupted and altered into completely unconventional chaos. By balancing and contrasting the familiar with the unfamiliar, ~~the~~ Schnittke engages the audience and provides speculation about his intentions. Is he, perhaps, saying that the Concerto Grosso is a ~~dead~~ dead form, having decayed and twisted over the centuries? //

Upon reading Schnittke's notes, we realise that he is in fact saying exactly the opposite. - The concerto grosso is still highly relevant, and rather than decaying, it is instead evolving. Schnittke explores the innovative potential of centuries-old styles, and by combining innovation and convention in this manner, ~~he~~ ^{he} asks the audience to discard their preconceptions of what should be combined with what and accept his "musical utopia" ~~like~~ ^{like}

~~like~~ Working in the tense political atmosphere of ~~the~~ 1976 Soviet Russia, Schnittke has nonetheless forged a truly unique and fresh style by using the old as a foundation for the new. The Concerto Grosso is an enthralling, dramatic ~~work~~ ^{work} which opens our minds to new possibilities while embracing musical tradition. It is truly a work for all times and ages. //

MUSICAL QUOTATIONS (OPTIONAL)

Make sure it is clear which part of your answer any quotation relates to.

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A) Mam Theme - Baroque style

Violin 1

Violin 2

Imitation in 2nd violin

dissonant minor 2nd

etc.

B) Tango theme

Violin 1

Violin 2

Tango rhythm

etc.

C) Tango theme in ~~Baroque~~ violin

Violin 1

Violin 2

Parallel Diminished 7ths

etc.

Excellence exemplar 2017

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|-----------------|--------------------|--|--------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Subject: | Music | Standard: | 91423 | Total score: | 08 |
| Q | Grade score | Annotation | | | |
| | E8 | <p>An insightful response which begins with a concise introduction that provides a clear framework for the essay. Each paragraph contributes a new and carefully considered discussion about ways in which the composer has balanced convention and innovation in a range of conception, production and interpretative aspects.</p> <p>Explanations of the juxtaposition of the “old” and “new” are supported at all times with well-chosen and succinct musical evidence, which is both quoted and described with highly accurate musical terminology. The combination of musical and contextual information is perceptive and the work chosen is appropriately challenging for this level.</p> | | | |