

## Assessment Report

### Level 3 Music 2017

Standards [91420](#) [91421](#) [91423](#)

#### Part A: Commentary

Level 3 Music candidates who achieved success in the external examinations commonly demonstrated a secure understanding of musical elements and features in a variety of contexts and used appropriate language to clearly express their ideas. Answers were legible when music notation was required. Students responded to questions within the examination rather than relying on pre-prepared answers and used works that were substantial enough to allow in-depth understanding to be shown.

#### Part B: Report on standards

#### 91420: Integrate aural skills into written representation

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- used appropriate musical language to describe musical and compositional features
- understood and explained basic musical textures
- compared musical passages and outlined some differences and similarities
- transcribed melodic contours and rhythmic patterns with some accuracy
- identified notes within chord patterns
- identified some of the instruments and ensembles heard.

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

- provided unfocused or imprecise responses
- did not provide coherent, balanced responses
- supplied musical manuscript evidence containing basic notation errors
- lacked knowledge of basic musical terms, elements and features
- misheard contour direction, interval quantity and rhythmic patterns
- labelled chords inaccurately.

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

- explained musical textures, cadences and tonality in detail
- outlined the structure and function of compositional devices
- discussed how musical contrast was being achieved

- matched melodic patterns with rhythmic patterns with some accuracy
- selected chord indications which showed awareness of harmonic progression
- identified instruments and ensembles.

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

- provided detailed analysis of musical features and elements
- compared and contrasted musical changes and similarities in a range of contexts
- explained specific compositional devices in detail
- completed highly accurate melodic and rhythmic transcriptions
- outlined harmonic content using primary and secondary chords in root position and inversion with attention to added sevenths and suspended notes.

### Standard specific comments

Candidates need to develop their aural skills by listening to and thinking reflectively on a wide range of music. They are encouraged to provide as much detail in their response as they can.

For example, in Question 3 (a) (ii) candidates were asked to identify TWO elements or features used to build the music to a climax, and explain how they are used. The following samples outline the four levels of achievement:

- the music gets louder. (Not achieved)
  - the dynamics get louder and there is more texture. (Achieved)
  - the dynamics get louder while the rhythm gets faster and more intense. (Merit)
  - more instruments are added [these need to be identified]. As this happens the dynamics become louder and the texture thickens to create a fuller sound. (Excellence).
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## 91421: Demonstrate knowledge of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified chords in root and inverted positions using a range of standard notation terminology
- labelled simple chords using Roman numeral notation
- used given harmonic progressions to write accurate bass lines
- completed basic cadential progressions by writing missing inner harmonic parts
- differentiated between major, minor and diminished chords
- demonstrated understanding of harmonic contour and voice leading.

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

- struggled to identify the tonality of a given extract and its relationship to the tonic key
- selected inappropriate triads and chord patterns
- used inaccurate terminology to describe harmonic features
- wrote stylistically weak passages containing basic harmonic and rhythmic errors
- overlooked simple modulations, analysed cadence points inaccurately.

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

- differentiated between harmonic and non-harmonic notes and analysed them in detail
- completed harmonic passages based on given bass lines
- harmonised musical cadence points based on a given melody

- demonstrated understanding of harmonic accuracy through completing inner voice parts
- labelled and analysed pivot chords used in modulating passages
- demonstrated knowledge of vocal range and harmonic texture.

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

- demonstrated a secure understanding of chord progressions, cadential writing and modulation
- demonstrated stylistic flair and musical accuracy when completing harmonic extracts
- were aware of limitations within vocal ranges
- maintained given harmonic textures and compositional styles
- used a range of harmonic resources including seventh chords, inversions and non-harmonic notes
- considered rhythmic content, musical contour and phrasing when adding moving bass lines.

### Standard specific comments

Candidates who have a stronger grasp of musical language, cadences, standard harmonic progressions and voice ranges are in a better position to achieve in this standard.

Where candidates were able to process harmonic content, they set themselves up well for Achievement at Merit or Excellence level. Those who struggled to achieve were not as secure in understanding musical elements and applying them to the task.

Notational skills are also important. Ambiguous note heads, faulty tail direction and inaccurate rhythmic content often marred what would otherwise have been a secure response.

## 91423: Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided responses that were pre-prepared and had some relationship to the question being answered
- wrote generalised statements about the contexts and their influence on the work
- presented responses that were musically analytical but did not make use of the analysis to support a response to the influence of context
- wrote factual information that was not developed in any depth
- supported responses with simple musical evidence.

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

- wrote about works that were not substantial
- presented pre-prepared responses that did not respond to the question
- provided in-depth analyses of song lyrics unsupported by musical or contextual evidence
- had limited ability to use musical terminology
- used very broad evidence that did not specifically support their response.

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

- provided clear and detailed explanation of the influences of context on the conception, production, and interpretation of the work
- provided specific musical evidence that supported key points
- presented descriptively or as musical quotations on the manuscript provided
- planned their essay to ensure that it responded specifically to the question
- used accurate and purposeful musical terminology throughout their response.

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

- showed an in-depth understanding of both the question and the influence of context on the work
- made insightful links to wider contextual understanding
- defined clearly the parameters of their responses and provided in-depth, clear, and insightful discussion supported by relevant and perceptive musical evidence.

### **Standard specific comments**

Candidates were generally well prepared for this standard, but should be advised that pre-prepared responses often hinder their capacity to respond specifically to the question.

Some candidates were unable to provide in-depth responses as their works were not 'substantial' – this was particularly apparent for short, stand-alone popular songs.

The word count is given as an indication of what we can reasonably expect a candidate to write in one hour. Good use was made of the planning page but many candidates tended to write overly lengthy responses which did not add to the quality of the response or improve the grade. Candidates should be encouraged to write succinctly.

Candidates who have studied vocal works should be careful to ensure that lyric analyses and/or plot summaries are used to support the response to the question rather than being presented as the main body of the response. It is important to demonstrate knowledge of the influence on the context on the music as well as the thematic content of the plot/lyrics.

Examples of 'substantial music works' that worked well in 2017 were:

- Bartok – Concerto for Orchestra
- Bewley – Te Tangi a Wairaka
- Elgar – Enigma Variations
- Farr – The Horizon from Owhiro Bay
- Radiohead – OK Computer album
- Shostakovich – Symphony No. 11
- Stravinsky – The Rite of Spring

## **Music subject page**

### **Previous years' reports**

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

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