

Subject: Music

Level: 3

Standards: 91420, 91421, 91423

Part A: Commentary

These examinations provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of musical elements and features and skills in transcription and analysis. Evidence of careful preparation was noted with successful candidates applying themselves to the specific questions given, reading them carefully and providing accurate, relevant and insightful answers. They completed all the required parts of a question, followed conventions of musical notation and wrote legibly.

Candidates are encouraged to refer to the resources on the NZQA Music subject page, especially the Aural skills and Conventions tables.

Part B: Report on standards

91420: Integrate aural skills into written representation

Examination

This examination required candidates to transcribe and analyse aspects of music from three differing styles: contemporary pop, classical, and film soundtrack. This involved transcription of rhythmic and melodic phrases and chordal sequences, identification of instrumental techniques, and analysis of specific elements and features.

Observations

Candidates who were successful in this examination attempted all parts of each question. They were able to transcribe with accuracy and followed all instructions for each question (for example, they used correct notation for the identification of chords, and they ensured that answers were written in the correct key). They were able to analyse music thoroughly by providing sufficient detail in their answers and points of connection between elements. Candidates are strongly encouraged to go over all answers in pen.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- attempted most questions
- transcribed some melodic contours and / or rhythms
- identified some chords
- made basic responses to written questions
- understood some musical terminology

- tended to have more success with paragraph-type questions rather than transcription.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not transcribe with any accuracy
- showed limited use of basic notation
- did not answer all parts of each question
- did not demonstrate understanding of keys
- did not recognise or distinguish between major and minor chords
- did not understand questions using musical terminology, e.g. tonality.

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

- transcribed a combination of melodic contours and phrases
- wrote mostly idiomatic notation
- attempted all questions and interpreted terminology correctly
- demonstrated a clear understanding of keys
- identified most chords including some inversions
- used Roman numeral and jazz / rock chord indications correctly.

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

- transcribed accurately and consistently
- took care to make notation clear and idiomatic
- demonstrated a consistent understanding of keys
- identified chord inversions
- provided detailed written answers
- used terminology, signs, and symbols confidently and accurately.

91421: Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores

Examination

This examination required candidates to analyse and realise extracts of harmony from three differing styles: 4-part Bach chorale, 19th-century piano solo, and solo jazz song. This involved answering all parts of each of the three questions.

Harmonic features for analysis and realisation included diminished chords and suspensions as well as the writing of cadences in Question One. Extracts from a theme and variations by Brahms in Question Two provided the opportunity for candidates to compare changing harmonic features within a work.

Observations

Candidates who achieved higher grades demonstrated consistency in their analytical and realisation skills. They provided answers for all parts of a question and focused on the quality of the response. Music notation and text answers were consistently legible and usually involved writing answers in pencil first and then going over them in pen.

Successful candidates attended to details in musical notation such as accidentals and inversions and were able to analyse jazz / rock chords with the most logical answer. Key centres, cadence points and non-harmonic notes were analysed accurately, and broad harmonic features were identified, rather than providing a bar-by-bar analysis of an extract. When realising harmonic passages, these candidates notated chords accurately and in a stylistically-appropriate way.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- analysed chords and chord inversions accurately
- identified tonal centres and cadence points
- analysed and realised basic triads and / or bass notes
- demonstrated some understanding of harmonic techniques
- attempted most parts of each question.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not analyse basic triads
- did not analyse tonal centres accurately
- did not realise bass notes accurately
- confused harmonic features with other elements of music
- omitted parts of each question.

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

- realised chord progressions accurately
- analysed major and minor chords / keys accurately
- analysed and realised added note chords with some accuracy
- included passing notes appropriately
- realised cadences with some accuracy
- identified specific harmonic features including specific keys, harmonic rhythm, and non-harmonic notes.

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

- realised chord progressions in a stylistically appropriate way
- analysed and realised added note chords including diminished 7th chords
- realised cadences accurately
- identified pivot chords accurately
- identified broad harmonic features within an extract such as overall key structure, pedal notes, cadence points and use of chromaticism
- provided an answer for all parts of questions.

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

Examination

This examination provided candidates with the opportunity to consider how a specific aspect of context impacts a music work they have studied. Four possible contexts were provided, with candidates required to select one. The contexts encompassed the role of innovation in music, the influence of a significant relationship, the impact of the spirit or mood of an era and the effect of working within limitations.

Candidates were required to select and explain aspects of their chosen music work as they related to the specific context in question, providing detailed examples from the music where possible.

Observations

Candidates were generally well prepared for this standard, but should be advised that pre-prepared responses often hinder the capacity to respond specifically to the question, particularly when responses are pre-structured with a paragraph on each of conception, production and interpretation.

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

Candidates should be careful to ensure that lyric analyses, plot summaries, and social commentary are used to support the response to the question rather than be 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 / social history.

Examples of ‘substantial music works’ that worked well in 2022 were:

- Bartok – Concerto for Orchestra
- Farr – Te Papa
- Farr – From the Depths Sound the Great Sea Gongs
- Shostakovich – Symphony No. 11 “1905”
- Shostakovich – Symphony No. 5
- Hermann – Soundtrack from Psycho
- Bach – Brandenburg Concerto No. 5
- Mussorgsky – Pictures at an Exhibition
- Ritchie – Remember Parihaka.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided responses that appeared 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 awarded **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 or plots 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 explanations of the influence 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
- showed evidence of planning 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
- were able to make insightful links to wider contextual understanding
- clearly defined the parameters of their responses and provided in-depth, clear, and insightful discussion supported by relevant and perceptive musical evidence.