MUSIC

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-31	32-49	50-59	60-71	72-81	82-100

Standard level group performing

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-32	33-51	52-62	63-69	70-79	80-100

Standard level solo performing

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-32	33-48	49-59	60-71	72-82	83-100

Standard level creating

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-32	33-48	49-58	59-69	70-80	81-100

Solo performing (HL/SLS)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-11	12-13	14-16	17-18	19-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Work was mostly of a very high standard. There was often notable substance and breadth of exploration in the repertoire selected, and a high number of candidates showed work of a rigorous standard and exemplary accomplishment. Several schools showed improvements in their candidate preparation, particularly regarding breadth of stylistic exploration. A few schools would benefit from improvement in the standard of preparation of their candidates as will be detailed below. Some submissions lacked clarity and rigor, the work seems to have had limited, if any, professional direction.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Submissions were mostly strong and of clear stylistic contrast, however, there were a few submissions where the repertoire was overly well known or narrow in style.

Criterion B

Several notable performances were submitted which were musical and technically flawless. It was clear that most candidates were working hard at developing mastery over the musical content, their instruments or their voices.

Criterion C

Some informed performances demonstrated notable understanding of stylistic nuance and effective preparation was clear.

Criterion D

Commendable musical communication was evident for the most part. Some performances were limited by technical inconsistencies or inappropriate understanding of the stylistic character of a number.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The solo performance submissions were generally very well prepared. It is very helpful when schools include photocopies of the repertoire performed with their recitals. This is to be encouraged particularly when pieces are group performance selections or of unusual musical content.

A few of the discs would only playback on a computer. Repeated incidence of this error in preparation is noted from some schools where feedback entries from former sessions addressed the issue. A note on the mark sheets and directly to course teachers emphasizing that the recordings must play back on regular CD players is recommended.

Some very fine preparation is in place in a good number of schools for the November session. This is to be commended as many of the results are of the highest standard.

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In some other centres the candidates would benefit from aiming for a higher standard. This may entail working through broader (more adventurous and contrasting) repertoire; expecting much more precision and rigor in the delivery, or working with larger technical challenges. Please note that professional support is expected for the candidates in their approach to their performing medium.

Further comments

There were commendable candidate recitals and support through professional accompaniments. All examiners were encouraged and commented on the unusual and notable standard attained. The inclusion of score copies for out of the ordinary repertoire is well appreciated by examiners, as well as the detail in the course teacher candidate reports.

Group performing (SLG)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-12	13-14	15-15	16-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Performances were in general very good with some exceptional work.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

In general, performances ranged from good to excellent in those school groups where, most likely, the teacher/conductor was responsible for the selection of the repertoire.

Criterion B

As stated above, some groups demonstrated an excellent mastery of the technique. There were also groups with some issues but nothing that was below satisfactory.

Criterion C

The groups demonstrated in general good understanding of the style. However, due to the nature of some groups such as hard rock bands, the style was quite limited.

Criterion D

There were some memorable performances demonstrating a high level of commitment, which was very pleasant to hear.

Creating (HL/SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-11	12-16	17-19	20-23	24-26	27-30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Generally a good standard of work this session with very few instances of too few works in the portfolios. Compositions remain the most common component, followed by technology creations. The other options: improvising, arranging and stylistic techniques were less popular.

Most work was suited to the task although there were still occasional instances of stylistic techniques submissions where the requirements did not seem to have been fully understood, including some confusion between figured bass exercises and chorale writing.

Most candidates presenting arrangements remembered to provide the examiner with some form of the original (audio or manuscript) that has been worked from.

Improvisations did not always make clear and identifiable the candidate's improvised contribution.

Recordings of computer playback (compositions) were more common than live recordings.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There were some good portfolios reflecting a deep understanding of how to use the musical elements. Many others contained very creative ideas but lacked the ability to develop them to any extent. Pieces scoring well here made creative use of dynamics, instrumental contrasts, and development of thematic material. Less successful pieces appeared to have made excessive use of repetition, often in the form of simply copy and paste.

Candidates offering stylistic techniques did not always have an effective and appropriate understanding of the task.

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Criterion B

Marks in criterion B generally tended to follow those in A and E, although some genuinely communicative and creative worked suffered from a lack of structural cohesion and sense of direction. Most candidates appear to have understood the need to structure their pieces although some lacked subsequent development of their ideas.

Criterion C

Instrumentation was generally handled competently with candidates often choosing to write for instruments they knew well, and subsequently, inappropriate or impossible parts for instruments were rare. There were some outstanding examples of idiomatic writing, usually accompanied by recordings of live performances reflecting the candidates' access to musicians. Sadly, there are still many who think that whatever the music software can generate will suffice as long as it's within the range of the instrument.

Music technology pieces made good use of sound manipulation although some made use of programmes that offered preset solutions, making work presentable but somewhat lacking in individuality. Examiners are looking to award creative interaction between the candidate and the software.

Criterion D

There were some very fine and detailed scores in this session. More attention to phrase marking might on some occasions have pushed marks up further. There were still instances where transposing instruments were named in the score, but the part was not transposed. Care should be taken because often software will state "Clarinet in Bb" whether or not the part is actually transposed. Songwriters should be aware that a text with chord symbols over the words is in no way an adequate representation of the song. Also a vocal melody line with chord symbols is not a full score.

Candidates presenting improvisations in a group setting should remember that the examiner will be listening out for the spontaneity and creativity only of the candidate, so a good group performance will help if it is helping to showcase the candidate's personal improvised input. A three minute song with a twenty second improvised guitar solo will probably not offer much for the examiner to reward.

Criterion E

Candidates generally seem to have been aware that variety in the portfolio can help in the holistic assessment and consequently most portfolios offered pieces with different instrumentations and/or styles. There were several outstanding works – especially for chamber ensembles and solo instrument with piano – which were highly communicative and well crafted.

Criterion F

Most reflections were well organised, addressing methodically the required components of intention, process and outcome. Of these three elements the last was nearly always the

weaker, often just offering a declaration of satisfaction on the composer's part and not mentioning what has been learned or what might have been done differently. Intentions too were sometimes vague, and although a reflection is not required to be a list of facts, some more basic information would often have helped. For example, some reflections failed to mention the instrumentation of the piece, which one would imagine would be an important factor in the intentions of the composer. In particular, when stating intentions, candidates should focus on the musical intent and not general/personal motivation. In some cases the 300 word limit was not adhered to and this limited the achievement in this criterion. Reflections for music technology should include details of hardware/software and how sound was manipulated or processed.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

To expand candidates' creative experience by developing knowledge and understanding of compositional techniques through musical analysis,

There is perhaps room for more systematic study of how to shape the main rhythmic, melodic and harmonic/textural aspects of a piece. For example: experimenting with a melody or motif by changing the rhythm, the intervallic structure, and using devices such as sequence and inversion.

The guide states that candidates are encouraged to try out their compositions in a live setting and present where possible recordings of live performances. This would be an important part of a composer's learning process.

Stylistic techniques submissions generally need to have a clearer idea of the style and musical conventions of the music chosen. Instructions should be carefully read so as not to omit the required elements - imitation, modulation etc. Teachers should remember that, with 12 Tone exercises, it is they who must provide the tone-row to the candidates, not have them devise their own, and candidates are required to add expression and dynamic indications for this component. For the figured bass exercise (stylistic techniques ex C) it is best not to choose a chorale but a piece that has been conceived for a melody with keyboard accompaniment.

To provide candidates with opportunities to reflect on their creative intentions, processes and outcomes regarding their creative works, by the use of appropriate terminology and the application of a consistent theoretical knowledge.

In general, teachers' comments supported and explained their marking.

Paper one (Listening paper) (HL)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Mark range:	0-17	18-35	36-59	60-71	72-82	83-94	95-140

Paper one (Listening paper) (SLS, SLG, SLC)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-13	14-27	28-40	41-49	50-57	58-66	67-100

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As in previous sessions, candidates seem to struggle to understand that while section B in the examination offers some scope for open ended answers, in section A the questions are specific and they do not offer the flexibility than questions in section B.

A second aspect that appeared to present difficulties to the candidates was the balancing of answers in section B. The assessment establishes four criteria of assessment for each answer. Often candidates focus on one or two of the aspects neglecting the others. The result is unbalanced answers that do not reach high marks.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates seemed to be well acquainted with the Prescribed Works. They felt comfortable with the programmatic aspects of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* as well as the form of Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*. They also demonstrated in general good understanding of the characteristics of the Baroque period (including good reading of the score).

The candidates demonstrated good acquaintance with the aspects of pop music and, to a lesser extent also world music.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

Most candidates that selected this question demonstrated a good understanding of sonata form. In the best cases candidates not only discussed how Prokofiev imitated the 'classical' style but they also discussed how he diverted from it. Unfortunately there were several

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candidates that failed to present examples to support their otherwise correct arguments. There were also candidates that did not correctly locate the different sections of the structure.

Question 2

Many candidates showed familiarity with programmatic elements of the piece. By far the most selected movement was movement 1. Candidates presented good examples of the 'river', 'boatmen', 'rowing' etc. A similar situation happened with the fourth movement where the patriotic songs were used as an example of programmatic elements. Candidates were less successful with the other two movements. At times candidates discussed potentially valid programmatic elements but failed to demonstrate these with clear examples.

Question 3

Candidates were less successful with this question. An important number of candidates did not mention the presence of pentatonic scales in the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*. Nevertheless candidates described the use of 'diatonic system' or 'western system' in both pieces. More challenging was the aspect of modulation. Several candidates did not discuss it. Others simply presented 3-4 modulations without engaging in an argument. In the best cases candidates argued that composers used modulation to create shock (Prokofiev) or form (Xian).

Question 4

As stated before, this was one of the best answers in the examination. Candidates recognized: figured bass, basso continuo, voices, imitation, Latin, sacred, key, meter, etc. However, it was surprising that an unusual number of candidates did not use the score to analyze the piece.

Question 5

This was probably the question that presented more challenges to the candidates. While there were some brilliant responses that described an "expressionist composer from the 2nd Vienna School with works such as Wozzeck..." there were other candidates that could not place the piece and were equally puzzled by harmony and structure. Some candidates declared that the solo instrument was a "viola" despite the title of the piece. Rhythm (meter) was also puzzling for the candidates.

Question 6

There were many good answers for this question with candidates identifying the "fusion" nature of the piece. The candidates seemed quite capable to identify structural elements. Instruments (including the 'ethnic' instruments) were reasonably named. Candidates talked about modern elements such as "beat box" and Bhangra or Bollywood.

Question 7

Candidates noticed the lack of predictable beat in the first section compared to other sections. They noticed the "narrative" aspect of the voice which some described as "Sprechstimme" or

"recitative". In general they identified the instruments but failed to identify the culture. Many limited to say "from Europe" with some saying "Middle-East" or "Native American".

Question 8

Candidates found links. However, often these links were not substantial. For instance, "both pieces use voices" or "both pieces use western tonal system"... better links were for instance "imitation present between saxophone/voice and violin/voice" (Q4 and Q7).

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Probably the most useful recommendation would be to insure that candidates read correctly the questions in section A. The number of candidates that attempt to 'insert' pre-memorized material that does not correspond to the question is numerous.

Candidate should not use terminology they are unsure of. At times, candidates use sophisticated words without a real understanding of their meaning. In such cases the result is that candidates demonstrate lack of understanding rather than the opposite.

The use of "bullet points" is not always a good solution. In some cases candidates attempt to describe excerpts as if following a 'check mark' list such as this one:

"Mode: major

Texture: homophonic

Dynamics: Forte".

However, in many, if not most of the cases, excerpts change mode, texture and dynamics. Therefore the previous system does not demonstrate a complete understanding of the piece.

Musical Links Investigation (HL, SLS, SLG, SLS)

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, the range and suitability of work submitted was of a very good standard with some excellent scripts presented. Choice of musical cultures was appropriate and varied with some clearly stated links that allowed for in-depth analysis. There were some submissions,

however, where the links fell short in lending themselves to a comprehensive musical discussion and there is still often an imbalance between similarities and differences. Candidates are asked to compare and contrast musical cultures and, while it is important to show similarities by the musical links, differences can also be equally significant. One feature of a number of submissions in this session was the tendency for schools to use what appears to be a "template". Examiners commented that they had received several scripts from one school that all followed the same format, with the only difference being the choice of culture and musical examples. The result was often mechanical investigations, which were thorough in addressing the analysis and comparison but which stifled the creative thinking of the candidate.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Candidates seem to be doing better in the selection of cultures and generally in the choice of musical examples. There were examples where one piece had been influenced by elements of the other musical culture, or there were instances where links were not musical (i.e. "lyrics' or "music that impacted on its period") or were insubstantial. In a number of examples there were up to four or five links which allowed for broad (not in-depth) comparison but little room for contrast.

Criterion B

There was a broad range of performance against this criterion. In the best examples, candidates clearly identified musical links and offered supporting examples (often notated). In other cases the analysis was limited to brief mention of links, without demonstrating them. In a few instances there was not direct analysis of chosen musical examples but, rather, the mention of contextual characteristics of the cultures. There is still a tendency for candidates to narrow their discussion of the musical links to one small section of the work where the link exists, rather than looking at the significance of that link in relation to the work as a whole. In many cases, comprehensive analysis was lacking, with more specific detail (and musical examples) required to show an understanding of the elements of the works.

Criterion C

Again, there was a vast range of performance against this criterion. In the best investigations, candidates made use of appropriate and sophisticated terminology and were able to refer directly to the chosen musical examples to show their understanding and application of the terminologies. Some scripts, in particular at the higher end, showed the candidates' ability to label and explain musical elements at a very high level which is impressive. Weaker scripts often do not display the musical language or understanding to articulate through musical terminology the points that are being made, and this often jeopardized the possibility to obtain higher marks. It is important to note, in addition, that the absence of clefs and key signatures in musical examples does invalidate the example in terms of accuracy, especially if pitch or harmony is the specific point of discussion.

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Criterion D

Although there were some beautifully presented and well organized scripts, few candidates used valuable sources. In general the sources were on-line and of limited academic value (e.g. Wikipedia). The higher achieving candidates usually demonstrated a better understanding of academic research which included use of footnotes, discography, as well as acknowledgement of images and articles. It is preferable that candidates try to access published recordings of their chosen musical examples rather than rely on YouTube clips, which (unless acknowledged with detailed references) are difficult to authenticate. It is also helpful if primary sources such as musical scores, recordings or interviews are clearly apparent in the bibliography.

Criterion E

Those candidates who have researched the cultures well and have chosen pieces with significant links also exhibit a more intellectual approach. This is often directly linked to the level of analysis and the ability of the candidate to discuss musical ideas and follow through a point of view. It was disappointing to note that there were a number of scripts (often many from the same school) which appeared to follow an "MLI template". Whilst this gives a candidate a fair idea of what material to cover, it does inhibit creative thinking and the sense of a personal engagement with the investigation process. A number of scripts were weak in this criterion as they relied too much on anecdotal information in relation to the popularity of the artist, for example, or the number of records sold, or the social context of the music and significance of lyrics. Power points and web pages can be difficult to organize in relation to musical examples and can limit the flow of an argument.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is important to instil a good grounding for the candidates in relation to analysis, the understanding of the common elements of music and the best practice in referencing within the body of a script. Candidates need to be more aware of the quality of their references and strive for research with primary sources.

It is suggested that teachers have meetings with candidates during the course of the time that they are working on their research so that they can see how the candidates are progressing. Compare and contrast pieces in class as a preparation in the processes involved for MLI and ensure that candidates have a working knowledge of music theory and history of music. This will give them the tools with which to meet the requirements of the MLI. Show examples of best practice in producing musical examples in support of their arguments. Please abstain from offering candidates a "template" to follow as this negates the creative aspect of this component.

Further comments

It is important to emphasize that the use of "templates" is a weak model for the MLI component. For example, several scripts were received from one school that all followed the same format and, although the average mark was a healthy "mid-range" because a broad

range of material had been covered via the "template", the lack of personal engagement with the material, or the creative process of investigation, was apparent. The candidates were unable to achieve to the highest level as a result.

A further point worth emphasizing is the issue of YouTube as a valid audio resource for the MLIs. YouTube does offer access to a wide and vivid range of musical examples, which the candidates may otherwise not encounter. However, the question has been raised as to the authenticity of YouTube as a resource. A number of the candidates simply put "YouTube" in their discography, and with this minimal information it is difficult to establish the authenticity of the source. If candidates give a detailed reference however, it is possible to easily trace the source and could be considered more valid.