

## MUSIC TRIPOS PART IA: EXAMINERS' REPORTS 2018

### Paper 1: Music and Musicology Today

#### *1A Written examination*

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	4	47	12			1
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>19</i>			<i>1.5</i>

The most surprising aspect in this set of scripts was the great disproportion between the questions that the candidates chose to answer – a result that is very unlikely statistically, and probably unprecedented. Each of the 64 candidates had to pick two questions from a choice of nine altogether. Of the 128 answers, 48 were on question 4 (on music as performance) and 42 on question 3 (on ethnomusicology), whereas each of the other seven questions received only between 2 and 14 answers.

On the better end of the spectrum, there was evidence of study and competence, and candidates did address (or at least try to address) the specific question that was being asked. Some of them did so in a rather personal way, occasionally even original.

On the basis of the reading of all the scripts, here follows a number of general suggestions for future candidates. For virtually all of the issues below (including handwriting!), it would be good for candidates to practice writing essays in exam conditions during the academic year, and to ask supervisors for feedback.

- 1) Ensure that you read carefully, and answer specifically, the question in front of you, rather than the one you expected (and perhaps already answered in a supervision); in other words, avoid giving the impression that you are recycling a pre-existing essay, however good that may be.
- 2) Examiners would much rather read answers that are concise, clearly expressed and to the point, than long answers that feel rushed, are awkwardly written, go on at excessive length (not always keeping focus on the specific question), or even ramble on so that the reader loses the sense that there is one argument.
- 3) The spelling of English is sadly a dying art even among natives, and some examiners may choose to ignore it. But the increase in illegible handwritings has become a serious problem for the examiners. You are instructed to write legibly on the examination cover-sheet, and you put yourself at risk by not doing so.
- 4) It would be good to show evidence of reading through mention of scholarly literature. A few answers felt as though they could have been improvised by anyone who had walked into the examination room without having attended the course or done any reading.

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- 5) There is no need to repeat chunks of the question in the body of your answer. If you are indeed keeping to the specific question, that will shine through your answer anyway.
- 6) You may have heard or read some things about the fields of musicology, but repeating them in a simplified and unquestioned manner – turning them into myths – is bad intellectual practice. For instance, is it really true a) that comparative musicology emerged primarily as a colonialist project? b) that before the 1980s (the advent of the so-called New Musicology) musicology ignored the context? c) that traditional musicology considered performance superfluous or irrelevant?

A couple of remarks on specific questions:

Question 2 (Theodor Adorno and popular music):

A number of students answered this question as though in a vacuum: not only did they seem unaware that Adorno was active about fifty to seventy years ago, but they made no mention of any literature on popular music or on the sociology of music. In other words, they were basing the answer exclusively on their personal experience of popular music.

Question 4 (studying music as performance):

A number of candidates felt that they had to put the historical-performance movement at the centre of their answer on what was in fact a broader theoretical question. Moreover, several of them strangely conflated historically informed performance and the different question of 'authorial intentions'. Finally, most answers did not do what one would expect to see in this case: mention of what scholars of performance studies actually do, *how* they study performance.

### 01A Performance

No of students taking paper	1	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
33	12	16	5	0	0	0
Percentage	36.36	48.48	15.15	0	0	0

The overall standard of programming, performance and presentation (including printed programmes) was very good indeed, with some recitals being outstanding. Thank you to all recitalists for the performances this year.

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### 01B Composition

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
23	4	12	7	0	0	0
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>17.4%</i>	<i>52.2%</i>	<i>30.4%</i>			

#### Marker 1:

The best pieces from this set of submissions showed real qualities of invention and engagement with current compositional concerns, aspects which were distinctly absent from the weaker entries. Many of the middle-ranking compositions showed some skill and powers of imagination but were framed in the idiom of a bygone era. Presentation was generally good, and most of the CDs worked in a standard player, though as in the past, it was sometimes very frustrating (and occasionally painful) to prise the disc from the tangle of sellotape and staples with which they were attached to the submission. Overall, this was a mildly disappointing set of pieces.

#### Marker 2:

Not very many of these pieces showed much sense of curiosity, adventure, boldness or ambition; those that did made a welcome contrast. There was in most cases a sound (if rather constrained) sense of what works for specific instruments or voices, and most (though not all) of the scores were decently notated and had informative prefaces.

### 01C Extended Essay

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
8	3	4	1			
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>37.5</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>12.5</i>			

It was an interesting collection of essays, with an attractive spread of subjects, and generally showing the candidates' good effort and their personal engagement with the chosen topics.

Here follow a few comment and suggestions for future reference:

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- 1) passages of musical analysis or description will generally benefit from the presence of musical examples;
- 2) all musical examples and graphs should be clearly legible (well reproduced, and of a good size);
- 3) ensure that whatever is made reference to in the essay's main text does actually appear in the relevant appendix or bibliography (in particular, the introduction of the author-date bibliographical system in dissertations of a historical nature seems to have generated an unusual number of problems);
- 4) in several cases it was hard to tell precisely how much of the posited thesis was original, because of the not always explicit reference to scholarly literature; in two cases there was the *suggestion* that the main thesis of the paper had in fact already been expressed in earlier literature on the subject.

The weaker work showed sloppiness in editing and poor writing/arguing (logical gaps, ungrounded claims). In the best examples, the author's thesis was pursued competently and expressed clearly.

### Paper 2: Music History I

No of students taking paper	1	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
63	8	50	5			
Percentage	13	79	8			

### *Medieval*

#### **Marker 1:**

This was a balanced set of results. There were a handful of first-class marks, a large number of 2:1 marks and a smaller number of 2:2 marks. At the top end, candidates displayed an ability to handle both historical argument and stylistic issues in a fluent manner. Towards the lower end, candidates often displayed a lack of precision,

frequently not identifying sources, providing dates, or naming authors. The most consistent weakness was not answering the question set, reproducing set essays on a topic that engaged only obliquely with the specific terms of the question. Those who attempted to answer questions directly, even if ultimately writing shorter essays with fewer examples, were well rewarded.

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Question 1a saw a range of responses. Those who were able to give a sense of unfolding melodic process provided the most convincing answers. Passing acquaintance with the standard musical procedures employed in the two genres (Offertory and Tract) served a few candidates well, while others were tripped up by looking for a Respond-Verse structure in the Offertory. A few candidates did not recognise the F clef.

Answers to question 2a ploughed a similar furrow in drawing on the same small body of writers (Augustine, Basil, Niceta and John of Chrysostom). The themes addressed by these authors were for the most part well summarised, with a few candidates coming to terms with the dynamics of compunction, but it would have been interesting to have seen evidence of wider reading (McKinnon's handbook might have been profitably consulted). Question 2b had the widest range of answers. Those who were able to refer in detail to historical materials while summarizing major themes fared the best.

Question 3 saw some good, detailed answers but also some relatively weak ones. Those who merely summarized Fuller's seminal article were not well rewarded, especially since the question focused on singing, not on theory. It was surprising to read so many answers focusing on Winchester and Aquitaine, when the more obvious pairing would have been Winchester and Paris. This may be due to candidates feeling unwilling to make independent connections and comparisons in exam conditions.

The answers to question 4 were generally of a high quality, with some exceptional answers showing detailed knowledge of the repertory. Candidates who reproduced a standard narrative of the history of music in Paris in this era, especially without questioning the reliability and utility of Anonymous IV's testimony, did not score highly. It was especially disappointing to read answers relying on textbook accounts that are now regarded as out of date.

Question 1b was not attempted, which was a shame as it relied on direct knowledge of the repertory. Candidates should feel ready to answer questions that do not require them to reproduce memorized essays.

### **Marker 2:**

The analysis question was answered more successfully than in previous years, and demonstrated the ability on the part of some students to get to grips with Gregorian melody. One issue affected the marks of a good number of students: many took the general subject of an essay and wrote something about it, rather than answering the actual question. This was particularly true for question 4, on Parisian polyphony.

### ***Renaissance***

There was a disappointing uniformity in the choice of questions and the answers given; almost all candidates attempted either the Byrd-progressive or Palestrina-conservative question, without first considering what these terms might mean in the context of 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century musical culture. Essential to a good answer on Byrd was discussion of the Verse anthem/service and on Palestrina his history of publications and their dedicatees – both of which were discussed thoroughly in the lectures. Poor answers relied upon hackneyed discussion of recusant music and the Council of Trent.

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Next most popular was question 8; which for poorer candidates seemed to provide an excuse for returning to questions of progressiveness v tradition. Only a few answers engaged with the issue of self-conscious historicism in Renaissance repertoires which was the intended target of this question.

Answers to the other questions were largely successful; and, one imagines, attempted only by students who had immersed themselves in the period with greater thoroughness than merely a dipped-toe into Allan Atlas.

### Paper 3: Music History II

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	11	49	4			
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>6</i>			

#### Marker 1:

In general, this was a very pleasing set of scripts, with few essays (and even fewer papers) falling below the 2:1 boundary. All the questions were attempted, though a surprisingly small number of candidates opted for Q1 (on the essence of Romanticism) and Q5b (on Wagner). Presumably, this can be explained in part by the requirements in these questions for detailed knowledge. However, it would be disappointing if that were the sole reason; Q1 asked candidates to base their answers on 'any **one** work by Haydn or Mozart' - arguably, a fairly flexible frame of reference.

Many exam reports contain exhortations about reading the questions carefully. Such encouragement was particularly relevant to this year's paper, as quite a few candidates addressed the general area of a question but missed – or, at least failed to home in on – the central point.

Q6 proved particularly problematic in this respect. A significant proportion of the answers treated the question as an excuse to offload prepared material on the symphony after Beethoven. However, candidates were asked to address the *fin de siècle*, a period that could perhaps be said to include Brahms's symphonies but has very little connection with Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Schumann or Liszt. Of course, some background can be welcome, but the best answers here focussed on composers such as Mahler and Sibelius; inventive students even brought in Schoenberg and Debussy.

Similarly, Q3 was often used as an excuse for a prepared essay on programme music or on progressive versus conservative. However, the first half of the nineteenth century was clearly set as a time-frame, and major excursions outside this period had to be penalised to some degree. Some candidates discussed changes in approaches to

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*Lieder*, but curiously none of the essays I read addressed Schumann's own piano miniatures which, of course, exemplify tensions between text and music in a very particular way.

Q5a elicited a particularly broad range of often quite detailed responses. Perhaps predictably, most of the candidates chose to focus on *Carmen*. However, it was pleasing to see that almost a dozen operas in total were discussed; these included *Der Freischütz*; *La Muette*; *Guillaume Tell*; *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète*; *La traviata*; *Aida*; *Don Carlos*; and *Salome*.

### Marker 2:

Once again, Nationalism was the most popular topic (55 candidates attempted Q4) and it was pleasing to see a much higher standard of responses this year, as most candidates tended to focus on a smaller number of examples in greater depth. Q6 was also popular, but responses here were generally less successful. While discussions of the influence of Beethoven on later symphonic composers are to be expected, the question made specific reference to the *fin de siècle*, yet many candidates focused on works from several decades earlier. Some responses to Q3 also missed the point of the question and veered into a general discussion of programme music without examining the quote provided. There were some surprising - if not entirely convincing - interpretations of 'large-scale compositions' in responses to Q2b.

Responses to Q5a were the most variable in standard, but at the top end showed impressive knowledge. The range of operas in the responses was striking, and it was pleasing to see so many candidates take an enthusiastic interest in the French repertoire.

While a number of candidates wrote out musical examples on manuscript paper this year, on the whole engagement with the score tended to be thin, with a few inaccuracies, suggesting that in preparations for the exam listening may not be keeping pace with reading. A number of candidates misspelled the names of opera characters, scholars, composers or the names of works, even when they wrote about them at length.

Overall, however it was pleasing to see that most candidates have been reading widely, and many showed an impressive recall of the relevant debates. Responses at the top end engaged critically with the scholarship and several responses showed evidence of independent thought. Once again, the importance of carefully reading the exam questions must be highlighted, as it was a great pity to have to penalise intelligent but off-topic responses.

### Marker 3:

In general, this was a very good set of scripts, with few essays falling below a II.1. The best essays offered a clear and focused argument, illustrated with detailed musical examples, and demonstrated critical engagement with the scholarly literature.

Essays that fared less well were often marred by basic factual inaccuracies, a lack of relevant musical detail, and, most significantly, a failure to answer the specific question being asked. For example, in a number of cases, especially for Question 3 (on programme music) and Question 6 (on the symphony at the turn of the century), candidates provided what appeared to be largely pre-prepared answers based on the lecture topics, without adapting their ideas and examples to the questions in hand. This was a

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particular problem when it came to matters of chronology: for the most part, students answered these two questions purely as 'programme music' or 'symphony after Beethoven' questions, largely disregarding the title quotations, and the restricted time periods (first half of the century, and *fin de siècle*, respectively); consequently, many of the answers made extensive use of musical examples which fell outside the remit of the question.

It is crucial to read the question carefully, to address *all* parts of the question, including any quotations, and to be flexible in the application of the knowledge, ideas, and materials that have been acquired and developed over the course of the year.

There was a fairly wide spread of answers, though few candidates attempted Question 1, 2b, or 5b. The majority of candidates chose Question 4 (on Nationalism), and in general this was answered well. While Brahms and Dvorák inevitably featured high on the list of composers considered here, there were some interesting references to a range of composers, including Martinú, Janacék, Sibelius, Glinka, Balakirev, and Amy Beach. A similarly pleasing array of works featured in the answers to Question 5a on Opera in its cultural and political contexts – the second most popular question, and perhaps the best answered. Although *Carmen* was by far the most commonly chosen case study, *Aida*, *Don Carlos* and *Le Prophète*, among others, also made an appearance. It was gratifying to see that students had gone away and looked closely at these operas; there was evidence here of a keen engagement with the works, and the surrounding literature.

When approaching this, or indeed any exam, students should not feel that they have to reproduce the lectures (far from it) – lectures merely provide a framework for the students' own explorations of the subject, for their own reading, listening and thinking. Students should not be afraid to take some risks in their answers: there is no one answer that we are looking for; but they should make sure that they justify their approach, and clearly relate it to the question being asked.

### Paper 4: Introduction to Music Analysis

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
	4	52	8	0	0	0
Percentage	6.25	81.25	12.5			

#### Marker 1:

It was encouraging to find that the great majority of candidates were able to submit two complete and (in many cases) substantial answers. In Section A (Bach BWV 886) Question 2 was probably the least well answered, and it was remarkable that so few candidates chose to make use of music examples, which would have been able to

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articulate motivic relationships so much more clearly and efficiently than words. In the case of Question 3, really successful answers were those that kept the terms of the question in clear focus, and built an argument to support their case. Section B (Beethoven, Op. 18 no. 2/ii): too many answers were badly marred by attempts to shoe-horn this movement into some kind of sonata form, when it so clearly makes little sense from that perspective. Few really grasped the radical nature of the contrast between the outer and inner sections; and no-one pointed out the potential for displacement of the barline by one crotchet beat throughout the B section. Answers to Question 5 suffered from a failure to comment on 'the whole movement'; also, issues of register and tessitura, double stopping and dynamics were often ignored. In Question 6 it was important to keep the notion of *style* to the fore, and to recognise that the 'comic' and 'parodic' are not simply interchangeable.

### Marker 2:

On the whole candidates seemed to tackle the first part of the paper (on the set work) better, though there were a few perceptive and skilfully argued answers to each of the six questions.

In Question 1 candidates tackling the Prelude frequently identified elements of formal repetition correctly and were able to relate these to wider principles of tonal organisation. A small number attempted to impose inappropriate formal models (sonata form will rarely provide insight in this part of the paper), while disappointingly few candidates attempted to relate the work to ritornello principles in any systematic way. Those opting for the fugue in this question on the whole did better, though a few omitted important details of fugal procedure (such as the nature of the answer) while many candidates conversely limited themselves to basic technical observations without exploring the contrapuntal technique or structural organisation in any detail. Almost none spotted the bipartite organisation of the fugue. Question 2 yielded some good answers, though here as in other questions many candidates lapsed into descriptive commentary; most answers to Question 3 explored a simple strict/free dichotomy, but a few more ambitious candidates attempted to interrogate some of the terms of the question ('schematic plans', 'organicism') with some good results at times.

Very few candidates seemed to discern any creative reasoning behind the extreme contrast of styles in the ternary-form second movement of Beethoven's quartet op.18/2. A disturbingly large number of candidates attempted to shoehorn the whole movement into some sort of Hepokoski and Darcy-influenced sonata reading, a strategy that yielded uniformly low marks (especially for those candidates who entirely failed to note the problems of such a reading, stating apparently without any misgivings that the movement contained a subordinate theme in the tonic or subdominant, for example). A more nuanced engagement with some aspects of sonata theory might in fact have been possible, particularly if deployed to describe how Beethoven might have developed the materials of the first section differently, or to posit particular listener expectations at key moments.

The most successful answers to Question 4 correctly identified the overall ternary layout and the rounded-binary plans of the individual sections, combining these terms with sensitive remarks on phrasing. A few candidates threw around the terms 'antecedent' and 'consequent' rather too freely without pausing to consider whether the phrases concerned really behaved as such. Question 5 was a popular choice, but some candidates did not read the question with sufficient care: the reference to texture was clear but often overlooked, while many candidates neglected to consider the middle section at all despite the reference to 'the whole movement'. Many answers to question 6 showed considerable insight into aspects of contrast and parody in the work, especially in the handling of ornamentation in the repeated 'A' section. Even here,

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though, as in the other questions, almost no one tackled the bizarre structure and contrast of styles at the heart of this movement head-on: the 'A' section that gestures towards expansion into the dominant only to return to the tonic and conclude in short order; the transformation of an innocuous closing motif into a skittish 'B' section that might be interpreted as a scherzo and thus a new movement in its own right, were it not for the return of the 'A' section in a hyperbolically varied literal reprise.

### Paper 5: Tonal Skills I

#### *5A Counterpoint Exam*

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	13	29	21	1	0	0
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

#### **Marker 1:**

The answers given in this Palestrina counterpoint exercise ranged from some confident and stylish writing to incomplete scores with large sections left un-attempted, with an alarmingly high number of candidates making many basic fundamental errors, multiple times. What was most concerning was the repeated use of parallel 5ths and

octaves, which appeared in so many answers. Most candidates found a good number of the correct points of imitation, but some answers clearly struggled to locate even these, including the soprano first entry. The extended final cadence allowed the best candidates to display a knowledge of prepared suspensions and part writing, but others finished on the wrong chord and failed to show an extended melismatic cadence of any sort. There were a high number of errors in reading the tenor clef, which resulted in some strange accidentals and sometimes incorrect notes. Most of the text writing was ok, though some candidates failed to identify the correct stress of syllables in the free material, and one candidate failed to include any text at all. Nearly all candidates would have benefitted from ring-fencing at least five minutes at the end of the examination to check all of their answers – I am sure that many of the above mistakes would have been spotted if so.

#### **Marker 2:**

In general the shaping of lines was well considered, and much of the imitation was correctly handled, but the fairly high number of 2ii scripts came as a result of too much technical error, either through inappropriate dissonance treatment or parallel writing in 5ths and 8ves. Some candidates may need to work through more simple 2-part

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exercises till they know how to avoid these errors before moving on to 3-part and 4-part exercises. More preparation may be needed for dealing with final cadences since this passage caused much difficulty, as noted in previous years.

### 5A Harmony Exam

No of students taking paper	1	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	12	38	13	0	0	1
Percentage	19	59	20	0	0	2

#### Marker 1:

It was pleasing to note that, in contrast to last year's paper, all but a handful of candidates completed the whole song accompaniment task and those that did not manage to do so only left a few small blank sections. Curiously, several candidates performed better in the more chromatic and modulatory second part of the paper than in the relatively straightforward first part where they were sometimes let down by sloppy voice leading in the execution of conventional progressions. Another common shortcoming was a lack of momentum arising from static harmony. In particular, it is worth keeping in mind the capacity of harmonic and textural motion in the piano as a way of maintaining a sense of movement through sustained vocal notes. Far too many otherwise strong answers were marred by copious missing accidentals. Nevertheless, the majority of answers were well planned and demonstrated a solid awareness of functional harmony, secondary dominants and the applications of chromatic chords such as diminished 7ths and augmented 6ths, and there were plenty of stylish and texturally inventive completions.

#### Marker 2:

In the exam question (Schubert), the best answers had a wide harmonic vocabulary including appropriate use of appoggiaturas, augmented and Neapolitan sixths, and pedals, while making use of sequences where possible. The strongest answers also made use of the given material in various ways to articulate the song's structure and give drama to key moments.

The less successful answers tended to be overly static, and/or failed to respond to harmonic implications in the vocal line. Some also harmonised the final page of the song in the wrong key (although this by itself didn't necessarily spell disaster).

For this side of the Harmony paper, candidates could usefully prepare by practicing score-reading (of Schubert songs etc), and doing harmonisations increasingly away from the piano during the year. Every candidate has the potential to develop a strong inner ear, and the ability to hear music in their head, but only via practice!

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### *5B Counterpoint takeaway paper*

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	14	34	16	0	0	0
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

#### **Marker 1:**

Most candidates worked well on this takeaway paper to produce competent fugal expositions. Many candidates correctly identified tonal answers where necessary, but some sadly did not adapt their answer and thus took their material to unhelpful keys. Those candidates who chose to write the three-part exposition could have benefitted from some more episodic writing – a number of these answers were rather brief and needed fleshing out. Alarming, a number of the submitted expositions showed a lack of basic musicianship: stems in the wrong directions, unintelligible beaming, lack of rests, and forgotten accidentals. In a takeaway paper there should be no excuse for this.

#### **Marker 2:**

In general the standard of answer was reasonably high, with most candidates showing at least a competent understanding of how Fugal Expositions work. Errors included incorrect tonal answers, problems with the invertible counterpoint, and spacing difficulties caused by an unorthodox order of voice entries. Some scripts were poorly presented and showed a lack of understanding of technical matters such as beaming and rests. Some candidates who chose a 3-part texture submitted very short answers, and should consider adding more free material and demonstrating the inversion if appropriate.

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### Paper 6: Tonal Skills II

#### *6A Aural Skills*

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	14	10	21	12	3	4
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>15.5</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>6</i>

Although a large majority of candidates made the effort to not leave blank spaces, the usual frustrations were present, most typically missing accidentals, time signature and key signature misreadings, and clues already provided in the score being ignored. It would also be a worthy investment of certain students' time to learn the rules of note beaming/grouping, and there were still one or two who, despite their teachers emphasising not to do this, hoped that it would be enough just to draw some stems and arrows on the page.

In question 1, a concerning proportion (approaching 1 in 5 candidates) were unable to write a rhythm that added up to 7/8 time, let alone the correct one. A little over a third of candidates were able to correctly identify the keyboard counterpoint excerpt as having modulated from G major to B major, but the vast majority of even these people lost marks for incorrectly notating the value of the final note. Despite this, the question overall was extremely well answered, with most people scoring over 70% here. The same is true of question 4 (string quartet). Question 3 (vocal counterpoint) was also well answered, with very few results falling below 30% (unusual for this question), and most of these being directly because of candidates not actually writing notes on the page, rather than writing the wrong ones.

Disappointingly, the mistake-spotting (question 5) is a rather different story, with some very poor answers indeed: even with this admittedly difficult performance of the Wagner song, candidates were overly concerned with the lengths of notes and this resulting in them overlooking more obvious mistakes in pitch and rhythm (it needs to be remembered that performances of this sort of music almost always involve some licence when it comes to note values (e.g. piano pedalling, vocalist breathing)). Some candidates wasted time and effort by unnecessarily writing out whole bars in order to correct just one small mistake, despite instructions in classes to the contrary. Other candidates would have achieved higher marks if they hadn't corrected mistakes on the wrong stave.

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### 6B Practical Skills

No of students taking paper	I	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	12	22	21	7	1	1
Percentage	19	34	33	11	2	2

#### Marker 1:

Most candidates were relatively consistent in their level of answers, and the cohort seemed about average, with only a few outliers at each end. Nevertheless, there were a number of common pitfalls this year. For example, candidates were very reluctant to elaborate beyond the 'letter' (i.e. figure!) of the the harmonies in the figured bass question, even if this meant stubbornly playing a minor third against a sharpened third printed in the melody. Part crossings in the score-reading flummoxed quite a few people. There were very few disastrous harmonisations, and in fact there were several very imaginative answers to this question.

A continuing problem with many candidates is fluency. Credit was given where candidates were able to ignore their mistakes without going back and correcting them at the expense of the flow of the music. In the worst cases, chords were sometimes repeated four or five times before candidates moved on. The duet nature of the figured bass question means this cannot happen here; the same approach should really be taken to the other questions as well.

In general students should try to view this paper as an opportunity to expand existing musical skills rather than something inevitable and to be dreaded. It was clear from their performances which students had chosen to approach the exam this way, even if they were not necessarily high achievers.

### 6C Harmony takeaway paper

No of students taking paper	1	II.1	II.2	III	Pass	Fail
64	19	36	9	0	0	0
Percentage	30	56	14	0	0	0

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### Marker 1:

This year's paper produced a feast of string writing with only two candidates submitting piano variations (both good, one very good). Ground bass exercises were of a much more uniformly high standard than in some previous years, with almost all of them demonstrating stylistic awareness, rhythmic and textural interest, and cumulative intent with regard to the pacing of harmonic variety, register and density. There were also plenty of high quality string quartet exercises, the best of which demonstrated harmonic and textural resourcefulness in extending and developing the given material. While a few of the weaker examples were excessively repetitive or texturally unvaried and some of the more ambitious pieces of work occasionally came unstuck tonally or harmonically, all submission showed fruitful engagement with the techniques and repertoire explored in this course.

As might be expected, the classification of the two harmony elements in tonal skills demonstrates that the extra time and access to a piano afforded by the take-away paper allows more candidates to achieve to the best of their potential. However, the marks for the examination are also very encouraging and suggest that, in the course of the first year of their Tripos studies, candidates, regardless of previous experience in the skills examined in this part of the course, are able to make excellent progress and to build a strong foundation for further study and professional activities.

### Marker 2:

In the takeaway paper, the strongest String Quartets included convincing harmonic preparation for the reprise in the B section (perhaps via a pedal or augmented 6<sup>th</sup>), while re-working the reprise itself also proved a way to gain extra marks, as this gave opportunities for creativity and further invention.

The most successful Grounds included a range of textural as well as harmonic variety, and had a clear sense of flow: rather than seeming like a series of unrelated exercises, answers which gave the sense of a continuous piece of music tended to do better. Although there were comparatively few Piano Variations, this year all of these were convincingly inventive and pianistic.

As in the other side of the paper, aside from actual composition practice, the best way candidates can prepare for the exam is through studying, playing through at the piano, and analysing their models.