

MUSIC TRIPOS PART II EXAMINER REPORTS 2018

Paper 1: Analysis Portfolio

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----|------|------|
| | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>18.18</i> | <i>54.54</i> | <i>27.27</i> | | | |

The total of 11 candidates offering this paper this year makes for a small sample, and it is difficult to make general observations without risking identifying specific submissions. Most candidates were able to submit two substantial and complete pieces of work: that is, there was less evidence than in previous years of one or the other submission having been cobbled together very much at a late stage. The overall standard of presentation was good, though not all candidates provided a Bibliography (and some Bibliographies were decidedly thin in relation to the subject matter of the essay). In cases where a particular theoretical approach is advanced it is important that that theory be rigorously employed, and shown to be decisive for the results obtained. It is very important, too, that the essay fulfil the terms of the Abstract, and that candidates choose repertoire carefully in relation to the 4000 word limit for each essay.

Paper 2: Portfolio of Compositions

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----|------|------|
| 12 | 4 | 7 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>33.3</i> | <i>58.3</i> | <i>8.3</i> | | | |

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Marker 1:

There was significant aesthetic variety across the portfolios, ranging from the relatively traditional to the highly conceptual. The best submissions combined vividly realised sonorities with imaginative structures, revealing an overall clarity of intention. There were also striking works questioning the approach to notation. In some cases, interesting and imaginative ideas were let down by insufficient elaboration, inaccurate notation or misunderstanding of instrumental techniques used. One particularly disappointing and common omission was the simple lack of a page detailing performance notes, instrumentation and such basic information as duration and 'score in C'. It is important to remember that a score is not only a set of instructions for performance, but also a document which serves to convey ones artistic (aesthetic, expressive, technical) intentions. As such the manner in which the score is presented is of the utmost importance.

Marker 2:

The best of these portfolios were impressive without being superlative, while most were of a very secure technical and imaginative level. A couple of pieces were very difficult to assess without recordings, and one or two showed signs of being more adventurous than their composers' abilities could sustain. There was sometimes evidence of a strong conceptual idea that had failed to find adequate musical realisation. In a couple of instances, a more detailed explanatory note would have been very helpful.

Paper 3: Notation and Source Studies Portfolio

| No of students taking paper | 1 | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|------|------|
| 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>50</i> | <i>38</i> | <i>12</i> | | | |

Marker 1:

As in previous years, the standard was impressive, displaying a level of detail and sophistication equal the best undergraduate work in any paper. With only one exception, the topics were original and of appropriate scope to suit the requirements; and demonstrated original research and creative thinking.

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Marker 2:

In a paper which is often very well handled, this was an exceptional year. More than one of the portfolios submitted would have been close to publishable.

Paper 4: Advanced Performance

| No of students taking paper | 1 | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----|------|------|
| 27 | 13 | 13 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>48</i> | <i>48</i> | <i>4</i> | | | |

The overall standard of programming, performance and presentation (including printed programmes) was extremely high this year, with some recitals being outstanding. The optional spoken introductions were clear and well thought through. The recitals attracted average (internal) audiences of 30 for each group, and some had nearly 50 people. This created the atmosphere of a real concert. Thank you to all recitalists for the performances this year.

Paper 6: Advanced Tonal Skills

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----|------|------|
| 35 | 8 | 26 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>23%</i> | <i>74%</i> | <i>3%</i> | | | |

Marker 1:

There were a number of strong portfolio this year, though less as a percentage than in previous years. Two outstanding portfolios both happened to be C20th Wind quintets, and both to a significant extent transcended their models, and became pieces of 'free' composition in their own right (albeit in tonal styles set within the context of specific C20th periods). Another strong portfolio went a little further off the beaten track than many candidates, in a

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convincing emulation of a Muffat Concerto Grosso. As ever, the portfolios which were well researched and clearly historically situated tended to do better; one mass, entitled simply 'sixteenth century mass', and lacking any explanatory note, provides a counterexample. On this subject, there were several further portfolios submitted this year with an extremely short or no explanatory note, which did them no favours at all.

As ever, in the majority of cases candidates' marks were lower for the exam component, preventing first-class portfolios from achieving overall firsts in several cases. While this was not true across the board, this nonetheless suggests that many candidates could usefully devote more time to canon/song accompaniment practice during the year. The best canons had well articulated phrase structures and a clear sense of harmonic direction throughout. One candidate's canon was notable for changing the given opening (!), something which should never be done under any circumstances. The best song accompaniments, as well as demonstrating general fluency in late C19th chromatic harmony, took account of the composer's nationality in their harmonic language.

Marker 2:

A good number of portfolios showed a really detailed and imaginative engagement with a specific historic style. The prefatory material was generally very informative and helpful in focussing the candidate's stylistic aims. None were very weak, but the less strong portfolios were either more routine and featureless, or relatively unfocussed and off the mark in terms of scoring, sonority, figuration and texture, or formal design.

In the examination scripts, the canons displayed much good work, though a few answers contrived to offer considerably less canonic material through the phasing out and reintroduction of voices, and through the use of recapitulation (sometimes formally and stylistically appropriate, sometimes less so). In general (and with a couple of fine exceptions), the song accompaniments were much more patchy; several were unfinished, and some candidates seemed to be out of their depth, with only intermittent grasp of either harmony or texture.

Paper 7: Fugue

| No of students taking paper | 1 | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|----|------|------|-----|------|------|
| 17 | 2 | 12 | 3 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | 12 | 71 | 17 | | | |

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Most candidates completed their fugues and demonstrated a sound knowledge of fugal techniques and procedures. The relatively melodic nature of the subjects did not permit many of the more esoteric techniques, but it was pleasing to see some use of inversion nevertheless, and many fugues had a good sense of climax whether through the use of pedals or re-harmonisation. More candidates might have used false entries, since these are possible whatever the nature of the subject. Errors tended to be more harmonic than contrapuntal in nature - care needs to be taken to manage dissonance in a consistent and appropriate manner. Some candidates failed to add bar numbers.

Paper 8: Advanced Performance Skills

(i) Advanced Keyboard Skills

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------|-----|------|------|
| 5 | 1 | 4 | | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>80</i> | | | | |

Marker 1:

The general standard this year was pleasingly high, though only one candidate managed a First, and there were only 5 candidates overall.

Harmonisation: most candidates unfortunately misunderstood the key of the passage and so found themselves facing considerable difficulties, in some cases ignoring the original notes. *16th-C. Score-reading:* this was generally well done, though the soprano clef seemed to cause as many problems as the doubled alto clefs. *Orchestral score-reading:* some mistakes of transposition occurred, and many candidates misread the rhythms of the central passage.

Transposition: the relatively high use of leger lines in the score caused problems for some candidates.

Prepared tests: Most candidates showed a good awareness of the soloist in the Strauss songs, following the singer well but failing to bring out many of the nuances of the accompaniments themselves both in terms of the characterisation of mood and strict adherence to the score markings. In the figured bass question most candidates chose speeds that were unnecessarily fast, and their desire to play correct figures meant that they seemed less aware of the soloist than in the other question. Although there are relatively few figures in the original score, these were often incorrectly realised in the performances. The right-hand movement during the ostinato section was often too parallel to the bass line. Few candidates seemed prepared for the likely repeat pattern of the closing section.

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Marker 2:

A relatively small number of candidates took the paper this year, but all of them had prepared well, and marks ranged from the middle of the 2:1 range upwards.

In some cases (for example, the score-reading tests) the principal requirement is to reproduce material as accurately as possible; given this, the following report will focus on those areas where interpretation comes to the fore. However, it must be emphasised that it is difficult to produce an accurate version of an orchestral score without a good working knowledge of horn transpositions.

The song accompaniment was generally played fluently, though several of the performances were strikingly unpianistic in terms of sound. The Strauss songs chosen for this year's paper featured a number of melodies in the piano's tenor register, but very few candidates projected the lines adequately. In similar vein, quite a few of Strauss's more subtle dynamic and pedalling markings were neglected. Examiners expect a concert-worthy performance, so such factors need to be taken into account; care to detail will be appropriately rewarded. Conversely, cases of heads in scores – and ears turned off – were penalised. One final point: it wasn't clear that everyone had studied the *Lieder* texts carefully; at least, some of the performers struggled to capture the mood of individual passages in their accompaniments.

The figured bass test challenged the best candidates one way or another. Issues that candidates might think about in future years include: use of the instrument (not a single candidate changed registration at any point); variety of realisation on repeats; listening closely to the 'accompanist'; accuracy of harmony (most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scores contain passages with insufficient figuring, but where figuring is present, it should be carefully observed, unless patently a misprint).

Finally, harmonisation. This year's test was an object lesson in distinguishing between essential and non-essential notes. Candidates in future years would do well to study this test carefully, as it required skills that not everyone had mastered. The ideal *modus operandi* – admittedly, easier said than done when preparation time is short – involves playing the melody repeatedly without harmonies to try to penetrate its essence. If this method serves no other purpose, it should at least help to reduce the large number of inaccurate accidentals in the melody itself this year. More generally, this year's candidates adopted an over-literal approach to harmonisation, focussing on one or two notes at a time and with little concern for the bigger picture.

(ii) Choral Performance

Marker 1:

This paper involves a rigorous set of tests and the cohort by and large did well with this new format of exam. The skills which tended to divide the firsts from the 2.1s were the contemporary sight-reading and the Renaissance facsimile reading. In ensemble direction, the best candidates sang with real vocal

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authority and organised their rehearsal appropriately. Lesser candidates were content merely to sing through their editions. Credit throughout was given to singers who performed as ensemble singers.

Marker 2:

Most candidates gave competent performances of the plainchant notation (**1a**): the best clearly took into account the performance indications in the red neumes, had a good flow and gave expressive performances. The Renaissance facsimile (**1b**) reading proved less successful for a number of candidates who miscounted – mostly misreading the rests. The best candidates answered confidently and fluently, and were aware of the other singers in the ensemble. The transposition question (**2a**) was mostly answered well by most candidates, successfully negotiating some of less-obvious points of imitation and the intervallic writing. The best performances showed a real understanding of consort singing, reacting to the other performers in the group. The contemporary sightreading (**2b**) proved challenging for a number of candidates, who were put off by the surrounding parts, or – worse – were unable to correct mistakes by looking at the other parts. A few candidates misread rhythms or missed accidentals, but the best answers took in all details from the score and gave a real performance that got beyond simply singing the correct notes. For the prepared piece (**3**), the quality of both the edition and the rehearsal varied widely between candidates. Some candidates failed to discuss text or give a clear interpretation in their rehearsal. Some did not supply translations in their editions, and a number contained lazy spelling errors which had not been proof-read. The best candidates gave animated and well-prepared sessions, were quick to respond to issues that arose in the live rehearsal, and who clearly displayed an authoritative account of exactly what they wanted to achieve in the allotted time. The best candidates displayed technical language of how to achieve this – the worse had very little of note to say and simply ran through the piece, without much improvement.

Paper 9: The Sequence from its Beginnings to the Carmina Burana

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>45.5%</i> | <i>54.5</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> |

Marker 1:

A small cohort performed very well: there was evidence of thoughtful engagement with issues and significant coverage of bibliography in almost all cases. The best candidates showed evidence of nuanced independent thought and in some cases individual research. It was particularly rewarding to read new

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syntheses of ideas and to see candidates commenting in detail on the complexities of Latin poetry in relation to melodic design. Weaker candidates clung to summaries of secondary literature and did not display first-hand engagement with issues of style or interpretation of historical documents. Question 1 was answered particularly well, with almost all candidates navigating a notoriously complex area. Those who offered their own configuration of ideas, rather than adjudicating between established authors, fared the best. Answers to question 2a were more patchy as some candidates concentrated solely on the narrative and political elements of the prologue, paying less than full attention to the wording of the question, which specifically asked for comment on Notker's 'techniques of sequence composition'. Question 3 received some outstanding answers, drawing on the most recent scholarship in the field. The understanding of the work of Arlt and Kruckenberg in particular was outstanding given that it has yet to be absorbed into standard accounts of the era available in English. Answers to questions 4a and 4b made responded in a balanced fashion to the work of Margot Fassler, displaying an informed and diverse range of responses to a methodology that remains controversial within the field. Question 5 received a higher proportion of routine answers that did not fully digest a complex set of source material and sprawling bibliography. With this said, the best answers showed sensitivity to the historical particularities of Hildegard's situation both in her own time and in the decades following her death.

No candidate attempted questions 2b and 6, which were the two questions focused more exclusively on repertory. This was something of a shame as several candidates showed detailed knowledge of repertory in other questions. The risk of offering entirely independent observations may have been seen as too great within examination conditions.

Marker 2:

All of the candidates wrote well: the quality of the answers was as high as I have ever seen in a Part II paper. Bibliography was dealt with especially well. If there were to be any criticism, or suggestions for more preparation, it would be to get to know more sequences as well as what people have to say about them.

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Paper 10: Music and Worship in Tudor England

| No of students taking paper | 1 | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|----|------|------|-----|------|------|
| 17 | 5 | 11 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | 29 | 65 | 6 | | | |

The paper presented questions on four general historical periods covered in the lectures: pre-Reformation polyphony under Henry VIII, Edward VI and the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer, Latin church music under Mary I, and the Latin church music of William Byrd. The chief objective of the course was to introduce key works in each of these periods (with a longer list for further independent study), set within the changing historical, religious and political backdrops.

The more successful answers tended to provide general historical knowledge of the period in question, a good selection of *relevant* works and related source materials upon which to elaborate arguments, and evidence of further reading beyond lecture notes and the accompanying slides. Less successful answers tended to deviate from the question (though answering, often reasonably well, one of their own devising), or offer little engagement with music and sources. Additionally some candidates seemed to rely solely on lecture notes, which, from original delivery to supervision essays to actual exam conditions, tended to lose credibility and authority in transmission. The best option is to always explore further reading as provided by the lecturer or in supervisions.

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Paper 11: Bach's St Matthew Passion

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----|------|------|
| | 2 | 26 | 5 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>79</i> | <i>15</i> | | | |

Marker 1:

It was clear that some detailed preparation went into a number of the scripts, effectively drawing together materials from the lectures and the wider readings. I especially enjoyed those answers that made unexpected, illuminating connections between different sets of readings or issues that were not necessarily discussed in conjunction in class – e.g. bringing questions of performance practice into a discussion of Chafe's theory of tonal allegory (question 1). In general, I'd encourage students to engage critically with the details of each question by thinking through and interrogating its terms and assumptions. This would have helped with pushing more of the high 2.i marks into the first class bracket. For instance, the most successful answers to question 4b. included an exploration of what the term 'affect' may have encompassed at the time, and how these ideas may or may not relate usefully to music (was music depicting or causing particular affective states, and how?), instead of simply assuming that there is affect in the music and giving examples of it. In some cases, affect seemed to be equated too easily with text painting. Or with regard to question 2, thinking through specifically what Sellars' comment about 'the performer's whole being' might refer to in relation to his and other productions (why and how is it opposed to the idea of 'theatre'? Does that make sense as a comment?), thereby moving beyond a descriptive outline of a few different stagings. In responding to a question like No. 6, it is always useful to explore both sides of the argument in a nuanced and critical (rather than opinionated!) fashion before coming to a conclusion that may side with one or the other.

Marker 2:

In addition to the first marker's comments I would observe only that this paper received an uneven response from many candidates, many of whom produced one or two very good answers but could not manage uniformly high standards across all three questions. This is one reason why few candidates came out with a first class mark overall; it illustrates well the need in this sort of paper for candidates to revise all areas of the course thoroughly and pace themselves carefully in the exam itself.

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Paper 12: Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Context

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----|------|------|
| | 10 | 15 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>38%</i> | <i>58%</i> | <i>4%</i> | | | |

In general, the work produced for this paper was of a high standard, and there were very few essays that earned less than a 2:1. At the top end scripts were marked by confidence in dealing with both music and secondary literature. In exceptional cases, strikingly new ideas were proposed; these scripts were rewarded accordingly.

Though all questions were attempted, the distribution of answers was fairly uneven. The most popular question by some way was the Taruskin quotation about nationalism. Some produced sophisticated answers here, though a significant proportion of candidates struggled to deal with the nuances contained in the quotation. The question about Brahms's debt to Bach was also popular. There was a great deal that could have been said here, and the best candidates managed to convey a sense of the range of possible answers while delivering some detail.

The two questions on unity, textual and musical, and the question on a 'second German Requiem' attracted good numbers of candidates. Curiously, very few brought Brahms's own comments to Schubring about motivic connections to bear when discussing musical unity; the ambiguity of composer's comments would have allowed much scope for discussion.

Perhaps predictably, the question about 'chewy' art inspired the most individualistic answers. Some verged on the surreal...

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Paper 13: Olivier Messiaen, 1949-64: Experiment and Regeneration

| No of students taking paper | 1 | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----|------|------|
| 27 | 8 | 18 | 1 | | | |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>30</i> | <i>67</i> | <i>3</i> | | | |

This was generally a good set of answers, engaging with all the different areas of the course and combining a consideration of various contexts – theological, historical, philosophical, aesthetic – with detailed commentary on the music. There was a pleasing variety of individually thought-out points without too many overly well-trodden paths. The best essays were extremely interesting, well argued and thoughtful. The weakest (of which there weren't many) tended to show muddled chronology, a somewhat loose use of conceptual terms, superficial discussion of individual works and carelessness regarding names of people and pieces.

Paper 14: Issues in Music and the Moving Image

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 41 | 9 | 29 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>21.95%</i> | <i>70.73%</i> | <i>7.32%</i> | <i>0%</i> | <i>0%</i> | <i>0%</i> |

Overall performance on the exam was pleasing. A good number of first-class marks were awarded, and there were some outstanding answers to individual questions. Only a few candidates failed to achieve at least a II.1.

There was a relatively even spread of attempts at the seven questions (3a and 3b receiving fewer individually, but a similar amount to the other questions when taken together).

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Most students demonstrated a solid grasp of theories and concepts covered on the course, whether these were invoked by a question directly (e.g. Rick Altman's 'supradiegesis' (Q1), or Ben Winters's 'nondiegetic fallacy' (Q5)) or indirectly (e.g. the idea of 'televisual flow' (Q3a), or 'dynamic music' in video games (Q3b)). A number of answers impressed by citing scholarship listed on course materials only as further reading, or not at all.

Similarly, the range of examples referenced demonstrated wider viewing and ability to apply concepts to cases beyond those discussed in classes, almost across the board. This was great to see.

The best answers articulated a clear argument in response to the question. Originality was relatively common, and always rewarded by the examiners, though some candidates overstretched in the pursuit of this, building points on oversimplifications and generalizations. (This was particularly evident in response to Q2 on Herrmann and 'film composers' versus 'composers who work in film'.)

Regarding the mistake on the exam paper (asking for two questions to be answered, rather than three), and the delay in communicating this to all venues: the examiners found no evidence in individual scripts that any candidate's performance had been affected, nor any general discrepancy in performance between candidates sitting the exam in different venues.

Paper 15: The Music of Chopin

| No of students taking paper | 1 | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 7 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>41.2</i> | <i>58.8</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> |

Marker 1:

I was delighted by the consistently good quality of the 17 scripts. As the statistics above reveal, there was a significant proportion of Firsts, with no results below II.1. The overall average for the course was extremely high at 69.24, as against an average across all Part II papers of 66.70.

The responses to Questions 3 and 5 tended to be less successful than those to other questions, and the problem in both cases was that candidates did not directly address the fundamental issues at stake. For Question 3, by way of example, it was necessary to write about 'Chopin's innovations' (some students did not even refer to them!); to their possible origins in the 'post-classical repertoire'; to the nature of the 'central assumption' of the latter, i.e. that 'work and performance are inseparably fused'; and to the effects thereof on the innovations in question. This breakdown might usefully have served as the

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structure of students' essays, but the critical thing was that all elements had to be addressed to some extent for the question to be adequately answered. There was nevertheless commendable engagement with the claim made by Jim Samson. In respect of Question 1, about Chopin's ornamentation, greater definition of what that ornamentation consisted of would have been beneficial, along with some attention to what J P Dunn meant by a 'high-water mark'. As for the two questions in Question 4: here I felt that the word 'genre' acted as a trigger for essays about genre in general rather than about 'generic contracts' (What are they? How are they discussed in the literature? Who sets up and governs such contracts? How were they 'broken' by Chopin?) or about the putative 'rhetoric of genre' used by Chopin (What is meant by 'rhetoric'? etc.).

Notwithstanding these issues, I regarded these scripts very positively: indeed, they were among the best Part II exams that I have ever seen. Students had clearly absorbed the material well and could write about it convincingly and effectively even under examination conditions. Much intelligence and musical sensitivity were shown along the way. All in all, then, congratulations are due on the genuinely fine work on display.

Marker 2:

Most of the students addressed the precise question asked, which prevented their marks from dropping unnecessarily. As expected, the best responses displayed not only very good knowledge of the research literature, but original thinking coupled with elegant writing style, as well as clear structuring of ideas. Weaker responses to question 2 displayed some misunderstanding of the term 'appropriation', and did not provide subtle distinctions. The weaker responses to question 3 did not rigorously explore the connection between Chopin's innovations and post-classical style; the better ones provided a good discussion of the work-performance relationship in Chopin's music. Best responses to question 1 also focused on unpacking the terms 'mechanical' and 'artistic'. Overall, there was considerable consistency in the references – and even quotations – provided in answering the questions, indicating that the students received good coaching during supervisions. Suggestion for future exam preparation is to make sure to read beyond the assigned texts, and explore the literature more widely.

Paper 16: Music, Nationalism and Politics in Spain

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|
| 27 | 7 | 18 | 2 | | | |
| Percentage | 26% | 67% | 7% | | | |

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Overall, I was very pleased with the results for this paper. There was a high proportion of first-class and high second-class marks awarded, indicating that students had prepared well and answered the questions critically. The topic was completely unfamiliar to the students and there was a high reading load, so I am glad that the students appear to have understood and engaged with the course material. What I was also impressed with was the way in which students contextualised their answers according to relevant historical, social and political circumstances. The best papers were those that showed a good understanding of the relevant literature and which engaged critically with the readings and case studies, moving beyond mere summary. Some students also incorporated material not covered in the lectures or supervisions (either additional case studies or theoretical perspectives). This added critical depth to the answers and illustrated wider research beyond simply the course reading lists. I was also pleased that the majority of the students followed my advice and structured their essays carefully, with a clear introduction and concluding statement. This made the essays much easier and more enjoyable to read!

There were, however, issues with some of the answers. At times questions were not directly answered, and the answers with lower marks were often poorly structured with disjointed arguments that made it difficult to pick out the main points. There were some essays that had little or no reference to, nor engagement with, the readings covered on the course. With certain essays, this exposed a clear lack of revision and preparation. At times key terms were not defined or contextualised (such as costumbrismo, majismo). This unfortunately gave the impression that students were not aware of what the term meant or how it was relevant to the question.

Paper 17: Exploring Music Psychology

| No of students taking paper | I | II.1 | II.2 | III | Pass | Fail |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 6 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>27.3</i> | <i>72.7</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> |

Overall the exam essays were impressive with analysis of research studies and interesting ideas for new research projects building on previous research projects and some personal experience. Essays that stood out had a clear point from the opening section and came to a clear conclusion at the end.

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Moreover, they referred to papers beyond those discussed in the lectures and provided a broader view than giving a summary of a series of research papers.

Question 4 was the most popular question. Several essays were just good enough for this question. Relatively few answers went beyond listing a series of research papers in more or less detail. The best answers used individual papers as examples of a bigger case they were making in the assessment of the research evidence about music's influence on our behaviour, perceptions and/or mood.

There were some references to musical experience in the real world but less so than in previous years. In this course, it's good to be able to show the links between research and musical practice and drawing on personal experience is one way of doing that.

It is good to familiarise yourself with papers discussed in the lectures. However, it is important to also look for and read literature not discussed in lectures. For some questions, it is hard to shine when you don't have the broader overview you get from reading a little more widely.

The structure of the essays was not as strong as in previous years. When planning before you start writing think about the key points you'd like the reader to learn from the essay. Where possible make your argument explicit in the opening section of the essay, summarise your points throughout the essay and bring the main point back at the end.

Practice handwriting quickly throughout the year. It is very difficult to read many of the scripts. If possible, choose only blue or black to write with.

Be careful with vocabulary you use. Common confusions that we certainly shouldn't see in Part II: "Elicit" vs. "Illicit" and "Affect" vs. "Effect". Finally, research rarely "proves" things definitively. It usually provides evidence to support a hypothesis at best.