2023 VCE Music Inquiry written external assessment report

General comments

The 2023 VCE Music Inquiry examination was consistent with the *VCE Music Study Design 2023–2027* and the sample examination material published in February 2023.

The examination consisted of one section worth a total of 75 marks. The questions focused exclusively on the key knowledge and key skills found in Area of Study 3, Responding. The five questions were based on short excerpts of music from a variety of geographical and historical backgrounds.

Students responded well to questions that called for aural analysis of the use of melody and dynamics. However, student responses that involved analysing duration, tone colour and texture often did not score as well. These elements of music remain fundamental components of aural analysis and are significant in the study of music more generally. It is important that students have a thorough understanding of these aspects. Learning activities that improve students’ skills in analysing and describing composers’ use of these elements of music would be helpful. The compositional device of transition was handled quite well by most students, and overall students displayed an understanding of the concept of variation, although many responses needed to include more specific detail on how variation was achieved in the excerpt. Preparation for describing the treatment of compositional devices should encompass a wide variety of ways that transition, variation, repetition and contrast can be achieved, and students are encouraged to refer to specific and detailed musical examples.

Specific information

Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

Question 1a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 0 | 5 | 26 | 33 | 37 | 3.1 |

This question asked students to describe the vocal melody. Many students achieved full marks, but some included responses that were not relevant to the vocal melody such as the character of the music, the vocal technique used, or the harmony created by a second voice.

Clear responses covering at least four of the points below were awarded full marks.

* Vocal melody is based on natural minor scale/Aeolian mode with added blues note on lowered 5th.
* Melody is based on even phrases of 4 or 8 bars, each with a descending contour.
* There is a lot of repetition of melodic and rhythmic material between the phrases.
* Intervals are mostly stepwise with occasional 4ths and 3rds.
* Vocalist sings in a medium/high register with an overall range on one octave.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The vocal melody utilizes a lot of short phrases in its lines, with lots of small, descending intervals. Its smooth contour is occasionally interrupted by a leap in register, giving it a larger overall range. For the most part, the vocal line remains in the lower-middle register for a female vocalist.

Question 1bi.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 0 | 12 | 37 | 35 | 16 | 2.6 |

This question asked students to describe the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of the banjo motif.

Clear responses covering at least four of the points below were awarded full marks.

* Based on a natural minor scale.
* Opens with three ascending tones, returns to the starting note and repeats it, then ascends one more tone.
* Repeats this figure almost as a sequence, one tone higher, except it continues to ascend, ending on the dominant.
* This melodic ostinato begins on the tonic and repeats throughout the excerpt.
* Rhythmically driving one bar ostinato with changing pitch.
* Using syncopation and complex quaver, semi-quaver pattern.
* In simple/compound quadruple time/division of four beats or can be seen as 6/8 or 12/8.
* Uses Afro-Cuban elements and bell patterns with shuffle/swing elements.

Most students were able to provide a couple of accurate points, but some strayed off the topic, mentioning aspects such as the character of the excerpt, or the articulation of the motif (which was not relevant to melody or rhythm).

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The banjo motif uses a two-phrase repeating line. There is a rising semiquaver pattern used in the motif, that alternates between two pitches, signifying a move in chords. The pitch rises on the two quaver notes at the end of every second time the motif is played, using an ascending melody.*

Question 1bii.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Average |
| % | 0 | 9 | 12 | 24 | 21 | 17 | 12 | 5 | 3.8 |

This question asked students todiscuss how the repetition and variation of the banjo motif create structure and unity in the excerpt. Very few students scored highly in this question.

Students needed to interact with all aspects of the question to be awarded full marks. Points to be mentioned include:

* The motif creates a two-bar melodic and rhythmic ostinato that opens the excerpt and continues through the excerpt while other layers change around it. Its repetition from the beginning throughout the excerpt creates familiarity and unites the excerpt throughout, even while some variation occurs in other layers.
* The ostinato incorporates melodic changes to accommodate the change in vocal melody in the final phrase of the melody. Here it repeats the same pitch but preserves the same rhythm.
* The ostinato’s continuation through different sections of the song, and the way it combines with different melodic lines and blends with the chordal guitar accompaniment, ties the entire excerpt together and provides unity.
* Motif harmonically underpins the one note flat contour of the pre-chorus, creating suspension as a pedal tone.
* Interlocking rhythms between guitar and banjo creates variation and interest.

Many students were able to describe the repetition of the motif, but often variation was only described in general terms. For a high-level discussion, a clear connection to a range of specific musical examples in the excerpt was required. The connection between the way the repetition and variation of the motif contributed to the excerpt’s structure, and how they helped to create unity, required clarity. Only a small portion of the cohort was able to do this.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The banjo playing throughout the whole excerpt creates unity. The banjo plays a melodic and rhythmic ostinato which deviates slightly as the violin enters towards the end. This repetition develops the sense of unity. There is also some melodic variation toward the end of the verse. The variation just before and as the violin enters creates a sense of change, marking the development of a new idea or section, since previously the repeating banjo motif was undisrupted and unchanged.

Question 2a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 6 | 15 | 33 | 35 | 10 | 2.3 |

This question asked for a description of the treatment of duration in Section A of the excerpt.

Clear responses covering at least four of the points below were awarded full marks.

* The continuous syncopated downbeat creates an unsettled tension.
* Strong pulse in quadruple time sustained throughout along with fast tempo.
* Bass rhythm dominates the texture.
* Bassline uses short note values.
* Longer note values in voice and piano create rhythmic contrast.
* Repeated 2- and 4-bar rhythmic phrases.
* Sidechaining pumping compressor effect.

Many students correctly described aspects of duration in the excerpt; however, a significant number interpreted ‘duration’ as the length of the excerpt, so their response was limited to observations such as ‘Section A was quite short and Section B was longer’. Other students described the articulation, tone colour, harmony or character of the section, but failed to describe aspects of duration such as tempo, metre, note values, rhythmic feel or pulse. The large number of responses that did not address aspects of duration makes it clear that teachers need to focus on this term as it is defined on page 17 of the cross-study specifications in the study design.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A simple duple metre is established, with accented beats on 1 and 2, creating a strong pulse. Long note values of the vocal part contrast with the short note values of the electronic rhythmic support. An allegro, moderately fast tempo.

Question 2b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 1 | 3 | 5 | 14 | 18 | 14 | 18 | 16 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5.2 |

The compositional device of transition, new to the study design in 2023, was examined in this question. The study design defines transition as ‘the shift from one musical idea or section to another’.

This question asked students to explain how two elements of music were used to create transition in Section B of the excerpt.

Assessors awarded full marks to those who were able to include a range of the following points for the two elements selected.

Texture:

* Texture suddenly diminished from section A after a ‘wash’.
* Texture slowly thickens after the addition of percussion and background echo-like vocals.
* Gradual thickening of texture creates a sense of anticipation towards the beginning of Section C.
* Continued addition of new layers increases overall musical complexity and density.

Tone colour:

* Start of Section B creates a sudden change and the wide range of instruments used is reduced.
* Contrast between high, airy electronic tone colours and smooth vocal ‘dreamy’ tone colour.
* Percussion is high pitched, using sharp, high-pitched, detached articulations.
* This contrasts with driving, low gated bass drum and use of pulsing synthesiser.
* High reverb complements the floaty/atmospheric character of the transition.
* High pass filter creates a tinny tone colour.

**Duration:**

* The stopping of explicit beat occurs during transition, providing contrast to the previous section.
* The rhythmic drive from section A is replaced by a synth playing a long, held chord that removes the pulse.
* The transition uses ambiguous beat placement within the accompaniment.
* Percussion instrument added after the synth chord, with increased frequency of rhythmic diminution / doubling tempo / complexity.
* Sidechaining pumping compressor effect.

**Melody:**

* Melody of Section B creates a bridge between Sections A and C.
* Melody of Section B uses synth with static long, held chords.
* Minimal development of melodic material – hanging in the air.
* Descending – stepwise contour of vocal melody ‘Waiting for a…’.
* Reduced focus on voice/melody and increased focus on changes in tone colour and duration.

A number of high-scoring responses drew clearly on the treatment of two elements of music to provide a clear explanation of how transition occurred.

Some students, however, deviated from Section B and focused more on Sections A or C, resulting in a response that did not actually explain how the shift from Section A to Section C was achieved.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

***Texture:***

*The texture suddenly thins to one sound source (monophonic) to mark the distinction between Sections A and B. The texture thickens as the hi-hat enters, and then again as the kickdrum enters, before the sudden thickening of the texture to multiple parts to mark the start of Section C where the texture becomes homophonic.*

***Duration:***

*Undefined beat in the beginning of the B section as the electronic bass rhythmic support stops playing. A rhythmic crescendo is implemented in anticipation of the instrumental rhythm section, in the hi-hat and kick drum-like rhythmic accompaniment.*

***Tone colour:***

*The tone colour in this section is echoey and swirling, adding to the dream-like nature of the transition. The shimmering timbre of the cymbal-like electronic sounds adds to a soundscape which is otherworldly. The tension is raised as the timbre of the electronic bass is reintroduced, and its raw gravelly sound builds the timbre to something more gritty, supporting the growing energy, tension and motivation in the piece as it leads towards Section C.*

Question 3a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
| % | 1 | 4 | 12 | 17 | 21 | 18 | 15 | 9 | 2 | 4.3 |

This question asked students to explain how tone colour is used to create musical character in this excerpt.

This question, beginning with the word ‘explain’, required students to provide a very detailed explanation that clearly linked aspects of tone colour to the character(s) created in the excerpt. To do this, students needed a clear understanding of how to describe tone colour and how to link this clearly to character. A wide vocabulary of both tone colour and character terms was needed to do this.

High-scoring responses displayed points such as:

* Throughout the excerpt, the strings repeat the main theme using strong, clear articulation, in a mostly high register, and are supported by different instruments on separate iterations of the theme. This adds variety and energy, and helps to create a sense of forward motion, and a character of triumph and excitement.
* Fanfare-style trumpets add to a driving and triumphant character through high registers, bright tone colour and crisp articulation. Overall, the brass add energy and create a character of triumph and excitement.
* Crash cymbals together with snare drums and auxiliary percussion emphasise the rhythmic character. Woodblock interacts with contrasting rhythms and the woody, percussive tone colour adds to the playful and joyful character. This also creates a ‘Wild West’ hoedown feel.
* Emphasis on a strong driving beat with a pulsating feeling on each beat of the measure. This creates the driving character of a hoedown. Upper brass with a bright and clear tone colour play off-beat, syncopated rhythms to create a playful character.

This question pinpointed students who were unable to distinguish between tone colour and character, and often confused the two, writing responses such as ‘In Hoe-Down, the tone colour could be described as mischievous and playful’.

Students should be provided with clear guidelines of suitable vocabulary for describing tone colour – identifying the instrument, describing register, articulation, dynamics, techniques, instrument combinations that influence the sound, and distinguishing these from character or mood words. Specific tone colours should then be clearly linked in short sentences that explain how the tone colour creates a particular character or effect, as demonstrated in the points above.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The high register horns have a bright, brassy timbre which supports the emotive outcome of excitement. The deep, rich and warm colour of the strings section supports the grandeur and prestige of the character which approaches. The booming hits of resonant percussion have an echoey timbre which support the soundscape of the imminently grand character, encompassing a mood of anticipation. The high register pitched percussion, sounding somewhat like a xylophone, is resonant, heady and bright, giving a frivolous and frantic character to the soundscape. Overall, these contrasting tone colours support the development of a diverse soundscape with a range of characters, contributing to the overall mood of a frantic and grand event.*

Question 3b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
| % | 2 | 6 | 16 | 24 | 18 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 3.9 |

This question required students to explain how the elements of music were used in Section A1 of the excerpt to create a variation of Section A. The A section presented short motifs in ‘seed-like’ form, which were then developed and varied through melodic extension, increasing complexity of texture, instrumental dialogue, variation in tone colours and dynamics. High-scoring responses made clear reference to Sections A and A1 and cited musical examples covering different elements of music to explain a number of ways that variation was created. High-scoring responses covered many of the points below.

* Section A / introduction introduces short, repeated motifs on strings and brass that announce the first part of the main melody in a fanfare-like fashion, later presented in full in Section A1.
* These short half-bar motifs are the kernel of the full four-bar themes that emerge in Section A1.
* Section A introduces the rhythmic motifs and fast tempo; later, these rhythmic ideas become the basis of the main themes and accompaniment patterns in Section A1.
* In Section A1, these melodic and rhythmic motifs are expanded to become fully fledged melodies and accompaniment figures.
* There are two main melodies presented in Section A1, which alternate and are passed between different instruments in a dialogue fashion. Both are developments of motifs presented in Section A.
* Textural changes in Section A1 create variation – the strings move to the middle ground and the xylophone to the foreground, while more instruments are added, thickening the texture.
* Variation is created by the two themes being presented by different instruments, in different registers, and consequently using different tone colours: from bright, high violins, to being doubled on xylophone, to mid-register strings, mid-register woodwind, and then repeated in the very high register of the violins.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The melody of Section A is expanded upon, given variation through duration. It is repeated in different registers and passed through sections of the orchestra, giving an ambiguous, dwindling melodic contour which contrasts the accented, abrupt, stagnant phrases of the introduction. The syncopation tentatively explored through open string double stops in the introduction is abandoned in the main section, with a new rhythmic clarity creating a sense of unity and strength. Copland orchestrates this unity by giving the xylophone the same melodic line as the strings, adding to the texture and removing the previous ambiguity surrounding rhythm, establishing a definite 4/4 beat aiding the heroic character, creating a sense of achievement. Dynamics are used to create variation as the forte dynamics established as the status quo are shortly contrasted with a piano repetition of the same melodic line.*

Students who did not score as highly were generally unable to clearly refer to Sections A and A1, and only made brief and general reference to some form of variation, such as Section A1 being longer or having a thicker texture. Students should prepare for these types of questions by practising listening to excerpts that include variation and reinforcing the importance of providing a number of different examples, each containing specific detail from the excerpt. It is important that students are encouraged to clearly reference the sections mentioned in the question.

Question 4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | Average |
| % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 10.2 |

This question related to excerpts from two interpretations of the work ‘Wake Me Up’.

Students were required to select two elements of music and describe four ways each element was used in each interpretation.

Many responses were quite strong. As the response on each element for each interpretation was worth four marks, students had to include at least four clear, accurate points that thoroughly described the treatment of that element within the interpretation. High-scoring responses generally contained clear and accurate dot points such as:

**Duration:**

* use of repetitive rhythm in the accompanying layers
* contrasting rhythmic treatment in different layers
* overall rhythmic feel and use of syncopation
* roles of time signature, tempo and rhythmic patterns and most common note values in the individual parts

**Pitch**

* treatment of harmony, such as repeated chord patterns, types of chords used
* register and range of vocal melody and accompanying layers
* degree of consonance and dissonance
* melodic characteristics of the vocal line, such as the structure, phrasing, register, contour, use of ornamentation, inflections or slides

**Texture**

* number of layers used throughout the excerpt, and changes to these within the excerpt
* types of textures created, such as homophonic, biphonic, monophonic
* instruments used and their roles
* changes in texture throughout the excerpt and effects created by these changes

**Tone Colour**

* clear identification of all the instruments used in the excerpt
* clear description of the tone colours created by instruments (including voice) individually and in combinations
* description of the ways tone colour was manipulated, such as electronic effects, dynamics, register, specific techniques and articulation

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

**Pitch:**

Interpretation A:

Major tonality established by major repeating chord progression (strummed) in acoustic guitar and in vocal melody. Vocal melody uses consonance with the acoustic guitar, no chromatic notes deviate from this tonality.

Interpretation B:

Major tonality, however chromaticism and dissonances are used as the piece develops, introduced in the piano with its descending run and accompanying chords, just prior to vocal entry and with the vocalist respectively. Minor and chromatic vocal lick melodic feature deviates from the otherwise major tonality. Blues adjacent tonality.

***Texture:***

Interpretation A:

* Homophonic texture; the vocalist sings the primary melody.
* Acoustic guitar plays strummed chordal harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment.
* Texture thickens after the entry of the vocalist.
* As the dampening and compression of the guitar part is eased to create a more similar (louder dynamic) and hence thicker texture.

*Interpretation B:*

* *Homophonic texture where the vocalist sings the primary melody, piano plays chordal accompaniment for harmonic and rhythmic support.*
* *Piano also plays some short licks in the introduction and as the vocalist enters, which are primary and secondary melodies respectively.*
* *Kickdrum and snare play rhythmic accompaniment.*

Low-scoring responses often resulted from students not having a clear understanding of the selected element. For example, many students confused ‘texture’ and ‘tone colour’. After selecting the element ‘texture’, some wrote responses referring to the sound of the instrument, rather than its role within the texture. Similarly, many responses under ‘texture’ described the overall sound or character, or were simply a list of instruments used, with no reference to their roles or the changing number of layers within the excerpt. Low-scoring responses under the heading of ‘tone colour’ often used character words rather than descriptions of the sound – such as ‘the guitar chords feel happy and uplifting’. When teaching the element of tone colour, it is recommended that teachers begin with a focus on identifying the instrument, then develop a vocabulary of suitable words to describe tone colour that are not character words. Similarly, lessons on texture should reinforce providing information on ‘who (instrument) does (role) what (description of role) when’ (when the role changes).

Question 5a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 2 | 9 | 25 | 35 | 29 | 2.8 |

This question asked students to describe the treatment of dynamics throughout the excerpt. High-scoring responses contained at least four clear, accurate points covering aspects such as:

* Dynamics are generally growing throughout the excerpt.
* Gradual addition of textural layers contributes to build in dynamics.
* Begins relatively softly with solo oud, and gradually increases, with addition of instruments and textural layering.
* Dynamics build with a strong crescendo to a climax at the end of the transition, then settle back a little at the start of the C Section, when the orchestra settles into the main theme. Here, the strings double the oud in a relatively low register, adding to the lower dynamic effect.
* In Section A, solo oud and violin, dynamics follow the contour of the melody – rising and building excitement as pitch rises.
* Dynamics vary within the orchestra once it has fully entered.
* Tawadros plays oud throughout with strong and harsh articulation, allowing the oud to project clearly.
* Brass often swell, adding to the growing energy. Strings and brass sustain held notes that crescendo to build momentum.
* As full strings and middle woodwinds join the brass on the repetitive theme in Section C, the excitement and overall dynamic reaches a peak. Doubling in upper octaves is used to increase effect of rising dynamic on each iteration of the theme.
* Flutes and piccolo playing in very high register at the peak of the crescendo adds to the excitement and exaggerates the dynamic peak at the end of the excerpt.

Most students scored highly. Low-scoring responses tended to be brief and perhaps only mentioned the first dot point. Some students did not seem to have a clear understanding of dynamics and deviated onto articulation or character.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

* Solo oud consists of mf dynamics
* When violin comes in, dynamics lift slightly due to thicker texture
* Percussion enters lifting it further before dynamics suddenly drop to p before Section B
* At B the dynamic returns suddenly to mf and starts crescendoing gradually to ff throughout the B section as orchestra enters
* ff dynamics maintained through smooth transition to C and maintained throughout C

Question 5b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 1 | 2 | 6 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 16 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 5.2 |

This question required adiscussion on how contrast is created between Section A and Section C, with reference to two elements of music. Overall, most students provided only a medium-level description of how contrast was achieved.

High-scoring responses made clear reference to Sections A and C and drew on accurate and detailed analyses of their selected elements to mount a thorough discussion of how they were used to create contrast between the two sections. High-scoring responses made frequent and explicit reference to contrast. Some were set up as a table with dot points on Section A on the left side, and dot points on Section C on the other. These discussions displayed points such as:

**Texture**

* Section A introduces the melody using a monophonic texture, creating a simple and thin layer.
* This moves into a heterophonic texture with violin doubling oud.
* This contrasts with much a richer texture in Section C; oud joined by full orchestra.
* Various doublings occur in Section C, violins join descending phrase the first time, then cellos the second time.
* Texture is thicker in Section C, varying between being more complex and busy, to unified, homophonic, with many orchestral layers doubling the oud melody.

**Melody**

* Section A melody is highly virtuosic and soloistic, using a wide range of notes and mostly short note values, but generally pulse and note values are unpredictable and constantly changing.
* Section A melody has a flowing, more improvised feel, with use of ornamentation, uneven, long phrases and a wide variety of rhythmic ideas.
* Section A phrases use some repetition but also sudden variations in pitch and contour that create an unpredictable, improvised effect.
* Section A melody uses a winding contour beginning in medium/low register and suddenly ascends into high registers. Has a minor/Aeolian modal feel.

These contrast with Section C in:

* Section C melody uses shorter phrases that use more repetition of ideas, no embellishment. Predictable and regular melodic ideas settle into a repeated main theme.
* Section C melody begins in low register, with repeated short, even phrases.
* Section C melody is doubled by upper winds and strings.
* Section C first theme is repeated a number of times, then followed by a second ‘consequent’ theme that builds up in pitch to a climax before the excerpt ends.
* Melody in Section C has clearer harmonic basis.

**Tone colour**

* Section A: The tone colour opens with solo oud, creating a somewhat resonant but harsh sound, created by strong plucking of the strings, and resonance within the hollow wooden body of the instrument.
* Section A: The medium/low register adds to the resonance of the sound, and the fast tempo and use of ornamentation adds to the harsh and intricate sound quality.
* Section A: The tone colour changes with the addition of violin doubling one octave higher, creating a more incisive, clean sound when combined, which cuts through.

This contrasts with:

* In Section C, the tone colour is more varied, with the addition of the orchestra, and the timbre of western instruments provides contrast with the eastern sound of the oud.
* Section C: The string family adds a warmth to the sound when it doubles the oud melody, creating a smoother sound from the legato bowed strings that overlay the ‘twang’ of the plucked strings of the oud.
* Section C generates excitement through high register flurries on woodwind, which create a sharp, piercing tone colour.
* Double basses and percussion entering on the downbeat at the start of Section C punctuate the sound with a strong, resonant and deep tone colour.

**Duration**

* Pulse is ambiguous and less clear in Section A, with flowing runs of short note values, highly ornamented passages that flit between different note lengths.
* Less repetition of rhythmic ideas in section A creates a more improvisatory and flowing rhythmic feel.
* Use of ornamentation in Section A contributes to complexity of rhythmic effect and lack of clear pulse.
* Shifting accents in Section A also contributes to complexity of rhythmic effect and lack of clear pulse.

This contrasts with:

* Clear pulse established in Section C with strong accent on beat one from percussion and lower strings.
* Clear quadruple pulse established in Section C with repetition of short melodic ideas, short rhythmic phrases.
* Less variety of rhythmic ideas in Section C and more repetition of short patterns contrasts with wider range and improvisatory nature of rhythm in Section A

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Texture:

A monophonic, then heterophonic texture is used in the first section to build tension. The oud and violin are the only parts in a very sparse sound. In contrast, Section C has a large ensemble playing many different parts, using call and response, while also bringing many instruments in and out of the forefront of the sound. Overall, much more dense and busy than Section A.

Tone colour:

The tone colours in Section A are quite spiky and metallic, but also a bit thin, due to the staccato playing of the oud. This tone is reflected in the final section, but the addition of the orchestra adds a myriad of tone colours, creating contrast. The horns and brass instruments add very open, bright tones, while the strings also add fuller, warmer tones in the final section. The echoing tone colour of the solo percussion in Section C contrasts to the twangy and metallic tone colour of the solo oud in Section A. The distinct colour of the oud is clear throughout, however contrast is created in Section C by the addition of more instruments and tone colours.

Low-scoring responses tended to be brief and general, often not mentioning contrast and/or not clearly referencing sections A and C. There were many instances of confusion between the elements of music; for example, students citing ‘texture’ for their discussion, then writing about things such as a violin ‘adding a higher sound in contrast with the lower range of the guitar’ as an example of contrast in texture. Many students confused the name of the solo oud, calling it a ‘banjo’ or a ‘guitar’, despite it being named in the title of the work. Part of the exam preparation needs to include students practising reading the question very carefully and making the most of the information that is often supplied within the title of the work or the wording of the question.