Y11 Unit 2: Composing & Appraising Music

***AoS 1****: Rhythm & Metre;* ***AoS 2****: Harmony & Tonality;* ***AoS 3****: Texture & Melody;*

***AoS 4****: Timbre & Dynamics;* ***AoS 5****: Structure & Form*

**Key Facts:**

* **20%** of total marks (40 marks)
* **10%** for Composition
* **10%** for Appraisal
* Up to **20 hours** of **Controlled Assessment**, informal supervision
* **1 piece** of music
* Using **2 Areas of Study** above
* Linked to **Western Classical Tradition**
* **Recording** of final composition– live performance, ICT or a combination
* Must have a **musical score** e.g. staff notation, annotation, graphic notation, tab, or a combination



* Appraisal (evaluation) can be typed and you may use notes. You have **2 hours** of controlled time to write up your appraisal.

**Assessment Criteria:**

***Composition***

**20-17**:

* The composition is musically stimulating, interesting and satisfying.
* Imaginative creation of musical ideas in relation to the Areas of Study and Western Classical Tradition
* There is a sense of completeness in the music and there is evidence of development of the musical ideas.
* Writing for instruments, voices and sound sources makes good use of the instrument and its features.
* The score is accurate and contains detailed performance directions appropriate to the chosen style of the music.

**16-13**:

* The composition is imaginative and largely satisfying.
* You demonstrate a sound sense of understanding of musical ideas in relation to the Areas of Study and Western Classical Tradition.
* •There is a sense of wholeness in the music with **some** development of the musical ideas.
* Writing for instruments, voices and sound sources demonstrates understanding of the techniques required.
* The score contains sufficient detail to reflect the candidate’s intentions, though some details may be missing i.e. no dynamics etc.

**12 –10:**

* The composition is largely effective.
* You demonstrate some understanding of the musical ideas in relation to the Areas of Study and Western Classical Tradition.
* You competently handle musical ideas.
* Writing for instruments, voices and sound sources demonstrates some understanding of the techniques required.
* The score shows some accuracy but may contain some omissions and/or inaccuracies.

**9 –7:**

* The composition is partially effective.
* You demonstrate limited understanding of the musical ideas in relation to the Areas of Study and Western Classical Tradition.
* There are some limitations in the handling of the musical ideas.
* Writing for instruments, voices and sound sources may present inconsistencies in their deployment.
* The score shows some musical ideas clearly.

**6 –4:**

* The composition works but at a basic level.
* You demonstrate a basic understanding of the musical ideas presented in relation to the Areas of Study and strand.
* There may be some incoherence in the handling of musical ideas.
* Writing for instruments, voices and sound sources appears simplistic and may lack finish.
* The score shows inconsistencies and is not accurately presented.

**3 –1**

* The composition is very rudimentary.
* The candidate demonstrates a rudimentary understanding of the ideas in relation to the Areas of Study and strand.
* Musical ideas lack coherence and may appear incomplete.
* Writing for instruments, voices and sound sources lacks understanding.
* The score is inaccurate and incomplete.

**0**

* The candidate’s work shows no evidence of the skills being assessed

***Appraisal***

**20 –16**

* Appraisals at this level demonstrate a thorough understanding of the success of the composition in relation to the Areas of Study and strand. There is a detailed and accurate description of the composing process and a sound understanding of how the music has been developed. Problems and difficulties are readily acknowledged and solutions identified. These are clearly evidenced in the composition. Any weakness in the composition has been identified.
* You demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the essential musical elements, characteristics and conventions relating to the Areas of Study and strand.
* You use a wide range of relevant musical vocabulary.
* There will be few, if any, errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

**15 –11**

* Appraisals at this level demonstrate a broad understanding of the success of the composition in relation to the Areas of Study and strand.
* There is an accurate description of the composing process and a clear understanding of how the music has evolved. There is an awareness of problems and difficulties encountered and solutions suggested.
* You demonstrate a broad knowledge of the essential musical elements, characteristics and conventions relating to the Areas of Study and strand.
* You use musical vocabulary relevant to the chosen task accurately and in context.
* There may be errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation, but they will be infrequent.

1. **–6**

* Appraisals at this level demonstrate some understanding of the success of the composition in relation to the Areas of Study and strand.

There is some understanding of the composing process and an understanding of how the music has been created. There is some awareness of problems and difficulties encountered although remedies and solutions may not always be in evidence.

* You demonstrate that you have some knowledge of musical elements, characteristics and conventions relating to the Areas of Study and strand.
* Some musical vocabulary associated with the Areas of Study and strand is used appropriately. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may be noticeable and intrusive and suggest a weakness in these areas.

**5 –1**

* Appraisals at this level demonstrate limited understanding of the success of the composition in relation to the Areas of Study and strand. Comments on the composing process focus on technical demands but lack understanding of how ideas have been created and developed. There is little or no awareness of problems or difficulties encountered with little or no evidence of remedies or solutions.
* Knowledge of musical elements, characteristics and conventions relating to the Areas of Study and strand are limited or entirely lacking.
* Musical vocabulary associated with the Areas of Study and strand may be sparse or inappropriately used.
* Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may be intrusive, making the answer difficult to follow.

**0**

* The candidate’s work shows no evidence of the skills being assessed.

Links to the Strand (Western Classical Tradition)

**You need to compose a piece of music using 2 Areas of Study and link it to ‘The Western Classical Tradition’**

**There are some ideas below, please select 2 from two Areas of Study.**

***For Example:*** I have decided to write a pop song and will link it to ‘The Western Classical Tradition’ through the use of Rondo form (ABACA) and Modulation; therefore I have linked it to The Western Classical Tradition through Harmony & Tonality and Structure & Form. In my appraisal I will give examples of Classical Music where this can be found.

***Western Classical Tradition***

**AoS1: Rhythm and Metre**

Crisp dotted rhythms

Regular time signatures

Contrast of rhythms

Specific rhythmic patterns

Syncopation

Waltz rhythms

**AoS2: Harmony and Tonality**

Use of major/minor scales and/or modes

Musical devices such as pedal, drone

Exploring modulation

Contrast of consonance and dissonance

Clearly marked cadences

Chromatic harmony

Contrast of keys

**AoS3: Texture and Melody**

Imitative writing

Contrapuntal writing

Use of ornaments

Use of sequences

Melody with accompaniment

Homophonic writing

Dialogue between soloist and orchestra/ small group and large group/ voices and

instruments/ solo voice and choir

Antiphonal writing

Ornamentation

Unison

Single melody line

**AoS4: Timbre and Dynamics**

Contrast of groups of instruments

Dynamic contrast

Instrumental (*pizzicato*, *tremolando*, use of pedal, etc)/vocal techniques (falsetto/vibrato)

String Quartet

Piano Trio

**AoS5: Structure and Form**

Main dance forms (binary, ternary etc)

Ground bass

Rondo form

Use of continuo

Variations

Linking movements

Use of cadenza

*Da capo* aria

Through composed

Strophic

**Appraisal Questions:**

The Appraisal questions are below, the most important is how you composed it, to help you with this keep a diary of what you did each lesson. I have also attached an example of an A\* and a C appraisal.

* *What Areas of Study did you choose and what is the focus of your composition within the given strand?*
* *Why did you choose these Areas of Study and the particular focus within the given strand?*
* *How did you go about composing your music and how was the final recording achieved?*
* *What difficulties did you encounter during the task and how did you overcome them?*
* *What makes your composition successful in relation to the Areas of Study and the focus chosen within the given strand?*
* *What is the relationship of your composition to its context?*

A\* Example

What areas of study did you and you choose and what is the focus of your composition within the given strand?

The areas of study I chose were harmony and tonality and structure and form. My link to the strand was to write a Gospel piece in three-part harmony.

Why did you choose these are areas of study and the particular focus within the given strand?

I chose harmony and tonality because I wanted to use the full range of a female voice and I wanted to create an emotional song like gospel music making use of appropriate cadences and chords. I also decided to choose structure and form because when listening to Gospel music I heard that they have a strong chorus and contrasting verses and this is what I wanted to recreate. I chose to write a Gospel song because I am a singer and wanted to explore close harmony among female voices.

How did you go about composing your music and how was the final recording achieved

I began composing my song by listening to some Gospel music in a music lesson, singing some and watching Sister Act and I liked the sound of it.

To begin with I decided to use Sibelius 6 and I found a religious poem and used that for my lyrics for my composition. The lyrics are about a story of Gospel.

On the first day I decided what key to work in (C major) and wrote out the scale and basic triads. I chose a section of my lyrics that I wanted as the chorus and like a piece I had studied decided to start my piece with the chorus. I played around on the keyboard and came up with the first four bars of the first chorus thinking about the cadences i.e. starting on a C chord and finishing the first 4 bars on a G chord to ensure an imperfect cadence. I included a D in the first chord as it added an interesting dissonance that quickly resolved. For the next 4 bars of my chorus I started on a C chord then using the words “mighty power lord” I wanted it to be really strong with a ascending scale to bring out the lyrics because they are most important ending on a pause. I then used an F chord because this is used in a plagal cadence and as the song is religious in context I thought this would work as it is like the amen at the end of a hymn, however I changed it just before the end to a perfect cadence. I then started to compose my first verse. The first four bars I go up the C major scale then on the lyrics “ make a mighty man fall” I go down the C scale to make it sound like the man is falling, this is word-painting I also changed the dynamics of these two sentences to reflect the difference between them. In the next four bars of my verse I decided to use call and response, giving all singers a part and creating contrast in pitch. In the next four bars I added a dominant pedal note to emphasise the word “hate” before leading into another imperfect cadence. This leads back into the chorus.

I then started to compose my second verse. I built up the triad of C major with each part entering a 3rd higher using call and response and layering, before all parts coming in on a C major triad. I did this as I wanted to make the verse straightforward I then repeated it as the main word is ‘gospel’ and this made it stand out. Then I decided to repeat the first verse as my third verse however the last 8 bars are in unison as this reflects the lyrics and creates a unified sound which is what I experienced when listening to and singing gospel songs. This section increased in dynamic to bring out the final words ‘but you’ve got to have gospel when you go your own way’. I ended this verse with a perfect cadence. I decided to end the song with the chorus using a descant part to give it a more definite ending like a coda and also I used a rit at the end of my piece and ended on a perfect cadence. My descant part was mainly scalic and highlighted important words like Gospel. I chose to use the top C at the end as this is the top of a soprano’s range yet is very effective as the end to a piece of vocal music.

Recording my piece was tricky as I didn’t have a choir to hand and the Sibelius sounds were bad. I couldn’t reach all the notes in the soprano line so I asked my teacher if she would record her voice. Using an Ipad, Garageband and an IO dock my teacher recorded all of the parts and layered them to get the finished recording we then exported it as an mp3.

What difficulties did you encounter during the task how did you overcome them.

The difficulties I came across were; that I had to ask my teacher how to apply lyrics to my piece as I didn’t know how to. I learnt that by pressing cmd +L I could enter my lyrics. Often I needed to split syllables between notes but it wouldn’t work, I learnt that I had to press the hyphen to make it jump. I also didn’t know how to add expression to my piece but I found out it was cmd + E then click to get a cursor and then right click to get a selection of dynamics. I found to add crescendos etc I needed to select the bar (s) and press L. The other problem I had was when the parts split and sung different words, I wasn’t sure how to create two lines of lyrics, I learnt I had to select layers on Sibelius. Some of the rhythms were wrong when I initially input notes so I had to use a metronome to help get it in time counting in quavers to make it clear to myself.

What makes your composition successful in relation to the Areas of Study and the focus chosen within the given strand?

My piece links to structure and form by having a chorus then verse one then a chorus then verse two then a chorus then verse three and the a chorus with a descant part over the top.

I have also used call and response between parts.

My piece links to harmony and tonality as I have used the key of C major and made use of chords such as G, Am, Dm and F. I have also used inversions to add variety to the chords and create sing able lines. Most of my harmony is consonant but there is some dissonance, for example my first chord has a second in it.

I have used close harmony throughout the piece which links it well to the Gospel style. Also a resultant chorus and the use of unison are similar to the style that Gospel music is famous for

What is the relationship of your composition to its context?

I linked my piece of music to gospel music such as “Oh Happy Day” from the musical sister act. This song is linked to my piece as I have used the same structure and made use of call & response and close harmony. It also links to the African singing heard in ‘The Lion King’ where parts are built up in 3rds and have resultant choruses and make use of full vocal ranges. This is clear in ‘The Circle of Life’.

C Example

**What Areas of Study did you choose and what is the focus of your composition within the given strand?**

The areas of study I chose were structure and form and rhythm and meter the focus of my composition is polyrhythm’s.

**•Why did you choose these Areas of Study and the particular focus within the given strand?**

I have chosen rhythm & meter because I am a drummer so I liked the way I had an option to experiment with other drums and rhythms.

I have chosen structure and form because I wanted a piece that had a simple ABA structure and used call and response. I wanted to use syncopated rhythms and layer them to give a polyrhythmic effect.

**•How did you go about composing your music and how was the final recording achieved?**

The first thing I did was picked the most suitable software for my capabilities and that was logic. In logic I picked the instrument I was going to use was going to be a percussion instrument so the way I could link it to word music was by picking a tribal instrument from Africa. I chose the African kit and wrote a simple 1, 2, 3, 4 rhythm using crotchets on the beat. I then looped it and this became the basis for the rest of my piece. Next I added another African kit using a different sound I created an off-beat crotchet rhythm. This created contrast, I also looped this. Then I added another African kit, this rhythm was a mix of on and off-beat and fit well with the other beats. I had created the start of my piece. I decided I needed some melody by way off a riff so I did on notes F/G. After the main beat was made into the backbone of the composition I added some cymbals over the main beat of the piece to make it more interesting and funky. In the middle of the song I added a riff/melody. The melody included syncopated drumbeats with an offbeat and the melody included a acoustic guitar. I added a descending melodic line on the acoustic guitar, which was the call, and the response was lower. The melody notes I used were G/F/E/D/C and E/D/C/B/A. My section A ended at bar 32. In my section B I created a simple on the beat drum pattern and added a descending scale idea on the marimba, which moved around in pitch. I wanted the middle section to be less busy than the first section. At bar 62 the piece returns to section A by adding parts like at the beginning and building up. Finally I added dynamics and pan to get the feel like the instruments were not all in the same place and make the call and response more effective. I bounced my final piece as an mp3 from logic.

**•What difficulties did you encounter during the task and how did you overcome them?**

The difficulties I encountered were finding the right drum sound. I overcame this by testing all the drum sounds on logic. The next big thing was trying to get all my beats I time. I overcame this by quantizing. Some of the beats ended up on top of each other so I had to move the beats around in logic scroll. This was successful as the piece now sounds together.

**•What makes your composition successful in relation to the Areas of Study and the focus chosen within the given strand?**

My composition is successful in relation to rhythm and metre because it is in 4/4 time and it uses syncopated rhythms and combines them with on beat rhythms as well as quaver patterns in the melodic lines.

It is successful in relation to structure and form because I have used a ternary structure, made use of rhythmic and melodic ostanati and have used call and response.

It links to polyrhythms as all parts have a different rhythm but they fit over the top of each other plus make use of syncopated and on the beat rhythms.

* **What is the relationship of your composition to its context?**

My composition is like an African drum workshop I did at school. There was a main beat and then half the group started doing a syncopated rhythm over the top, then another part joined in and this was playing a simple repeated melody using a couple of notes. It is also like some African music we have looked at in lessons like the Hatsiatsia, this music is based on one rhythm then other rhythms are built on top of it.