

A Guide to the GCSE Listening Paper

Compiled from Simon Rushby's articles for Rhinegold's *Music Teacher*

The GCSE listening paper is divided into two sections. **Section A** contains eight **listening** questions, two on each Area of Study. These questions require detailed knowledge of the set works, and you have to answer all of the questions in this section. You will not know which of the twelve set works will be covered until you sit the exam.

Section B will offer a choice of two questions, from which you select one. This section will include one or two very short questions about the background to one of the set works, and a long-answer question that asks you to examine the work from the perspective of the **elements of music**.

One of the questions in Section B will be on a work from either AOS 1 or 2, and the other from AOS 3 or 4, so it is possible that you could revise just half of the set works for this question, if you find all twelve too much. However it is worth mentioning that this would remove the element of choice from Section B, and they would still have to know all twelve set works for Section A. It is perhaps not entirely a good idea, unless you are really struggling.

Later in this pack I will give some advice on how to write really good Section B answers.

So, in preparation for this paper, you need to be able to identify aurally the key musical features in each of the set works. You need to know a little about the context in which they were written, and how they fit into their relevant genres. You should also be prepared to answer notation questions based on extracts from the works, and express and justify opinions on them.

Area of Study I: Western Classical Music

The set works in Area of Study I are:

- 'And the Glory of the Lord' from *Messiah* by Handel, written in 1741
- *Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 500 (first movement)* by Mozart, written in 1788
- *Prelude No. 15 in D♭ major, Op. 28 ('Raindrop')* by Chopin, written in about 1839.

Although these works were all written within a one hundred-year period, they span three important eras of musical style – the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods.

HANDEL: 'AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD' from MESSIAH¹

The Baroque Period

The period of music running from the time of Monteverdi (1600) to the death of Bach (1750) is commonly known as **Baroque**, though this term was not coined until the twentieth century. This was a time of great steps forward in science, and European explorers colonized many new foreign lands, bringing great wealth to the continent. The arts took on a sense of the dramatic, with painters, sculptors, architects and composers wishing to impress with great **virtuosic** displays and sumptuous decoration in their work, as seen in the examples pictured.



(The Interior of St Peter's Basilica, Rome, and exterior of Berlin Cathedral)

The following major stylistic features of Baroque music are:

- A huge importance placed on melody (often highly decorated) and rhythm (extremely exciting in this example).
- Busy, full textures – composers liked to contrast between **homophonic** and **polyphonic**.
- The importance of dramatic, intense emotion.
- Showy, virtuosic technical displays.
- **Functional harmony**, with clear **cadences** and **modulations** to related keys – this was the period where the major/minor key system we know today was cemented.
- A desire to link music to the greater world – in this piece, through the vivid portrayal of the cold winter, and in the Handel set work, through clever setting of the words to appropriate music.
- The use of the harpsichord or organ, along with a bass instrument, to underpin the music (known as **basso continuo**)

Context

Handel, a German composer who had travelled extensively throughout Europe (especially Italy) and by now was residing in England, composed his best-known **oratorio** in a little over three weeks in the late summer of 1741, to texts drawn by librettist Charles Jennens from the Bible. It received its first performance in Dublin in the Spring of 1742, as part of a series of concerts which raised funds for various local charitable ventures. Handel is thought

¹ A video performance of this extract from *The Messiah* can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6ylgN54R7k>

to have played the harpsichord at the first performance, which also featured trumpets, timpani and strings in the orchestra (oboes and bassoon were added by Handel for subsequent performances). Later, Mozart arranged the work for a larger orchestra.

'*And the glory of the Lord*' is the fourth movement in the first part of the work, and the first choral movement. It is a response by the choir to the news of the coming of Christ, proclaimed by the tenor soloist in the previous movements.

Analysis

The main concept that Handel communicates in this movement is **joy**, and much of the writing is intended to promote the feeling of optimism found in the text. Let's have a look at how he does this.

Melody

- Handel states each line of the text with its own melodic idea, resulting in four very different ideas, or **motifs**, which are each developed throughout the piece, sometimes together, sometimes separately.
- Handel uses both **triadic** and **stepwise** melodies, and often follows one with the other by way of contrast. The first motif ('And the glory, the glory of the Lord'), starting in bar 11, is a good example of this.
- Melodies often rise and fall in contrast with each other – for example, the second motif ('Shall be revealed' – starting in bar 17) descends to contrast with the ascending first motif.
- Repetition of small melodic **cells** is used, such as in the third motif ('And all flesh shall see it together'), which starts in bar 43. Sometimes these repetitions are in **sequence**, such as in the second motif (bars 18-19).
- Handel achieves a sense of occasion and dignity by proclaiming the very austere words of the fourth motif ('For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it') on just two notes. This is first seen starting in bar 51.
- These motifs are often combined, so that some voices sing one motif whilst other voices sing another. A good example of this is seen starting in bar 22, where the tenors and sopranos have the first motif, and the altos (followed by the tenors) have the second. In the passage of music starting in bar 93, Handel has three motifs going on at once!

Word setting

- Clever word setting is one of Handel's trademarks, and we can see evidence of it in this movement. Handel contrasts **syllabic** word-setting (e.g. in the first motif, bar 11) with **melismatic** (e.g. the second motif, starting bar 17).
- Word painting can be seen in the fourth motif (e.g. bars 51-57) where the slow rhythms reflect the importance of the text.

Rhythm and metre

- The movement is in triple time, and has a lively dance-like feel to communicate the joyful mood of the words.
- There are many examples of **hemiola**, usually as the music approaches an important **cadence** point, such as bars 9-10.
- The music is driven throughout by an incessant crotchet rhythm in the bass line.
- The three beats of silence before the final cadence are extremely dramatic.

Harmony and Tonality

- The movement is in the bright key of A major, emphasised by the first motif, which starts with an A major triad and ends with a rising scale to the tonic note.
- Modulations in the movement are to the **dominant** (E major – e.g. bar 22) and the dominant of the dominant (B major – e.g. bar 74). Handel avoids minor keys and the flatter sounding **sub-dominant**. The modulations occur at important parts of the movement, dictating its structure. This is known as **functional tonality**.
- **Primary chords** (I, IV and V – the major chords) and **perfect cadences** are extremely common in this movement, adding to its bright, optimistic mood.
- Handel carefully chooses moments to use a more grand-sounding **plagal cadence** – most striking is the one in the very last bars of the movement.

Texture

- This is arguably the element that Handel contrasts the most, resulting in a very colourful setting.
- When the altos start, in bar 11, they are alone, but they are answered by the other three vocal parts in homophonic texture, making this opening exchange sound very declamatory. In many of the homophonic sections, it is the basses who have the melody.
- There is much use of **imitation**, resulting in sections of quite complex polyphonic textures, such as bars 17-22, the first entry of the second motif.
- Handel contrasts the combinations of voices to make the texture colourful and interesting. Bars 22-33 are a good example of this.
- Polyphonic and homophonic textures are contrasted throughout, and Handel often uses homophony to emphasise an important phrase, such as in bar 33, and at the end (when the tempo slows as well).
- Handel contrasts between one, two, three and four-part vocal textures.

Orchestral writing

- Handel uses the orchestra in three main ways – to double the vocal parts, to drive the music forward (especially in the writing for basso continuo) and to provide short **interludes** between the choral sections.
- The orchestral writing is mainly string-orientated.

Section A questions

In the exam, a short extract from the movement lasting between 30 and 60 seconds will be played five times. Depending on the extract, these are examples of the types of questions you might be asked:

1. How does Handel make the music sound joyful in this section?
2. Complete a very short section of melody (you will be given the rhythm, and it may be one of the four main motifs. You could alternatively be asked to notate an extract of rhythm only).
3. Name the cadence at bar x.
4. What is the key of this extract?
5. To which key does the music modulate at the end of this extract?
6. How does Handel contrast the texture of the choral parts in bar(s) x?
7. What is the name of the melodic/rhythmic/harmonic device in bar(s) x? (See the box to the left/right for a summary of devices).

Devices are compositional ‘tools’ used commonly to develop or emphasise a musical idea. Devices found in this set work include:

Melodic devices: sequence, imitation (this also falls under texture).

Rhythmic devices: hemiola.

Harmonic devices: **pedal notes, inverted pedal notes, suspensions.**

Section B questions

Section B will start with one or two simple, short-answer factual questions about the music or its context – such as:

- In which musical period was this piece written?
- In which year was this piece written?
- In which city was *Messiah* first performed?
- What type of movement immediately precedes this chorus?
- What is an oratorio? (Or what genre of music does *Messiah* belong to?)

Then there will be a question demanding a longer answer in prose, worth 10 marks. This will be about one or more of the elements of music, as described above.

Examples could include:

- Describe how Handel creates contrast in this movement. Concentrate your answer on melody, rhythm and texture.
- How does Handel achieve a sense of joy and optimism in this movement? Concentrate your answer on melody, rhythm, harmony and word setting.
- What features of melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and instrumentation are typical of the Baroque period in this movement?

MOZART: SYMPHONY NO. 40 IN G MINOR, K. 500 (FIRST MOVEMENT)²

The Classical Period

Not to be confused with the generalised term ‘classical music’, the actual Classical period was a very short but crucially important period of music, running from about 1750 to the death of Beethoven in the 1820s. This was the period when much of the features of modern music were fully established – particularly the concept of balance through **repetition and contrast** of the elements of music. It was the period of three heavyweight composers – Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, who between them took all genres of music to a new level and influenced countless composers after them.

This was also the period of revolutions in France and other parts of Europe, and an increasing disrespect of the aristocratic ruling classes. Composers were left without wealthy employers (except for the very fortunate Haydn!) and had to radically re-think how to make their music popular to a wider public. The philosophical concept of the *Enlightenment*

² A talk on this movement by Leonard Bernstein (composer of one of the other set works) can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0ZE38BQmvQ> and might interest those who wish to go a little further into the detail of the music. There is an extract from an excellent performance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plsMmuf9Q3Y>

flourished in this period, where form, order and balance were considered important as the arts tried to become one with nature. This explains the name 'Classical', as the balance and symmetry of Greek and Roman architecture was copied in musical structures.



Classical artists took their influence from the symmetry of ancient Greek and Roman architecture, and the order imposed on nature found in landscaped gardens of the time.

Features of Classical music include:

- Homophonic textures, with a clear sense of melody and accompaniment (usually known as **melody dominated homophony**).
- Emphasis on memorable, balanced melodies with a clear sense of question and answer phrases (which are of equal length).
- Functional harmony – harmonic progressions that use primary chords, have frequent cadences and modulate to related keys at important points in the music.
- A structure that relies on an opening section returning later after a contrasting middle section (such as **sonata form** which is also the form of the Mozart set work).
- The use of a larger orchestra than in the Vivaldi, with the rise to prominence of woodwind and some brass instruments, and timpani.



Few composers have had more influence over the course of Western music than Mozart, a fact made all the more astonishing when considered that he lived for only 35 years. Much has been written about this man, some of it perhaps little more than conjecture (particularly the circumstances surrounding his early death, which were not nearly as suspicious as we might be led to believe!), but there is no doubt that Mozart was a prodigiously talented and intelligent artist, who made such astounding progress in music as a child that he was composing complete operas by the age of 12. He left his native Salzburg for Vienna in 1781, but did not work for a patron after this time, meaning that he often struggled financially. However he worked tirelessly and by the time he died, in 1791, he had completed more than 600 works, covering most genres from chamber music to operas.

The G minor Symphony, the penultimate of the 41 that Mozart wrote, was written over the summer of 1788 (along with Nos. 39 and 41). This form of orchestral music was relatively

new and considered a Classical phenomenon, relying as it did on balance and contrast, the two Classical ideals. Haydn was the first composer to champion the form, writing 104 and becoming known as 'the father of the symphony'. However the foundations for the symphony stretch back into the time of Handel and Bach, who wrote **orchestral suites** that had many movements of contrasting styles and speeds, and **sinfonias**, which were either single movement instrumental interludes (rather like the overture in Handel's *Messiah*) or Italian three-movement pieces for strings.

It is likely that Mozart wrote his three last symphonies with the idea that he would himself put on performances of them and then publish them, in the hope that they might provide him with some income. The original version of the G minor did not include clarinets but Mozart later re-worked it to include them, suggesting that the work was indeed performed at some point in his lifetime. It was published a few years after his death, and by the beginning of the 19th century was recognized as an important work in the orchestral repertoire.

Analysis

Form

Since Classical style is all about balance, it is best to begin by looking at the form of this movement, which is the first movement in a four-movement work. Like most first movements in multi-movement works of the Classical period, this *Allegro* is in **sonata form**, which is a slightly more complex type of ABA (or **ternary**) form, governed particularly by the use of keys to structure the music.

Here is a clear, simple explanation of sonata form at work in this piece:

The 'A' section is known as the **exposition**, because the main themes are 'exposed' for the first time. In this movement, like in most sonata form pieces, there are two main themes, which we call **subjects**.

The first subject is in the tonic key, G minor, and begins in bar 1, without any introduction.

In bar 20 this same first subject starts to modulate, which means we are in a **transition passage** – a passage of music which links the first subject to the second. Some people call this a **bridge passage**.

In bar 44 we hear the other main theme – the second subject. This is in the relative major (B flat major), and contrasts in lots of ways with the first subject.

The exposition ends with a 'winding up' section called a **codetta** – a mini version of the coda we will hear at the end of the music. Then the whole exposition is repeated.

The 'B' section of the movement is called the **development**, because Mozart takes some time to develop (or play around with) some of the material we heard in the exposition. In this case, he concentrates entirely on the first subject and has some fun presenting it on different instruments, sometimes overlapping it with itself, and going through a lot of different, related keys. More on the keys later! The development lasts from bars 101 to 164.

Once Mozart has had enough playing about with the material, he 'recaps' by giving us both subjects, and the transition, again, in a section known as the **recapitulation** (the returning 'A' section if you like). However there are some big differences.

The first subject starts the recapitulation in bar 164, as we would expect, in the tonic key of G minor.

The transition comes in again, but this time Mozart does not modulate to the dominant. Instead he moves through a number of keys (very quickly) and returns to the tonic.

In bar 227 we hear the second subject in the tonic key, which makes it sound very different as it is now a minor-key melody.

Finally we hear the closing section, or **coda**, from bar 260 to the end. One of the strengths of sonata form is that though we feel we have been on a very interesting journey, we arrive home in a very obvious and satisfying way.

The composer and broadcaster Howard Goodall explains sonata form extremely clearly, using a train journey as an analogy, in the 1991 edition of his series *Great Dates*, made by Tiger Aspect/Channel Four and available on DVD. This programme also includes a lot of valuable information on Classical style and is well worth watching if you have time. You can see the relevant section on YouTube here (it even uses Mozart 40 as the example!): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twf8IUPVnrg&feature=related>

Melody

Classical music focuses heavily on melody, and Mozart himself is responsible for some of the simplest and most poignant melodies ever written.

- The first subject begins with a three-note rhythm repeated three times, followed by a rising sixth. These two ideas are later broken up into mini 'cells' and developed incessantly, particularly in the development section.
- Both the first and second subjects have equal four-bar question and answer phrases, which in turn can be broken into equal two-bar phrases. This is called **periodic phrasing**, and is a feature of all the melodic writing in this movement.
- Furthermore, the answering phrase, which begins in bar 5, is the same as the questioning phrase, but a tone lower. This is a sequence, and there are many examples.
- If that is not enough, the rhythm of the melody of each two-bar phrase of this first subject is identical. How more balanced could Mozart be?
- The second subject (bar 44) has a more laid-back feel to it, and uses a falling chromatic idea. It also has few instruments (better expressed as 'reduced texture').
- There is another mini-theme, a little like a second part to the second subject, which rises chromatically at bar 66.
- The codetta focuses on just the first three notes of the first subject, and the development on these and the rising sixth idea.

Harmony and tonality

I mentioned in the section on *form* that it is the keys that structure this movement.

- The exposition starts in the tonic (G minor) and ends in the relative major (Bb major). The modulation between these two keys happens in the transition. This is very normal for sonata form structure.
- The recapitulation also starts in the tonic, but this time any modulations are short lived and it ends in the tonic as well. This is also normal practice.

- The development shows Mozart's creative genius at work! He modulates every few bars, often by way of chromatic sequences, visiting a whole host of extremely distant keys.
- The end of the development gives us a huge clue that the 'modulation madness' is coming to an end and the recapitulation is around the corner – we hear a very long **dominant pedal** (the note D) in the closing bars of this section. This is known as **dominant preparation**.
- The movement is littered with perfect cadences that give us clear signposts in this otherwise quite complex trip through tonality.
- A lot of the harmony is chromatic, but relies on **circles of fifths** to underpin it. A good example of this is the answering phrase in the second subject, bars 47-50, where you can clearly see the chromaticism in the violin parts, and the circle of fifths in the 'cello and bass parts.
- It is worth noting that the **harmonic rhythm** – the rate at which the actual chords change underneath the melodic parts – is often quite slow, so that the melody is given room. The first subject, for instance, is set over an unchanging G minor chord for its first four bars, and then moves to a two-bar or one-bar rate of harmonic change.

Texture and instrumentation

- The overriding texture in this movement is melody-dominated homophony, or 'melody with accompaniment'. There are very few examples of polyphonic texture (but see 'other points' below).
- This does not mean that the music is textually one-dimensional. On the contrary, Mozart contrasts the instrumental texture constantly, using different combinations of instruments.
- The woodwind gets a more prominent role than that seen in the Handel, often having melodies or sharing them with the violins, though the music is still quite string-dominated. The horns' role is largely textural, adding weight to the harmony.

Other points

- Mozart includes a lot more performance instructions than Handel, such as dynamics and articulation.
- There are a number of 'special effects' such as **diminished sevenths**, **syncopation** and short passages of **counterpoint**.

Section A questions

Again, pick a short extract and adapt some of the suggested questions to suit it!

1. What is the key of the extract?
2. Name the cadence heard at the end of the extract.
3. Complete the following melody/rhythm (don't give more than five or six missing notes).
4. From which part of the sonata form structure does this extract come?
5. (For a chromatic phrase) How would you describe the melody in bar x?
6. Name two instruments which play the melody in this section.
7. How is the phrase at bar x contrasted when it is repeated in bar y?
8. What melodic/rhythmic/harmonic device can you hear in bar x?
9. How would you best describe the texture of this extract?

Section B questions

The short-answer questions in this section may ask you to identify the century or period in which the symphony was composed, or ask a question about the type of work from which this movement comes (such as how many movements the symphony has). For the longer question, focus the thinking on how Mozart uses the various elements shown above to create both balance and contrast in this movement.

CHOPIN: PRELUDE NO. 15 in Db MAJOR, OP. 28 ('RAINDROP')

The Romantic Period

The concept of Romanticism, which dominated the nineteenth century, went hand-in-hand with the spirit of revolution and the desire to gain national identity. Artists in all genres became more interested in fantasy, emotion and patriotism – ideals driven by the heart rather than by the head. This was perhaps in part a reaction against the formality of the Classical period, but in fact most Romantic composers were heavily influenced by Haydn, Mozart and particularly Beethoven.

Common features of Romantic music include:

- A much looser structure, with the course of the music dictated more by **programmatic** elements than the idea of balance.
- Longer melodies with more irregular phrasing.
- Larger orchestral forces, including more brass and percussion instruments.
- A wider palette of colour in the music, with large contrasts of dynamics, tempo, texture and instrumentation.
- Technically challenging parts for all instruments.
- More **dissonance** and **chromaticism** in the harmony, which adds to the sense of tension. Harmony was increasingly used more for colour than structure.
- Modulations to more remote keys.

Like Mozart, Chopin was a child prodigy who had a strong musical upbringing, and by his early twenties was travelling around Europe, settling for quite a long time in Paris, where he got to know Berlioz and Liszt and the authoress Georges Sand, with whom he struck up a relationship which lasted for some nine years. His music was virtually all written for the piano, and often drew upon his native Poland by using Polish dance styles and melodies, such as *Mazurkas* and *Polonaises*. Chopin quickly became known for his collections of shortish piano pieces, published in collections by type, such as *Waltzes*, *Nocturnes*, and *Preludes*, of which the set work is part of a set of 24. He wrote this in a monastery on the island of Majorca, where he had gone to try to recover from tuberculosis in 1838 at the age of just 28. He did return to Paris but never fully recovered from the disease and died from it in 1849.



The piano had come into its own in the 19th century and many composers were writing for it, especially as technological advances had hugely improved the instrument since the smaller, wooden framed instruments of Mozart's day. The piano of the Romantic period was capable of a wide range of sounds and expressions, and Chopin championed it with his output. At the time of writing the *Preludes* Chopin had been studying Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* – a set of 48 preludes and fugues, two in each major and minor key. Chopin's 24 *Preludes* mimic this idea and are arranged in the order of the circle of fifths. Though the story is no more than anecdotal, it is said that Chopin composed this *Prelude* during a storm and imagined his withered body lying in a lake, with raindrops splashing upon it. Certainly his tuberculosis caused him to have wild imaginations, and his publisher naturally latched on to the imagery and dubbed the piece 'Raindrop' – not a title that Chopin particularly approved of.

Analysis

Form

- This 89-bar piece is in a simple ternary form, with the A sections in the key of D \flat minor, and the central B section in the tonic minor, **enharmonically** changed to C \sharp minor.
- However, this ternary form is unbalanced, as the final A section is significantly shorter than the other sections and operates as little more than an extended coda.
- The opening A section has a ternary structure of its own.
- The piece is also unified by the incessantly repeating pedal note (A \flat in the A sections, enharmonically changed to G \sharp in the B sections), which is likely to be the rhythmic patter of the raindrops falling on Chopin's roof as he composed the piece.

Melody

- The opening theme, like Handel's, begins with a key-defining triad followed by a scale, though Chopin's triad falls and his scale rises and then falls, perhaps to add to the melancholy mood of the piece or to further signify the raindrops.
- As a throwback to the Classical era, this opening theme is regularly phrased.
- A second theme begins in bar 8 – another simple, sad, stepwise melody. This one is varied when it is repeated, and does not return in the final A section.
- As the first theme returns, there is more decoration with **septuplets** and **acciaccaturas**. This is very typical of Chopin's piano style.
- The B section melody is played in the left hand and is very foreboding and not particularly lyrical. The incessant raindrops almost dominate in this dark section.
- In the short reprise of section A, the melody is broken off by the sudden interruption of a **cadenza**-like passage for just the right hand.

Rhythm

- The dominating rhythm is the repeating quavers of the ‘raindrops’, which keep the music going despite this relatively slow tempo.
- One aspect of rhythm that was important in Romantic music was the application of **rubato**, where the performer was encouraged to be flexible with the tempo in order to allow the music to ‘breathe’.

Harmony and tonality

- The inner parts tend to support the melodies with thirds and sixths, and the harmony is often simple and **diatonic**, using mainly tonic and **dominant seventh** chords, with the occasional **added ninth** (e.g. bar 3, beat 2).
- Perfect cadences continue to provide closure at important points, showing that functional tonality still applies in this early part of the Romantic period.
- Some chromaticism appears in the second theme, and becomes more apparent in the minor key B section, along with other ‘melancholy’ devices such as **appoggiaturas** and suspensions.
- Other than the move to the tonic minor, modulations tend to be quite short lived, apart from the move to Ab minor and then Bb minor in the second theme. Chopin modulates by using **pivot notes**.
- Pedal notes are a big feature of this piece, usually dominant pedals, and sometimes inverted (i.e. in the top part).

Texture and piano writing

- Chopin was a master of writing for the piano, and brings out many aspects of the instrument’s expressive qualities, such as the use of the lower register in the middle section, and the use of the pedal. He also exploits the piano’s ability to bring out the melody whilst keeping inner parts quieter (‘sotto voce’ is a favourite instruction of Chopin’s!).
- The texture throughout is quite full, with three or four parts going on, and the middle of the B section is both loud and very full-textured, providing a tense and powerful climax to the piece.
- However, Chopin also brings in stark contrasts, and frequently reduces the texture to just one or two notes.

It is also worth drawing attention to the large number of performance instructions in this piece, ranging from dynamics, articulation and phrasing to detailed pedaling and words such as ‘smorzando’. Chopin was quite precise in indicating what he wanted – a far cry from Handel’s score.

Section A questions

Once again, any 30-60 second portion of the music can suffice. Questions might be something like:

1. Complete the melody in bar x.
2. What cadence can be heard in bar x?
3. What features of Romantic music can be heard in this extract?
4. How does Chopin communicate a mood of sadness in this extract?
5. What examples are there in this extract of expressive writing for the piano?
6. What is the key in bar(s) x?

Section B questions

The short answer questions are likely to be about the time or period of composition, the circumstances surrounding the composition or its acquisition of the name 'Raindrop', or something about Chopin's compositions for the piano or what the name *Prelude* means.

The long answer question will either ask you to show how this is a typical Romantic piece, or encourage you to comment on the way Chopin uses musical elements in the *Prelude*, but either way a good knowledge of the chief points pertaining to each element will stand you in good stead. There is a model answer on this very piece at the end of this pack.

Area of Study 2: 20th Century Music

The set works in **Area of Study 2** are:

- *Peripetie* from *Five Orchestral Pieces* by Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), written in 1909
- *Something's Coming* from *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), written in 1958
- *Electric Counterpoint: 3rd movement ('Fast')* by Steve Reich (born 1936), written in 1987.

Music at the start of the 20th century had, in some composers' opinions, reached a crisis point. Composers of the late 19th century had taken melody, harmony, tonality and form to a point far away from the order and balance found in works such as Mozart's *Symphony No. 40* in Area of Study 1.

If you compare aspects of the Mozart set work with Schoenberg's *Peripetie*, you might notice the following things:

- Whilst Mozart's melodies are **balanced**, with equal length question and answer phrases, Schoenberg's are short, **motivic**, irregular and not really 'melodies' in the traditional sense.
- Whilst Mozart uses a clear **tonic key** and **modulates** to **related keys**, Schoenberg has done away with keys altogether.
- Whilst Mozart employs **cadences** at important points to outline his **structure**, Schoenberg does not use them at all.
- Whilst Mozart's music is tonally and harmonically clear, leaving the listener in no doubt where he or she is, Schoenberg generates tension and emotion without ever giving the listener the comfort of a harmonic or tonal 'map'.

One thing was clear in the early years of the 20th century – composers rarely agreed with each other about the direction that musical language should take. As a result, a myriad of differing styles developed. Additionally, the invention of recording technology meant that millions more people could experience music new and old, and a number of 'popular' styles developed, starting with various forms of jazz and culminating in the explosion of rock and pop after the Second World War.

The three pieces in Area of Study 2 show just how diverse music of the last century became. In *Peripetie* we see a composer who has abandoned traditional tonality and is experimenting with a new musical order. In *Something's Coming* we see popular music and theatre combined with tremendous skill, so that tonal music sounds fresh and original. In *Electric Counterpoint*

we see technology and tonality combined in an exciting way. All three of these pieces, in their own individual ways, were taking music forward into a truly modern age.

SCHOENBERG: *Peripetie* from *Five Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 16 (1909)



Schoenberg – a self-portrait

Context

Whilst it suited some composers of the early 20th century to remain tonal and perpetuate or refine musical tradition, some, like Schoenberg, felt that a completely new approach was needed. Though the *Five Orchestral Pieces* were written before Schoenberg developed his **twelve-tone** method for which he was best known, he had already abandoned tonality and was looking for alternative ways to unify and develop his musical ideas.

Schoenberg wrote the *Five Orchestral Pieces* at a time when his style was best described as **expressionist**. Expressionism was a movement which originated in Germany at the start of the 20th century, first in painting and poetry, and which concerned itself with the often violent and vivid portrayal of mood and emotion. As well as one of the most important composers of this period, Schoenberg was also a painter of some note, whose work was sometimes exhibited alongside some of the best painters of the time.³

Schoenberg's compositional career and personal life at this time was going through something of a crisis. His early music, such as the string sextet *Verklarte Nacht* (1899), was highly chromatic and romantic in style, showing influences from Brahms and Wagner. From a very early point, however, Schoenberg experimented, particularly with tonality and key-relationships. The *Five Orchestral Pieces* come just at the moment when Schoenberg was becoming increasingly **atonal** in his outlook. Ultimately, this erosion of tonality led to Schoenberg needing to develop a new way to structure and unify his compositions, and this culminated in his twelve-tone (or **serial**) methods, which first appeared in the 1920s.

³ A performance of *Peripetie* combined with a selection of expressionist art can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNCIz-QFrS>. This is well worth watching as an introduction to expressionism.

It was brave of Schoenberg to write in this style in 1909. Only Charles Ives in America was similarly doing away with tonality, but Ives's music could arguably be described as more programmatic and therefore more accessible. The *Five Orchestral Pieces* are entirely abstract. It is hard for the listener to sense any structure or direction, and even today, atonal scores are often treated with derision by conservative audiences.

Peripetie is the fourth of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* and has the tempo indication 'Sehr rasch' (very fast). Schoenberg reluctantly added the title later, on the request of his publisher. He wrote in his diary that art can say more than mere words, and that he felt the titles should give nothing away in terms of his thoughts behind the music. The word 'Peripetia' comes from Greek drama and means a 'sudden reverse of events'. This may refer to the fact that themes from the first of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* return in this movement.

It is scored for a large orchestra, which was reduced in size in a revised version made thirty years later, shortly before the composer's death. The other four pieces also have titles, and there are no obvious thematic links between them.

Analysis

Schoenberg's painting became quite prolific during the years 1908-1910, and most of his pictures from this time were portraits, described by Schoenberg as 'visions'. The *Five Orchestral Pieces* were written in the summer of 1909, and *Peripetie* is clearly a very tempestuous and emotional movement, with Schoenberg focusing on brief and intense moods, perhaps partly because he no longer has **functional harmony** available to him to help prolong the movement. Schoenberg also had marital and financial problems at this time, which probably did much to exacerbate his need for emotional expression through his music.

Schoenberg's atonal style did not sit well with many leading figures in music of the day. He struggled to get performances and recognition, and preferred to work on music for smaller ensembles. This group of pieces for large orchestra was commissioned by Richard Strauss who then refused to play them.

The lack of tonality throws the spotlight on other important aspects of Schoenberg's style at this time. Central to his orchestral music is his use of instruments for their timbre, both individually and in ensembles. His melodic ideas (or **motives**) are thrown around the orchestra, split between instruments or groups of instruments, so that rarely does one instrument play a motive in its entirety. A glance at the first page of the score for *Peripetie* reveals a very sporadic approach to orchestration, with each short 'clump' of music assigned to a different part of the orchestra. This approach to orchestration became known as **klangfarbenmelodie** or 'tone-colour melody' and was typical of expressionism and later serialism.

Schoenberg wanted to avoid repeating or returning to thematic ideas, as he felt that this would result in an undesirable emphasis on one particular tonal centre. Therefore his approach was to present a short motive or theme and then immediately develop it. This inevitably meant that Schoenberg's compositions were often much shorter than tonal ones.

A number of features strike the listener on first exposure to *Peripetie*:

Melody

- **Disjunct** or angular
- Large intervals
- Extremes of pitch
- Irregular phrases

- No predictability
- Many short motives, often played simultaneously

Harmony/Tonality

- **Dissonant**
- Atonal
- No sense of key/non functional
- Harsh/clashes

Rhythm

- No pulse or sense of metre
- Varied – short, fast rhythms and long, slow ones
- Complex, unpredictable

Timbre/texture

- Huge variety of instrumental sounds and timbres in a short time
- Full sonorous textures and moments of extreme sparse textures
- **Polyphonic**
- Instruments often feature as soloists or in small ensembles
- Use of mutes, pizzicato and other effects

Other key words, which describe the overall style of *Peripetie*, include:

- Extreme
- Intense
- Contrast
- Motivic
- Atonal

Before looking in a little more detail at *Peripetie*, some important concepts need to be explained. One is the use of the **hexachord**, which operates as a kind of unifying feature. A hexachord is a group of six different notes played either as a chord or as short motivic ideas. Each hexachord also has a **compliment** – the name given to the *other* six notes of the chromatic scale not used in the hexachord. *Peripetie* has many hexachords and their compliments.

Another is the idea of a **principal** and **secondary voice**, referred to in the score (by Schoenberg, when he revised the work) as **H** (Hauptstimme) and **N** (Nebenstimme) with brackets like this [.....] to show the length of the melodic idea to which the letter refers.

There is some repetition in *Peripetie*, but not so much of melodic ideas as of moods or timbres. When initial motives return they are changed and developed so much that the listener is unlikely to pick them out. Nevertheless it does allow us to divide *Peripetie* into a kind of **rondo** structure:

A section Bars 1-18 A loud, cacophonous opening, followed by quieter, more sustained chords in the horns and lower wind and ending with an extended clarinet theme, with very sparse accompaniment. These three ideas are developed throughout the piece.

B section Bars 18-34 Starting with a cello theme, some rhythmic ideas can now be heard with the triplet becoming an important feature. The trumpet and cellos trade thematic ideas, with the cellos moving into a very high register, before the full orchestra enters and the music seems very 'edgy'.

A¹ section Bars 35-43 As I will show below, this section relates to the horn theme of bar 8. The dynamic and rhythmic levels have dropped again and the orchestration is again more chamber-like. At bar 37 we see the six horns once again working together.

C section Bars 44-58 We are only just over a minute into the movement, but already over half-way through. The bassoon and a solo cello take over from the horns, and the tempo indications alternate between 'ruhiger' (calmer) and 'heftig' (passionate). The texture is very empty here, until a sudden triple *forte* entry by the orchestra in bar 53.

A² section Bars 59-66 The final section builds in excited fashion, with complex string and clarinet rhythms and the entry of trumpets and upper woodwind, moving from *ppp* to *fff* in 3-4 bars.

What 'unifies' this movement, and leads us to consider the middle and last sections to be similar to the first? The answer to this question lies in Schoenberg's treatment of rhythm and pitch.

- **Rhythmic unity:** the final section (bars 59-66) has much in common with the opening section. The rhythms of bar 1 can be found in the third clarinet part for much of the final section, and the trumpets use rhythms found in bars 5 and 6.
- **Unity of pitches:** the clue here is the use of the hexachords mentioned earlier. The horns in bar 8 play a hexachord that appears again in the middle section, again in the horns, in bars 37-38. In the final section a fully orchestrated hexachord in bar 64 is exactly one semitone higher than the very first hexachord of the movement, in bar 1. There are a number of other hexachords in the movement.

Let's have a look at some of the questions that may be asked of this piece in the GCSE listening paper.

Section A questions

Section A will contain short-answer listening questions on the work. These will fall into a number of areas.

- Knowledge of the expressionist style and ability to name features of it
- Knowledge of key vocabulary and ability to define it – for example, hexachords, compliments, atonal, klangfarbenmelodie, H and N, timbre and so on. Ensure that you know all the bold words from this article!
- Ability to name instruments which have important material in this movement – for example, the clarinets, horns, cellos and bassoons.
- Knowledge of the performing techniques used, such as mutes and pizzicato
- Other important features found in the music, such as the chromatic scale played by the trumpets in bar 2.

Additionally, you may be asked to express your opinion about the music. In these cases, it is not important whether you like or dislike the piece, but it is important that you can justify your opinion with two or three *musical reasons* (for example: 'I like/don't like this piece because of the extreme contrasts in dynamics').

Section B questions

Section B asks some fairly broad contextual questions about the work, such as when it was written. However the bulk of section B is an extended answer (in continuous prose) asking you to write about how the elements of music are used in the piece.

You can prepare for this by making notes on the overall features of each element. I have suggested how these notes might start below.

Melody/Pitch

- The full range of the orchestra and its instruments is used
- Melodies are short and motivic (developed in a cell-like fashion)
- Melodies are angular and disjunct (they rarely move in step)

Harmony/tonality

- The work is atonal – there is no key or key relationships
- There is much use of hexachords
- Harmony is dissonant

Timbre/Texture

- Motives are split between instruments ('klangfarbenmelodie')
- Loud sections are dominated by brass, whilst the horns and clarinets are used extensively for warmer textures
- There are huge contrasts in texture

Rhythm

- Small rhythmic ideas recur during the movement
- Rhythms are complex and very quick
- There is a lack of a sense of regular pulse

Structure

- Hexachords and rhythmic ideas come back, giving the sense of a return to the opening idea on two subsequent occasions
- A kind of rondo structure, but no obvious use of structural reference points (such as cadences)

BERNSTEIN: 'Something's Coming' from West Side Story (1958)



Context

By the 1950s the young American Leonard Bernstein was an extremely successful musical figure. Having studied at Harvard he quickly became Assistant Conductor of the New York

Philharmonic, and became their Principal Conductor in 1958. He was an excellent pianist and was already established as a composer, most significantly of the musicals *On The Town* (1944) and *Candide* (1956), both of which ran for many performances on Broadway.

Bernstein was comfortable with a wide variety of musical forms, embracing both classical and popular music and frequently attempting to blur the distinctions between the two. In the 1950s he was particularly excited about **jazz** – both the burgeoning New York **bebop** scene (see Area of Study 3 – Miles Davis) and the increasing popularity in jazz of Latin American music. He was keen to work these styles into his music for *West Side Story*.

In America, the musical was an extremely popular genre at the time of *West Side Story*. Developing out of the musical extravaganzas and melodramas of the late nineteenth century, but borrowing heavily from European opera, musical theatre piggy-backed on the huge popularity of jazz and made the most of the increasing demand for populist entertainment. Musicals by Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hammerstein played for years on Broadway in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, and from the 1960s an equally high demand for musical theatre existed in London.

The idea for *West Side Story* was brought to Bernstein by the choreographer Jerome Robbins and writer Arthur Laurents as early as 1949, as a re-working of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, with the New York Catholic and Jewish communities taking the place of the Montagues and Capulets. However Bernstein subsequently suggested that the racially motivated gang warfare which was topical in New York at the time would give him more opportunities to explore his preferred musical styles, with the homeboy 'Jets' **cool jazz** (there is even a song called 'Cool') vying with the Latin rhythms of the immigrant Puerto Rican 'Sharks'. Ultimately, Robbins and Laurents agreed and up-and-coming composer Stephen Sondheim came on board to write the lyrics to the songs.

The project was long and wearisome, with all the collaborators falling out with each other at various times (usually about who was to be credited for what), and there were many problems getting the show to the stage. However, *West Side Story* opened on Broadway in 1957, ran for 732 performances before touring, and became a film in 1961 starring Natalie Wood as Maria. The theatre production won a Tony Award (the musical theatre equivalent of an Oscar) for Robbins' choreography, and the film scooped ten Oscars. Needless to say, the show remains hugely popular, has been revived many times, and is considered by many to be one of the best musicals ever written.

Analysis

'Something's Coming' appears early in the show and represents many of the stylistic features of the score to *West Side Story*. Since it is a song for Tony, a Jet, it is laden with jazz influences, but it also contains a number of **motives** which crop up throughout the score, and which will be examined in more detail later.

In 'Something's Coming' Tony sings of his desire to put the gang life behind him and carve himself a better future. It is optimistic and prophetic – he sings that he does not know what the 'something' is but he will know as 'soon as it shows' – that 'something' could well be Maria.

Interestingly, the song was added at quite a late stage when it was decided that Tony needed to establish himself early in the show.

Musical theatre scores exist to enhance the mood and propel the story forward, providing opportunities to the writers to say more than just the mere words of the characters. The

sense of optimism in 'Something's coming' is heavy with irony when one considers the dark twists and turns to come in the story, and Bernstein's music is full of devices to promote this positive mood:

- The music is set at a fast tempo, and is full of **syncopations**. These can be seen in the right hand part of the piano reduction and also in Tony's first entry ('Could be...').
- The syncopations result in a **two-against-three feel** that makes the pulse uncertain and exciting. These heavily syncopated rhythms perhaps signify the edgy excitement felt by Tony.
- The interval of a **tritone** (or augmented fourth – three tones) is a major feature of the entire show, and is evident from the very first chord of this song, which contains the interval between D and G sharp. Throughout the verses the **rising semitone** of G sharp to A is an important aspect, and it pre-empts the melody of the song 'Maria' which Tony sings later.
- The bebop style of 1950s New York is evident, with the fast tempo, insistent crotchet bass part and complex **cross-rhythms**. Compare the opening of this song with the metre and rhythms of Miles Davis's *All Blues* from Area of Study 3 – there are similarities, despite *All Blues* being at a slower tempo.
- The sections of the song switch from three to two in a bar, perpetuating the rhythmic interest and excitement.
- Despite the insistent rhythms, Tony finds opportunities to sing lyrically and with passion – for example 'Around the corner...'. Bernstein likes to superimpose long lyrical phrases over short repeating orchestral rhythms, so that the emotions of the characters are always underpinned with the rhythmic drive of 1950s New York.
- The influence of jazz runs deep – the score is laden with **dissonances** (or **blue notes**) such as **flattened sevenths** (e.g. the C natural long note that ends the vocal phrase 'soon as it shows'), cross-rhythms and short repeating motifs (or **riffs**) such as the one set up in the very first bar of the song.

'Something's Coming' is the third number after a lengthy instrumental prologue, in which the two gangs and their differences are vividly portrayed through dance, and a rousing song in which the Jets are introduced. It is the first solo number in the show, and is the first indication to the audience that Tony is 'not like the other Jets' (something he repeats to Maria, Bernardo and Anita at frequent points in the story). Something of the impending tragedy about to befall this young man is apparent in this song – a fact not lost on Bernstein whose music is edgy and unsettling.

The song does not follow a verse-chorus structure in the pop tradition (few songs in musicals do) but still uses **repetition** as an important unifying feature. The structure of the song looks deceptively simple, but within the repeating sections there is much variety. We should have a closer look.

Bars 1-3 The orchestra sets up the two-against-three syncopated riff that runs throughout much of this song. Over an **ostinato pizzicato** bass that falls in fourths, the interval of a tritone followed by a rising semitone is prophetic, as it will be the main melodic feature of the song 'Maria'. Bar 3 is a **vamp** – a safety-repeat that goes round and round until the singer is ready to enter.

Bars 4-39 Tony enters with two open statements – 'Could be' and 'Who knows!' - both set with long notes, which use the first three notes of the 'Maria' melody. Then he picks up on the orchestral riff, ending the opening phrase on a flat (or 'blue') seventh (the word 'shows'). This crescendos to a metre change at bar 21 and the insistent repeated notes

(to emphasise the word 'cannonballing'), punctuated by syncopated chords from the orchestra.

We return to triple time in bar 27 and the music repeats for a second 'verse'. At the end of this, in bar 32, Tony reaches his highest note so far on the word 'me', and the orchestral accompaniment switches to the riff for the next section.

The new riff still contains syncopation and moves at a fast pace, but feels more 'regular' as there are no cross-rhythms. A rising and falling melody in the tenor register maintains the sense of excitement about what is to come.

Bars 40-105 In a clever piece of writing, Tony enters with the same melody as before, set against this new riff and transposed a tone lower. Bernstein adapts this melody a little but it still ends on the blue seventh note in bar 48. The insistent second melody (bar 52) is also present but is presented with longer note values. Accents are thrown with wild abandon across the beat and Bernstein includes a three-four bar (bar 58) to further upset the metre. We get a strong sense here of both Bernstein and Sondheim's forward-looking approach to word setting – there is little room for regular metres or phrases in such a modern score.

The last part of this section (bars 73 to 105) contains Tony's longest and most lyrical phrases, at the top of his register. As if to maintain the uneasiness, the orchestral accompaniment becomes more **chromatic** at this point. This section is quite different to the others and is often referred to as the **bridge**.

Bars 106-140 The music this section is immediately repeated but does not have the extra 'verse' (shown by the first and second time bars in the previous section). The lyrical ending to this section is also cut short by the return to the opening music.

Bars 141-158 The song ends as it started, giving it a sense of symmetry, with the return of the syncopated triple-time riff in the orchestra. Tony reprises a small section of his vocal, and ends on the unresolved blue seventh. The music fades, leaving the audience unsettled about what is to happen to Tony.

Let's have a look at some of the questions, which may be asked of this piece in the GCSE listening paper.

Section A questions

Section A will contain short-answer listening questions on the work. These will fall into a number of areas.

- Knowledge of the style of this song – particularly the jazz influences and the role that the music plays to enhance the action and emotion on stage
- Knowledge of key vocabulary and ability to define it – for example: tritone, blue notes, sevenths, syncopation, riffs/ostinatos, cross-rhythms, dissonance
- Ability to name instruments which have important material in this movement, and to comment on Tony's vocal range and the way in which his voice is exploited
- Knowledge of the **word-painting** devices used by Bernstein.

Additionally, you may be asked to express your opinion about the music, or perhaps comment on what you think made it so successful on the Broadway stage.

Section B questions

Section B asks some fairly broad contextual questions about the work, such as when and where it was first staged, who sings the song or when the film version was made. However, if *Something's Coming* comes up in section B you will mainly have to write about how the elements of music are used in the piece.

You can prepare for this by making notes on the overall features of each element. I have suggested how these notes might start below – there are many more potential points.

Melody/Pitch

- You should be familiar with the main short motifs of this song, as seen in the voice part in bars 13, 21-27 and the section from 73-105 .
- The interval of a tritone (often resolving upwards to a fifth, perhaps to signify Tony's role as the ultimate resolution to the gang troubles).
- Bernstein frequently leaves Tony's phrases **unresolved**.
- Tony is a **tenor**, and the top of his range is reserved for the most passionate outburst ('whistling down the river').

Harmony/tonality

- The work is tonal. It starts in D major and modulates to G major at bar 21, returning very quickly to D. The B sections are in C major, with modulations to F on the first time through, and G on the second, after which the key moves back to D. All these keys are quite closely related.
- The harmony **colours** the tonal nature of this song with many dissonances, mainly influenced by jazz. These include blue sevenths, chromatic countermelodies (especially in the B sections) and bass lines with notes that deliberately clash with the vocal melody.

Timbre/Texture

- The music is **homophonic** throughout, and the word setting is largely **syllabic**.
- There is much interest in the orchestral parts (not shown in the score, so you will have to listen for these). As well as the driving rhythm section and brushes on the drums, clarinets, trumpets and violins play an important role.
- There are sometimes instrumental effects to enhance the words – listen for what happens, for example, when Tony sings about the air humming in bars 128-136.

Rhythm

- This is quite possibly the most important feature, with driving jazzy rhythms underpinning the whole song.
- Cross-rhythms, changes of metre and syncopation give the song its 'edgy' nature.
- Bernstein combines slow, languid vocal rhythms with fast-moving orchestral ones to create a sense of unease.

Structure

- The piece appears to have a simple, two-part structure, but actually there is a lot of ingenious use of melodic motives.

REICH: 3rd movement ('Fast') from *Electric Counterpoint* (1987)

Context

After the Second World War, music continued to diversify more than ever before. Many composers in Europe became highly experimental, extending Schoenberg's ideas of abandoning tonality to many other hitherto traditional musical features, such as pitch and rhythm. Electronic means of manipulating sound became popular with composers such as Stockhausen, and others, like Boulez and Berio, took serialism and other alternative structural and creative methods to their extremes.

Post-war America thrived, and led the way in music and the arts. Of course, the late 1940s and 1950s were an important time for the development of popular music, with the fusion of blues, country and jazz resulting in a myriad of new styles such as Rock 'n' Roll. However there was another movement in America in which happened simultaneously with the development of rock and pop music, and which was rooted in the ideal of stripping music back to its absolute basics, and this was **minimalism**.

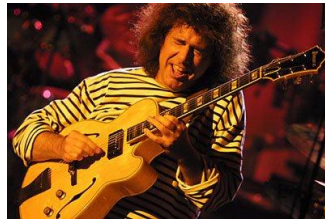
The ethos of minimalism was 'less is more', and the movement gathered pace not only in music but also in art. It was based upon the opinion of many artists and musicians that the new modern music should not be the overly complex, atonal **avant-garde** of many European composers, but should be centered around the concept of **repetition** and **slow transformation** of sound. This ultra-modern approach allowed music to become tonal again, but focused attention on the creation of music through means other than balanced melody and tonal structure.

This was not a reaction against the avant-garde, but an extension of it. American composers John Cage, Cornelius Cardew and others were challenging musicians and listeners with works that put more emphasis on decisions made by the performer, or sheer **chance**, than pre-planning. Additionally, these composers spent a lot of time finding new ways to create sound, either by playing conventional instruments in an unconventional way, or by using completely 'new' instruments. John Cage's infamous 4'33" took this to extremes since it contained the simple instruction 'tacet' – do not play anything at all. Cage argued that the music of 4'33" already existed and that the enforced silence of the performance instruction simply allowed the audience to tune into it.

American composers La Monte Young and Terry Riley were equally interested in finding new ways to create music. They spent a lot of time working with **drones** and repetition, and developed pieces that remained extremely static and were built on very short, repeating **cells**. Riley's masterpiece in this genre was his 1964 piece *In C* which was written for any combination of instruments (ideally about 35 according to Riley) who work their way through 53 short, numbered musical cells, repeating each one as many times as they like, and starting at different times. The result is a semi-**aleatoric** (reliant on chance) piece of which no two performances are the same.

One of Riley's performers in the premiere of *In C* was New Yorker Steve Reich. Reich's own approach to this style of composition was similar to Riley's, but he often liked to incorporate **electronic** means. His early pieces *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out* were written for **tape** and featured very early attempts at **sampling** and **phase shifting**. Sampling was the electronic manipulation of a recorded sound, and phase shifting was taking two identical recorded cells and moving them slowly out of sync with each other, creating new exciting effects. Later Reich works like *Piano Phase* used phase shifting in live performance.

Other American composers also worked in a minimalist style (although the word was coined later by British composer Michael Nyman). Most significant of these are Philip Glass and John Adams. In Europe, John Tavener, Michael Nyman and Arvo Part are just some of a large number of contemporary composers who have embraced minimalist ideas. The genre has become quite significant in the fields of film music and pop music.



Reich wrote *Electric Counterpoint* in the summer of 1987 for the jazz guitarist Pat Metheny. It is the third in a series, which also contains *Vermont Counterpoint* (1982 for flute) and *New York Counterpoint* (1985 for clarinet), all for soloist with tape. Whilst there is a version of this piece for live guitar ensemble, the original version (and the one we are studying) is for one live guitar player (who can play electric or acoustic) and tape, with the tape part featuring a number of guitar parts and two bass guitar parts. Metheny recorded it in 1987 and it was released on an album coupled with Reich's fantastic work *Different Trains*, which is well worth a listen if you have time! It has three movements, entitled 'Fast', 'Slow' and 'Fast', of which this is the third. Reich acknowledges Metheny's help in the reworking of the piece to make it more idiomatic for guitar.

Analysis

Reich is heavily influenced by the repetitive rhythms and melodies of African music (he has studied in Africa), and *Electric Counterpoint* includes references to this influence. The first movement is based on an African theme and is built up in an eight-part **canon**, and the second movement is a nine-part canon (at half the speed of the first movement).

The third and final movement is fast again and is in triple time. Reich uses this movement to create rhythmic **ambiguity** – whilst it is never 'out of time' it is not always clear what metre the music is in, until a very satisfying resolution near the end.

On hearing this work it becomes apparent that the main features of minimalism have underpinned the compositional process:

Looping – in this case, rather than using a sampled musical idea and looping it over and over again, Reich got Metheny to record 'live' loops – repeated cells – to **multitrack** tape.

Layering – the many parts interweave with each other, building up from one or two parts to a very thick, multi-layered sound. This is the **counterpoint** referred to in the title.

Repetition – the fundamental ideal of minimalism. The whole movement is based upon **ostinati**.

Canon – **ostinati** come in at different times to make more complex textures (rather like in a performance of 'London's Burning').

Guitar techniques – Reich uses both **picking** (playing individual notes) and **strumming** (playing chords rhythmically) in this piece.

Tonal ambiguity – Reich keeps the 'obvious' aspects of tonality to the most important parts of the movement, often leaving us unsure as to what key the music is in, though it never becomes atonal and rarely dissonant. Much of the time the music is actually **modal**.

Ambiguity of metre – **cross-rhythms** and phasing mean that the pulse is often temporarily lost.

Slow change – chords, keys and textures change very slowly over a long period of time. Often new ideas and sounds ‘evolve’ – we do not always notice the process of change as we listen. This is sometimes known as **metamorphosis**.

Rhythmic development – Reich places as much emphasis on rhythm in this piece as he does melody.

Rhythmic drones or **pedal notes** – an important feature of this movement.

Note addition and subtraction – adding and taking away single notes as an idea repeats.

Implied (or resultant) melody – a melody that jumps out at the listener through certain emphasised notes in the various ostinati, though such a melody is rarely visible in the printed score.

This movement is for live guitar, seven recorded guitar parts and two recorded bass guitar parts. In the *Edexcel GCSE Anthology of Music* the recorded guitar parts have been split into groups of four and three to make it easier to see how they interact.

Broadly speaking, there are two large sections to this movement. The first runs from bars 1 to 73, and the second (signified by a very noticeable key change) runs from bars 74 to 113. There is a final ‘coda’ section from bars 114 to the end.

Let us have a closer look at how Reich applies some of the techniques described above in this movement, by looking in more detail at the opening twenty bars or so.

The opening bars use ostinato and canon to set up the movement. The one-bar ostinato of Guitar 1 is soon combined with a three-note idea in the live guitar part. Using note addition, Reich extends this live part to – eventually – another one-bar ostinato. Crucially, this is the same ostinato as the Guitar 1 part, but it starts a crotchet beat later and works in canon. This can most easily be seen in bar 6.

When Guitar 2 enters it takes over from the live part. Then we have a number of other entries of the same ostinato, all in canon and coming in at different times, so that a gradually layered increase in texture is felt. Most of these entries come in bit-by-bit, using the note addition technique.

Later in the movement we see the entry of the two bass guitars, whose role at first is to provide pedal points and therefore give harmonic or tonal references to the music. From bar 36 we start to see strummed chords and a definite sense of key starts to emerge.

Again, more detailed analyses of this movement can be found in the two books mentioned at the start of this article. To conclude our look at the Reich, let us consider some of the ways you can prepare for Section A and B questions.

Section A questions

Section A will contain short-answer listening questions on the work. These could include:

- Questions about instrumentation and the way in which this work is performed.
- Questions about texture – make sure that you can use words such as ‘polyphonic’ and ‘canon’.

- Questions about metre and cross-rhythms. Compare how the music *sounds* (rhythmically) with how it *looks*. How does Reich ‘play’ with metre?
- How does Reich use devices such as ostinato and note addition?
- Questions about the harmony and tonality. Is this music diatonic? Are the keys related? Does Reich modulate or just shift key suddenly?
- What features of minimalism can be found in this work?

Section B questions

Section B may ask some fairly broad questions about when the work was written and for which guitarist. The bulk of this section, remember, will be an extended answer commenting on how Reich uses the various elements of music. I have already gone into some detail on this area – but in conclusion here is a key-word summary of what you need to know.

Melody: cells, note addition, ostinati, repetition, implied melody.

Harmony: strummed chords, added chords (7ths and so on), diatonic.

Tonality: tonal centres, key-shifts, ambiguity.

Rhythm: triple metre, ambiguity, cross-rhythms.

Texture: Canon, imitation, layering, polyphony.

Area of Study 3 – Popular Music in Context

The set works in AOS3 are:

- *All Blues* by Miles Davis, recorded in 1959 in New York for the album *Kind of Blue*
- *Grace* by Jeff Buckley, recorded in 1993-4 in New York for the album *Grace*
- *Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad?* by Moby, recorded in 1998-9 in New York for the album *Play*.

MILES DAVIS: *All Blues*



Context

In 1959 Miles Davis was at the top of his game as a trumpeter and as a leader of some of the most stellar ensembles in jazz at the time. Born to a middle-class family in Illinois, Davis’s parents encouraged his musical education and he enrolled in 1944 (aged 18) at New York’s famous Juilliard School of Music. It was not long before Davis had fallen in with the hip New York jazz scene, getting to know and jamming with such luminaries as Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins and Thelonius Monk. Davis quickly decided to drop out of Juilliard and pursue a path as a jazz musician.

During the 1950s Davis steadily built a reputation through both his contacts with major jazz musicians of the time, including Gil Evans, Sonny Rollins and Dizzy Gillespie, and through his own trademark sound, which was often characterised by the use of **mutes** and playing very close to the microphone, resulting in an 'intimate' tone which is quite apparent on *All Blues*. The 1950s were also a difficult time for him, with many relationship problems and a burgeoning drug habit. However the decade was a very productive and creative one, and the revered albums *Birth of the Cool*, *Miles Ahead* and *Round About Midnight* all came from this period, as well as superb arrangements, with Gil Evans, of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and Rodrigo's *Concierto di Aranjuez* (the latter on the album *Sketches of Spain*).

A Kind of Blue was recorded in New York on two days in March and April of 1959 (and released in August) with his **sextet** of the time, which included pianist Bill Evans and legendary saxophonists Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley and John Coltrane. Many of the tracks on the album were presented to the musicians on the day of the recording as harmonic overviews, resulting in a very **improvisatory** feel to the performances. However *So What* and *All Blues* had already been played at a few concerts and were therefore more developed as compositions.

Style

All Blues, the fourth track on the album and the longest, is effectively a **twelve bar blues** in the key of G. In simple blues terms, this would result in the following chord pattern:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
G	G	G	G	C	C	G	G	D	C	G	G
I	I	I	I	IV	IV	I	I	V	IV	I	I

However, Davis was an exponent of **modal** harmony. This meant that he blurred the concept of major or minor chords by using modal notes such as **flattened 7ths**, interchangeable **major and minor 3rds** and **chromatic** sounding shifts. Over this, soloists were provided with **modes** (rather than scales), which they used to **improvise** melodies. The actual chords used in *All Blues* are as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
G⁷	G⁷	G⁷	G⁷	Gm⁷	Gm⁷	G⁷	G⁷	Dm⁷	Ebm⁷-Dm⁷	G⁷	G⁷
I⁷	I⁷	I⁷	I⁷	Im⁷	Im⁷	I⁷	I⁷	Vm⁷	bVIIm⁷-Vm⁷	I⁷	I⁷

As you can see, there are a number of significant departures made by Davis in his selection of chords for *All Blues*. Notable among these is the use of the **tonic minor** chord instead of the subdominant in bars 5 and 6, and the **minor dominant** chord in bar 9. Bar 10, the most interesting of all, contains a chromatic shift upwards of one semitone from the preceding bar, resulting in an Eb minor 7th chord, or a **flattened sub-median**, which quickly moves back down to the more settled dominant. This kind of **chromatic harmonic decoration** is typical of Miles Davis's style.

Also very notable about these chords is that every one of them contains **added seventh** notes. The flat (or 'blue') seventh was very common in jazz harmony and melody, but in this case many of them are **minor 7ths**, which make the harmony that little bit more interesting. Not notated are the myriad of other 'extra' **non-harmony notes** put into the mix by the trumpet and saxophones (and also the piano) which give the track its rich palette of **colour** – double and triple **appoggiaturas** and **chromatic passing notes** appear in virtually every bar.

Analysis

In the following section, I refer to the track using times rather than bar numbers. A number of transcriptions exist, some in 3/4 time and some in 6/8, so using bar numbers would cause confusion. Do make sure you use the original 1959 recording from the *Kind of Blue* album – there are live recordings and alternative takes in existence, which have significant differences.

The overall structure, in very superficial terms, is as follows:

0'00" *Introduction*

Oscillating notes on piano (Bill Evans), a **riff** (or **vamp**) on the double bass (Paul Chambers), a **swung waltz**-style pattern on the drums using brushes (Jimmy Cobb)

0'10" *Introduction (continued)*

Alto (Adderley) and tenor (Coltrane) saxophones enter with a riff in **thirds**, emphasizing the **flat seventh** note F.

0'20" **Head**

Davis enters with the main theme on trumpet with a **harmon mute** – one of his trademark sounds. Typically of Davis, this theme is slow moving and understated. All other riffs and parts continue, apart from in bars 9 and 10 of the 12-bar when the **chromatic shifts** between chords V and VI are emphasised.

0'53" *Intro and Head repeated (slightly altered trumpet melody).*

This is followed by another four bars of the intro riff, and a drum fill.

1'45" *Choruses 1-4*

Trumpet solo (Davis), without the mute. Cobb moves from **brushes** to **sticks**. No saxophones – just the rhythm section of piano, bass and drums accompany the solos. These choruses are also the best parts of the track for hearing the chord progressions clearly. Following this 48-bar solo the intro returns for four bars.

4'00" *Choruses 5-8*

Alto saxophone solo. Adderley's solo style is more rhythmic than Davis, with **syncopation** and short riffs and **sequences**. There are also some lovely chromatic and modal runs using the full range of the instrument. Once again the solo is 48 bars long and is followed by a four bar intro.

6'14" *Choruses 9-12*

Tenor saxophone solo. Coltrane's trademark warm and commanding tone is a great contrast to Adderley before him. This solo is more **virtuosic** and perhaps less rhythmically arresting, with the focus being on melody and stunning chromatic runs. Cobb's drums become more complex in this solo as well, with a lot of syncopation, **cross-rhythms** and **polyrhythm**. Again a four-bar intro follows the solo.

8'26" *Choruses 13-14*

Piano solo. Of course, Bill Evans has been playing all along, but he now gets a 24-bar solo of his own. He skillfully mixes harmonic improvisation of a very complex nature with some small snippets of melody. He experiments a lot with **parallel chains of chords**.

9'28" *Intro*

The saxophones return with their riff, the piano reverts to its oscillating notes, and it sounds like the Head is going to return to bring the piece to a close.

9'38" *Head*

Davis does not disappoint, and the intimate tone of the muted trumpet (complete with a 'split' note at the start – but Davis never worried about those!) returns for the Head, played twice as before.

11'00" *Outro*

Four more bars of introduction, and then Davis signs off with some rhythmic improvisation before the track fades.

In preparation for **Section A and B questions** on *All Blues*, the following points should be useful.

Pitch

- Can you notate the bass riff and saxophone riffs heard in the introduction?
- Solos are based on the concept of modal improvisation. For example, the G-G scale with a flat seventh degree used in this track is the **mixolydian mode**.
- Sequences are often used in the instrumental solos – check out the alto solo for good examples.

Rhythm

- The track has a 6/8 swung waltz feel to it, though some scores will notate it in $\frac{3}{4}$ time (which makes each 12-bar chorus 24 bars long).
- The track has a moderate **tempo**.
- Jimmy Cobb's drums carry this triple time **groove** through the entire track, with focus particularly on the **ride cymbal** (more on this under 'instrumentation').
- There are many examples of syncopation both in melody and harmony parts. The alto sax solo and Davis's improvised **outro** are good examples of this.
- The drum part becomes quite complex as the piece goes on, and there are many examples of fills, cross-rhythms and polyrhythm.

Harmony

- I have already mentioned the **altered 12-bar blues** harmonic structure, and the use of modal harmony – one way of explaining this is that the track is neither major nor minor.
- The harmony of the track is characterized by chromaticism, appoggiaturas and added 7^{ths}.

Instrumentation

- The track is scored for a jazz sextet consisting of three **rhythm** instruments (piano, bass, drums) and three **lead** instruments (trumpet, alto, tenor).
- Apart from in the intros and Head choruses, only one lead instrument plays at a time. The rhythm section plays throughout.
- The drums are played with brushes at first, and then sticks when the solos begin. The ride cymbal features heavily as the main rhythmic driving force (common in jazz), and the **snare** features with syncopated decorations and fills (sometimes the **toms** as well).

- The double bass is played **pizzicato** and generally plays a riff. It has a rhythmic part as important as the drums, which keeps a solid beat and often **walks**.
- The piano begins the piece with an oscillating almost **trill-like** figure on the notes A and G, doubled at a fourth below. This idea is both decorative and harmonically interesting. When the solos start the piano **comps** - maintaining both a rhythmic and harmonic underlay for the soloists. Bill Evans also gets his own short solo, which is full of parallel chords and non-harmonic notes. Generally speaking, Evans restricts himself to the middle range of the piano.
- As well as their easily recognised riff in thirds, the alto and tenor both have virtuosic solos with much chromaticism and runs. The alto solo is also very rhythmic with much syncopation. Both these solos are based on modes, and use the full range of the instruments, with 'special effects' such as **smears** and **glissandos**.
- The trumpet has two distinct timbres – the intimate sound created in the Head by the harmon mute, and the open sound of the solo. It is not in Davis's style to play showy, virtuosic solos. Instead his melodies are slow, mellow and have **long phrases**. He likes to experiment with very complex modal harmony, and clearly spends a lot of time thinking about what he is playing! He was never a technically adept player in the way that, for example, Louis Armstrong was, and was not bothered if he 'missed' notes or made 'mistakes'.



A wah-wah mute

Structure

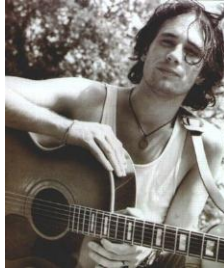
- The track is structured in the conventional jazz 'Head' arrangement, which dates back to the **trad jazz** of the 1920s and is akin to the classical **theme and variations** structure.

It would also be good to spend a little time thinking about aspects such as **dynamics** and **texture**.

Additionally, it is important that you understand how *All Blues* fits into the development of the jazz style, but only to a reasonably superficial level:

- The importance of **Trad Jazz** in New Orleans and Chicago of the 1920s.
- The rise of **Swing** in the 1930s, and particularly the concept of the big band, of jazz for dancing, and the complex written out arrangements of bandleaders such as Duke Ellington. This was the overly commercial jazz that Davis's New York friends of the 1940s objected to.
- The rise of **Bop** (or **Bebop**) in 1940s post-war New York. This was small-band, complex jazz intended for aficionados rather than mass popularity. Any music of the 1940s by Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk or Dizzy Gillespie would be good here.
- From this background it becomes easier to understand Davis's interest in simplifying the Bop style, and switching the interest to modal harmony, timbre and texture. Despite the showy saxophone solos, there is none of Bop's overt complexity in *All Blues*.

JEFF BUCKLEY: *Grace*



Context

Jeff Buckley's only completed album was released in August 1994 and initially peaked at 149 in the US and 42 in the UK charts. The title track was released in early 1995 as the first single from the album, and Buckley played it at gigs (along with his co-writer Gary Lucas) for at least three years prior to the release date.

Jeff Buckley was born in California to musical parents, though it is thought that he only met his biological father, the **folk-rock** singer Tim Buckley, once, when he was eight years old. By the early 1990s Buckley was causing a major stir as a performer at Manhattan clubs such as *Sin-é*, and he was hastily snapped up by Columbia records, who allegedly agreed a million-dollar, three-album deal with him.

He gathered a band around him (including co-writer Lucas for *Grace* and one other song, *Mojo Pin*), and recorded *Grace* in late 1993 and early 1994 with producer Andy Wallace, who had previously been involved with major albums such as Nirvana's *Never Mind*.

Though the album did not initially do well, over the fifteen years following its release it has sold millions of copies, and is lauded by critics as an extremely significant work.

Buckley's second album was never made. One evening in Memphis in 1997, whilst waiting for his band to fly in to begin recording the album, Jeff Buckley went swimming in the Wolf River (a tributary of the Mississippi) fully clothed, and disappeared. His body was found days later, and a verdict of death by accidental drowning was recorded.

Style

Certain aspects of Jeff Buckley's style stand out after maybe only one listen to this lengthy song.

The lyrics, poetic and profound, were loosely about Buckley's own decision to move from California to New York, partly to be with a loved one, and deal with the concept of true love, though they seem ironic in the context of what was to happen to Buckley three years later.

His voice is pure and covers a vast range (or **tessitura**), rising from quiet meditation at the beginning to wild, unbridled wailing at the end. The track has an acoustic sound (and features a number of guitar riffs) but is full in its **arrangement**, with a constant 'wall' of strange background sounds vying to be noticed.

The harmony is often **discordant** and complex, but the **superimposition** of a number of memorable riffs and Buckley's **scalic** vocal melodies made the song hard to forget. The tempo is medium paced but the song has frenetic rhythm and vital energy.

In truth this track is original and transcends genre – there are undoubtedly clear traces of his **folk** and **progressive rock** influences but the singing style is more akin to 20th century

'classical' and **avant-garde** music. Buckley's work was a strong influence on subsequent alternative bands, most notably English band Radiohead.

Analysis

Structurally *Grace* is complex, but it follows a **verse/chorus model**. The verses are mostly in two parts, and each is preceded by an **instrumental**. The complexity of this song is mainly in the **tonal structure** – despite the overall key being E minor, other keys are explored and there is much evidence of chromatic harmony.

0'00" *Introduction/Instrumental (Section A)*

Two guitars double up on a **finger-style** riff outlining first the chord of F minor, and then G minor, though the presence of the **sharpened sixth** in this riff makes the music sound modal immediately. The band enters with a single, loud E minor chord.

0'11" *Instrumental (Section B)*

This is also part of the introduction, but called 'instrumental' here to recognise the fact that it returns before every verse. A strong, chordal guitar riff, played four times, high in the guitar's range, underlines not the tonic key but that of D major, with emphasis on the seventh degree, C sharp. The strong sense of **compound time** is also evident now – the song is in 12/8 so that every beat has a 'triple' feel to it. Count "1 and a 2 and a 3 and a 4 and a" to get to grips with this.

0'27" *Verse 1*

A shift to the tonic key of E minor. This verse is divided into two sections as follows:

0'27" *Section A* - Buckley's haunting voice moves slowly up and down over chords which generally shift up a semitone to F minor or down a semitone to Eb. There are many discordant notes and general tonal confusion, which perfectly complement the wandering melody. This chord sequence is played twice.

0'49" *Section B* – Buckley moves up an octave and the harmony rises by step. The melody seems more positive, largely due to its preoccupation with the second and seventh degrees of the scale – both 'sharp' notes. Again the chord sequence is played twice.

1'11" *Chorus*

Songwriters agree that 'good' pop songs reach the chorus at around the 1-minute mark, and Buckley delivers accordingly! However, though the chorus melody (to the repeated words "Wait in the fire") is repetitive and catchy in the best pop tradition of the **hook**, the underlying harmony is even more discordant and continues to be based on chords a semitone apart. The guitars appear to remain on an E minor chord whilst the bass part moves from F to E to Eb (as it did in the first part of the verse). Buckley's vocals are doubled (an octave higher, **falsetto**) and the chorus ends with a **resolution** onto the tonic chord.

1'30" *Instrumental (Section A)*

This is the same as at 0'00", but with slightly fuller texture.

1'41" *Instrumental (Section B)*

The same as at 0'11"

1'56" *Verse 2*

This second verse is very similar to verse 1, with the second section beginning at 2'19". Texturally there is more interest now, with a string section added. Buckley helped with the

string arrangements but they were largely the work of Karl Berger, who adds colour to the arrangement with use of **tremolos**, pizzicato, glissando and sudden changes of dynamic.

2'41 *Chorus*

Buckley's singing is becoming higher and more impassioned, and we are beginning to get a taste of the amazing power and range of his voice. This chorus is largely similar to the last, with the addition of subtle string parts.

3'00 *Bridge*

Right at the point where many pop songs would come to a close, *Grace* enters a new phase with an exciting and harmonically obscure **bridge**. Melody is largely absent in this section and it feels as if we are moving to the key of G minor, but only fleetingly as a passage of falling semitones plunges us back into E minor.

3'16" **Vocalised** verse (*Section B*)

We hear the harmonies of the second part of the verse, but the lyrics are replaced with full-sounding vocal harmonies and some characteristic falsetto from Buckley. On the third repeat of this sequence (at 3'31") he passionately sings the words "It reminds me of the pain I might leave behind", his voice laden with **effects** and manipulation of **EQ**. This 'half-verse' is really part of the Bridge above, as it is not preceded by its first section or followed by the chorus.

3'41" *Instrumental (Section A)*

A return to the very opening of the song, with added percussive effects made on the guitar by completely **muting** the strings and strumming.

3'53 *Instrumental (Section B)*

As before, but perhaps more rhythmically exciting now

4'07" *Verse 3*

This third verse is only half as long as the others (there is no Section B, perhaps because we heard it in the Bridge), and Buckley sings the melody an octave higher than before, with tremendous emotion. Guitars and drums play particularly strongly.

4'26" *Chorus (extended)*

The chorus begins (it actually has the same chords as the first part of the verse – a fact which is emphasised here). Buckley is vocalising and does not bring in the lyrics of the chorus ("Wait in the fire") until 4'41". This style of singing, reaching previously unheard heights, was one of the chief reasons for Buckley's meteoric rise to stardom through his live performances, which must have been spellbinding. The instrumental performances match Buckley's singing in intensity and the song builds and builds. Eventually it hits a final chord – not the tonic - leaving the listener feeling rather unsettled!

Section A and B questions on *Grace* are likely to cover some of the following points:

Pitch

- The complexity of this track will make notation questions difficult, though perhaps small sections of Buckley's vocal melody (such as that for the chorus) might be set, with you being asked to insert missing notes. This type of question could conceivably be asked of the guitar riffs as well.
- Spend time looking at Buckley's vocal range, which covers two octaves from E to E (and even higher at the end).
- Instrumental sections are entirely chord-based – there are no noticeable instrumental melodies other than the guitar riffs.

Rhythm

- The track has a 12/8 compound feel to it, though some transcriptions might notate it in 6/8 time. It does feel like a fast triple time song – quite unusual for a pop song.
- The track has a moderate tempo but feels quite fast, due to the quick guitar rhythms. Buckley's vocal is generally very slow moving, however.

Harmony and tonality

- The harmony and tonality of this song are the most complex of its features. There is a preoccupation with chromatic scales and semitone relationships, and it is not unusual for the band to be playing two chords at the same time, making a **polytonal** effect.

Instrumentation

- The track is written for **rhythm** and **lead guitars** (there are at least three rhythm guitars on the recording due to **overdubs**) – both acoustic and electric, bass, drums and string orchestra.
- The album notes mention other instruments played by Buckley, including **organ**, **harmonium** and **dulcimer** – it is quite possible that some of these instruments contribute to the overall texture on this song.
- There is much use of lead guitar, with long, slow moving notes and effects such as **feedback** contributing to the plethora of sound effects on this track.

Texture

- Much can be said about the arrangement on this track and the control of texture, which allows the track to develop towards its impassioned climax

You will need to have a little knowledge of the background of the track (see the overview above) and be able to relate any extract heard to the piece as a whole. Additionally, it is important that you understand how the track *Grace* fits into the album, and a very brief, superficial study of one or two of the other tracks would be good for this. For example:

- *Mojo Pin* – similar to *Grace* (and also co-written with Lucas) in that it exploits Buckley's interest in **superimposing** instrumental effects over guitar riffs. Additionally, the harmonic structure is complex and his vocal range impressive. It also explores a variety of tempos and **metres**. The characteristic Buckley sound of the strummed electric guitar is heard on this track too.
- *Hallelujah* – you may well be familiar with this, since it nearly topped the charts at the end of 2008 thanks to an online campaign by Buckley fans to outdo *X-Factor* winner Alexandra Burke's version! It has also appeared in many popular films and TV shows. Buckley's cover of this classic Leonard Cohen song is minimal in arrangement and probably the best example of his phenomenal performing ability – undoubtedly inherited from his father.
- *Lover, you should have come over* – this is a beautiful ballad, with a fantastic harmonium introduction played by Buckley himself. Melodically it is possibly his best work. Like *Grace* it has a triple time feel to it. You might be interested to listen to Jamie Cullum's cover of this song, on his *Twenty-Something* album.
- *Corpus Christi Carol* – this unusual track (how many other pop albums can boast songs from the sacred choral tradition?) is particularly haunting, and Buckley's voice and performance breathtaking. Both Buckley and Britten were influenced by folk music, and here we can trace this common ground between two otherwise very different musical styles.

- *Lilac Wine* – this is a cover version of an old song. Buckley was known to have loved Nina Simone's version.

It is also important for you to gain a little understanding of Buckley's musical background. His biological father, Tim Buckley, released nine albums in the late 1960s and early 1970s (he died of a drug overdose in 1975). Additionally it is well-known that Jeff Buckley was strongly influenced by 1970s progressive rock bands such as Led Zeppelin and Genesis, folk-rock artists such as Van Morrison, classical composers such as Ravel and jazz arrangers such as Duke Ellington, whose harmonies and textures interested Buckley acutely.

MOBY: *Why does my heart feel so bad*



Context

Richard Melville Hall adopted the stage name Moby due to his namesake and distant relative, Herman Melville, the author of *Moby Dick*. Born in New York in 1965 and given a musical education as a child, Moby started to make an impact on the charts and in the clubs in the UK in 1991 and by 1998 he had scored a number of top ten hits and toured with some major artists. He was also a competent film score composer and **remixed** the James Bond Theme for the 1997 film *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

However it was his 1999 album *Play* (his sixth studio album), which really propelled Moby to fame in mainstream pop music. Despite slow initial sales, this album has now sold more than nine million copies, and every track on it has been licensed to appear in films, TV shows and commercials. The follow-up album, 2002's *18* sold four million copies, and Moby toured extensively for both these albums. Throughout the following years Moby has continued to be at the forefront of world dance music, has had very public spats with hip-hop artist Eminem, has co-written with the likes of Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Britney Spears, and has headlined at Glastonbury. His best-known song, *Extreme Ways*, appeared in the Jason Bourne movies. He continues to be a very successful artist and his music continues to appear in film and TV on both sides of the Atlantic. He also does a lot of work for good causes and provides free music for film students and non-profit organisations.

Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad was the fourth single released from the album *Play*. Moby originally wrote it in 1992 as a **techno** dance track, but for this album made it slower and more melancholy. In keeping with Moby's interest in **sampling** old vocal recordings, this track features *The Shining Light Gospel Choir* from the early 1950s. It reached number 16 in the UK singles chart and number 3 in Germany, and appeared in the trailer for the Ewan McGregor film *Black Hawk Down*. Its animated video features 'Little Idiot' – an alter-ego of Moby's who lives on the moon and visits Earth for a number of adventures.

Style

Moby has a strong spiritual side and a Christian faith, and the underlying style of the music on his *Play* album is the fusion of inspirational (though not always religious) samples with solid dance grooves. His techno background is clearly evident, with equal measures of dance

breakbeats and **ambient** textures and a wonderful concoction of old and completely new samples which makes his work almost timeless.

The song itself mixes traditional blues and gospel with techno and **electronica**, and has minimal lyrics, alternating verses of “Why does my heart feel so bad? Why does my soul feel so bad?” with “These open doors, these open doors”. These words are not exactly true to the original 1950s gospel song, but have been cleverly altered and ‘cut and pasted’. Let’s have a closer look.

Sampling

At the start of the track it is easy to hear that the vocal samples have been lifted from an old gospel recording and ‘glued’ together (using a **sequencing** program such as *Logic*). One can hear the **lo-fi** noise of the original shellac 78 record, and the ambient sounds of the other gospel singers. The phrases “Why does my heart” and “Why does my soul” are lifted in their entirety, but “feel so” is taken from a different part of the original verse, and the word “bad” has been electronically altered by Moby from the original word “glad”.

Additionally, the phrase “These open doors” has also been altered – the original has the phrase “He opens doors”. It is likely that Moby sampled the “s” sound from another word and added it to make “he” sound like “these”. This kind of manipulation of samples is the staple diet of DJs and remixers. What is particularly refreshing about Moby’s work is that he makes no effort to ‘tidy up’ or modernise these samples – conversely he prefers to retain the lo-fi aspect that they bring to the track.

Instrumentation and arrangement

The sampled gospel vocals, one male and one female, form the basis of the track, but Moby creates an ambient, **chill-out** style of music to accompany them. The drum track comes from the fabled **Roland TR-909** drum machine, which was as important to 1980s **House** and **Techno** as the violin is to orchestral music. The bass and string parts come from a variety of **synthesizers** and the piano sounds from an Emu music workstation – these were multi-tasking synths (often with on-board sequencers), which had become very popular in the 1990s. Some of the more intricate drum parts were sampled and **looped** by Moby from existing dance tracks.



The piano part in this track is particularly important, as it plays the chords (see below), which structure the entire song. The style of piano playing, common in techno and house music of this time, is very simple, ranging from **triads** in the right hand with single left hand bass notes (the triads sometimes in **inversion**) to **spread chords**. In later sections the piano becomes more rhythmic, alternating left and right hands to make syncopation.

Melody and harmony

Like the other two tracks examined in this article, the melodic and harmonic writing is modal. In this case the **Dorian** mode, **transposed** to A (and therefore containing the

notes A, B, C, D, E, F sharp, G and A) is used. It sounds like A minor but crucially uses G naturals rather than G sharps, making it modal.

The harmonic structure of this track is very straightforward, as is common in dance music. The verses, or **A sections**, where the male vocal sample is used, follow the chord progression

Am	Em	G	D
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with two bars to each chord. The choruses, or **B sections**, where the female vocal sample is used, follow the progression

C	Am	C	Am
F	C	F	C

Rhythm

Essentially Moby uses three aspects of his arrangement to build the chilled, laid-back rhythm of this track. The piano part has an important part to play, as mentioned above, and ultimately has a syncopated rhythm (first heard at 1'18"). The drum loop remains virtually unchanged, and is mixed so that it compliments the piano and 'colours' the texture rather than dominating it rhythmically.

Finally, the vocal samples themselves contain syncopated rhythms, which are enhanced by Moby's creative sampling – a good example of this is the way he treats the female vocal in the B sections. He makes much of the contrast between more rhythmic phrases ("Why does my heart" and "open doors") and slower moving phrases or long notes ("feel so bad" and "These").

Structure

Many dance tracks of the 1980s and 90s follow an equal 8 or 16 bar 'block' structure, and this track is a good example of that. Each block is eight bars long and contains four chords (two bars per chord), and is usually characterised by a new aspect of the arrangement, such as the addition or subtraction of an instrument or part of the texture.

The eight-bar blocks in this track can be seen as follows:

A section

0'00"	Simple chordal piano introduction
0'20"	Addition of male vocal sample
0'39"	Addition of drum loop and three-note falling motif , which answers each vocal phrase (synth piano/string sound)
0'59"	Addition of bass and string chords
1'18"	Piano becomes more rhythmic (see notation above)

B section

1'38"	Female vocal replaces male. Harmony changes (see above) but the arrangement remains the same as previous block.
1'57"	Second half of female vocal section. The vocal sample is repeated at double time, creating rhythmic interest. Harmony changes again (see above). Some new vocal interjections can be heard.

A section

2'17" Return of male vocal sample. This time, a **delay effect** is applied, along with some removal of the **lower frequencies** on the 'echoes'. Instrumental parts remain largely the same

2'37" Same as above. An extra bar of silence is inserted at the end.

B section

2'59" Drums, piano and bass have disappeared, resulting in a more ambient **breakdown** section, common in dance music. The female voice has more **reverb** and is further back in the **mix**.

3'18" The **drop** – where all the rhythmic parts return (preceded by a simple drum fill). The vocal interjections have returned and the main vocal is prominent again.

3'38" A repeat of the second part of the B section

A section (coda)

3'57" A final rendition of the male sample, with very understated **synth pad** chords and nothing else. The track ends on an unresolved D major chord.

To help your awareness of Moby's style, you could make yourself broadly familiar with a couple of other tracks from the *Play* album:

- *Natural Blues* is another one of the successful singles from the album - an arrangement or remix of an old a cappella folk-blues song called *Trouble So Hard*
- *Run On* is a cover of a well-known folk song also known as *God's Gonna Cut You Down* which has also been recorded by Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. Moby's version samples vocals by Bill Landford and The Landfordaires.
- *Porcelain* – the highest charting single in the UK from this particular album – features Moby himself singing and is more in the ambient, techno style for which he was previously known.

Area of Study 4 – World Music

The set works in **Area of Study 4** are:

- *Chuir M'Athair Mise Dhan Taigh Charraideach (Skye Waulking Song)* from the album *Nàdurra* by Capercaillie.
- *Rag Desh* (there are three different performances).
- *Yiri* by Koko.

World Music – an introduction

The name 'World Music' has become common in recent times, and is generally used by those in the western world to describe indigenous, or perhaps **folk** music from across the

world. This is most commonly so that indigenous music can be separated from commercial music (such as pop) and western classical music (such as that covered by Area of Study 1).

World Music has become an increasingly common part of school music curricula in the last ten or fifteen years, and it is quite likely that you will have encountered World Music during your Key Stage 3 music lessons. Music from Africa and Indonesia particularly offer quick and easy accessibility, relying as they do on **repetition and contrast**, simple **polyrhythms** and **pentatonic scales**.

The three examples chosen by Edexcel to represent World Music are not necessarily 'mainstream' (in World Music terms) but represent a good cross section of indigenous music from three very different parts of the world, each of which has a very rich musical heritage. In order to make these examples more accessible, it would be good to start this Area of Study with a look at the way in which music from the Celtic, Indian and African traditions have influenced western music to a great degree.

Please note that the tracks and genres selected for the three examples below are purely to show the way in which these World Music genres have influenced western commercial music – they are not particularly closely related to the styles of the three set works.

Irish and Scottish folk songs (the set work is a 'waulking song' or a **work song** from Skye, in the Western Isles of Scotland) have become a common part of modern popular culture, due in no small part to the incredible success of shows such as *Riverdance*, which combined traditional Irish forms with music from other cultures. Listen to one of the songs from *Riverdance*, such as the haunting *Lift the Wings*⁴, which was composed by Bill Whelan as part of the show in the 1990s, but has its roots in traditional Celtic music. What aspects of this song could be considered 'traditional'? Answers might include:

- Use of traditional instruments such as **pipes**.
- Use of only a few chords – very slow **harmonic rhythm**.
- **Repetitive** structure, with a **refrain**.
- **Ornaments** in the vocal melody.

We will be finding a number of these characteristics in the first of the World Music set works.

Indian music has been a big influence in Britain over the last thirty years, thanks to the second and third-generation British-Asian population whose parents and grandparents emigrated to the UK in the 1960s and 70s. One of the forms in which this is clearest is **Bhangra**⁵, and you could listen to *Husan* by Bhangra Knights⁶, which was famously used for a car advertisement a few years ago. Complete a table showing how the Indian and Western styles have merged in this track. The result might include some of the following points:

Indian elements	Western elements
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⁴ a beautiful version can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QL2r6yG3XM>

⁵ An article on Bhangra is available from Mr Rushby if you are interested in finding out more

⁶ The video for this is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wImW5uPMIhU&feature=fvst>

Punjabi language in the chorus	Technological techniques associated with dance music – such as sampling and using loops
Indian instruments (particularly the drum and string sounds)	Jamaican-style rapping (or ‘toasting’) in the verses
Using a traditional Punjabi song	Electronic instruments and effects
Shouts of ‘bhangra’ and ‘hei’	A dance groove – reminiscent of disco

The second set work comes from the very different **Indian classical tradition**, but the above exercise hopefully goes some way to convincing you of the relevance of Indian music in modern western culture. In the 1960s in Britain, some of the foremost pop musicians became influenced by Indian classical music, particularly that of the **sitar** player Ravi Shankar, who for a while taught Beatles guitarist George Harrison. This resulted in the sitar appearing on Beatles songs including *Norwegian Wood* and a track on the *Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* album called *Within You, Without You*, which was written by Harrison and used almost exclusively Indian instruments. The Rolling Stones followed suit, using a sitar on their well-known song *Paint It Black*.

African folk music has had an immense influence on western music of the last fifty years, influencing composers and artists from minimalist Steve Reich to singer-songwriter Peter Gabriel. **African singing** has been made universally popular largely thanks to the South African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo who have toured the world tirelessly since their collaboration with Paul Simon on the album *Graceland* in 1986.

African drumming is taught in schools throughout the UK now, since it contains effective techniques such as repetition, polyrhythms and **cross-rhythms** which make **improvised** performances quick to put together and very impressive to hear. Even Disney have got on the bandwagon, showcasing a variety of African influences in the film and musical version of their blockbuster *The Lion King* which features music by Elton John.

Listen to the opening song from either the film or musical version of *The Lion King* (the former is readily available on DVD, both can be found on YouTube⁷, or you could download *The Circle of Life* as an audio track). Identify how the songwriters/arrangers of *The Circle of Life* have created an ‘African’ sound. Answers might include:

- The opening contains chanting/singing **a cappella** reminiscent of African choral singing, including the technique of **call and response**. This is sung by South African singer Lebo M who was brought in by Disney to work on the soundtrack.
- Underlying the first verse is a repetitive **ostinato** chant – ostinati are common in African music.
- The percussion parts are influenced by African instruments such as the **djembe** and include polyrhythms and cross rhythms.
- The chorus features more prominent **close harmony** singing.

⁷ Try <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX07j9SDFcc>

The third set work is from Burkina Faso, in West Africa, and features a number of these characteristics.

CAPERCAILLIE: Chuir M'Athair Mise Dhan Taigh Charraideach (Skye Waulking Song) from the album Nàdurra (2000)



Context

A 'waulking song' is one sung during the process of waulking, or working wool, which was traditionally done by a group of women around a board. They would sing songs in the Gaelic language that had repetitive and rhythmic **refrains** (sung by the group) and verses sung by a soloist. This particular song (the title translates as 'My father sent me to a house of sorrow') comes from a collection of folk songs that were originally collected by the Irish writer and traveler Alexander Carmichael, who published it in the late nineteenth century. It is part of a long waulking song (200-plus verses) called 'Seathan (John), Son of the King of Ireland', and tells of the sadness of John's wife who travelled the world with him and witnessed his death.

The waulking women would have sung this song without instruments (**a cappella**) to help them compete the arduous task, to give them a sense of togetherness and perhaps to exercise their grievances about their lot in life. The waulking song tradition is part of a long tradition of work songs around the world, which included prison songs, slave songs (such as those sung on American plantations by African slaves) and sea shanties.

Capercaillie is a Scottish Celtic folk band who began recording in the 1980s, led by accordion-player and keyboardist Donald Shaw. Their lead singer is Karen Matheson and they have enjoyed much success (including some chart entries) over the past 25 or so years. Their style is to take traditional folk songs and arrange them for traditional instruments, but fused with modern instruments and production techniques.

On this track we hear a wide variety of instruments, not all of them associated with Celtic folk music. Shaw plays the accordion, as well as piano and keyboards, and there is also a bass guitar and drums. Additionally, you can clearly hear **fiddle, bouzouki and uilleann pipes**. The bouzouki, a plucked string instrument like a mandolin or lute, is from Greece but has become quite popular in Celtic folk music in the last fifty years. The uilleann (or 'elbow') pipes are Irish bagpipes played seated and powered by a bellows situated underneath the right arm. Their haunting sound characterise much Irish traditional music.

Analysis

The *GCSE Anthology of Music* has a score of this song, which has been transcribed, meaning that it has been assembled from the recording (which was done without printed music) and is intended to be a guide to what the band actually play.

Melody

- The vocal (sung by Karen Matheson) is in the low **alto** range.
- The melody uses a small number of notes and is very repetitive. In fact, like a lot of folk music, it is based on the five-note **pentatonic scale** (in this case, G-A-B-D-E).
- There are in fact two verse melodies and two refrains. These melodies contrast, particularly in the way that they **descend** or **ascend**.
- There is an element of **call and response** in the refrains heard later in the song.
- The instruments often **imitate** the vocal phrases.

Word-setting

- The words are in Gaelic (in the verses) and use 'nonsense' syllables, or **vocables**, in the refrains.
- The text is set in a **syllabic** way – there is very little **melismatic** writing.

Harmony and Tonality

- The chords that harmonise this song are different for the verses and refrains. However the overall harmony is very simple and allows the melody and rhythm to dominate. When chords change, it is very noticeable.
- The harmony sounds **modal**, due to the lack of chords with sharpened notes in them (most of the chords are either G, E minor or C).
- Some of the chords are **dissonant note-clusters**, emphasising the modern twist that Capercaillie have brought to the song.
- The song ends with a series of **plagal cadences** - again giving a modal 'feel' to the arrangement due to the lack of a **dominant** chord.

Rhythm and Metre

- The overall **metre** of the song is **compound**, written in the score as 12/8 time.
- The drummer spends a lot of time playing across this metre, and these **cross-rhythms** give the arrangement interest and character.

Instrumentation and Texture

- The arrangement is for both traditional and modern instruments, and Capercaillie make a lot of this fusion.
- Often the instruments 'trade' phrases in a kind of conversation, with the electric piano and bouzouki featuring early on.

- When the full band enters in the middle of the arrangement the effect on the texture is very telling. To emphasise this, a new chord is played and the drums move to a more regular rhythmic pattern..
- Some of the texture is **heterophonic**, meaning that instruments tend to embellish melodies even when playing in unison with each other.
- There is a lot of **improvisation** around the melody by various instruments.

Suggested Section A questions

In the exam, a short extract from the track lasting between about 30 and 60 seconds will be played five times. Pick an extract and adapt the following questions to suit it:

- On what type of scale is vocal melody based?
- In what language is the song sung?
- Complete a very short section of melody (you would be given the rhythm, or alternatively be asked to notate a simple extract of rhythm only).
- Name or write out one or two of the chords used in the harmony of the extract.
- Name an instrument featured playing the melody in the extract.
- What example from the extract supports the fact that this arrangement is a fusion of traditional and modern music?

Suggested Section B questions

Section B will start with one or two simple, short answer factual questions about the music or its context – such as:

- How would you describe the style of this music?
- Which part of Scotland does Capercaillie come from?
- Name one of the band members of Capercaillie.
- What is 'waulking'?

Then there will be a question demanding a longer answer in prose. This will be about one or more of the elements of music, as described above. Examples could include:

- Comment on the use of melody in this piece,
- Comment on the structure of this piece,
- Give examples of how Capercaillie adds a modern aspect to this traditional song.

VARIOUS: Rag Desh

Context

Rag Desh is a well-known example of **Indian classical music**, which is quite different to the bhangra mentioned earlier. The Indian classical tradition is one of the oldest musical traditions in the world, and its origins are largely the stuff of legend. What is clear is that Indian culture has been shaped by the development of this important genre of music, which in turn has been influenced by the rich variety of cultures present in the subcontinent over the ages.

Indian classical music can be found in the form of vocal music, instrumental music and dance. There is a great difference between traditional classical music of Northern India (called **Hindustani**) and Southern India (**Carnatic**). *Rag Desh* comes from the Northern Hindustani tradition. The melodies are based upon the **rag**, and the rhythms are based on the **tal**.

Rag is a little like the western **scale** or **mode** – a ‘line’ of five or more notes from which the melody is constructed or improvised. The word comes from the ancient Sanskrit language and means both ‘colour’ and ‘beauty’, suggesting that different rags ‘colour’ the listener’s mind with different emotions.

A rag has a selection of notes, which are structured in a **modal** way known to Indian musicians as **that**. Like a scale, the rag ascends and descends, and has some notes that are more important than others, like our key notes. Additionally, a rag can be associated with a time of day (*Rag Desh* is a night-time rag) and sometimes a season (*Rag Desh* is associated with the monsoon season).

The tal (sometimes seen as ‘tala’ or ‘taal’) has no real equivalent in western music, but is a **rhythmic cycle** that comprises a number of rhythms based around repeating patterns. The word itself means ‘clap’, and each section or ‘measure’ is indicated by a clap or a wave of the hands. These sections (known as **vibhag**) are like our bars in that they contain a set number of beats, called **matras**. The strongest beat is the first beat of the rhythmic cycle, and is called **sam**.

The most common and famous instruments associated with Indian classical music are the **sitar** and the **tabla**. The sitar is plucked like a guitar, and has a long neck with over twenty strings, many of which are not plucked but simply resonate in sympathy with those that are played. The playable strings either provide a **drone** or play the melody. The sitar has moveable **frets** (allowing very fine tuning of the strings) and two **bridges** that cause a large number of **harmonics** to sound as the strings vibrate, giving the sitar its characteristic ‘jangly’ sound.⁸



The tabla is the most common percussion instrument, found in almost all Hindustani classical music. It consists of two hand drums of different sizes, played by the fingers, palm and ‘heel’ of the hand to create a large variety of sounds. The smaller drum (called the **dayan** or tabla) is tuned to the most important note of the rag being played, and the larger drum

⁸ There are a number of good videos on YouTube which show the sitar and tabla being played.

(bayan) has a much deeper unpitched sound. The drum heads are made of animal hide, with a central area made from a kind of paste which allows for a wider variety of timbres.

Structure

A typical rag performance can last anything from forty minutes to a number of hours, and has a structure that falls into different sections. Overall there is a definite sense of starting slow and free, and getting steadily faster, more rhythmic and more intense.

The **alap** section acts as a kind of introduction, where the notes of the rag are played slowly in free rhythm. Then the rhythm and melody of the rag are gradually introduced in a section called the **jor**. This is followed by the **gat** section, where the tabla player establishes the pulse of the music and the melody is pre-determined (rather than improvised). The final section, the most intense and exciting of all, is often called the **jhalla** section, which is fast, extremely exciting and largely improvised. Both the length and the order of these sections are quite flexible!

Ends of solos and sections are often signaled by a special melodic and rhythmic flourish called a **tihai**. This is a short rhythmic phrase that is repeated three times, so that the end of the third repetition coincides with the strong beat of the tal (sam). There are many examples of tihais in all three performances.

The three performances on the *GCSE Anthology CD* are all based on *Rag Desh*, but are very different. Let's have a look at them in a little more detail.

Anoushka Shankar's performance

Anoushka Shankar is a sitar player, and the daughter of Ravi Shankar, who I mentioned earlier. You may be familiar with the music of her half-sister Norah Jones, an American-based singer-songwriter. This performance of *Rag Desh* was recorded at Carnegie Hall in New York in October 2001. Here are the most important characteristics of her performance:



- The performance is for sitar and tabla. There is no **tambura** (a common drone instrument), so Shankar provides her own drone on the sitar.
- The alap section has no fixed metre.
- There are a lot of examples of bending the string and therefore the pitch of the notes on the sitar, especially in the opening alap section of this performance. This technique is called **meend**.
- The tabla does not enter until the second section – the gat section. This section includes a pre-determined composition based on the rag. The tabla plays a ten-beat tal called **jhaptal**. This section becomes more intense with more improvisation and decoration from both instruments.
- Towards the end of the gat section, the beat changes to a 16-beat **tintal** – the most common type of tal.
- The final part of the performance is the jhalla section, and features a lot of very impressive improvisation by Shankar. There is a lot of call-and-response between sitar and tabla.

- The final jhalla section is very exciting indeed and includes strumming of the drone strings of the sitar.

Chiranjil Lal Tanwar's performance

Tanwar's performance of *Rag Desh* takes the form of a devotional Hindu song called a **bhajan**, which uses words written in the 16th century to praise the deity Lord Krishna. The singer is well known in Indian classical music and has released a number of albums and performed on television and radio. This performance dates to 2004.

Tanwar is accompanied by two stringed instruments: a **sarod**, which is a smaller, fretless version of the sitar, and a **sarangi**, which is a bowed string instrument often used with singers as it can imitate the voice. Additionally there are tabla, some small cymbals and a large double-headed drum called a **pakhawaj**. The two heads of this drum have different pitches, which can be clearly heard in this recording.

- This performance also begins with an alap, featuring sarangi and voice outlining the notes of *Rag Desh*.
- Again, the tabla joins in the bhajan section, which is the equivalent of the gat section in instrumental music (another word for a vocal 'gat' is a **bandish**).
- Soon after the entry of the tabla, the song falls into a verse-refrain structure, with instrumental interludes featuring the sarod and the sarangi. The tabla plays an eight-beat tal called **keherwa tal**.
- The vocal part uses a lot of ornaments, fast scales and melismas.

Benji Wertheimer and Steve Gorn's performance



Also recorded in 2004, this third performance based on *Rag Desh* is given by two American specialists in Indian performance. Gorn plays an Indian bamboo flute called a **bansuri** which has fingerholes a little like a recorder, and is capable of the smallest variations in pitch, using **microtones** (intervals smaller than a semitone). Wertheimer plays a bowed string instrument called the **esraj**, which has frets and a large number of strings – a sort of cross between a sitar and a sarangi.

Later in the performance Wertheimer switches instruments and takes up the tabla.

- The first section (alap) outlines the notes of the rag at a very slow tempo, accompanied by a drone created either by a synthesizer or a kind of electronic accordion called a **shruti box**. The bansuri and esraj improvise in dialogue with each other.
- The second section (gat – and on a separate CD track) starts with a bansuri solo, while Wertheimer takes up the tabla. Later in this section the tabla begins to improvise patterns based on a seven-beat tal called **rupak tal**.

- This is followed by the fixed composition and more rhythmically exciting music. The bansuri repeats short phrases, before taking over with the improvisation. There are several clear examples of tihai in this section.
- The final section (the third CD track) is another gat section based on a twelve-beat cycle called **ektaal**. This exciting section finishes with three successive tihais – known as **chakradar tihai**.

Suggested Section A questions

Again, feel free to pick a short extract from one of these performances and adapt some of the questions suggested below to fit it:

- What are the characteristics of the alap section?
- What is the name given to the section that includes a fixed composition?
- Describe some common ways in which a sitar is played.
- Explain the following terms found in these performances: *drone*, *meend*, *tal*
- What is a rag?
- What are the specific characteristics of *rag desh*?
- Name one of the instruments heard in this extract
- Which type of tal is heard in this extract?

Suggested Section B questions

Short-answer questions found in section B may ask you to identify aspects of the Indian classical tradition, such as knowing the name *Hindustani* or identifying the part of India most associated with this music. The long answer question will again address the music from the point of view of one or more of the elements of music – some suggested questions appear below:

- How do the treatments of *Rag Desh* differ in the three performances?
- Compare the structure of two of the performances of *Rag Desh*.
- What different types of tal are used in the three performances?
- How do the three performances differ in terms of the instruments and the parts that they play?

KOKO: Yiri⁹

Context

⁹ This track is available to buy from iTunes, and part of the album 'Burkina Faso – Balafons and African Drums' which is available on iTunes and Amazon, amongst other sites.



Burkina Faso is situated in West Africa, landlocked by Mali, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Niger. It was given its current name in 1984, having formerly been called Upper Volta. It is a republic with a population of about 16 million, many living in poverty, and its capital is Ouagadougou.

Like many African countries, there are a very large number of different cultures and traditions in Burkina Faso, making it difficult to pinpoint any one particular musical style that could be called 'typical' of the country. Furthermore, Burkina has imported a lot of music from its larger neighbours as well as Europe and the USA.

Many of the most popular home-grown musical groups in Burkina are **balafon** bands, featuring this well-known xylophone-like instrument accompanied by drums such as the equally famous **djembe**. Burkina has a thriving manufacturing industry of these instruments, based in the second-largest city of Bobo Dioulasso. Koko is a balafon band with great popularity in the country, and is led by balafon player and singer Madou Kone. Koko also has a second balafon player and four other percussionists who play instruments such as the djembe, **talking drum** and maracas. A number of these instrumentalists are also singers.

The track is intended by Edexcel to be representative of the wider Sub-Saharan African style, and it would be good to spend some time finding out about other music from this huge area.¹⁰ Particular focus on singing, drumming, the **mbira** (or thumb-piano) and the **kora** (a type of guitar-harp hybrid)¹¹ would be very beneficial, though sadly there is not room in this article to go into all of this. If you have time to do this, focus the listening on identifying the common characteristics of African instrumental music:

- Repetition
- Call and response
- Polyphonic texture (and polyrhythms)
- Improvisation and dialogue
- Pentatonic and heptatonic melody
- Rhythmic patterns and cycles, often with cross rhythms
- An **oral tradition** – none of the music is likely to be written down.

Style and Overview

'Yiri' translates roughly as 'wood' and features a chorus, solo vocal sections, solo balafon sections and some very exciting drumming. Like all the other pieces in this Area of Study, the score published in the *GCSE Anthology* is a transcription of this live performance, which would have been played without any notation. The transcriber has done an excellent job in trying to capture the detail of what the musicians play, but it is important that you focus on what they hear more than what you see on the page, which is intended as little more than a guide.

Yiri begins with a free introduction on the balafon, in which the seven-note (heptatonic) scale on which this piece is based is introduced. Note how the notes are played in a **tremelo**

¹⁰ In the Naxos Music Library, there is a lot of information on Sub-Saharan African music in the Study Area on this site, including links to tracks and listening exercises.

¹¹ YouTube has a number of excellent videos of mbira and kora players, such as the legendary Toumani Diabate, who can be found on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8luhdxS2KuM>

fashion, to help sustain the sound. After this introduction, the two balafons establish a simple four-in-a-bar pulse, playing in 5ths and octaves with a repeating phrase.

Then the drums come in with an equally simple, repetitive rhythm, and a moderate tempo is established. All of the phrases heard here are repeated as ostinati, and grow in complexity with devices such as syncopation beginning to appear. This builds the tension up nicely, ready for the start of the singing.

The singers begin with a pentatonic **chorus** (or refrain), and the balafon imitates the ends of the phrases, before embarking on a solo that includes syncopated rhythms and descending melodic phrases. After this solo, the chorus returns, followed by another balafon solo. All these sections have a very clear tonal centre, or key note.

We are now about two minutes into the piece, and a singer performs a lengthy solo at this point (often with the word 'Yiri'). Despite the fact he begins with a long note, most of the vocal solo consists of short descending ideas, just like the previous balafon solo. The two balafons play repetitive patterns to accompany, and towards the end of each section of the solo the other voices respond to the soloist's 'call'. As the solo progresses, the balafon rhythms become more syncopated, using cross-rhythms. This section has a tonal centre a fourth higher than the previous one.

Another balafon solo takes the music to a higher **tessitura**, and another contrast follows with the entry of the chorus, now modified to resemble the previous solo, and repeated after a short section for instruments only. Then we hear the most complex balafon solo of all, where the most showy playing has been reserved for the climactic point of the piece. The balafon ends by playing the chorus melody, and the singers hear this signal and join in, before leaving the balafon to another, showy solo.

Finally, we reach a **coda** section where the balafons explore a new repeating pattern.

We can be fairly sure that the balafon solos have been shared between the two players, and it is clear to see that these solos, punctuated by the chorus, form the structure of the piece. There is a lot of repetition, usually of short phrases or groups of notes, and the piece has a constant tempo and dynamic level, meaning that contrast has to be achieved through rhythm and texture.

Make your own Section A questions for Yiri

Choose any 40-60 extract from *Yiri* (try to select a specific section, such as one of the balafon solos), you can use the generic questions below to make your own practice question for Section A. The total number of marks for Section A is 10, and the extract will be played five times.

- Name the instrument playing the melody.
- Name one of the types of drum playing the rhythm.
- Describe the texture of this extract (*this could be monophonic, heterophonic or polyphonic depending on the extract*).
- The following terms describe aspects of the music in this section. Define these terms: ostinato, syncopation, cross-rhythm.
- Complete a small (four or five-note) section of one of the repeating phrases.

Suggested Section B questions

The opening short answer questions might ask from where in Africa this music comes, or perhaps the name of the leader of *Yiri*, or another short-answer context question. The long answer question (worth 10 marks) will ask how different elements of music are treated in *Yiri*. The following notes should help plan and answer this question.

Melody

- Melodies are short and repetitive – more phrases than full-blown melodies.
- Melodies use a 7-note scale or 5-note scale.
- Melodies are often centered around one or two notes.
- Vocal melodies are sometimes treated in call-and-response fashion.
- Melodies often descend in pitch.
- New melodic material appears in the coda section of the piece.

Harmony

- Some of the repeating melodic patterns are harmonised in 5ths or octaves.
- Much of the music is performed in octaves or unison.
- The piece has a clear tonal centre most of the time.

Rhythm

- The drum rhythms are simple but interlock, creating polyrhythms and cross rhythms.
- The rhythmic patterns are repetitive.
- There is a clear quadruple pulse, though this is sometimes altered for effect.
- There is much syncopation.
- Towards the end the rhythms become increasingly fast and complex.

Texture

- The opening section has a monophonic texture.
- Much of the texture of the piece is polyphonic
- There are sections of heterophonic texture, where one balafon outlines the melody of the other

- Koko vary the texture of the piece for dramatic effect

Instruments/Voices

- The piece is performed on two balafons and a variety of drums (see above for detail)
- There is a solo voice and a group of unison voices, who sing a refrain
- There are extensive solos for the balafons and the solo voice, with much scope for improvisation and virtuosity
- Much more could be said about the contribution of each of the parts to the piece

How to write really good Section B answers

There should be two basic aims in your mind when tackling a question requiring a prose answer:

- approach the question with a clear and positive mind (in other words, don't be frightened of it!);
- produce an answer which is concise, direct and well structured.

If you have to write anything extended about music, these nine golden rules will, if followed, help them towards good marks.

1. Know what you are writing about
2. Be concise
3. Plan before you begin to write
4. Make a list of the important points you want to make
5. Use musical vocabulary
6. Give examples for every point
7. Show your enthusiasm
8. Use good language
9. Check your work

Let's look at these golden rules in more detail.

1. Know what you are writing about

There is no hiding from the fact that if you don't know your facts or understand the music, you won't get many marks. Good writing is more about content than style. Therefore, the unavoidable truth is that you need to make good notes in lessons, review those notes after each lesson (otherwise you will forget most of what you have learned), and revise actively. Active revision means making notes from your notes, drawing mind maps, timelines or flowcharts, making lists or testing yourself – and not sitting gazing at a book.

If you have to remember information about set works, try to condense all the information you need onto ONE side of A4 paper for each work¹². At GCSE, examiners are not looking for an extremely in-depth knowledge of a given piece. A good knowledge of the most important facts and characteristics will gain high marks, and it is important to separate these points from the irrelevant ones (for example, a lot of biographical information about the composer could be irrelevant if you are studying the musical characteristics of one of his works).

2. Be concise

There are no marks for the length of your answer – once again, it is all about what you say, not how long you take to say it. So don't waffle on – say what you need to say **once** and move on. Above all, be careful that you don't repeat yourself – if you find yourself writing "...as I said earlier.." then you need to improve your planning. This leads us nicely onto the next two rules.

3. Plan before you begin to write

4. Make a list of the important points you want to make

Maybe nine out of ten students will begin writing their answer almost as soon as they have read the question, committing words to paper as things occur to them and spewing out all they know about a topic as quickly as possible. Here is a short example of such an answer:

Q. What musical features of Chopin's Raindrop Prelude are typical of music of the Romantic Period?

A. Chopin's Raindrop Prelude is a piano piece, which is based on emotion more than structure and planning. It was written for the piano and uses the instrument in a very expressive way. It contains both traditional chord sequences and also some more chromatic harmony, and it is full of contrasts of dynamics and articulation. Chopin wrote the piece towards the end of his life when he was suffering from illness, and it is said that he imagined raindrops falling on his body as he lay dying. The piano was a lot more advanced in Chopin's day and, as I have said, he was able to be very expressive with it in the way that he wrote. Also, the chords he chose were often dissonant and he was able to create tension. Other ways in which he used contrast were by having the middle section in the minor key, though this section is a lot longer than the A sections which is a Romantic feature. The Raindrop Prelude is in ternary form.

¹² A resource which does exactly this and is good for revision is available on the website

There is no doubt that this student has revised quite thoroughly and has a lot of very good points to make, but this otherwise good answer lacks careful planning and is therefore quite hard to follow. Before answering such a question, whether it is about a particular set piece or a more general subject, **make a list** of what the main points are. You can do this on the answer paper and then draw a line through it if you do not want the examiner to take any notice of it (although it won't do any harm if they do!). Here is a list, in no particular order, of the points that the student wanted to make about the Chopin Prelude:

- *Piano piece*
- *Emotion and expression*
- *Uses the piano expressively*
- *Both traditional chord sequences and more chromatic ones*
- *Contrasts of dynamics and articulation*
- *Imagined raindrops*
- *Piano more advanced*
- *Dissonant chords = tension*
- *Middle section in minor key*
- *Middle section longer - not as balanced as classical pieces*
- *Ternary form*

All of these are good points, and a little organisation could get them across in a better way. Next, draw lines linking up points that are similar or could be put together in the answer. The re-ordered list would then look something like this (though just linking the points with lines would save time):

- *Piano piece, piano more advanced, uses piano expressively*
- *Emotion and expression, imagined raindrops*
- *Ternary form, middle section longer (so less balanced)*
- *Contrasts - minor key, dynamics, articulation*
- *Both traditional chord sequences and chromatic ones, dissonance=tension*

Finally, number these five 'groups' of points in the order that you want to state them. Then you can write the answer, and it might look like this:

A. *Chopin's Raindrop Prelude is a piano piece. It was written for a much more advanced piano than in previous periods, and Chopin uses it very expressively. In fact, emotion and expression are very important in this piece, and it is said that Chopin, who was very ill when he wrote*

it, imagined raindrops falling on his body as he lay dying. The Prelude is in ternary form, and the middle section is longer than the outer sections, making the piece less balanced than a piece from the Classical period. It is full of contrasts, both of dynamics and articulation, and the middle section contrasts by being in the minor key. The harmony is still quite traditional, but there are a lot of chromatic chords and dissonance, which causes tension.

Hopefully you will agree that this is a much easier answer to follow, and it is more concise too.

5. Use musical vocabulary

The above answer is also strong because there are some great musical words in it, such as **contrasts, dynamics, articulation** and **dissonance**. Words like these jump out at examiners and add 'class' to an answer. Keep a glossary for each genre or area of study as they go through the course, and play frequent games of 'hangman', 'pictionary', 'dingbats', or do crosswords or anagrams to remember them.

Try to convert these sentences by replacing as much of them as you can with musical words (suggested answers are also shown):

- (a) The music gets louder and more instruments come in
- (b) The main melody comes back though it sounds more spikey, and it is in a different key
- (c) There are a lot of both smooth and detached melody lines, and some of the chords clash
- (d) All the instruments play together in the same rhythm, and it is much quieter. The tune has lots of sharps and flats.

Suggested answers (musical words underlined)

- (a) There is a crescendo and the texture becomes fuller/thicker
- (b) The main theme returns, played staccato, and the music has modulated
- (c) There are many contrasts of articulation, with both legato and staccato phrases, and there are some dissonant chords
- (d) The texture is homophonic, and the dynamic is piano. The theme/melody is chromatic.

6. Give examples for every point

A sure-fire way to gaining lots of credit is to be able to give examples. In GCSE exams this would appear quite difficult as you have no access to the anthology. In fact at GCSE you are not usually expected by examiners to be able to cite bar numbers. However there are plenty of opportunities to give examples in other ways. For example, compare:

Bernstein uses a lot of syncopation in 'Something's Coming' from West Side Story

with

Bernstein uses a lot of syncopation in 'Something's Coming' - for example Tony's entries on 'Could be' and 'Who knows' are syncopated.

The first example would gain one mark, the second could well gain two.

It is worth mentioning also that composition or performing commentaries can also benefit hugely from examples. Here, you can really impress by referring to bar numbers or time-references, such as 1:45 (meaning one minute and forty-five seconds), when talking about an important aspect of their work, such as:

I brought back the repeating bass idea at bar 45, to build up to the final key change at bar 57

..or better still:

I brought back the bass ostinato at bar 45, to build up to the final modulation at bar 57.

7. Show your enthusiasm

Without meaning to, you show a lot of your personality and enthusiasm in your written work. Compare these three short, fabricated accounts of the beginning of Louis Armstrong's West End Blues:

A

The trumpet solo at the start of the song is very important, as Louis Armstrong plays lots of contrasting rhythms and uses both high and low notes. He starts it in Eb major and ends it on a high Bb, followed by the band on a Bb augmented chord. Then the song begins.

B

Louis Armstrong immediately shows his ability as a trumpet player in the opening to this piece. His attention-grabbing introduction, which was probably improvised, contains huge contrasts of

straight and swing rhythms, uses the full range of the trumpet, and dazzles us with remarkable virtuosic playing.

C

West End Blues begins with an amazing solo by Louis Armstrong. His playing is extremely impressive and he shows what a great trumpeter he was. I love the way he sets up the whole piece with his solo, and really grabs the listener's attention. It is possibly the most important moment in jazz.

Whilst there is little factually wrong with any of these answers, and all would score some marks, there is a lot of difference in the style of writing which would probably influence the way in which the examiner might mark the work. Answer **A** contains some good points but is extremely bland, talking about 'the song' (and it's not a song, at least in this version!) as if regurgitating some notes made in class. At the other end of the scale, answer **C** is positively gushing but makes very few, if any, important points about the music. Answer **B**, however, contains a number of good points, which are made in a way that shows that the writer is **interested** in the music.

Try to re-work some of what you write in class so that it sounds more enthusiastic. However it is important that you do not go overboard with enthusiasm at the expense of the important points!

8. Use good language

'Quality of written communication' (QWC) is assessed in Section B. This means, in a nutshell, that good spelling, punctuation, grammar and writing style will gain a few more marks than an answer that is poorly expressed or has poor syntax. However you should not lose sleep over this – QWC makes a difference of just a small number of marks at GCSE level.

Teachers know that students have very differing levels of ability to express themselves in clear English, and will be sure to carefully liaise with your school's learning support staff to devise a strategy to help if you find this area difficult. There are some specific things that all music students can do, however, which will help them do a little better in their quality of written communication.

(i) Spelling musical words

Keep a glossary or keywords diary, and match the most common musical words to appropriate genres. Regular games or quizzes to help you to learn how words like 'rhythm' and 'cymbals' should be spelt. There are some good mnemonics as well, such as 'Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move'. Competitive games can be played, such as seeing who can write the word 'rhythm', correctly spelt, the most times in a minute.

Exercise

Rewrite these sentences with the correct versions of mis-spelled musical words:

(a) *The peice has a repetative rythm.*

- (b) *The drummer plays the crash symbol and the high hat.*
- (c) *The music is in tenary form, with a 4/4 time signature, and the tempo is quiet fast.*
- (d) *There is a repeating base line and cords in the piano accompaniment.*

NB – beware of the word “practise”! This spelling is the verb, whereas the noun is “practice”. So both of these sentences are correct:

‘I had to practise my part for many months’

‘Ornamentation is common practice in Baroque music’

(ii) *Learn common punctuation errors.*

Great steps forward can be made if the most common errors are known about and avoided. Here is a selection:

(a) **The apostrophe s!** This bane of every teacher’s life is commonly misused in everyday life. Only recently I found myself visiting *One of the South-East’s biggest collections of reptile’s*. Try to remember that apostrophe s is used to show belonging, as in “Chopin’s piano” or “Queen’s Bohemian Rhapsody”, whereas plurals NEVER have apostrophes.

(b) **It’s not it’s, it’s its!** This annoying little word is the exception to the above rule. Here, if you are saying that something belongs to “it”, there is no apostrophe, just as in “his”, “hers” and so on. The apostrophe is only used to show an elision of the phrase “it is”.

(c) **If in doubt, don’t elide.** For example, “is not’ should be written instead of “isn’t”, “cannot” for can’t and so on.

9. Check your work

Teachers tire of telling students to do this, and the advice to check work even appears on many exam papers now, but it is still clear to examiners that many students do not check through their work once they have completed writing it. Once you have checked through for mis-spellings, try to read your work aloud to the class. This is a very good way of highlighting clumsy English, poor grammar, or poorly expressed points, as you are likely to stumble over sentences that contain any of these issues.

I hope that this resource gives you lots of useful help and information about the Edexcel GCSE Music listening paper. Remember that the text book and Anthology are also excellent and important resources.

