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3

Aural Skills

aims

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- understand and identify all key musical features that may be examined in Question 6 of the exam
- apply your knowledge and study of the set works
- identify and understand a range of musical genres and performance mediums

General Information

Question 6 on the Listening Paper is worth 20 marks.

This question examines your musical awareness and ability to identify and describe musical features in a piece that you may not have heard before.

The music played in this question can be from any style or genre, e.g. pop/rock, jazz, classical, folk, ethnic. The music may be instrumental, vocal, choral or a combination of these.

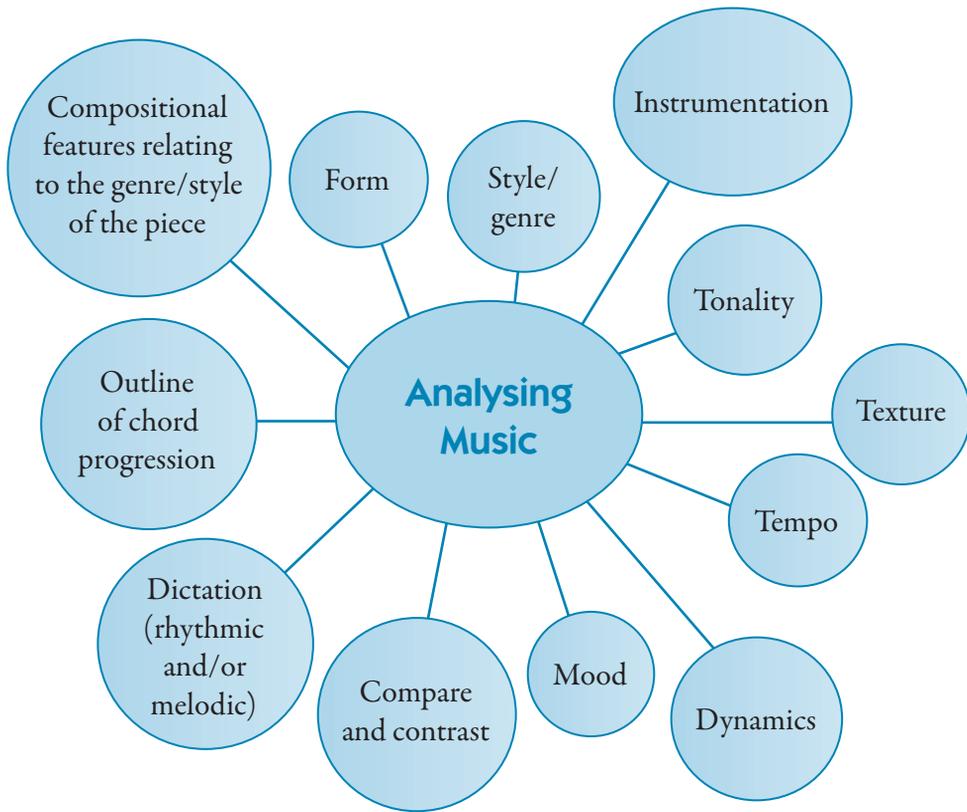
There may be two or three sections in this question. Each section is usually played three times.

You may be asked to compare an unheard piece with the style of one of your set works.

Preparing for the Examination

When preparing for Question 6 of the examination you should:

- Develop a good understanding of your set works. What you have studied for the set works questions may be relevant for Question 6. The set works are analysed using the topics in the mind map on the next page. Features relating to these topics should also be studied for Question 6.



- Listen to a wide variety of musical styles.
- Use the internet for studying and observing performance mediums.
- Learn to recognise instruments/voices.
- Learn to identify chords and cadences by playing them on piano/guitar.
- Complete past exam papers and workbook exercises.
- Be familiar with a range of major and minor key signatures.



If a question asks you to identify the texture of a piece of music, try to give some detail about the melody **and** the accompaniment, if present.

Musical Features and Techniques

Melodic features refer to the treatment of the tune. For example:

- Step movement
- Chromatic movement
- Sequences
- Blues/jazz notes (flattened third or seventh notes of a major scale)
- Wide leaps
- Repeated notes
- Arpeggio/triadic movement
- Repetition

Rhythmic features refer only to the rhythm. For example:

- Changing time signatures
- Syncopation
- Steady rhythm
- Dotted rhythm
- Ostinato (repeated rhythmic pattern)

Harmonic features refer to what is happening in the accompaniment/harmony. For example:

- Major/minor/diminished chords
- Sustained/block/broken/Alberti chords
- Homophonic/polyphonic textures
- Dissonant sounds

Compositional techniques refer to the musical devices used by the composer. They may include all of the features mentioned above, as well as:

- Modulation
- Pedal note
- Canon
- Imitation
- Antiphony
- Inversion
- Augmentation
- Contrary motion

Instrumental techniques refer to the way by which an instrument is played. For example:

- Pizzicato
- Arco
- Con/senza sordino
- Col legno
- Vibrato
- Glissando

The Exam

On the day of the exam:

1. **Attempt to answer all the questions, even if you don't know the answer.** Try not to leave any blanks, as you could pick up a mark or two if you write something.
2. **Read the questions very carefully.** Underline key words in a question. For example: *Name the instruments that play the melody in this excerpt.*
3. **Tick the correct number of boxes.** If a question asks for one feature, only tick one box. You could be penalised if you tick too many or too few boxes.
4. **Make notes on musical features in the excerpts.** Students are often asked to compare one musical excerpt with another. If you have time, make notes on what you hear in the music as it is being played. You may have to refer to this music later in the question.
5. Be clear with **underline or circle instructions.** If your answer is unclear, you may lose marks.
6. When asked to **identify a cadence point**, answer with the appropriate term such as perfect, imperfect, etc. The exam usually specifies not to use Roman numerals in your answer.
7. **Stay relaxed and focused.** Remember, you will hear everything three times, so you don't need to rush.

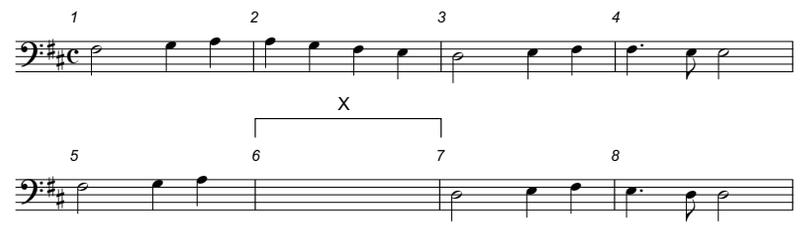
Leaving Certificate Examination 2020, Question 6

This question is based on four excerpts of music. Answer the questions on each excerpt. Use the tips provided to help you.

Go to www.examinations.ie/exammaterialarchive to access the musical excerpts featured in this question.

Select the following file: Exam Papers > 2020 > Leaving Certificate > Music > Paper Two: Sound File



Excerpt	Question	Answer guide
<p>Excerpt 1, played twice. An outline score of bars 1–8 of this excerpt is printed below.</p>	<p>(a) Insert the four missing notes at X on the score.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is a dictation question. ● Follow the score that is given. ● You might like to make a note of the direction of the missing notes or jot the rhythm over the top of the missing bar. ● Is the missing bar a repeat of a previous bar?
<p>Excerpt 1, played twice more.</p>	<p>(b) Name the instruments that play the melody in this excerpt.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underline the key word: melody. ● Can you identify the family of instruments? ● What about timbre (high, medium or low pitch)?
	<p>(c) The form of the music heard in this excerpt is</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ABA</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ABB</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ABC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The music fits into three 8-bar structures. ● Can you hear a repeat of any of the phrases? ● Is there a different phrase at the end? If not, you can eliminate ABC.
<p>Excerpt 2, played three times.</p>	<p>(d) Describe the texture of the music in this excerpt.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are three blank lines given for this answer, so you will need more than a one-word answer for full marks. ● Is the music polyphonic, homophonic or monophonic? ● Describe what instruments are playing and what they are playing (melody, countermelody, accompaniment).

Excerpt	Question	Answer guide
Excerpt 3, played three times.	Line 1 Joyful, joyful, Lord we adore Thee. Line 2 God of glory, God of love. Line 3 Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, Line 4 Hail Thee as the sun above. Line 5 Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, Line 6 Drive the dark of doubt away. Line 7 Giver of immortal gladness, Line 8 Fill us with the light, fill us with the light. Line 9 Oh, fill us with the light of day.	
	(e) The rhythm of the introduction played on piano is <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only tick one box here. ● Check this answer each time the excerpt is played.
	(f) Describe one similarity between the vocal music of line 1 and the vocal music of line 3. _____ _____ _____ _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underline the word similarity. ● Make very small one-word notes on the page. ● Consider tempo, style of singing and cadence.
	(g) Identify the cadence at the end of line 6. _____ _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Answer using one of the terms: perfect, imperfect, plagal or interrupted. ● Do not use Roman numerals.

Excerpt	Question	Answer guide
	<p>(h) There is a climax in the music in line 7. How is this achieved?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underline the word climax. ● A musical climax can be achieved in many ways, including change of tempo, change of dynamics, change of pitch or change of instrumentation. Can you hear any of these features in the excerpt?
Excerpt 4, played three times.	<p>(i) Describe two differences between the music heard in this excerpt and the music heard in Excerpt 3. Refer to both excerpts in your answer.</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Answer this question in very clear and concise language. ● Consider any instruments that have been added or taken away, tempo changes, texture changes, key changes, etc. ● Refer to both excerpts in your answer. For example: Excerpt 3 features a solo singer, whereas Excerpt 4 has a choir. <p>See page 171 for the marking scheme to this question.</p>

Aural Skills Key Words

Performance Details

Dynamics	How music is played, e.g. loud, soft, and transitions between.
Phrasing/articulation	How notes are played, e.g. legato (smooth), staccato (choppy), flowing or disjointed.
Tempo	The speed at which the music is played, e.g. fast, slow, moderate.

Texture

Dense texture	Many instruments playing.
Homophonic	One line of melody with harmonic accompaniment.
Light texture	Few instruments playing, light harmonic accompaniment.
Monophonic	A single line of melody, no harmonic accompaniment.
Polyphonic/ Contrapuntal	Two or more independent melodic lines. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descant (melody heard over main melody) ● Countermelody (a second melody played in counterpoint with the main melody) ● Canon (one or more voices strictly imitate each other at a fixed distance) ● Fugue (a melody is introduced then all parts imitate the main melody in turn).

Form

Binary	Two-part form: AB, AABB, ABAB.
Free form	Unrecognisable form structure.
Ritornello	A musical form where the main theme returns between different episodes.
Rondo	The main theme returns after each contrasting phrase: ABACA.
Sonata form	Large-scale ternary form: exposition, development, recapitulation, coda.
Strophic	The music is the same for each verse.
Ternary	Three phrases or sections: ABA, AABA, ABBA.
Theme and variations	A theme can be varied in different ways, e.g. changing melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, etc.
Through composed	The music is different for each verse.

Common Musical Terms

Antiphony	Where two groups of voices/instruments imitate each other in quick succession; 'call and answer'.
Block chord	Chord notes played together at the same time.

Broken chord	Notes of a chord played in succession.
Imitation	Melody imitated by another instrument/voice.
Ostinato	A melodic/rhythmic phrase that is repeated identically several times.
Pedal note	A note held or repeated over several bars while the harmony changes.
Repetition	Melody/rhythm repeated by the same instrument.
Sequence	Melody repeated (by the same instrument) at a higher or lower pitch.
Syncopation	Placing emphasis on the offbeat.
Timbre	The tone quality of sound, a musical note or tone.

The Orchestra

Chamber	15 to 45 players, often used for Baroque and Classical music.
Pop	Orchestral instruments with added guitar, drumkit and keyboards.
String	String players only.
Symphony	Up to 100 players.

By Period

Baroque (1600–1750)	Small string section: violins, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, trumpet, harpsichord or organ.
Classical (1750–1800)	Larger string section than Baroque era, with flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, horn, trumpets, timpani.
Romantic (1800–1900)	Large string section with harp, piccolo, flutes, oboes, cor anglais, clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoons, double bassoon, up to four horns, up to three trumpets, trombones, tuba.
Modern (1900–present)	Same as romantic orchestra with percussion instruments such as snare drum, xylophone, piano, tambourine.

Vocal Music

A cappella	Unaccompanied singing.
Falsetto	Male voice singing in an artificially high register.
Glissando	Sliding from one note to another.

Melismatic word setting	Several notes sung per syllable.
Syllabic word setting	One note sung per syllable.
Vibrato	Fluctuation in pitch creating a quivering sound.

Voices

Soprano	Highest female voice.
Mezzo soprano	Female voice with a range between soprano and alto.
Alto/contralto	Lowest female voice.
Tenor	Highest male voice.
Baritone	Male voice with a range between tenor and bass.
Bass	Lowest male voice.

Instrumental Techniques

Arco	Use the bow (instruction after <i>pizz.</i>).
Col legno	Use the wood of the bow.
Con sordino	With mute.
Fanfare	Declamatory flourish, played by brass, usually at ceremonial occasions.
Glissando	Slide from one note to the next.
Harmonics	A note produced on a string instrument by touching the string lightly at a particular point.
Pizzicato	Plucking the string.
Senza sordino	Without mute.
Sul ponticello	Play near the bridge (string instrument).
Sul tastiera	Play near/on the fingerboard.
Tremolando	Rapid, repeated bowing on the same note.
Vibrato	Quivering effect achieved by moving the fingers on the left hand, resulting in slight pitch fluctuations.