S1 Music Practice Paper: Musical Elements and Notation, Note Values and Beat, Scales and Intervals, Instruments and Timbre, Hong Kong and Chinese Music Culture, Listening and Appraisal (100 marks)

S1 | Music | Time: 75 minutes | Total: 100 marks | 24 questions

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Section A Musical Elements and Notation

Part A: 4 marks each, 16 marks in total.

1. Name any four basic elements of music and explain each in one sentence. [4]

Answer: Any four, e.g. melody (an organised succession of pitches); rhythm (the pattern of durations and stresses); harmony (sounds heard together); timbre (the quality of a voice or instrument); dynamics (loudness); texture (how the parts are combined).

2. Write the note names of the five lines of the treble staff, from the lowest to the highest. [4]

Answer: From the lowest line upwards the notes are E, G, B, D and F.

3. Arrange the dynamic marks pp, p, mf and ff from softest to loudest and give their meanings. [4]

Answer: From softest to loudest: pp (pianissimo, very soft) - p (piano, soft) - mf (mezzo-forte, moderately loud) - ff (fortissimo, very loud).

4. In the time signature 4/4, what does the upper number and the lower number each mean? [4]

Answer: The upper 4 means there are four beats in each bar; the lower 4 means a crotchet (quarter note) counts as one beat.

Section B Note Values and Beat

Part B: 4 marks each, 16 marks in total.

5. How many quavers (eighth notes) are there in one bar of 4/4 time? [4]

Answer: There are 4 beats per bar and 2 quavers per beat, so 4 x 2 = 8 quavers.

6. A piece in 3/4 time has 36 bars and is played at 72 bpm (beats per minute). Find the performing time in seconds. [4]

Answer: Total beats = 36 x 3 = 108; time = 108 / 72 x 60 = 90 seconds (1 minute 30 seconds).

7. How many semiquavers (sixteenth notes) are there in one dotted crotchet? [4]

Answer: A crotchet equals 4 semiquavers and the dot adds half of it (2), giving 6 semiquavers in total.

8. In 4/4 time, add the values of a crotchet, a quaver, a quaver and a minim. How many beats is that? [4]

Answer: 1 + 0.5 + 0.5 + 2 = 4 beats, which exactly fills one bar of 4/4.

Section C Scales and Intervals

Part C: 4 marks each, 16 marks in total.

9. Write the eight notes of the C major scale and state where the semitones occur. [4]

Answer: C D E F G A B C; the semitones fall between E-F and B-C.

10. Given A4 = 440 Hz, find the frequencies of A5 and A6 and state the octave frequency relationship. [4]

Answer: A5 = 440 x 2 = 880 Hz; A6 = 880 x 2 = 1760 Hz. The note an octave higher has twice the frequency.

11. How many semitones are there in a perfect fifth? Give one example of a perfect fifth. [4]

Answer: A perfect fifth contains 7 semitones; for example C to G and D to A are perfect fifths.

12. The G major scale has one sharp. Write the G major scale and name that sharpened note. [4]

Answer: G A B C D E F-sharp G; the sharpened note is F-sharp.

Section D Instruments and Timbre

Part D: 4 marks each, 16 marks in total.

13. Classify the violin, flute, timpani and cello as string, wind or percussion instruments. [4]

Answer: Violin: string; flute: wind (woodwind); timpani: percussion; cello: string.

14. What is timbre? Give an example of two instruments playing the same pitch with different timbres. [4]

Answer: Timbre is the quality of a sound, determined by its overtone pattern and how the sound is produced. For example a violin is bowed and sounds warm and sustained, while a flute is blown and sounds bright and clear.

15. Match each Chinese instrument to how it produces sound: erhu, pipa, dizi and luo - bowed, plucked, blown or struck? [4]

Answer: Erhu: bowed; pipa: plucked; dizi: blown; luo (gong): struck.

16. Why does an orchestra tune before a performance, and to which note is it tuned? [4]

Answer: Tuning makes every instrument agree on pitch so that the ensemble does not sound out of tune; modern orchestras tune to A = 440 Hz.

Section E Hong Kong and Chinese Music Culture

Part E: 4 marks each, 16 marks in total.

17. Name four instruments commonly used to accompany Cantonese opera. [4]

Answer: Any four, e.g. gaohu, yangqin, gongs and drums, suona, dizi, zheng.

18. Which five solfege notes correspond to the Chinese pentatonic degrees gong, shang, jue, zhi and yu? [4]

Answer: They correspond to do, re, mi, sol and la, with no fa or ti.

19. Into which sections are the instruments of a Chinese orchestra in Hong Kong usually grouped? [4]

Answer: They are grouped into wind (blown), plucked, bowed and percussion sections.

20. What is gongche notation, and how does it differ mainly from staff notation? [4]

Answer: Gongche notation is the traditional Chinese system that writes pitch with characters (shang, che, gong, fan, liu, wu, yi and so on); staff notation shows pitch by the position of notes on lines and spaces and also records duration and harmony precisely.

Section F Listening and Appraisal

Part F: 5 marks each, 20 marks in total.

21. Listen to a piece in 4/4 time and describe what you hear in terms of tempo, dynamics and texture. [5]

Answer: Marking notes (1 mark per aspect, 2 marks for expression): tempo as fast, slow or moderate with an approximate bpm; dynamics with any change such as a crescendo from p to f; texture as monophonic, homophonic or polyphonic.

22. A piece in 4/4 time has 24 bars and is played at 96 bpm. Find the performing time in seconds. [5]

Answer: Total beats = 24 x 4 = 96; time = 96 / 96 x 60 = 60 seconds (1 minute).

23. Compare Cantonese opera and Western opera in terms of singing style and accompaniment, giving similarities and differences. [5]

Answer: Similarities: both tell a story mainly through singing with instrumental accompaniment. Differences: Cantonese opera is sung in Cantonese with distinct role voice types and uses Chinese instruments such as the gaohu and gongs; Western opera usually uses bel canto singing with an orchestra and separates recitative from aria.

24. Choose a piece you know, identify two musical elements in it and explain how they create the mood. [5]

Answer: Marking notes (2 marks per element, 1 mark for explanation): for example a slow tempo in a minor key creates sadness; a dense rhythm at high volume creates tension; a bright major key with a rising melody creates joy. Answers must cite specific features of the piece.
