

3.10 MUSIC (511)

Music is assessed in three different papers as summarized below

Paper 1 (511/1) Practical Performance: This is a practical performance paper comprising of several practical tests, which measure the candidate's acquisition on the desired skills in practical musicianship. Candidates are required to perform a series of prescribed tests for an 'on the spot' assessment by an external assessor.

Paper 2 (511/2) Aural Tests: This paper assesses the candidate's acquisition of aural recognition and musical transcription skills. It aurally assesses all the basic elements of music presented in a set of 5 main questions. These tests are presented in a recorded format and played only once through during the examination.

Paper 3 (511/3) Theory of Music: This is a fully written paper which comprises of the basic theory and practice in music, history and analysis of African and Western music, and general knowledge in music. The creative element is included in melodic composition and harmony tests.

3.10.1 General performance of candidates

The table below summarizes the candidates' general performance in KCSE Music (511) examination for the years 2018 to 2022.

Table 19: Candidate's Overall Performance in KCSE Music from 2018 to 2022

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Mark	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2018	511/1	1430	50	38.87	6.64
	511/2		50	21.52	9.89
	511/3		100	52.49	16.1
2019	511/1	1485	50	39.00	6.185
	511/2		50	21.00	10.314
	511/3		100	45.00	14.807
	Combined		200	106.39	27.09
2020	511/1	1901	50	38.96	5.92
	511/2		50	20.28	10.01
	511/3		100	47.48	14.01
	Combined		200	107.1	25.64
2021	511/1	2302	50	38.41	6.41
	511/2		50	16.68	8.46
	511/3		100	48.62	13.5
	Combined		200	103.5	24.68
2022	511/1	2444	50	38.27	7.29
	511/2		50	17.29	8.17
	511/3		100	46.74	14.47
	Combined		200	102.19	25.81

From the table above, the following observations can be made:

i) Paper 511/1 (Practical performance)

Scoring of this test is done by a team of assessors sent to each of the schools to assess every candidate, individually. Marked out of 50, the paper registered a mean of 38.27, very similar to 38.41 of the 2021 cohort. This good performance as indicated by the high mean is a pointer to adequate preparation by the candidates since they are availed ample time to go through the set pieces and other requirements. This is expected for a practical performance test.

ii) Paper 511/2 (Aural)

Candidates are presented with pre-recorded tests which are played back, and they are expected to answer all the questions as presented. These entail rhythmic recognition and transcription, melodic transcription, and aural identification of intervals, cadences and modulations to related keys. Scored out of 50 marks, this paper recorded a low mean of 17.29, indicative of a generally below average performance as has been the trend in the previous 5 years. This points to the lack of adequate preparation of candidates to enable them to acquire and demonstrate the desired musical skills.

iii) Paper 511/3 (Theory)

This is a written paper comprising of rudimentary musical theory and practice, history and analysis of African and Western music, and general contemporary and emerging issues in music. Nationally, this paper posted a mean performance of 46.74 out of a maximum score of 100, witnessing a slight drop from 48.62 of the 2022 cohort.

This report discusses each of these papers, highlighting some of the areas that posed a challenge to the 2022 cohort of candidates. The issues have mostly been raised by the examiners who either assessed the candidate's practical performance or marked the candidates' scripts in the written papers. The report provides recommendations to both teachers and students on how best to handle the seemingly problematic areas.

3.10.2 MUSIC PAPER 511/1 -PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE

There were four tests in this paper. Different issues were raised on each of the tests as follows

Test 1: Performance of a Kenyan/African Own Choice of a folksong, traditional dance, or traditional instrument.

The candidate was expected to present either a solo performance of folksong song or instrument, or a group performance in which the candidate would be the leader as a soloist or the main performer. This performance is expected to be in the traditional idiom of the community of choice with strict adherence in text, instrumentation, movement and singing styles.

Observations:

- i) There is a growing practice of all candidates in the centre preparing **only one song** for presentation, but only varying the soloist each time. In as much as it is an own choice, This monotonous option only works to disadvantage all the learners since no creative input can be observed.
- ii) A very small proportion of candidates presented African traditional instruments with *Ohangla, Sukuti* drums, *Chivoti, wandindi, Obokano, Shiriri* and *Orutu* featuring.

- iii) It was notable that little attention was given to the aspect of authenticity and originality of choice and presentation as some of the folksongs and dances were more of creative than authentic performances.
- iv) Most performances did not incorporate authentic traditions accompaniment, but rather opted for what was available in the school. This led to a somewhat misrepresentation of musical cultures.
- v) The role of costume and décor was not well considered by some of those candidates who performed dances. Further, a few candidates had slightly indecent costumes.
- vi) The performance duration of up to 3 minutes was mostly bypassed by majority of the presenting dances.

Recommendations:

- i. It is advisable that every candidate performs his/her own song or dance which they have individually trained the group. This is a requirement as the candidates have a long period of time to prepare for this examination. Furthermore, it is disadvantageous to have all the candidates sing only one song since they may all end up making the same mistakes and get scored equally.
- ii. Candidates should be encouraged to take up playing of traditional African instruments as a viable option for this examination. This will help in preservation of the instruments which are quickly disappearing because of not being used.
- iii. Teachers should guide candidates to make appropriate choices of items for performance in relation to age and gender and social relevance.
- iv. The roles of costumes, décor and accompanying instruments need to be brought out appropriately during the performance.
- v. Adherence to stated time limits is critical in an examination.

Test 2: Performance of a Western Set Piece for Voice or Instrument

A wide variety of vocal and instrumental pieces are provided at least a year before the examination. Candidates are required to select either voice or instrument as their performance medium in the examination.

Observations:

- i) It was notable that many of the candidates paid little attention to performance directions such as dynamics, tempi and expressions.
- ii) Some candidates selected voice pieces that were outside their range of voices.
- iii) The descant recorder was the most popular instrument, followed by voice.
- iv) It was also evident that some centers specialized on one instrument/voice, and one choice of piece of music.
- v) A few candidates opted to perform without accompaniment. Most of the candidates used pre-recorded accompaniment which sometimes required rewinding in cases of candidate stopping for one reason or the other. This tended to be time consuming. Some of the pre-recorded accompaniment also had the melody/voice/instrument part.

Recommendations:

- i. Adequate preparation of the music in relation to performance directions is mandatory. Teachers should avail the music to candidates in good time to ensure thorough preparation and interpretation of the music.
- ii. Candidates should be adequately guided so selected pieces appropriate to their range of voice as soprano, alto, tenor or bass.

- iii. Use of pre-recorded accompaniment is permitted. However, the accompaniment music adheres to all instructions in the music so as not to mislead the candidate. However, teachers should ensure that candidates rehearse with live accompaniment. Where not possible, candidates need to rehearse well with the recorded accompaniment to ensure compatibility. Performing without accompaniment only serves to disadvantage the candidate. However, pre-recorded accompaniment should not have an outstanding melodic line as witnessed in many of them.
- iv. Candidates should be given a leeway of choosing from the numerous pieces provided for examination rather than being restricted to one or two choices. This enhances variety of experience for all learners.
- v. Teachers must appropriately guide the candidates on choice of music and use of the correct version and edition of the music.

Test 3: Prescribed Technical Exercises

These tests required candidates to perform a prescribed major scale, minor scale, major arpeggio, minor arpeggio and a sequence in a given rhythmic pattern. The tests have specific performance requirements with regard to rhythm, phrasing and dynamics. Candidates were required to perform these exercises using the instrument with which they played their set-pieces.

Observations:

- i) Few voice and recorder candidates still performed wrong rhythms for the major and minor scales, and not as prescribed.
- ii) There was a tendency of voice candidates mixing up the major and minor scales.
- iii) Quite a number of candidates were unable to play/sing the minor arpeggio correctly.
- iv) Instructions on dynamics, phrasing and repeats were also ignored by most candidates in scales and arpeggios.

Recommendations:

The technical exercises are pre-set and available to the candidate for all the four years of their study. Teachers should introduce the singing and playing of these exercises in form 1 as preparatory exercises before any practical performance session. With time these exercises will become part and parcel of daily practice and will therefore not present any challenge to the candidates.

Test 4: Sight singing/Sight reading test

Observations

- i) Performing of wrong pitches due to inability to read the key signature to the given music.
- ii) Incorrect rhythmic interpretation in simple/compound time. It was common for candidates to read in free rhythm i.e., played notes separately disregarding the rhythm and time signatures.
- iii) Most candidates presenting descant recorder preferred to transpose the music given to G major instead of reading in the set key.
- iv) In a few instances candidates got the pitches right but not the rhythms.

Recommendation

There is urgent need for teachers to help students develop the sight-reading skill through progressive and consistent preparation. The ability to interpret music and read at sight lies at the core of practical musicianship.

3.10.3 PAPER 511/2- AURAL TESTS

This paper assessed the candidates' acquisition of aural skills: listening and the ability to write what is heard. This included the candidates' ability to identify and write pitch and rhythm presented in form of different tests. Different elements of music were tested here. All questions and instructions in this paper were administered through a pre-recorded compact disk. There were 5 broad areas covered. Candidates were required to aurally identify and write rhythms (in simple and compound time), melodies (in major and minor), harmonic intervals, cadences and modulations. Out of the five tests, test 1 and 2 presented the biggest challenge to the candidates.

Test One: Writing rhythm on monotone from dictation

This is a rhythmic dictation test requiring candidates to listen to, interpret and transcribe the rhythm on monotone in three different instances:

- a) Monotone rhythm from a drum
- b) Rhythm from a melody in simple time
- c) Rhythm from a melody in compound time

Observations:

- i. Inappropriate grouping of notes into beats
- ii. Inability to use note extensions eg ties etc
- iii. Some candidates could not differentiate between simple time and compound time.

Recommendations:

Rhythmic notation skills should be developed right from the foundation levels. Teachers should guide learners to develop this skill from the formative stages in form 1. Consistent practice is key to developing the skill of rhythmic discrimination.

Test Two: Writing melodies on the staff from dictation

This test required candidates to listen to a recorded test, transcribe the pitch and rhythm, and write the melodies in staff notation. The melodies were broken into phrases each, making it easier for the candidates to internalize and transcribe. This was presented in 2 parts thus:

- a) Melody in a major key
- b) Melody in a minor key

Observations:

- i) Inability to write the stated key signatures on the staff!
- ii) incorrect pitches
- iii) incorrect rhythms
- iv) The melody in the minor key was incorrectly written by majority of the candidates.

Recommendations:

- i) develop the habit of consistent solfège practice!
- ii) sight reading can develop pitch discrimination required for this exercise
- iii) listen to and sing melodies in both major and minor keys for better pitch discrimination
- iv) Practice rhythms regularly

Test Three, Four and Five

These tests entail identification and description of intervals, identification of cadences, and identification of modulation. Most candidates were generally able to identify these elements.

Advice to teachers

- i) Aural practice and training should be introduced early in form 1 and integrated into every basic skills music lesson. Continuous and consistent practice will enable the candidate to develop the aural skill and be able to comfortably handle all these tests.
- ii) Participation of music students in various music activities such as hymn practice, choir training and singing etc will enable the students to develop appreciation and ability to discriminate sound, pitches and rhythms.

3.10.4 PAPER 3 (511/3) -MUSIC THEORY

This paper covers three areas presented in three sections:

Section A: Basic Skills – Melody and Harmony

Section B: History and Analysis of African and Western Music

Section C: General Music Knowledge

Question 1- Melody

This question was presented in two parts:

- (a) completing a given beginning to make a melody of 16 bars, modulating to relative minor, incorporating a syncopation.
- (b) setting given lyrics to own composed melody.

Observations

- i. Part (a)-completing a given melody to 16 bars, modulating to the relative minor, incorporating a syncopation
 - The concept of modulation to the relative minor presented a challenge to some candidates
 - Syncopated rhythm wasn't well executed
- ii. Part (b)-writing a melody to given lyrics.
 - Accentuation/speech rhythm and syllabic division is problem to many candidates.
 - Text setting was also a major problem to many candidates.

Recommendations

- i. Modulation to different related keys from a given major or minor key is a critical skill that needs to be developed through consistent practice.
- ii. Execution of specific melodic devices such as syncopation need to be taught and practiced
- iii. Writing a melody to given lyrics is fundamental in developing the candidates' creativity as a young composer. Text setting is a critical component in this area. This skill should be developed from the simplest setting in early learning stages in form 1.
- iv. Candidates should be taken through correct syllabic division for both English and Kiswahili. As many practical examples as possible are required to achieve this.

Question 2- Harmony

This question required the candidates to harmonize a given melody for SATB by adding Alto, Tenor and Bass voices above the given Soprano voice. the question also involved resolution of a cadential six-four chord progressing to a dominant 7th at the final cadence.

Observations

- i. Some candidates captured the key signature on only one staff
- ii. Some clefs were missing on the great staff.
- iii. Many candidates had a challenge with chord progression and voice-leading resulting in many harmonic faults such as consecutive octaves and fifths, missing 3rds of chords, doubled 3rds etc.
- iv. The cadential six-four chord and dominant 7th were not realised and appropriately harmonised by majority of the candidates

Advice to the teachers

- i. Candidates should be given plenty of practice to be able to complete an SATB harmony
- ii. The content in this area should be well covered with the students.
- iii. Candidates should be taken through progressions involving the special chords (dominant 7th, 2nd inversion chords).

Question 4

Candidates were required to answer questions on any two of the four prescribed composers of western Music. Through their study period, candidates interact with these four composers. It is expected that teachers will cover biographical information which constitutes basic recall tasks as well as some analysis of various aspects of the composers such as their works, compositional styles, influences, and contributions to music.

The composers included: Antonio Vivaldi, W.A. Mozart, Johannes Brahms and Benjamin Britten

Observation

- The pattern of incorrect responses seemed to suggest that some revision materials used by a certain group of learners from several schools had factual errors which were reproduced by the candidates in their workings.
- Most candidates gave inaccurate/ incorrect responses to the questions on composers of their choice.
- There is clear evidence that not much analysis is done on these composers and their works.
- It was apparent that some centres had only studied two composers as evident in their uniform choices.

Recommendations

- It is evident that some teachers acquire revision notes prepared by different individuals and agencies, which may not be adequate in coverage of all requirements in this area. These notes, treated as complete in themselves, may mislead candidates and make them get wrong information. Teachers must validate the notes before giving them to the candidates.
- Proper analysis of the composers, their works, styles of composition and contribution to music should be covered.
- Candidates should be guided on what aspects of the composers' history to be studied
- It is advantageous to study all the four composers for general knowledge despite only answering questions on two of them.

Question 5- Prescribed African Music

Candidates were expected to answer questions with reference to the prescribed African music analysis work- *Pokot* Folksong by Ortum Boys High School.

General Observations

- Some candidates did not respond to the analysis questions as required. The choice of language and presentation of responses did not give an indication of good preparation in analysis of folk music performance.
- There was evidence of a certain pattern of responses which pointed to use of specific revision materials which had misinterpreted the analysis work.

Recommendations

- Caution should be exercised when using certain revision materials which could contain incorrect information in relation to the work.
- This work should be well analysed in class by the teacher and the candidates.
- Frequent and adequate listening and objective discussion of the prescribed work is recommended in order to equip learners with the prerequisite analytical skills.
- Learners should be exposed to analysis of a wide variety of African music works in order to equip them with the pre-requisite analysis and question answering skills.

Question 6 – Prescribed Western Music

Candidates were expected to answer questions with reference to the prescribed western work- *Finale* from Choral Fantasy in C minor, *Op. 80* by Ludwig van Beethoven.

Observation

The questions presented required candidates to directly interact with the provided score and draw their responses. However, most candidates had difficulty referring to the musical score as required. This is evidence of not having appropriately analysed the work.

Recommendation

- Candidates should be taken through score-reading and identification of specific elements in the musical score provided.
- Teachers should directly interact with the work, analyse it objectively and guide the learners appropriately. Consultation with others is necessary so as not to have own opinion which may not necessarily be correct.

Question 7- Unprepared Work

Candidates were expected to answer questions with reference to an excerpt from “*Minuet*” by Mozart

Observations:

- Most candidates had difficulty referring to the provided score and responding to the questions as required.

Advice to Teachers

- It is advised that the skill of score reading, and analysis be developed through adequate exposure to music scores and subsequent analysis of the same.
- Analysis of different forms of music should be carried out right from form 1. This will aid in building the right approaches and vocabulary needed in answering questions of this kind.

Question 8- General Music Knowledge

This question consisted of four parts covering (a) Ways in which the Government of Kenya supports music as a discipline (b) Terminology in Musical structure (c) open and closed score, and (d) Musical instruments in folksong/dance performance.

Observations

- Challenges in open/closed score rewriting
- Inability to describe basic terminology in musical form.

Recommendations

- Score transposition skills should be well covered, and adequate practice given to candidates.
- Cover the content on western musical forms exhaustively.
- Candidates should be exposed to higher order thinking tasks to enhance acquisition of skills.

