

The final first teach date for A Level Music (H543) is **September 2026**. The final assessment opportunity will be **Summer 2028**. There is no resit opportunity.

# Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Music

## H543/02 Performing B

### Marking criteria

#### INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

- The marking criteria are provided for teacher reference to aid planning and teaching the content of the non-examined, externally assessed components.
- The Performing components are marked by OCR based on the marking criteria below.
- The component is marked out of **105**.
- **75** marks are available for the Section 1: Free Choice.
- **30** marks are available for the Section 2: Focused Study.
- This document consists of **12** pages.

(35%) Maximum 105 marks

This component assesses Assessment Objective 1: Interpret musical ideas through performing, with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context.

To select the most appropriate mark within the band descriptor, assessors should use the following guidance:

- where the learner's work convincingly meets the statement in a mark band, the highest mark in that mark band should be awarded
- where the learner's work adequately meets the statement in a mark band, the most appropriate mark in the middle range of that mark band should be awarded
- where the learner's work just meets the statement in a mark band, the lowest mark in that mark band should be awarded.

### **Recital - 10–15 minutes**

#### **Section 1: Free Choice (75 marks)**

The learner's overall performance in this section of the recital is assessed and a mark given under each of the three headings: knowledge and fluency; technical control; and realisation of performance markings and/or performance conventions.

A level performances must show fluency and critical understanding of the shape, direction and style of the music chosen through knowledge of the music.

#### **Level of difficulty**

To achieve marks in the higher bands, learners need to demonstrate their skills and understanding in the performance of at least **two** contrasting pieces that demonstrate different use of musical elements such as different tempos or style. The pieces should demand a level of complexity, technical challenge, musical understanding and communication **comparable** to that typically found in the repertoire from syllabuses of the performing examining bodies at grade 6 which may include syllabuses from the ABRSM, TCL, LCM, RockschooL, Trinity Rock and Pop, Yamaha etc.

If the music performed is not grade 6 level or above, then the top two mark bands for "technical control" are not accessible.

Where learners choose to perform two pieces which are similar, they are not demonstrating a *range* of techniques, as is required in the 'Technical Control' section of the marking criteria, and so will self-limit the number of marks that they can achieve for this section.

Learners should be guided to select repertoire with a sustained level of demand throughout the recital.

## 1. Knowledge and fluency (25 marks)

In this section, learners are assessed on their knowledge of the music being performed.

**Knowledge** refers to the decisions made by learners in terms of pitch and/or rhythm as appropriate to the instrument and style, accuracy of musical elements.

<b>21–25 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates an excellent knowledge of notes and rhythms and the performance is completely fluent. Overall shape and direction of the piece(s) performed demonstrates strong critical understanding.
<b>16–20 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates a secure knowledge of notes and rhythms; some mistakes, but not enough to disturb the fluency of the performance. Overall shape and direction of the piece(s) performed demonstrates critical understanding.
<b>11–15 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates a moderate knowledge of the notes and rhythm; a number of mistakes disturb the fluency of some parts of the performance. Overall shape and direction of the piece(s) performed demonstrates some critical understanding.
<b>6–10 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates an erratic knowledge of the notes and rhythms; hesitancy sometimes seriously impairs the fluency of the performance. Overall shape and direction of the piece(s) performed demonstrates limited critical understanding.
<b>1–5 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates poor knowledge of notes and rhythms, showing persistent hesitancy and little fluency throughout the performance. Overall shape and direction of the piece(s) performed demonstrates poor critical understanding.
<b>0 marks</b>	No response or no response worthy of credit.

## 2. Technical control (25 marks)

Learners are assessed on their use of a range of appropriate techniques; quality, variety and evenness of tone; technical skills displayed; specific factors as they apply to the learner's instrument/voice (e.g. coordination and balance of RH/LH, bow/fingers, tongue/fingers; intonation; breath control; diction; pedalling; registration, use of appropriate tempi).

Where the learner presents a performance using music technology to realise music, their ability to use appropriate technique (e.g. appropriate software functions; production techniques; balance) is assessed.

If the music performed is not grade 6 level or above, then the top two mark bands are not accessible. Where learners choose to perform two pieces that are similar, they are not demonstrating a *range* of techniques, as is required in the 'Technical Control' section of the marking criteria, and so they will self-limit the number of marks that they can achieve for this section.

<b>21–25 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates very secure technical control of the instrument, voice or technology in every respect, in music that demands a range of advanced techniques.
<b>16–20 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates secure technical control of the instrument, voice or technology in all significant respects, in music that demands a range of fairly advanced techniques.
<b>11–15 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates moderate technical control of the instrument, voice or technology, with problems in some areas, in music that demands moderately advanced techniques.
<b>6–10 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates erratic technical control of the instrument, voice or technology, with significant problems in some areas, in music that demands modest techniques.
<b>1–5 marks</b>	The learner demonstrates poor technical control of the instrument, voice or technology, with significant problems in most areas, in music that demands basic techniques.
<b>0 marks</b>	No response or no response worthy of credit.

### 3. Realisation of Performance markings and/or performance conventions (25 marks)

Learners are assessed on the realisation of markings written into the score by the composer and/or the observance of appropriate performing conventions (e.g. ornamentation, *notes inégales* and other Baroque rhythmic alterations, swung quavers and other conventions appropriate to jazz, popular music or other traditions).

Where learners present their recitals in an ensemble or as an accompanist, their aural awareness in relation to the ensemble, their awareness of the needs of other performers and their ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performer(s) is assessed.

In improvisatory styles, the learners' ability to extend their part in ways appropriate to the chosen style is also considered.

Aural awareness also pertains to choices made by learners in terms of amplification and in projecting into the performing space.

<b>21–25 marks</b>	The learner convincingly realises all markings of tempo, expression, articulation and phrasing throughout the performance and/or all appropriate performing conventions are effectively applied. A high level of aural awareness is evident and is in keeping with the context of the music. (Where relevant, a high level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)
<b>16–20 marks</b>	The learner realises markings of tempo, expression, articulation and phrasing throughout most of the performance and/or most appropriate performing conventions are applied. A good level of aural awareness is evident. (Where relevant, a good level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)
<b>11–15 marks</b>	The learner realises markings of tempo, expression, articulation and phrasing in some passages in the performance and/or some appropriate performing conventions are inconsistently applied. A satisfactory level of aural awareness is evident. (Where relevant, a satisfactory level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)
<b>6–10 marks</b>	The learner inconsistently realises markings of tempo, expression, articulation and phrasing in the performance and/or few performing conventions are applied. Some level of aural awareness is evident. (Where relevant, some level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)
<b>1–5 marks</b>	The learner seldom realises markings of tempo, expression, articulation and phrasing throughout most of the performance and/or performing conventions are largely ignored. Limited aural awareness is evident. (Where relevant, limited awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)
<b>0 marks</b>	No response or no response worthy of credit.

**Section 2: Focused Study (30 marks)**

Learners must show an understanding of style and context by performing at least **one** piece that demonstrates understanding and idiomatic use of their chosen instrument. They will demonstrate through their performance the understanding of the style and context specific to this instrument and its repertoire.

Where learners present their recitals in an ensemble or as an accompanist, their aural awareness in relation to the ensemble, their awareness of the needs of other performers and their ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performer(s) is assessed.

**Level of Difficulty**

Learners should be guided to select repertoire with a sustained level of demand throughout the recital.

The pieces should demand a level of complexity, technical challenge, musical understanding and communication comparable to that typically found in the repertoire from syllabuses of the performing examining bodies at grade 6 which may include syllabuses from the ABRSM, TCL, LCM, RockschooL, Trinity Rock and Pop, Yamaha etc.

If the music performed is not grade 6 level or above, then the top mark band is not accessible in either section.

## 1. Interpretative understanding (15 marks)

Learners are assessed on their musical insight into their chosen repertoire and understanding of the use of their chosen instrument.

<b>13–15 marks</b>	<p>The learner demonstrates an excellent understanding of how the instrument, voice or technology is used in the piece(s) in relation to its style and context.</p> <p>Thorough understanding of the style leads to informed decisions regarding interpretative and technical choices in the performance.</p>
<b>10–12 marks</b>	<p>The learner demonstrates a secure understanding how the instrument, voice or technology is used in the piece(s) in relation to its style and context.</p> <p>Secure understanding of the style leads to mostly confident decisions regarding interpretative and technical choices in the performance.</p>
<b>7–9 marks</b>	<p>The learner demonstrates a moderate understanding of how the instrument, voice or technology is used in the piece(s) in relation to its style and context.</p> <p>Satisfactory understanding of the style leads to relevant decisions regarding interpretative and technical choices in the performance.</p>
<b>4–6 marks</b>	<p>The learner demonstrates a limited understanding of how the instrument, voice or technology is used in the piece(s) in relation to its style and context.</p> <p>Weak understanding of the style leads to decisions regarding interpretative and technical choices which may not always be relevant to the performance.</p>
<b>1–3 marks</b>	<p>The learner demonstrates poor understanding of how the instrument, voice or technology is used in the piece(s) in relation to its style and context.</p> <p>Limited understanding of the style leads to few relevant interpretative and technical choices in the performance</p>
<b>0 marks</b>	No response or no response worthy of credit.

## 2. Stylistic and aural awareness (15 marks)

Learners are assessed on their aural awareness and communication of their chosen style in keeping with the original intentions of the piece.

Where learners present their recitals in an ensemble or as an accompanist, their aural awareness in relation to the ensemble, their awareness of the needs of other performers and their ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performer(s) is assessed.

<b>13–15 marks</b>	<p>The learner gives a convincing performance which wholly retains the original intentions of the piece in relation to its style and context, communicated with acute aural awareness.</p> <p>(Where relevant, a high level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)</p>
<b>10–12 marks</b>	<p>The learner gives a secure performance which mostly retains the original intentions of the piece in relation to its style and context, communicated with secure aural awareness.</p> <p>(Where relevant, a good level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)</p>
<b>7–9 marks</b>	<p>The learner gives a moderately successful performance that adequately retains the original intentions of the piece in relation to style and context, communicated with mostly secure aural awareness.</p> <p>(Where relevant, a satisfactory level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)</p>
<b>4–6 marks</b>	<p>The learner demonstrates limited success in performance with limited retention of the original intentions of the piece in relation to style and context, communicated with some aural awareness.</p> <p>(Where relevant, some level of awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)</p>
<b>1–3 marks</b>	<p>The learner gives a basic performance with poor retention of original intention of the piece in relation to style and context, communicated with little aural awareness.</p> <p>(Where relevant, limited awareness of the needs of the other performer(s) and the ability to blend and co-ordinate with other performers is evident.)</p>
<b>0 marks</b>	<p>No response or no response worthy of credit.</p>

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