

3.10 MUSIC (511)

Music for KCSE is tested in three different papers as summarized below:

Paper 1 (511/1) Practical Performance: This paper comprises of a series of practical tests which measure the candidate's practical musicianship.

Paper 1 (511/2) Aural Tests: This paper tests the candidate's listening and transcription skills.

Paper 3 (511/3) Theory of Music: This is a fully written paper which comprises of the basic theory and practice in music, history of African and Western music and analysis of selected African and Western music.

3.10.1 GENERAL CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE

The table below summarizes the candidates' general performance in KCSE Music (511) examination for the years 2011 to 2013. In 2011, Practical performance and Aural Skills had been combined to form Paper 1. From the year 2012 each paper is treated individually.

Table 17: Candidate's Overall Performance in KCSE Music from 2011 to 2013

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Mark	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2011	511/1	1251	100	58.77	15.92
	511/2		100	50.32	13.09
	Combined		200	109.08	26.51
2012	511/1	1242	50	35.44	07.33
	511/2		50	22.95	11.64
	511/3		100	43.52	11.96
	Combined		200	101.59	27.29
2013	511/1	1222	50	37.62	6.32
	511/2		50	25.81	11.40
	511/3		100	50.35	14.73
	Combined		200	113.65	27.74

From the table above, the following can be deduced:

- i) There has been a steady decline in candidature in the three years.
- ii) There is improved performance in all the three papers as indicated by the improved mean posted in the 2013 examination as compared to the 2012 examination.
- iii) Although Paper 1 has recorded a better mean score of **37.62** in 2013 as compared to **35.44** in 2012, the reduction in the **Standard Deviation** is an indicator that there is no good spread of the candidates' scores as the candidates are mainly lumped together.
- iv) The year 2013 has posted the best performance in the subject over the three-year period with a combined mean of **113.65**, up from the mean of **101.59** in 2012.

This report discusses some of the questions and sections across the three papers that posed a challenge to the candidates of the 2013 KCSE Music examination.

3.10.2 Music Paper 1 (511/1): PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE

There were four tests in this paper. Different issues were raised on this paper as follows:

Test 1: Own choice of an African piece (song/dance/instrumental)

Candidates were expected to perform as a solo or as a leader (soloist) of a larger group in case of folksong or dance.

Observations:

- It was observed that an overwhelming majority of candidates opted for the folksong or dance as opposed to playing a traditional instrument.
- Some candidates were unable to distinguish between a folk song and folk dance in their introduction.

Recommendations:

- 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 as a result of not being used.
- Teachers should guide candidates to distinguish between a folk song and dance

Test 2: Set Piece (Western style for voice or instrument)

A wide variety of vocal and instrumental pieces are provided at least 1 year before the examination. Candidates are required select **one piece**, prepare it and perform during the examination.

Observations:

- A number of candidates seemed unprepared even after having had the music for more than a year.
- Candidates opting for the instruments are very few compared to those taking voice as an option
- Instrumental performers (except descant recorder) generally exhibited better preparedness as compared to their voice and recorder counterparts.

Test 3: Prescribed Technical Exercises

These were generally fairly well presented across the different performance media. However, the **minor scale** and **minor arpeggio** was a little difficult for most of the voice candidates. Accuracy of notes (pitch) was the main challenge.

Test 4: Sight singing/Sight reading test

The ability to play/sing at sight entirely depends on the level of preparedness of the candidate as a performer. Whereas majority of the instrumental candidates easily read what was presented to them, many of the voice candidates had a problem singing the correct pitches at sight.

It is therefore suggested that sight reading be approached as a stepwise progressive process which must be introduced in form 1 and developed over the years. Participation in school/external music activities would be a key factor that would enhance acquisition and development of accuracy in sol-fa reading.

3.10.3 Music Paper 2 (511/2): AURAL TESTS

This paper tested the candidates' 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 tape.

There were 5 broad areas covered

- Test one** : **Rhythm on monotone**
a) Drum rhythm
b) Rhythm from a melody in simple time
c) Rhythm from a melody in compound time
- Test two** : **Melody**
a) Melody in a major key
b) Melody in a minor key
- Test three** : **Intervals**
- Test four** : **Cadences**
- Test five** : **Modulation**
a) To the major
b) To the minor

Candidates were required to aurally identify and write rhythms (in simple and compound time), melodies (in major and minor), harmonic intervals, cadences and modulations.

In **test two** (Melody), the melodies were broken into phrases making it easier for the candidates to internalize and write. Full marks would only be awarded to a candidate who writes the correct notes (pitch and rhythm).

This paper posted a mean of **25.81**, up from **22.95** of 2012 indicating an improved overall performance.

Weaknesses

In **test one**, candidates were expected to write the rhythms with correct grouping of notes, time signatures and bar lines. Grouping of notes was not well done by some candidates.

Test two was poorly performed by most candidates. It was evident that most of the candidates were not able to hear and write the melodies, pitch and rhythm. Some had correct rhythm but wrong pitches and vice versa. Test 2 (b) – melody in minor had only a few candidates give the correct response.

Advice to teachers

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.

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 Music Paper 3 (511/3): MUSIC THEORY

This paper covered was divided into 3 sections thus:

Section A: Basic Skills – Melody and Harmony

Section B: History and Analysis of African and Western Music

Section C: General Music Knowledge

This paper improved to a mean of **50.35** up from **43.52** in 2012. However, some questions posed a challenge to the candidates as discussed below:

Question 1

- Either** (a) Continue the following opening to make a melody of sixteen bars for voice introducing modulation to the subdominant and then back to the tonic. Incorporate dotted rhythm and add phrase marks. (12 marks)



- Or** (b) Using staff notation, compose a melody and set to it the lyrics below. (12 marks)

*Ujinga kitu kibaya,
heri kumeza mchanga
Ujinga kwa mwanadamu,
si mwendo mwema ujinga.*

Observation

Option (a)-completing a given melody was preferred by majority of the candidates as opposed to (b) - writing a melody to given lyrics. Many teachers seem to ignore teaching the concept of writing music to given text, which is an essential component in composition.

Advice to the teachers

Syllabus sub-topic on writing a melody to match given lyrics is fundamental in developing the candidates' creativity as a young composer. This area should be taught as prescribed in the syllabus.

Question 2

Harmonize the following for Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass (SATB). Choose appropriate chords from the following: I, II, IV, V and VI. Make use of the passing note in bar 2. (20 marks)



Requirements

This question required the candidates to harmonize the given soprano melody by adding Alto, Tenor and Bass parts. The third-last chord required the candidates to correctly use the cadential 6-4 chord and resolve it to the dominant.

Weakness

Most candidates could not use a cadential six-four chord as required. From their different workings, there was glaring evidence of not having had any idea of what they were supposed to do!

Advice to the teachers

All chords and their respective resolutions should be taught as stated in the syllabus.

Question3 (c)

Name the instrument played by each of the following Kenyan traditional musicians. (4 marks)

- (i) Swaleh Mwatela;.....
- (ii) David Mwangi;.....
- (iii) Ogola Opot;.....
- (iv) William Ingosi.....

This question tested the little explored area of traditional Kenyan musicians.

Requirements

The question required the candidate to name the traditional instrument played by each four traditional musicians listed.

Weakness

Many candidates had no idea who the musicians were, which communities they came from and which instruments they played. There was a lot of guess work in this question.

Advice to teachers

A study of the prominent traditional Kenyan musicians is part of the content covered in the syllabus and therefore should be taught. Teachers should be resourceful enough to look for the biographies of these musicians, which have been published by various institutions such as The Permanent Presidential Music Commission and some individual scholars.

Question 7 (c)

(c) The concertmaster is an important member of the orchestra.

- (i) Name the instrument he plays. (1 mark)
- (ii) Where is he/she positioned in the sitting arrangement of the orchestra? (1 mark)
- (iii) State **two** of his duties in the orchestra. (2 marks)

Requirements

This question is drawn from the form 1 sub-topic “The western orchestra”.

It required candidates to have knowledge of

- i) who the “concertmaster” was
- ii) his/her sitting position in the orchestra
- iii) the instrument he/she played

Weakness

Majority of candidates did not know who the concertmaster was and therefore could give correct responses to the rest of the questions.

Advice to the teachers

It was evident that such areas of content were either not well taught or left to the students to study on their own.

Furthermore, the Orchestra is not a very strange theoretical concept in Kenya today. Part of the activities for the topic “Visits and Participation in Music Activities” would entail visiting an orchestra rehearsal/ performance and interact with the reality.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- i) Teachers should adopt a practical approach when teaching all basic components of music such as melody, rhythm, harmony etc
- ii) Effective coverage of the syllabus is essential in order to equip the candidates with the relevant knowledge and skills
- iii) Teachers should expose learners to practical music performances in order to develop their musicianship and general knowledge
- iv) Students should be exposed to the current trends in the tradition and contemporary music scene
- v) Teachers should arrange visits to music performances and performance venues such as Bomas of Kenya
- vi) Participation in Music seminars/workshops by both teachers and students would be of great benefit to teaching/learning.