

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 number of practical tests which measure the candidate's practical musicianship. Candidates are required to demonstrate performance skills through solo or group music making.

Paper 2 (511/2) Aural Tests: This paper tests the candidate's aural and transcription skills. It encompasses all the basic skills required to make a practical musician at this level. These tests are presented in a recorded format and are 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 issues and knowledge in music.

3.10.1 GENERAL CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE

The table below summarizes the candidates' general performance in KCSE Music (511) examination for the years 2015 to 2019.

Table 17: Candidate's Overall Performance in KCSE Music from 2015 to 2019

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Mark	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2015	511/1	1335	50	37.40	6.69
	511/2		50	28.50	11.79
	511/3		100	52.59	14.26
	Combined		200	118.13	28.47
2016	511/1	1407	50	37.41	6.41
	511/2		50	22.28	10.9
	511/3		100	41.07	14.39
	Combined		200	100.52	28.12
2017	511/1	1395	50	37.51	6.68
	511/2		50	30.71	14.37
	511/3		100	41.00	14.13
	Combined		200	109.11	28.23
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	6.185
	511/2		50	21	10.314
	511/3		100	45	14.807

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

- i) **Paper 511/1 (Practical performance)** This is a practical performance examination marked out of 50. With a mean of 39 we are witnessing the highest mean recorded in the past five years. This is an indication of enhanced preparation for this examination since the candidates are availed ample time to go through the requirements. The standard deviation has almost been replicated over the

previous five years, indicating that the candidates' scores are almost identical in all the years. This is generally a narrow standard deviation indicating that the scores always lie much closer together. This is expected for a practical performance paper.

ii) **Paper 511/2 (Aural)**

The performance in this paper is very comparable to 2018 since the means standard deviations are similar. This is a generally averagely performed paper.

iii) **Paper 511/3 (Theory)**

The performance in this paper keeps fluctuating greatly. From a mean of 41 in 2017, the paper registered a near-deal mean (52.49) in 2018 and has now dropped down to 45 in 2019. This may not be attributed to the level of difficulty of the paper, but largely to how well candidates are prepared especially for the parts of the paper that keep changing every year i.e. the prescribed analysis, composers and the unprepared analysis. Different prescribed works required different skills to analyze and so the teachers need to diversify their knowledge and skills in order to guide the candidates appropriately. The basic skills required in harmony and compositions too have a great bearing on how the candidates score will look like.

This report discusses each of these papers, highlighting some of the areas that posed a challenge to candidates in 2019. It further provides recommendations to both teachers and students on how best to handle these areas.

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

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

Test 1: Own Choice of an African Item (Song/Dance/Instrumental)

Candidates were expected to perform as a solo or as a leader (soloist) of a larger group. There however is an option of playing a solo African traditional instrument in the idiom of the community of origin.

Observations

- i. There was a common practice of candidates in a Centre presenting the same folksong/dance with only the soloist being changed. This means that no much learning took place as the candidates only learnt one song.
- ii. Most of the candidates opted for the folksong or dance as opposed to playing a traditional instrument.
- iii. Some candidates made wrong choices in of items terms of gender, topic and age.

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 as a result of not being used.

- iii. Teachers should guide candidates to make appropriate choices of items for performance in relation to age and gender

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 only **one piece** for either voice or instrument, prepare it and present for assessment.

Observations

- i. Most candidates used pre-recorded accompaniment to their solo pieces. This accompaniment varied in quality and some did not consider all the performance directions, thereby disadvantaging the candidate.
- ii. Most presentations by candidates were incompatible with the recorded accompaniment
- iii. A number of candidates seemed unprepared even after having had the music for more than a year.
- iv. Most performance directions with regard to tempo, dynamics etc were ignored by the candidates
- v. Candidates opting for the instruments are very few compared to those taking voice as an option
- vi. Instrumental performers (except descant recorder) generally exhibited better preparedness as compared to their voice and recorder counterparts.

Recommendations

- i. Use of pre-recorded accompaniment is permitted. However, teachers are advised to ensure the accompaniment adheres to all instructions in the music so as not to mislead the candidate.
- ii. Teachers should ensure that candidates rehearse with live accompaniment. Where not possible, candidates need to rehearse well with the recorded accompaniment to ensure compatibility.
- iii. Adequate preparation of the music is mandatory. Teachers should avail the music to candidates in good time to ensure thorough preparation and interpretation of the music.

Test 3: Prescribed Technical Exercises

This test required candidates to perform five technical exercises as prescribed. These are the major scale, the minor scale, the major arpeggio, the minor arpeggio and the sequence. Candidates were required to perform these exercises using the instrument with which they played their set-pieces.

Observations

- i. Instrument players were generally able to perform the technical exercises with more ease compared to their voice counterparts.
- ii. The **minor scale** and **minor arpeggio** were generally poorly performed by most of the voice candidates.
- iii. Accuracy of notes (pitch) posed a great challenge to most candidates who presented voice items.

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

Familiarity with time signatures and key signatures is key to being a successful sight reader. The candidate should familiarize him/herself with and practice a wide variety of time signatures and key signatures so that he/she is ready for any situation. It was evident that most candidates did not have good grasp of the time signatures and key signatures.

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

Listening lies at the heart of all good music-making. Developing aural awareness is fundamental to musical training because having a 'musical ear' impacts on all aspects of musicianship. Singing, both silently in the head and out loud, is one of the best ways to develop the 'musical ear'. Developing good aural skills is an important part of any music education and the ability to hear how music works helps students with all aspects of their music-making and learning.

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. 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, test1 and 2 presented the biggest challenge to the candidates.

Test One

This rhythmic dictation where candidates were required to transcribe rhythm played. Part (a) was drum rhythm; part (b) was rhythm of a melody in simple time and (c) rhythm of a melody in compound time.

Observations

- i. It was noted that many candidates were unable to identify the correct time signatures for both simple and compound times.
- ii. - Grouping of notes and insertion of bar lines was also a problem seen with many candidates.
- iii. Some candidates could not differentiate between simple time and compound time.
- iv. The triplet was also not recognized by many candidates

Recommendations

Rhythmic notation skills should be developed right from the foundation levels and learners encouraged practicing writing rhythms from dictation from form 1. This they could do in pairs or in groups. Expose learners to several rhythms in different times with recommended groupings.

Test Two

This test required candidates to listen to and write melodies in major and minor keys on the staff. Candidates were also required to correctly write the key signatures. The melodies were broken into phrases each, making it easier for the candidates to internalize and write.

Observations

- i. This test was poorly done by majority of the candidates.
- ii. Some candidates were not able to write the stated key signatures on the staff!
- iii. Most candidates wrote pitches and weren't able to get the rhythms right
- iv. The melody in minor key was not correctly written by majority of the candidates who were able to write the major melody correctly.

Recommendations

Regular practice is required for better acquisition of the skill of writing melodies from dictation.

Tests Three, Four and Five

These tests were fairly well performed by most candidates.

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 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

A few issues were raised as discussed below:

Question 1

This question is from general topic of melody and requires acquisition of the various composition skills covered in the syllabus.

Observations

- i. Part (a)-completing a given melody to 16 bars with a modulation and dynamics:
 - Many candidates were not able to modulate appropriately and establish the modulation as required. The modulation from a minor key to a relative major was a bigger challenge to many candidates.
 - Appropriate use of dynamic markings was generally a problem to most candidates as some dynamics did not follow the melodic flow/pattern
 - Melodic development techniques were visibly unfamiliar to many candidates. Melodies were plain and not very creative in most cases
- 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. Learners should be exposed to writing melodies in minor keys
- ii. Modulation to different keys from a major or minor key is a critical skill that needs to be developed through consistent practice.
- 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.
- iv. Candidates should be taken through correct syllabic division for both English and Kiswahili. As many examples as possible are required to achieve this.

Question 2

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 passing tones indicated were not to be harmonized.

Observations

- i. Some candidates did not harmonize in the correct key
- ii. The passing note presented a challenge to many candidates since they harmonized it, defying the initial instruction.
- 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. Various chord choice errors were noted.

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 by the teacher and the students
- iii. Harmony exercises in different tonalities should be worked on by candidates in preparation for this test.

Question 3

The question generally covered Kenyan traditional instruments, the influence of technology on making of instruments and mode of acquisition of instrument playing skills.

Observation

Some candidates misinterpreted these questions, giving incorrect responses or half responses.

Recommendations

- Teachers should guide learners on how to interpret and answer high order questions that require in-depth thinking.
- This is a content area that should be exhaustively covered to ensure candidates are well equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to answer questions

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.

Observation

- Most candidates gave inaccurate/ incorrect responses to the questions on composers of their choice.
- There is clear evidence that no much teaching takes place on these composers.
- It was apparent that some centres had only studied two composers as evident in their choices.

Recommendations

- It was reported 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.
- Teachers should not leave the candidates to study these composers on their own without guidance.
- It is advantageous to study all the four composers for general knowledge despite only answering questions on two of them.

Question 5

Candidates were expected to answer questions with reference to the prescribed African music analysis work- *Ameru Folksong* by Nkubu High School (PPMC Recording of KMF 2014).

Observations

- Some candidates had a problem interpreting questions in this area.
- Incorrect and incomplete responses were given by many candidates

Recommendations

- This work should be well analysed in class by the teacher and the candidates
- Frequent and adequate listening and objective analysis of 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 work

Candidates were expected to answer questions with reference to the prescribed western work- *Chorus No. 3: 'From Harmony' from 'Ode for St. Cecilia's Day'* – by George Frederic Handel

Observation

Most candidates were unable to identify the compositional devices as prescribed in the questions. This was clear evidence of shallow analysis of the work!

Recommendation

Analysis is a skill acquired through meaningful and consistent practice. 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 a piece of music they are seeing for the first time in the examination. This was an excerpt from *Sonata K.545* by W.A. Mozart.

Observations

- Candidates had trouble making direct reference to the score for their answers as guided, thereby giving inaccurate responses in certain cases
- There was evidence of candidates having memorized certain incorrect analysis styles which inhibited their objectivity here.

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) Tuning of Kenyan instruments, (b) Rewriting from closed to open score (c) sonata-allegro form (d) Western orchestra

Observations

- The layout of themes and keys for the sonata-allegro form was not known by many candidates
- The skill of rewriting tom open score was a challenge as many candidates didn't know what to do with the tenor clef and transfer of notes to individual voices

Recommendations

- Cover the content on musical forms exhaustively
- Basic skills need to be well taught and many practice exercise given to learners to better equipping