

Candidate 3 — Twilight Terror 2

Composing music

This serial composition demonstrates limited musical ideas with little development.

The instrumental writing is not always appropriate, for example, the sustained notes on the xylophone in bars 3, 7 and 20 are ineffective. Timbral and dynamic possibilities of the piano and the tuned percussion instruments are not fully explored to create the desired programmatic effect. The use of dynamics is straightforward.

During the concluding section, the candidate has moved the dotted crotchet and quaver rhythm from the xylophone part in the opening section, to the vibraphone and piano part but overall, there is little development of rhythm.

Within the straightforward ternary form, there is a creative structural idea: in bars 5 to 8, the candidate, having chosen to use the inverted note row, has then inverted the melodic shape of the three instruments compared to bars 1 to 4.

In bars 1 to 3, the candidate has chosen to use the note row at the original pitch. They may have benefitted from experimenting with these pitches to produce their desired impression of a spooky, night-time scene. They might, for example, have used different octaves to create a more successful programmatic effect.

There is very limited use of harmony. Apart from the homophonic writing in the percussion parts in bars 14 to 18, the candidate has mostly only used ties to create harmonies.

There are some errors in the rows in the piece, for example the last note of bar 5 should be an E natural, not an E flat; the ninth note of bar 9 should be a G natural, not a G flat; and the third-last note in bar 11 should be an A natural, not an A flat. As the candidate has stated that they are writing a serial piece and gives no reason for the changes in the note row in the composing review, these would be deemed a poor use of the melodic elements.

The candidate was awarded **2 marks**.

Review of the creative process

In their review, the candidate has shown the original note row and the three other forms used in the composition. The candidate has also annotated the score to show where and how the rows are used. Both of these greatly help to show the candidate's intentions and assist in the marking process.

This review includes a poor account of the main decisions made and a very limited explanation of the exploration and development of musical ideas. The candidate identifies very few strengths and does not identify any areas for improvement.

The candidate correctly identified that they used the note row in its original, retrograde and retrograde inversion forms, but was incorrect in stating that they had only used these versions, as they had used the inversion as well.

Much more detail linking their decisions and development of musical ideas to compositional methods used would have improved this review. For example, the candidate gives no information about why they chose to use harmony where they did. Strengths and/or areas for improvement should reference musical detail.

The candidate chose appropriate headings for each part of the review, with a mixture of bullet points and prose. This method is acceptable. It does not matter that the candidate made some references to development of musical ideas under the main decisions heading, rather than under the heading about exploration and development of musical ideas.

The candidate was awarded **1 mark**.