

# Candidate 1 — Piece for piano and cello

## Composing music

The piano starts with a four-bar phrase loosely based around the chords of Am, C, Em and G. This progression is played six times in succession. The left hand plays a broken-chord quaver pattern based on this progression, which repeats throughout most of the piece. It is then transferred to the cello part at bar 25.

There is an interesting choice of notes in bar 4, where the left hand uses the notes of a G chord, while the right hand has an E and a G. This brief dissonance creates harmonic ambiguity, but the candidate does not refer to this in the review and is perhaps unplanned. The candidate states that the piece is in the key of C major, which is clearly not the case until the end.

The cello enters in bar 9 with a simple melody based on the chord progression. This is developed at bar 13, with the addition of double-stopping. The first three notes in the cello part at bar 17, immediately appear in the second half of the same bar, in the piano left hand. This interplay continues for eight bars. Both parts are written in the same octave and frequently cross over each other, creating a lack of definition. The harmonic choices are not always appropriate.

At bar 25, the piano plays chords using the opening chord progression, with the addition of a Cmaj7 chord in bars 26 and 30. At bar 33, the piano part uses the same chords as bars 25–28 and the cello plays another simple melody.

Bar 37 takes an unexpected change of direction with a dramatic cadenza-like figure heard on cello, then loosely imitated on the piano. This section finishes quite abruptly with a final cadence on a C major chord.

This piece for cello and piano demonstrates musical ideas that have, overall, been developed satisfactorily and are appropriate to the candidate's chosen style. The selection and use of elements are generally simplistic and straightforward.

The candidate was awarded **10 marks**.

## **Composing review**

The first two paragraphs of the composing review focus almost entirely on unnecessary, programmatic comments. Following this, there is a limited account of the candidate's main decisions. More information about significant chord progressions (such as the opening four bars) and the timbral choices made when writing for the instruments, would enhance this review. There is an inaccuracy relating to rhythm. Although the time signature is 6/8, the candidate states 'the cello starts playing triplets'.

There is limited explanation of how the candidate explored and developed the musical ideas, and limited identification of the strengths and areas for improvement.

The candidate was awarded **3 marks**.