

# Music

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Leaving Certificate

Higher Level

2020 - 2021

## *Composition: Harmony*



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## Composition Paper Layout (paper 2) 100

There are 6 questions on the Composition Paper. You are required to complete 2 of the 6 questions: 1 melody question and 1 harmony question

These notes will focus on Q.1 and touch on Q.2. The harmony question will be discussed in detail in a separate handout

- Q.1 Melody (40 marks)
  - 16 Bar melody
  - Modulation
  - Dynamics, articulation, phrase marks
  - Pick an instrument
- Q.5 Harmony (60 marks)
  - Add chords to given melody (must form a good progression)
  - Compose a bass line
- (Q.2 Melody: Setting music to a given text)

You will be given 1.5 hours to complete the two questions. I would recommend spending approximately 30 minutes on the melody question and 50 minutes on the harmony question; this will leave you 10 minutes at the end to check over everything. This timing split is only a suggestion, you may choose to divide the time differently – do what works for you. Generally the harmony question will take longer than the melody question.

Please ensure that you complete your composition exercises using a sharp pencil. It is very important to be neat. You will also require a rubber, ruler and sharpener. On the day of the exam it is advisable to bring a few pencils with you.

You are required to know all major and minor keys up to 4 sharps and 4 flats (please see theory sheet). The melody/harmony questions could appear in any of the following keys:

Major: C, G, D, A, E, F, Bb, Eb, Ab

Minor: A, E, B, F#, C#, D, G, C, F

You must also be familiar with both the treble and bass clefs



## Question 5 Harmony 60 Marks

### Question no 5 on Composition Paper

#### 60 Marks!!

- Compose bass notes and chord indications to a given tune
- Fill out chord chart (add V7)
- Choose suitable chords /chord progressions and insert into given boxes
- Insert suitable bass notes in the style of the given opening
- Do not repeat the same chord in the same position in adjacent boxes
- You may use chord symbols or Roman numerals, but not both

#### Before you start you must know the following...

- Know your keys (up to 4 sharps and 4 flats Major and minor)
- Learn notes in treble and bass clef – Know your lines and spaces
- Know your cadences!
- Don't use chords iii and vii<sup>o</sup>
- Alignment is EXTREMELY important – if you struggle with this- group/circle notes into beats
- You do not need to add tempo/dynamics/expression markings/phrasing/articulation
- Do not use the same chord symbol in adjacent boxes

#### How is the question marked?

- Chords
  - Marks are awarded for 'each chord that is part of a good **progression** in chord boxes'
  - Marks are awarded for the '**quality** of musical progressions and cadences overall'
- Bass
  - Marks are awarded for every '**correct bass note** under each correct chord symbol' **NB** If your choice of chord is incorrect, your bass note will also be incorrect
  - Marks are awarded for '**quality** of bass line, including sense of **musicality**, awareness of **style** and technical **knowledge**'



## Chord Chart in a major key

As you can see from the figure below:

- In a major key chords I, IV and V are major - Major chords must be UPPER CASE
- Chords ii and vi are minor - Minor chords must be LOWER CASE
- Chords iii and vii<sup>o</sup> are not on the course – DO NOT use

I C      ii Dm      iii Em      IV F      V G      vi Am      vii<sup>o</sup> Bdim

3 4      4 3      4 3      3 4      3 4      4 3      3 3

3 = major  
 4 = minor  
 3 = diminished

Major – Upper case roman numeral

Minor – lower case roman numeral – small ‘m’

Diminished – lower case roman numeral with ° – ‘dim’

							(F)
G	A	B	C	D	E	F	
E	F	G	A	B	C	D	
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	
C	<u>dm</u>	<u>em</u>	F	G (7)	<u>am</u>	<u>bdim</u>	
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii <sup>o</sup>	

**A flat major**

When filling out the chord chart don't forget to add 'm' beside the minor chords, to observe the key signature, and to add the V7

Notes of chord	5th	E $\flat$	F	G	A $\flat$	B $\flat$	C	D $\flat$
	3rd	C	D $\flat$	E $\flat$	F	G	A $\flat$	B $\flat$
	root	A $\flat$	B $\flat$	C	D $\flat$	E $\flat$	F	G
Chord symbol		A $\flat$	B $\flat$ m	<del>C</del> m	D $\flat$	E $\flat$	Fm	<del>G</del> dim
Roman Numeral		I	ii	<del>iii</del>	IV	V	vi	<del>vii</del> <sup>o</sup>

The image shows a musical staff in the key of A-flat major (three flats). It displays five chords with their Roman numerals and names below them:

- I**: Ab Maj
- ii**: Bb min
- IV**: Db maj
- V**: Eb maj
- vi**: F min

## Cadences and good chord progressions

### Cadences in a major key

#### Finished

- Perfect
  - V-I
  - V7-I
- Plagal IV - I  
'Amen'

#### Unfinished

- Imperfect
  - I – V
  - ii – V
  - IV – V
  - vi – V
- Interrupted
  - V – vi
  - V7 – vi

### Good chord progressions in a major key

- I – anywhere
- ii – restricted – V (imperfect cadence)
- ii – restricted – V7 – I/vi
- IV – I (plagal cadence)
- IV – ii (falling 3rds)
- IV – V (imperfect cadence)
- IV – V7 – I/vi
- V – I (perfect cadence)
- V – vi (interrupted cadence)
- V – IV
- V7 – I (perfect cadence)
- V7 – vi (interrupted cadence)
- vi – even numbers ii/IV
- vi – V (imperfect cadence)
- vi – V7 – I/vi

NB Never finish a phrase on V7

Progressions in red create cadences



## Steps to follow

**Please note:**

- Carry out this question carefully and systematically
  - Do not make premature assumptions/judgments
1. Chord Chart
  2. Identify phrase endings
  3. Cadences – bracket cadence points
  4. Add options at cadence points
  5. Add options under other boxes
  6. Circle good progressions
  7. Add semibreve bass note under each box
  8. Fill in rhythm using patterns and rhythm from given bass
  9. Chords may need to be changed at that point in order to make the best bass
  10. Put final chord choices in boxes



## How to identify cadence points

- The phrases are often, although not always, around 4 bars in length
- Look for longer notes/rests, but be careful – these can appear mid phrase
- Look for repetition e.g. is bar 1 repeated anywhere? If so, this bar will likely be the beginning of a phrase
- If there is an upbeat at the beginning, it is likely that all subsequent phrases will have an upbeat
- There should ALWAYS be a finished cadence at the end

## How to identify ‘essential’ notes

- Essential notes are the notes that you are going to harmonise
- Generally the Essential melody notes will be
  - longer
  - on stronger beats
  - more dominant within the bar
- Try to harmonise as many notes possible within the bar
- Watch out for syncopation
- Circle the essential notes



## How to choose chords

- After drawing your chord chart and identifying the non-essential melody notes list all the possible options for each box
- The first few chords will be added for you
- Add options at cadence points first. You **MUST** make a cadence at these points
  - For a finished cadence only the chord of I can go in the last box of the phrase
  - For an unfinished cadence only the chords of V or vi can go in the last box of the phrase
  - Don't forget the cadence goes from the 2nd last box to the last box of the phrase
  - Use a finished cadence at the end of the piece
  - Finished and unfinished cadences can be used at the ends of phrases within the piece
  - **NB** Make sure that the cadences harmonise with the given notes!!
- Then using your knowledge about good and bad chord progressions choose the most suitable chords for each box
- In the boxes you can use Roman numerals or chord names. **Do not use both chord names and roman numerals!**
  - Roman numerals e.g. I, ii, IV, V, vi (remember large roman numerals for major chords, and small or minor/diminished chords). If you use a diminished chord (you will only use a diminished chord when doing a minor harmony question) you must add the circle, e.g.  $\circ$
  - Chord names e.g. C, Dm, F, G, Am (remember you must put an 'm' after minor chords, and 'dim' after diminished chords)
- Chord I is strong at the beginning of phrases
- Remember if you choose a 1st inversion chord make sure the 3rd of the chord is not the note in the melody under the box
- Working backwards may help you to come up with the best solution



## Chord progressions: Important Points

- Never use ii – I
- Never use V – ii
- If using different positions of the same chord in adjacent boxes always use root followed 1<sup>st</sup> inversion (not the other way around)
- NEVER double the 3<sup>rd</sup> of a chord – this will only be a possibility when using a first inversion chord (you may double the third of ii<sup>0</sup>b in a minor key)
- You may use the chord of Ic –but only if it precedes a perfect cadence (Ic – V – I) at the end of the piece, and if it is on the first beat of the bar
- vib is not on the course – do not use



## How to compose the bass line

- Write the root of each chord into the bass stave under the box, unless you are using a first inversion (where you put the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the chord in the bass), or a second inversion (where you put the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord in the bass)
- Following the style of the given opening (see sample answers) fill out the rhythm and try to use patterns found in the given opening
- Ensure that bass is in the style of the given opening
  - Analyse the bass and rhythm
  - Is the bass melodic or arpeggiated?
  - In a minor key don't forget the raised 7<sup>th</sup>
- Check your alignment i.e. the placement of notes in the bass clef in relation to the notes in the treble clef
- Try to avoid consecutive octaves – this is when the bass and the melody play in unison and move in step to another unison chord
- Also try to avoid consecutive fifths - this is when there is the distance of a fifth between the melody and bass note, going immediately to another distance of a fifth
- To avoid consecutives try to aim for contrary motion where possible

### Alignment:



Correct placement i.e. 4 crotchet beats in right must match up with 4 crotchet beats in left hand

Incorrect placement

Dotted crotchet = 3 quavers, therefore the 2<sup>nd</sup> bass note is drawn directly under the 4<sup>th</sup> quaver



Correct

Incorrect



## Detailed steps for completing Question 5 Harmony

1. Identify key (NB the chord chart tells you the key!!) and **draw chord chart** (add V7 to your chart) (see back of handout for all chord charts)
2. In your chord chart name each chord remembering to fill in the full details of the name - minor/ sharp/ flat etc - Don't forget to add sharps/flats in each chord where necessary.
3. **Sing melody** and identify **cadence points**. Put a square bracket over these points – remember a cadence goes to the last chord of the phrase from the previous chord.
4. Identify **non-essential notes** in melody
5. Study each bar and **add** (in pencil) the **options** above each box
6. Examine which **progressions** would be the best
7. From your chords **fill in the bass notes** using a development of the given style
8. You must put the root of your chosen chord in the bass (unless using an inversion – see discussion elsewhere)
9. If you use a first inversion chord make sure the 3rd of the chord is not the melody note!
10. Be careful of the placement of your bass notes- they **MUST** be in the correct position under the given melody
11. **Fill in** boxes. Use either chord symbols (e.g. C) or Roman Numerals (e.g. I) – do NOT use both! If you use chord symbols you must put 'm' after any minor chords. If you use Roman numerals remember use lower case for minor and capital for Major
12. Double-check every bar when you've finished



# Sample answer approach Question 5 Harmony

- Step 1: Fill in chord
- Step 2: Identify phrase endings and bracket cadence points
- Step 3: Identify essential notes and add options (starting with cadence points)
- Step 4: circle provisional good chord progressions

E♭	F	G	A♭	B♭	C	D♭
C	D♭	E♭	F	G	A♭	B♭
A♭	B♭	C	D♭	E♭	F	G
A♭	B♭m	Cm	D♭	E♭	Fm	Gdim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii <sup>o</sup>

**2009**

Step 4: circle provisional good chord progressions

<u>Eb</u>	F	G	<u>Ab</u>	<u>Bb</u>	C	<u>Db</u>
C	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	F	G	<u>Ab</u>	<u>Bb</u>
<u>Ab</u>	Bb	C	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	F	G
<u>Ab</u>	<u>Bbm</u>	Cm	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	<u>Fm</u>	<u>Gdim</u>
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	<u>vii°</u>

2009

Chord progressions shown in the score:

- 1-3: I, vi, ii<sup>b</sup>
- 4-6: I, V, I, Eb C: I<sup>b</sup>, Bb: ii, V, C: I, vi
- 7-9: D: ii, IV, V7, Db Bb: ii, V7, I, ii, ii, IV, I
- 10-11: C: I, vi, Ab C: I, vi, Db Ab: IV, C Eb: I, Bb Eb: V
- 12-14: I, IV, vi, Db Ab: IV, ii, V, I, vi, IV, I
- 15-17: Db Bb: ii, V7, I, vi, I, vi

Step 5: Sketch semibreve in bass under each box (NB you will not leave the bass like this)

You must put the root of the chord in the bass, unless you are using an inversion

<u>Eb</u>	F	G	<u>Ab</u>	<u>Db</u>	C	<u>Db</u>
C	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	F	G	<u>Ab</u>	Bb
<u>Ab</u>	Bb	C	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	F	G
<u>Ab</u>	<u>Bbm</u>	Cm	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	<u>Fm</u>	<u>Gdim</u>
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	<u>vii°</u>

<u>Eb</u>	F	G	<u>Ab</u>	<u>Db</u>	Bb	C	<u>Db</u>
C	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	F	G	<u>Ab</u>	Bb	
<u>Ab</u>	Bb	C	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	F	G	
<u>Ab</u>	<u>Bbm</u>	<u>Cm</u>	<u>Db</u>	<u>Eb</u>	<u>Fm</u>	<u>Gdim</u>	
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii <sup>o</sup>	

Step 6: Analyse the bass in given open. Analyse both melodically and rhythmically

Step 7: Complete your bass line in the style of the given opening

Step 8: Insert final chord choices into boxes

## Minor Harmony

- Follow the same method/steps as for major harmony
- Please follow essential notes (p. 7), how to choose chords (p. 8), important notes (p. 9) and the detailed steps (p. 11) of this handout

The natural minor scale

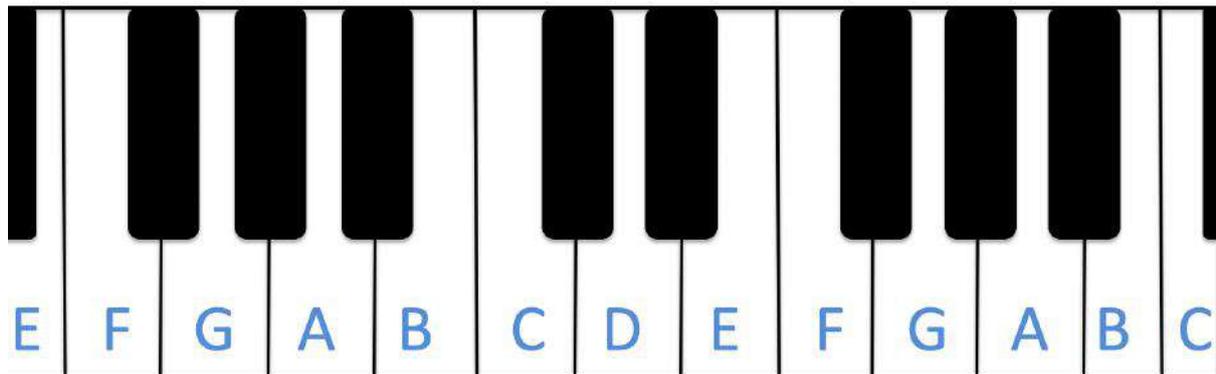
The harmonic minor scale

i Am    ii°b Bdim    III+ Caug    iv Dm    V E    VI F    vii° G#dim

3                      3  
 4 = major            3 = diminished  
  
 4                      4  
 3 = minor            4 = augmented



## Minor Harmony Chord Chart



Triads built on the harmonic minor scale

$i$ Am	$ii^{\circ}b$ Bdim	$III^{+}$ Caug	$iv$ Dm	$V$ E	$VI$ F	$vii^{\circ}$ G#dim
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3	3
4 = major	3 = diminished
4	4
3 = minor	4 = augmented

Major – Upper case roman numeral  
 Minor – lower case roman numeral – small ‘m’  
 Diminished – lower case roman numeral with  $^{\circ}$  – ‘dim’  
 Augmented – upper case with + – ‘aug’

$ii^{\circ}b$  can only be used in ‘b’ (first inversion) form

- Chords  $i$ ,  $iv$  – lower case minor
- Chords  $V$  and  $VI$  – Upper case major
- Chord  $ii^{\circ}$  – lower case diminished with circle and only in ‘b’ (first inversion) form – you may double third of  $ii^{\circ}b$
- Chords  $III^{+}$  and  $vii^{\circ}$  – not on course- do not use
- Chord  $V$  contains the raised 7<sup>th</sup> (accidental), therefore, do not use ‘soh’ in the bass line when Chord  $V$  is in the box – if you use the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale in the bass make sure it is ‘si’
- The raised 7<sup>th</sup> will be either a sharp or natural sign (depending on key sign)



## Minor Harmony Chord Chart

	B minor				E		
Notes of chord 5th	F#	G	A#	B	C#	D	E
3rd	D	E	F#	G	A#	B	C#
root	B	C#	D	E	F#	G	A#
Chord symbol	Bm	C#dim	Daug	Em	F#	G	A#dim
Roman Numeral	i	ii <sup>o</sup> b	III <sup>+</sup>	iv	V	VI	vii <sup>o</sup>

Add 'b' to chord ii, and circle the 3<sup>rd</sup> (middle note) of this chord to remind you what note to put in the bass

Circle the 3<sup>rd</sup> (middle note) of chord V as this note is the raised 7<sup>th</sup>, and therefore will need an accidental (the 3<sup>rd</sup> of chord V is the same note as the root of chord vii<sup>o</sup>)



## Cadences and Good Chord Progressions in Minor key

### Finished

- Perfect V-  $\underline{i/V7-i}$
- Plagal  $\underline{iv - i}$   
'Amen'

### Unfinished

- Imperfect  $\underline{i/ii^{\circ}b/iv/VI - V}$
- Interrupted V – VI/V7-VI

### Good Chord Progressions in a Minor Key

- $\underline{i - anywhere}$
- $\underline{ii^{\circ}b - V}$  (imperfect)
- $\underline{ii^{\circ}b - V7 - i/VI}$
- $\underline{iv - i}$  (plagal)
- $\underline{iv - ii^{\circ}b}$
- $\underline{iv - V}$  (imperfect)
- $\underline{iv - V7 - i/VI}$
- $\underline{V - i}$  (perfect)
- $\underline{V - VI}$  (interrupted)
- $\underline{V - V7 - i/VI}$
- $\underline{VI - ii^{\circ}b}$  (even no.)
- $\underline{VI - iv}$  (even no./fall 3<sup>rd</sup>)
- $\underline{VI - V}$  (imperfect)
- $\underline{VI - V7 - i/VI}$
- $\underline{V7 - i}$  (perfect)
- $\underline{V7 - VI}$  (imperfect)

NB never finish a phrase on V7

Red font = cadence



## Bass Line in a Minor key

- Write the root of each chord into the bass stave under the box, unless you are using a first inversion (where you put the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the chord in the bass), or a second inversion (where you put the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord in the bass)
- Following the style of the given opening (see sample answers) fill out the rhythm and try to use patterns found in the given opening
- Ensure that bass is in the style of the given opening
  - Analyse the bass and rhythm
  - Is the bass melodic or arpeggiated?
  - In a minor key don't forget the raised 7<sup>th</sup>
- Check your alignment i.e. the placement of notes in the bass clef in relation to the notes in the treble clef (see page 10 for more information)
- Try to avoid consecutive octaves – this is when the bass and the melody play in unison and move in step to another unison chord
- Also try to avoid consecutive fifths - this is when there is the distance of a fifth between the melody and bass note, going immediately to another distance of a fifth
- To avoid consecutives try to aim for contrary motion where possible
- **If you use the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale in the bass line – don't forget to treat it correctly. Use the 7<sup>th</sup> in the same way as you would in a minor melody (i.e. step off). If the accompaniment is broken chordal in style you may be able to do a broken chord of V, whereby the raised 7<sup>th</sup> is not resolved. See sample answers.**
- It is often possible to avoid using the raised 7<sup>th</sup> in the bass



# Sample answer approach Question 5 Harmony Minor

C	Db	E	F	(Bb)	G	Ab	Bb				
Ab	Bb	E	Db	E	F	G					
F	G	Ab	Bb	C	Db	E					
Fm	G	Ab	Bbm	C	Db	E					
	dim	aug				dim					
i	ii <sup>o</sup> b	iii <sup>+</sup>	iv	V (7)	VI	vii <sup>o</sup>					

- Step 1: Fill in chord chord
- Step 2: Identify phrase endings and bracket cadence points
- Step 3: Identify essential notes and add options (starting with cadence points)
- Step 4: circle provisional good chord progressions

C	Db	E $\flat$	F	G	(Bb)	Ab	Bb
Ab	Bb	G	Db	E $\flat$	F	G	
F	G	Ab	Bb	C	Db	E $\flat$	
Fm	G	Ab	Bbm	C	Db	E $\flat$	
	dim	aug			dim		
i	ii $\flat$	iii $\sharp$	iv	V (7)	VI	vii $\flat$	

Step 5: Sketch semibreve in bass under each box (NB you will not leave the bass like this)

You must put the root of the chord in the bass, unless you are using an inversion

C	Db	E $\flat$	F	G	(Bb)	Ab	Bb
Ab	Bb	G	Db	E $\flat$	F	G	
F	G	Ab	Bb	C	Db	E $\flat$	
Fm	G	Ab	Bbm	C	Db	E $\flat$	
	dim	aug				dim	
i	ii $\flat$	iii $\sharp$	iv	V (7)	VI	vii $\flat$	

Consecutive octaves = weak

- Step 6: Analyse the bass in given open. Analyse both melodically and rhythmically
- Step 7: Complete your bass line in the style of the given opening
- Step 8: Insert final chord choices into boxes

## Student Notes

