

GCSE DANCE

42301 – Critical Appreciation of Dance
Report on the Examination

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General

Once again it was pleasing to see some very well answered scripts, where it was clear that students had been given the opportunity to study professional works in their entirety as well as being able to articulate their understanding of different aspects of practical work from other units within the course. These students could describe motifs/movement phrases clearly and sequentially, and were able to describe and explain different production aspects of their chosen professional works in detail. Students are advantaged when they read through the first two questions of the paper before deciding to name their dance work 1 and 2. The majority of students could describe aspects of production clearly and wrote coherently about contributions of such aspects. It was very pleasing to see that a greater number of students are backing up contributions of production aspects with examples of the work to clarify their answers. Students who used bullet points in their responses sometimes failed to explain contributions fully, whereas students who wrote in continuous prose usually explained their points in more detail and were awarded more marks accordingly.

Questions 4 and 5 were generally answered very well. The majority of students could clearly describe a motif from their chosen prescribed work; they could name choreographic devices used to structure their dance and talk about stages of the choreographic process where they had opportunities to review and refine their solo composition tasks. Where students lost marks, they named either 'Impulse' or 'Find It!' as the professional work and as these are both Set Dances, where no choreographic demands are made on the student, marks could not be awarded for any of the questions. Many students did not name one of the professional dance works from the prescribed list and this made marking a motif very difficult for examiners. Centres should be aware that questions in the final section of the paper may well relate to other units within the specification and it is important that students know those units and the works that they have studied for each of them.

It was pleasing to note that students did not answer questions using both Christopher Bruce works this year. Centres are reminded, however that students are severely disadvantaged if they study a work that is not on the prescribed list of professional dance works as stated in the specification and on the AQA website. Only answers referring to work from the prescribed list can be awarded marks. Centres are advised to consult the specification regularly throughout the course and to use the AQA fact file for reference.

The most popular works studied were: Swansong, 'Still Life' at the Penguin Cafe, Ghost Dances, Fault Line, Perfect and Nutcracker!. It was very pleasing to see increasing numbers of students using Bird Song, Overdrive and Rosas Danst Rosas. Students understood that these works are abstract and therefore they did not attempt to give the works a narrative, consequently scoring well. It should be noted however that while one of the themes for Rosas Danst Rosas is rage, students writing about 'frustration' were not awarded marks. Similarly, marks were not awarded for suggesting that the dancers are in a mental institution.

Dance work 1**Question 1(a)**

This question was well answered and the majority of students cited the costume designer accurately.

Question 1 (b)

This question was also very well answered. Almost all students were awarded full marks for this question.

Question 1 (c)

Many students offered answers in this question that would have been awarded marks in question 1 (d) such as adding to the geographical location or suggesting gender. Many students were awarded at least one mark, but many failed to make the connection between how the costume related to action content. Those who answered well, used terminology such as enhances flow, body-line, created ease of movement, enhanced the genre of the dance, to explain their answers.

Question 1 (d)

Many students gained 1 mark in this question but often spent too much time elaborating on the same point or they had mentioned their points in question 1 (c) and failed to repeat them in this question. There were 3 marks available for this question and centres need to train students to make 3 separate contributions in order to gain full marks.

Dance work 2**Question 2 (a)**

The majority of students answered this question well and could name a starting point/stimulus, theme of their chosen dance work.

Question 2 (b)

Improved responses were seen by students when describing sequential motifs, particularly in relation to space and action. Many students scored 3 marks but where 2 marks were given it was nearly always because the dynamic content was missing. Some students wrote too generically, often bundling actions into one sentence with no sequential reference.

Question 2 (c)

There were various responses to this question. Few students were awarded all 3 marks but most could make one or two points referring the motif to the stimulus/starting point of the work.

Question 2 (d)

There was a good spread of responses to the choices given in this question. The majority of students opted for costume and responded well. Accompaniment and camera use were not so common, nor well answered, although some students responded very well to the use of camera in Swansong, particularly at the beginning, with the close up of the prisoner that then pans out.

Both works**Question 3 (a)**

The majority of students achieved full marks for this question. Worthy responses included reference to colour, shape, pattern of lighting, directions of lights, intensity etc.

Question 3 (b)

Lighting contributions were identified well in this question. Some students who only described without explanation could not be awarded full marks. Centres need to understand that to achieve marks, students must make a point, describe with an example and explain the relevance. Many contribution marks on the mark scheme were awarded. Students are also beginning to offer good interpretive points and centres should encourage this.

Two marks were available in this question for quality of written communication (QWC) which is awarded for questions worth 6 marks or more. The majority of students were awarded at least 1 mark for this question. Students who gained full marks used dance terminology appropriately and accurately. They also demonstrated excellent use of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout question 3 (b).

Own Work**Question 4**

It is vital that centres inform their students about the different units in the specification. In this question it was important to write about unit 4a. Confusion did arise where students used either “Impulse” or “Find It” as the professional work and therefore could not access marks. Some students used works such as Swan Lake as their professional work, which is not in the specification.

Many students did not indicate which work they had studied for unit 4(a), leaving the space blank. This caused problems for examiners who had some difficulty identifying which professional work was being described.

Question 4(a)

When answered well, students could describe in detail motifs they had been taught from one of the prescribed works.

Question 4(b)

It is pleasing to note that there were some excellent responses to this question. Many students were awarded full marks. Where students performed well, they wrote about choreographic devices in relation to the original motif they had described in 4 (a).

Question 4(c)

Most students could identify an accurate choreographic structure and therefore gained 1 mark.

Question 4(d)

The majority of students achieved at least 1 mark for this question and could describe the climax or highlight of their dance well.

Question 4(e)

There was a varied response to this question. Students understood the idea of impact, contrast, effect on an audience, relationship with accompaniment and/or storyline.

Question 5

Students who wrote about feedback or changing action, dynamics or space rarely went on to give a good impact example. Marks were often not awarded because the students simply stated that the dance was more interesting or they repeated the question and said it improved the dance. Better responses came when students really considered what the improvements were for instance a more obvious climax, a definite link between accompaniment and action and/or the impact of filming work and receiving feedback.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion