

MY MUSIC THEORY – MELODY WRITING MARK SHEET

Student's Composition:

OBOE

1) Violin or Oboe
ALLEGRO

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'ALLEGRO'. The first measure starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. A crescendo hairpin is drawn across the first four measures. The second staff continues the melody, with a piano (p) dynamic marking above the fifth measure. The third staff concludes the piece with a forte (f) dynamic marking above the sixth measure and a final crescendo hairpin leading to a double bar line. The word 'OBOE' is written above the first staff, and '1) Violin or Oboe' is written above the first measure.

Student: XXXXX XXXXXX

Date: 1 June 2008

Question No: Instruments, 1

1.	Length & Balance	1/2
2.	Neatness	1/1
3.	Notational Accuracy	2/2
4.	Performance Directions	2/2
5.	Suitability to Instrument	1/2/1
6.	Sequencing	1/2/2
7.	Cadence Points	0/2
8.	Overall impact	1/3
	Total	8/15

1. It is 8 bars long, which is good. However, you need to have 2 clear four-bar phrases. You have indicated a breath mark half-way through, but the melody does not seem to be divided clearly into two. It's a good idea to draw a phrase mark from bars 1-4 and from bars 5-8, to indicate this more clearly.
2. Your manuscript is very neat and easy to read. Well done!
3. All your bars add up, everything is present and correct.
4. Very good. The performance directions follow the melodic line in a meaningful way. You could add an FF at the end to make for a more dramatic ending!
5. There are a couple points to make here. Firstly, it's much easier to take a breath after a long note, than after a shorter one, because it's easier to steal a fraction off a

crotchet or a minim than off a semi-quaver! Your oboist has had two crotchet rests to breathe in bar 2, so they should be able to make it to the end of bar 5 without another breath. Secondly, an oboist would need to play the whole piece "tongued". You should draw phrase marks to indicate which groups of notes should be played in one breath. Notes without any articulation indicated are always played "tongued", but it is extremely tiring to tongue every note! The actual notes, however, are fine for an oboist to play.

6. This is the main weakness of your composition. It feels quite "bitty". I can see that you have tried to use sequences, so you are definitely heading in the right direction. However, I think the problem is that you have tried to introduce too much new material into a short space. You have 3 quite different rhythms in the first 3 bars, which is too much, too soon. The basic principle is to sequence the first two bars (not drastically though), to create the first four-bar phrase, then sequence the first phrase to create the second. I don't want to kill your creativity, but for Grade 5 Theory it's usually better to make small changes to the given opening, rather than show off your compositional flair!
7. I am not sure where you intend your first phrase to end (see p.1). The safest bet is bar 4. A middle cadence can be thought of like a comma in the middle of a sentence – so it's often better to end it with a note with some duration (crotchet or longer). Bar four uses a VI-V cadence, which is ok, but a IV-V, II-V or I-V cadence is more common. Your melody however, suggests that the first phrase ends on bar 5, the cadence itself is not clear at this point.
8. This is a good start and I think you have a lot of potential. The main points you need to work on are sequencing (think "less is more!"), and the cadence points. It can be useful to write the notes of the chords that could go with your tune at the end of each phrase, to check whether the cadence is working properly. This would also give you extra "real life" practice for the cadence questions in the exam.