

KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATION COUNCIL KCSE, 2014

MUSIC PAPER 1 ANALYSIS

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3.10 MUSIC (511)

Music for KCSE is tested in three different papers as summarized below:

Paper 1 (511/1) Practical Performance: This paper comprises of a number of practical tests which measure the candidate's practical musicianship.

Paper 1 (511/2) Aural Tests: This paper tests the candidate's listening and transcription skills.

Paper 3 (511/3) Theory of Music: This is a fully written paper which comprises of the basic theory and practice in music, history of African and Western music and analysis of selected African and Western music.

3.10.1 GENERAL CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE

The table below summarizes the candidates' general performance in KCSE Music (511) examination for the years 2012 to 2014.

Table 18: Candidate's Overall Performance in KCSE Music from 2012 to 2014

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Mark	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2012	511/1	1242	50	35.44	07.33
	511/2		50	22.95	11.64
	511/3		100	43.52	11.96
	Combined		200	101.59	27.29
2013	511/1	1222	50	37.62	6.32
	511/2		50	25.81	11.40
	511/3		100	50.35	14.73
	Combined		200	113.65	27.74
2014	511/1	1288	50	38.26	5.95
	511/2		50	23.44	10.88
	511/3		100	46.56	14.34
	Combined		200	107.82	27.14

From the table above, the following can be deduced:

- The number of candidates has increased from 1222 in 2013 to 1288 in 2014.
- There is a slight drop in the overall performance as indicated by the drop in the mean posted in the 2014 examination as compared to the 2013 examination. This is because of the drop in the performance of paper 2 and paper 3, which behaved in a similar manner.
- Although Paper 1 has recorded a better mean score of **38.26** in 2014 as compared to **37.62** in 2013, the reduction in the **Standard Deviation** is an indicator that there is no good spread of the candidates' scores as the candidates are mainly lumped together. However, this being a practical performance paper, this trend in performance is expected.

This report discusses some of the questions/tasks and sections that posed a challenge to the candidates of the 2014 KCSE Music examination.

3.10.2 Music Paper 1 (511/1): PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE

There were four tests in this paper. Different issues were raised on each of the tests as follows:

Test 1: Own choice of an African piece (song/dance/instrumental)

Candidates were expected to perform as a solo or as a leader (soloist) of a larger group in case of folksong or dance. There however is an option of playing a solo African traditional instrument in the idiom of the community of origin.

Observations:

- i. Most of the candidates opted for the folksong or dance as opposed to playing a traditional instrument.
- ii. Some candidates were unable to distinguish between a folk song and folk dance in their introduction.
- iii. Some candidates made wrong choices of items in terms of gender, topic and age.
- iv. Playing of contemporary tunes on traditional instruments was also a common practice.

Recommendations:

- i. Candidates should be encouraged to take up playing of traditional African instruments as a viable option for this examination. This will help in preservation of the instruments which are quickly disappearing as a result of not being used.
- ii. Teachers should guide candidates to distinguish between a folk song and dance in terms of presentation.
- iii. Teachers should guide candidates to make appropriate choices of items for performance.
- iv. Students should be guided to play only traditional tunes on the chosen traditional instruments.

Test 2: Set Piece (Western style for voice or instrument)

A wide variety of vocal and instrumental pieces are provided at least 1 year before the examination. Candidates are required select only **one piece** for either voice or instrument, prepare it and present for assessment.

Observations:

- i. Most presentations by candidates were incompatible with the recorded accompaniment.
- ii. A number of candidates seemed unprepared even after having had the music for more than a year.
- iii. Most performance directions with regard to tempo, dynamics etc were ignored by the candidates
- iv. Candidates opting for the instruments are very few compared to those taking voice as an option
- v. Instrumental performers (except descant recorder) generally exhibited better preparedness as compared to their voice and recorder counterparts.

Recommendations:

- i. Teachers should ensure that candidates rehearse with live accompaniment. Where not possible, candidates need to rehearse well with the recorded accompaniment to ensure compatibility.
- ii. Performance skills should be incorporated in lessons starting from Form 1 to ensure candidates develop the performance skill in good time.
- iii. Avail the music to candidates in good time to ensure thorough preparation and interpretation of the music.

Test 3: Prescribed Technical Exercises

- i. These were generally fairly well presented across the different performance media. However, the **minor scale** and **minor arpeggio** was a little difficult for most of the voice candidates.
- ii. Accuracy of notes (pitch) posed a great challenge to most candidates who presented voice items.
- iii. A few centers also played the outdated exercises. Teachers should keep up to date with the changes that take place in the examination regulations.

Test 4: Sight singing/Sight reading test

The ability to play/sing at sight entirely depends on the level of preparedness of the candidate as a performer. Whereas majority of the instrumental candidates easily read what was presented to them, many of the voice candidates had a problem singing the correct pitches at sight.

It is therefore suggested that sight reading be approached as a stepwise progressive process which must be introduced in form 1 and developed over the years. Participation in school/external music activities would be a key factor that would enhance acquisition and development of accuracy in sol-fa reading.