

**Advanced Higher Listening
Commentary
Exemplification – Part 2**

November 2006

Candidate 9

Advanced Higher Listening Commentary

Bruckner - *Locus Iste*
Taverner - *The Lamb*

Assessor's pro forma

Unit Music: Listening (Advanced Higher)

CANDIDATE 3

Locus Iste and The Lamb (final version)

Documentary evidence	√/x	Comments
Assessor's process observation checklist	√	<i>Provided</i>
Commentary on two or more works or movements (1500-2000 words)	√	<i>The commentary meets the minimum word requirement</i>
Referenced music mss. excerpts	√	<i>Excerpts are integrated into the text; complete copies are also submitted</i>
Referenced audio excerpts	√	<i>Excerpts are clearly referenced in the text; complete recordings also provided</i>
Candidate evidence is presented clearly and is intelligible to the reader	√	<i>The commentary is well written; presentation is clear</i>
Performance criteria/evidence requirements		
Personal choice of work is explained.	√	<i>The candidate's interest as a performer is explained.</i>
Chosen works are placed in context.	√	<i>Sufficient information provided.</i>
Stylistic features of the music are identified.	√	<i>Important features are identified.</i>
Compositional features of the music (melody, harmony, rhythm, structure, timbre, genre, form) are described by means of detailed comment.	√	<i>Although there are one or two errors of omission there is comprehensive coverage of both works.</i>
Notated music is referenced to the text, and is accurately related to audio excerpts. Music is notated correctly.	√	<i>The notation and audio excerpts are accurately referenced to the text.</i>
Comparison is made between the chosen works. Comparison relates to style and use of compositional techniques.	√	<i>Important features are accurately compared.</i>
Candidate's findings are briefly and effectively summarised.	√	<i>This had been adequately covered.</i>
Pass	√	
Supplementary comments		<i>This commentary exhibits quality work; all the important features in the music are identified and all the evidence is supported by accurate references.</i>

Assessor's process observation checklist

Unit Music: Listening (Advanced Higher)

CANDIDATE 3

Locus Iste and The Lamb

Choice of works for study	√/x	Comments	Date
has been made independently by candidate	√	<i>The candidate very quickly made the choice of 2 pieces; personal enjoyment in the performance of the music was a significant factor.</i>	
has been made by the candidate, with some guidance from tutor			
has been made by tutor as a result of candidate indecision			
Initial research into first work		<i>The candidate undertook much of the research independently; tutor input was required in accessing more technical aspects of the music.</i>	
successfully and independently undertaken by candidate			
undertaken by candidate with some prompting/guidance	√		
undertaken with considerable tutor input			
Initial research into other work(s)		<i>The candidate undertook most of the research independently; tutor input was required less than in the first work, the candidate seemed to find the second piece more easily accessible in terms of musical analysis.</i>	
successfully and independently undertaken by candidate			
undertaken by candidate with some prompting/guidance	√		
undertaken with considerable tutor input		(Insufficient candidate input to justify a Unit pass)	
First draft completed by candidate	√	<i>The candidate worked hard on the first draft with the important sections showing a lot of commendable features. Areas for revision were identified and re-worked into the final version.</i>	
Subsequent draft(s) completed by candidate			
Final version of commentary	√		
completed successfully by the candidate	√		
has eventually been completed, but with an unacceptable level of tutor prompting/assistance		(Insufficient candidate input to justify a Unit pass)	
Outcomes achieved/Unit pass	√		
Supplementary comments			

Music Advanced Higher
Listening commentary
Final version

"Locus iste" by Anton Bruckner and "The Lamb" by John Tavener are two equally beautiful and completely different vocal pieces written for SATB unaccompanied choir. I sang both of these pieces with the school choir and thought that they would be good choices for my commentary.

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) was a cathedral organist in Linz in Austria. He was very much a Romantic era composer and was greatly influenced by Wagner. Bruckner is most remembered for his symphonies and sacred music.

Around the middle of the 19th century, composers were going back to early music as a source of musical ideas. "Locus iste" is a motet (sacred work with a Latin text) and it is intended for liturgical performance (i.e. church service). This piece was composed in 1869 for the dedication of the church. The translation of the words is :-

"This place was made by God,
a priceless mystery;
it is beyond reproach."

John Tavener, born in 1944, was greatly influenced by Stravinsky's austere religious music. "The Lamb", composed in 1985, is written in the strophic form (i.e. different words are sung to the same music). But each verse is scored differently.

The text of "The Lamb" is a poem written by William Blake, which is based on the metaphor of the Lamb, which is compared with the traditional metaphor of Christ ("The Lamb of God").

At the beginning, this piece appears to be in G major but later it becomes clear that it is more in E minor although the composer uses a lot of notes outside the key.

The texture of "The Lamb" at the beginning is monophonic (the soprano part has a solo melody),

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of "The Lamb". It consists of four staves labeled SOPRANO, ALTO, TENOR, and BASS. The soprano staff has a melody with the lyrics "Lit - tle lamb, who made thee?". The other three staves (ALTO, TENOR, BASS) are empty, indicating that only the soprano part is active at this point. The word "monophony" is written in the center of the score.

but overall the texture could be described as homophonic as, rhythmically, the parts follow the same movement. There is practically no melisma in this piece, so the word setting is predominantly syllabic (i.e. one note per syllable).

The image shows a musical score for "The Lamb" with four staves. The lyrics are "Gave thee such a ten - der voice, Mak - ing all the vales re - joice?". The word "homophony" is written vertically on the left side of the score. The score shows that all four parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are moving together rhythmically, illustrating a homophonic texture.

The dynamic range of the piece is small – only from **pp** to **mp** and it does not depend on the number of the parts sounding at one particular moment, but is specifically marked in by the composer (unlike much earlier choral music, which uses variation of number of voices for variation in dynamics).

Poco meno mosso

ppp
I, a child, and thou a lamb,

There is no time signature in this piece, the rhythm is not restricted by the bar lines, it is flexible and always guided by the words in almost a rubato-like fashion.

Tavener uses inversions and retrograde, making the harmonies very dramatic and clashing.

The whole piece could be divided into 2 sections (1st – bars 1 to 10, 2nd – bars 10 to 20,), second section being an exact repeat of the first one with the difference that all 4 parts are singing all the way through section 2.

Section 1 could be divided into phrases A, B and A' (similar to a simple ternary form).

Phrase A (bars 1-2) is sung by only two parts (soprano and alto) and it appears to be in G major. Bar 2 is a repetition of bar 1 (in the soprano) and the added alto part is a simultaneous inversion of the soprano part. (Audio excerpt 1, bars 1-6)

With extreme tenderness – flexible – always guided by the words (*♩* = c. 40)

SOPRANO
Lit - tle lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?

ALTO
Dost thou know who made thee?

TENOR

BASS

repetition

Simultaneous inversion of the soprano

Phrase B (bars 3-6) at the beginning (bars 3,4) has monophonic texture as the melody is sung only by a soprano part.

Gave thee life, and bid thee feed — retrograde — By the stream and o'er the mead;

monophony

Bar 4 is a retrograde of bar 3.

The soprano part in bars 5 and 6 is a repetition of bars 3 and 4 and again, the added alto part is a simultaneous inversion of the soprano part.

Gave thee cloth - ing of de - light, Soft - est cloth - ing, wool - ly, bright;

Gave thee cloth - ing of de - light, Soft - est cloth - ing, wool - ly, bright;

simultaneous inversion of the soprano part

Phrase A' has the same melody as phrase A, but it is now sung by all 4 parts. Bars 7-9 are exactly the same and bar 10 is an augmentation of bars 7 to 9. (Audio excerpt 2, bars 7-10)

Lit - tle Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee? — augmentation —

Lit - tle Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?

Lit - tle Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?

Lit - tle Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?

In bars 11-20 (audio excerpt 3) the music repeats bars 1-10 except that monophonic sections are sung in unison/octaves. The overall mood of "The Lamb" is very calm, but also mysterious and cold because of all the chromatic harmonies and ambiguous keys.

"Locus iste" is quite the opposite of "The Lamb". The harmonies are simpler and mostly diatonic. The form of this piece could be described as ternary(ABA), although the first section is slightly different when repeated at the end – it is now extended, so the form is ABA'. Similarly to "The Lamb", the texture of "Locus iste" is predominantly homophonic. The word setting of both of the pieces is mainly syllabic with a few small melismas

melismas

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with Latin lyrics. The lyrics are: "in - as - si - ma - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum ir - re - pro - ha - si - bi - lis est, ir - re - pro - ha - si - bi - lis est." The score includes dynamic markings like *pp* and *f*. There are handwritten annotations: "melismas" above the first staff and "20" in a box above the second staff. Circles are drawn around specific notes in the lyrics, likely indicating melismas.

with the exception of the very end of the "Locus iste" where a long beautiful melisma occurs which lasts for 2 bars (bars 40-42) and is used to paint the word "Deo" ("God").

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with Latin lyrics: "De - o, a De - o, De - o fa - ctus est." The score includes dynamic markings like *cresc.*, *f*, and *pp*. There are handwritten annotations: "melismas" above the first staff and "20" in a box above the second staff. Circles are drawn around specific notes in the lyrics, likely indicating melismas.

The harmonies at the beginning of "Locus iste" are simple diatonic harmonies. There is a good example of a false relation in bars 4 to 5 (between soprano and alto parts).

False relation

5

fa - ctus est, lo - cus

In bar five there is a modulation into the dominant key and it seems that bars 5 and 6 are the sequence of bars 1 and 2, although the rhythm is the same and the melody is again descending, the notes are different, therefore not making it a sequence. In bar 8 the harmony is beautifully decorated with a double suspension.

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, a

Lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, a

Lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, a

Lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, lo - cus i - ste a De - o fa - ctus est, a

in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est,
 in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est,
 in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, ir - re - pre - hen -
 - ma - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum

Bars 24-25 are a harmonic sequence to bars 22-23. The harmonies in the next bar become again simple diatonic. The phrase finishes with an imperfect cadence with a cadential 6-4 (chords I_c-V) and is decorated with this time prepared 7-6 suspension (bars 27-28). Again, there is a half-a-bar long silence at the end of the phrase. (Audio excerpt 5, bars 17-29).

ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, Lo - cus i - ste
 ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, Lo - cus i - ste
 - si - bi - lis est, ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, ir - re - pre - hen - si - bi - lis est, Lo - cus i - ste
 Lo - cus i - ste a

Bars 30-39 of the next section (section A') are the exact repeat of the opening 10 bars. Bar 40 is the start of a long melisma. The harmony becomes chromatic, and there is a retardation on the chord of E minor in bar 42. Bar 43 is the longest silence in this piece. The last phrase is marked **pp** and the harmonies there are diatonic. Bars 46-47 are decorated with a very long suspension, which is also not typical for the style adopted by Bruckner. (Audio excerpt 6, bars 30-end).

De - a, a De - o, De - o fa - ctus est.
 De - a, a De - o, De - o fa - ctus est.
 De - a, a De - o, De - o fa - ctus est.
 De - a, a De - o, De - o fa - ctus est.

The mood of this piece is calm and contemplative. Bruckner, having written "Locus iste" for the dedication of the church, had very skilfully made the building of the church become a part of this piece.

"The Lamb" and "Locus iste" are two very different pieces, containing very different features, creating an equally great impact on the listener.

In comparing the two pieces I found the following three features to be the most important.

1. "The Lamb" has complete rhythmic freedom, written without barlines, whereas "Locus iste" is in 4/4 time throughout.
2. "The Lamb", although in a sort of E minor key, has a lot of freedom with a lot of chromatic notes and dissonances caused by the use of inversions and retrograde. "Locus iste" uses more conventional harmony but it also has dissonance and chromatic notes; the dissonance comes from the suspensions and the chromatic notes give a greater richness to the harmony.
3. "The Lamb" has a narrow range of dynamics (**pp-mp**) whereas "Locus iste" has a much bigger range (**pp-ff**). This means that "The Lamb" has a more intimate sound whereas "Locus iste" has a much bigger impact; "The Lamb" is colder than the warmth of "Locus iste".

In studying these two pieces I feel that I have been able to gain an insight into the main features of the styles of composing of these two composers in the way that they both write a sacred, unaccompanied piece of work for SATB choir. It has helped me to understand some of the ways in which a piece of music from the 19th century is different from a piece of much more recent times.