

BTEC Tech Award 2022 in Music Practice

External Assessment – MID MARK



Sample Marked Learner Work

Issue 1 – October 2024

Component 3: Responding to a Commercial Brief

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The audio recording can be found [here](#) - [SMLW Mid Mark 2024-2025 Activity 2.mov](#)

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You will need to refer to the BTEC Reformed Tech Award in Music Practice specification alongside these sample materials

[Link to specification and other relevant documentation](#)

Note:

The Pearson Set Task and the learner's work used for this sample marked learner work are taken from the Summer 2024 series.

You are reminded that you need to use the relevant Set Task for the series in which your learners have been entered.

Introduction

The following sample marked learner work has been prepared as guidance for centres and learners. It can be used as a helpful tool when teaching and preparing for external units.

The SMLW includes examples of real learners' work, accompanied with examiner tips and comments based on the responses of how learners performed.

Each activity will show the learner's response, followed by comments by the Lead Examiner. Tips may be offered where relevant.

The marking grids for each activity are also included for reference.

Pearson Set Task

Commercial Music Brief

'Launch Pad' is an online music magazine for teenagers where up-and-coming young musicians are offered the opportunity to showcase their work.

The magazine editors are launching an exciting new section called 'New Beginnings' where musicians can present reimagined pieces that have been created in a different musical style to the original. 'New Beginnings' aims to show how pre-existing music can be used as a starting point to inspire musicians to explore and develop their own unique sound. The section will also include information for subscribers about how the piece was created and developed from the original.

In the first edition of the 'New Beginnings' section, performers and producers are being asked to select a piece of music from a list and create a new version in one of four given styles. The magazine editors have provided a list of 10 pieces to choose from. Pieces should be a significant reinterpretation of the original and should demonstrate a knowledge of the idiomatic characteristics of the chosen style.

Along with the music product, a written commentary must be submitted so that the subscriber can learn and understand how a new version of a piece is created and developed.

You have decided to create and submit material for 'New Beginnings' to the magazine. You should choose **one** of the following four musical styles:

1. Ambient.
2. Britpop.
3. Disco.
4. Swing.

And choose **one** of the following pieces:

- *Don't Start Now* – Dua Lipa
- *We've Only Just Begun* – The Carpenters
- *New Normal* – Khalid
- *New Soul* – Yael Naim
- *Start a Band* – Brad Paisley and Keith Urban
- *New Body Rhumba* – LCD Soundsystem
- *Blue Monday* – New Order
- *New World Symphony – Largo* – Dvorak
- *That's How You Start Over* – Diana Ross
- *New Day* – Take That

The style that you choose **must** be different from the style of the original piece.

For this Set Task you cannot use the following combination:

- Disco and *That's How You Start Over* – Diana Ross

Sample Marked Learner Work

Learner 1 (Mid Mark)

Total Marks Awarded: 37

General Comments: Overall, this was a solid piece of work – where the learner did perform well for the final product. The aspects which let them down were mainly concerned in Activity 3 and to an extent, in the fact that they did not really ‘perform’ this piece. As the comments suggest later on, the learner needed to develop a higher level of stagecraft.

With regards to Activity 3, although they did spend a lot of time producing the document, it had little relevance to the product submitted with no justification as to why this was the case.

Activity 1

Assessment Objective 1: Initial response to the music brief

What did I choose and why?

I chose blue Monday – new order as my song and I chose ambient as my style I’m going to change it into.

I have chosen this song because I have liked it for years. I love the vocals during the beat drop. I chose the style ambient because I think there is a wide variety of things you can do to manipulate the piece into an ambient style. This includes: pitch, tempo and dynamics. From my research, the ambient style uses piano and that is the instrument I play so I am very comfortable using it in my composition. It challenges me as a piano player to manipulate the song into an ambient style with soft piano being played, since this song is not typically a song played on the piano. The song I’ve chosen is ambitious as it significantly contrasts to the slow relaxed style I’m going to change it into. Another reason I have chosen this style is I play a lot of ambient music already on the piano and there is a lot of improvisation which is a skill I am used to practicing and using in past music lessons .

How will I respond to the brief?

From my previous music component I chose to do creating and performing. I will learn to play the melody of the chosen part of the song on the piano. I have chosen to do the intro and the chorus of blue Monday. I am going to slow the piece right down since it has a fast tempo normally and change the dynamics of it so its less powerful and more soft to listen to. I may create a backing on sound trap where I will edit the different layers of the song so the instruments used are changed to ambient-style instruments. If I do play the backing I will play it along live with the melody and record it. If I do not decide to do that I will slim the piece down and just play the piano part live.

How will my response to the brief address the aims?

My response will meet the aims of the brief because the brief says the composition should be in the theme ‘new beginnings’ and the song I have chosen was released in 1983 whereas the ambient style I have chosen to put it in is used in coffee shops, bars and restaurants. I think my song and my style fits the theme because the style massively contrasts to the song which shows how I will change the song into a ‘new beginnings’.

How will I use the elements of the song and the style?

I will keep the vocals in the chorus of the song but I will make them less harsh and ominous and change them into a lighter instrument. The piano is a lighter instrument and I will play it at a high pitch. I am not entirely sure if I will keep the vocals in the making I might make, but if not I will play them on the piano and learn the notes of the vocals.

Resources I will need to successfully make my composition

To learn and practice the melody of my piece I will need to use a practice room which has a piano in the music department. I will need to use a computer in the main music room which has access to the internet and sound trap so if I do end up deciding to create a backing to play along live to. I will use word or a sheet of paper to note down how long I spend my time on tasks since I have had bad time management with past components. I will also create a time line for all tasks and activities I will do throughout component 3 to track what I'm doing and make sure I have enough time.

Lead Examiner Commentary

The learner is clear on the task within the brief and has selected a piece and style. There is some vagueness with regards to the characteristics of Ambient music and only a basic discussion of resources. Some mention of elements have been included although this has not been done in detail and mainly instrumentation has been discussed.

Mark: 4

Activity 2

Assessment Objective 2: Create a music product

Insert Link to Video

Lead Examiner Commentary

Activity 2a)

The use of rhythms throughout are effective. There is good use of pedalling to allow for stylistic awareness and some syncopation as well. Texturally it is effective and there is some nice melodic development and improvisation.

Mark: 11

Lead Examiner Commentary

Activity 2b)

Competent and stylistic although there were some small errors at the end. It was a consistent performance which demonstrated some good expression throughout.

Mark: 13

Lead Examiner Commentary

Activity 2c)

The piece is the correct length but stagecraft was not strong. Apart from at the end, you didn't see the learner's face and they were clearly uncomfortable at the end (which has been trimmed for purposes of this sample marked learner work)

Mark: 6

Tips

Where learners are performing, they need to engage with the performance. It is helpful for the teachers to have supported the learners in understanding how to present themselves when performing.

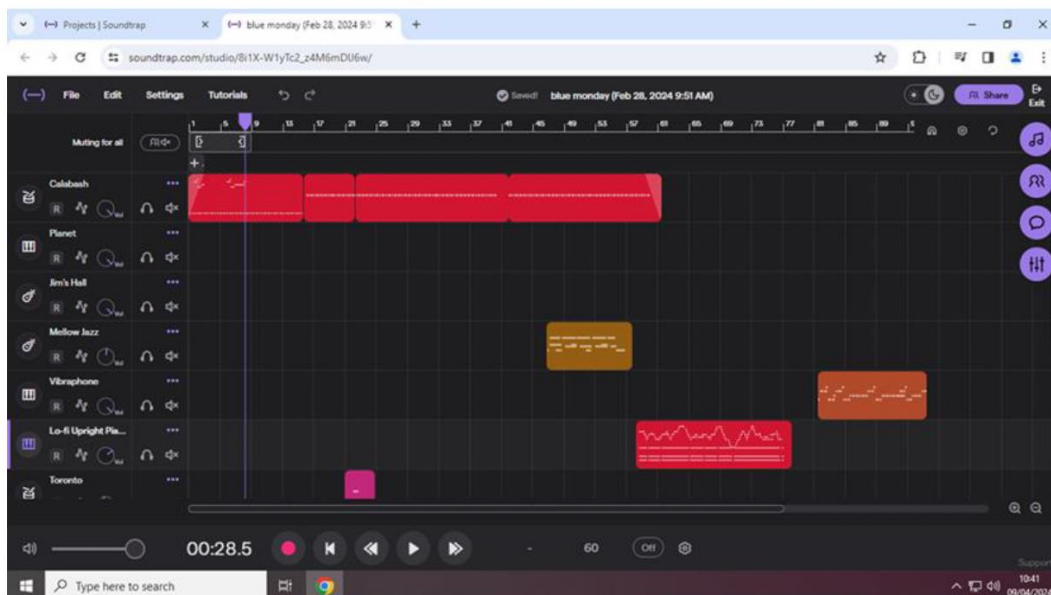
Where learners are performing in a group, they should be visible and easily identifiable (which can be done by all of the performers stating their names at the start of the recording)

Activity 3

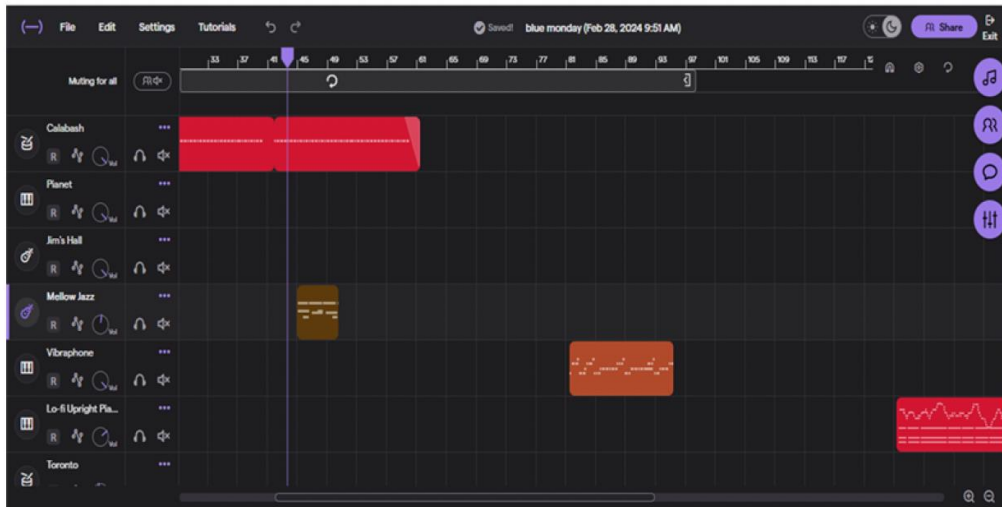
Assessment Objective 3: Individual commentary on the creative process

How and why have I developed my response to the brief?

I started my creative process by deciding that I wanted to create a backing track on sound trap which corresponds to the song I chose (blue Monday). Before I began to create my backing track I researched the piece and ambient style thoroughly and I listened to different cover styles of the song.

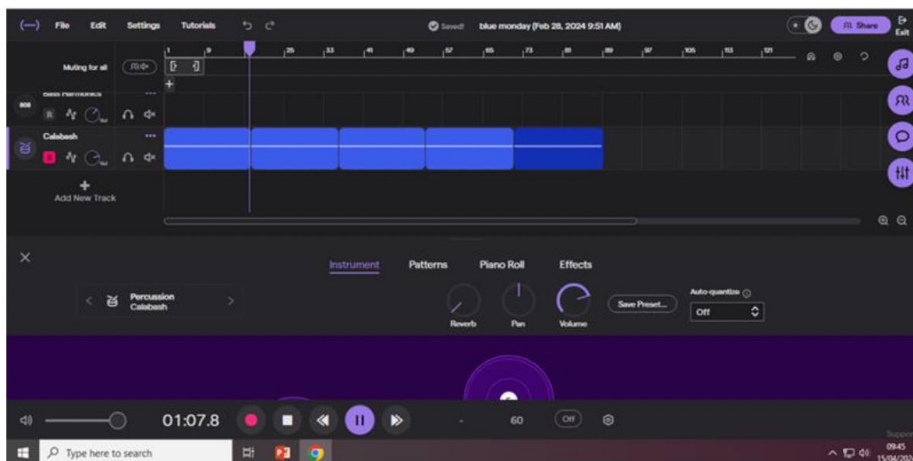


After doing that I spent a lot of hours creating and developing my backing track and creating different layers and instruments of the real song into ambient-style instruments and eventually slowing the backing down overall. To 60bpm.



I used you tube to learn the melody of blue Monday on a piano tutorial and used the practice rooms in the music block to learn the melody over a few hours. Once I learnt the entire piece of the song I started to slow the tempo down as I have a weakness of speeding songs up naturally as I know it and I'm able to play fully. I sent the backing to my email so I could try to play along with it live which was my original plan anyway. I was slowly learning the parts that I created on the backing track, on the piano so slowly I was taking out more of the backing until it was just the drum beat and a few sections which are played in the real song, which I eventually took out anyway because I found that I didn't need the backing track at all.

I created a new drum beat on sound trap and tidied it up so I was perfectly in time, because I imported the drum beat myself and some of it was making me go out of time so I cleaned that up and imported it again. After that I copied it so it played along to other layers of the backing.



I then overall slowed the whole backing track down using the tempo button on sound trap, I slowed it down to 60bpm because the style of ambient isn't usually fast music. I also created an improvisation section on the backing piece because I felt the style is commonly improvising but I felt after a while I didn't really need it and I couldn't find what I did on sound trap, on the backing so I stopped.

On the piano I began to slow the piece down entirely using the pedal to make the melody flow and merge together to give a relaxed feeling. I downloaded a metronome app on my phone and set the tempo to 60 bpm which was the same tempo as my backing piece and began to just use that to keep myself in time and still carry on the idea of using a backing to play live along with it. I tried to do the improvisation section live on the piano but I struggled to make it sound as good as it was on the backing.

How and why did I use the music elements, genres, style and performing techniques?

One way I used the genre ambient was slowing down the overall piece to 60bpm. I used a performing technique when I imported my backing track onto the music iPad and plugged it into the amplifier to play along live to it. I used a soft dynamic by pressing lightly and smoothly on the piano so its softer to listen to as an ambient piece would usually be. I made the piece into a thin texture because ambient style music isn't

harsh and usually a lot of different instruments being played at the same time like an orchestra, this is why I chose to eventually perform the piece with just one instrument being played because the backing track was making it sound way too complicated. I played it at a low pitch so its more relaxing and at a long duration. I also found from my

research that ambient music is quite repetitive which also links with my piece because the left hand melody plays a lot of the same thing throughout. I used the pedal on the piano. I used the midi keyboard in the main music computer room to import all the layers onto my sound trap backing piece. Another performing technique is I decided to record in a very echo-y room in the music room because I think it sounds better and links in with the ambient theme .

what are my strengths and my areas of improvement?

One of my strengths when doing this task was definitely turning the whole piece into the style of ambient music . I found this to be something I would definitely be good at as ive already played a lot of pieces in an ambient style before and a key feature of ambient music is playing the piano, which is my instrument anyway. I also thought that using the metronome app on my phone was helpful as one of my weaknesses is not playing in time and the metronome really helped me to slow down. One of my areas of improvement was improvising. I found that it was easier to create and improvisation on my sound trap backing piece but not on my live performance of playing the piano. I found it hard in my creating hours to do the backing piece and learn the melody. And then perform live to the backing track. I found as another weakness that creating the backing piece may have slowed me down as I could've worked harder and for a longer amount of time on the melody that I was learning on the piano. Another one of my weaknesses was timing but I did manage to create a timeline at the start of my first creating hour and I jotted down what I did In every creating hour so I could stay on task and make sure I have enough time just in case something might have gone wrong whilst creating.

Lead Examiner Commentary

The learner doesn't relate the document to the performance at all. There is discussion of this being on a DAW but no mention that this was changed. However, this does provide us with evidence of how the piece was created. No real discussions of the musical aspects of the creation

Mark: 3

Tips

When a learner chooses to produce a solo performance, then activity 3 should be related to that performance. In some cases, the learners may create a backing track using a DAW and it is appropriate to then comment on this within this activity.

It is helpful for learners to have collected screenshots during the creating process for inclusion in this last activity.

Where a learner is playing a solo performance with no additional backing track, then it would be helpful for the learner to discuss rehearsals and 'trying out' of ideas they made during the process.

Activity 1: Initial response to the music brief				
0 marks	1–2 marks	3–4 marks	5–6 marks	7–8 marks
No rewardable material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited planning which outlines superficial choices in how to respond to the brief. Limited consideration of how musical material can address the aims and requirements of the brief Limited consideration of how musical elements, styles and playing/producing techniques will be used. Limited consideration of the resources and skills development needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate planning which outlines choices which respond to some elements of the brief. Some consideration of how creative choices will address the aims and requirements of the brief. Some consideration of how appropriate musical elements, styles and playing/producing techniques will be used. Some consideration of the basic resources needed with some reference to adequate skills development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competent planning which takes a considered approach to how to respond to the brief. Informed and competent explanation of how the proposed musical material will address most of the aims and requirements of the brief. Competent consideration of how musical elements, styles and playing/producing techniques which are relevant to the brief will be used. Consideration of most of the resources and skills development needed, with reference to strengths and weaknesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed planning which contains a thoughtful and considered approach in how to respond to the brief. Detailed explanation with relevant examples of how the proposed musical material will successfully address almost all the aims and requirements of the brief. Detailed consideration of how relevant musical elements and specific styles and playing/producing techniques will be thoughtfully used to respond to the brief Detailed consideration of almost all of the resources needed with due consideration of barriers and opportunities linked to an insightful evaluation of the skills development needed.

Activity 2(a): Create a music product – the musical skill shown in the creative interpretation				
0 marks	1–4 marks	5–8 marks	9–12 marks	13–16 marks
No rewardable material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interpretation tentatively addresses the creative and stylistic aims of the music brief. The interpretation demonstrates a limited and sometimes inaccurate use of musical elements. The interpretation demonstrates a limited awareness of characteristics of musical style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interpretation adequately addresses some of the creative aims of the music brief. The interpretation demonstrates an adequate but inconsistent use of musical elements throughout. The interpretation demonstrates the basic characteristics of musical style which are adequately demonstrated in most of the piece. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interpretation effectively addresses most of the creative aims of the music brief by making creative choices appropriate to musical style. The interpretation demonstrates consistently accurate use of musical elements throughout which are deployed appropriately. The interpretation contains musical characteristics which make it recognisable as being in a musical style. These key features are demonstrated competently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interpretation perceptively addresses almost all of the creative aims of the music brief by making thoughtful creative choices informed by musical style. The interpretation demonstrates an assured use of musical elements throughout which are manipulated to achieve a desired effect. The interpretation is assured in demonstrating the idiomatic characteristics of musical style in an outcome which is successful and creative.

Activity 2(b): Create a music product – creating and performing – the technical musical skill in the final music product				
0 marks	1–5 marks	6–10 marks	11–15 marks	16–20 marks
No rewardable material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance demonstrates limited accuracy and technical ability throughout. The performance demonstrates limited use of musical expression. The final performance has major inconsistencies that detract from the overall quality of the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance demonstrates adequate accuracy and technique throughout with some errors. The performance demonstrates occasional use of appropriate musical expression. The final performance has minor inconsistencies that have some impact on the overall quality of the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance demonstrates competent accuracy and some stylistically appropriate techniques with minor errors. The performance demonstrates consistent use of competent musical expression. The final performance is generally consistent, with no negative impact on the overall quality of the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance demonstrates assured, confident and stylistically accurate techniques throughout, with no significant errors. The performance demonstrates an assured use of musical expression which adds to the success of the performance. The final performance is consistent throughout, which enhances the overall quality of the outcome.

Activity 2(b): Create a music product – creating and producing – the technical musical skill in the final music product				
0 marks	1–5 marks	6–10 marks	11–15 marks	16–20 marks
No rewardable material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The product demonstrates limited technical recording and production ability (including use of software, editing and effects). The product demonstrates limited use of musical expression. The final music product has major inconsistencies that detract from the overall quality of the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The product demonstrates adequate technical recording and production ability (including use of software, editing and effects) with some errors. The product demonstrates occasional use of appropriate musical expression. The final music product has minor inconsistencies that have some impact on the overall quality of the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The product demonstrates competent and stylistically appropriate technical recording and production ability (including use of software, editing and effects) with minor errors. The product demonstrates consistent use of competent musical expression. The final music product is generally consistent, with no negative impact on the overall quality of the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The product demonstrates assured, confident and stylistically accurate technical recording and production ability (including use of software, editing and effects) throughout, with almost no errors. The product demonstrates an assured use of musical expression which adds to the success of the final outcome. The final music product is consistent throughout, which enhances the overall quality of the outcome.

Activity 2(c): Create a music product – presentation and meeting technical requirements			
0 marks	1–2 marks	3–4 marks	5–6 marks
No rewardable material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the presentation of the musical product is generally inconsistent and unclear. The final music product tentatively meets the technical requirements of the brief. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the presentation of the musical product is adequate but with minor inconsistencies. The final music product partially meets the technical requirements of the brief. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the presentation of the musical product is generally clear and consistent. The final music product meets many of the technical requirements of the brief.
			7–8 marks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the presentation of the musical product is clear and effective throughout. The final music product meets the technical requirements of the brief.

Activity 3: Individual commentary on the creative process				
0 marks	1–2 marks	3–4 marks	5–6 marks	7–8 marks
No rewardable material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited account of how the music was developed through the creative process. Limited identification of musical elements, styles and techniques which were used to reinterpret the piece. Limited identification of the strengths and areas for improvement of the final product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate narrative-driven account of how the music was developed through the creative process with some reference to decision making. Adequate explanation of how musical elements, styles and techniques were modified to reinterpret the piece. Adequate description of the general strengths and areas for improvement of the final product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competent explanation of how and why the music was developed through the creative process with clear reference to the decision making process. Competent explanation of how and why musical elements, styles and techniques were modified to reinterpret the piece. Competent explanation of the strengths and areas for improvement of the final product with reference to examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough and detailed evaluation of how the music was developed through the creative process including reference to what would have happened if other choices had been made. Thorough and detailed evaluation of how musical elements, styles and techniques were manipulated to reinterpret the piece and what would have happened if other choices had been made. Thorough and detailed evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement of the final product with insightful references to specific examples.