



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2021

English - Ordinary Level - Paper 1

Total Marks: 140

Wednesday, June 9 – Morning, 9.30 – 12.20

- This paper is divided into two sections, Section I COMPREHENDING and Section II COMPOSING.
- The paper contains **three** texts on the general theme of **MUSIC**.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with each of the texts before beginning their answers.
- Both sections of this paper (COMPREHENDING and COMPOSING) must be attempted.
- Section I, Comprehending, carries 40 marks.
- Section II, Composing, carries 100 marks.

SECTION I – COMPREHENDING

- Two questions, A and B, follow each text.
- Candidates must answer **ONE** question in Section I:
either one Question A **OR one** Question B on **ONE** text.

SECTION II – COMPOSING

- Candidates must write on **one** of the compositions 1 – 7.

TEXT 1 – A RISING STAR OF THE IRISH HIP-HOP SCENE

This text is based on an interview with Denise Chaila conducted by journalist, Lauren Murphy.

1. She's a rapper and a philosopher. A feminist and a poet. She is from Zambia but she's also Irish. There are many labels that you could use to describe Denise Chaila, but one of them – 'Rising Star of the Irish Hip-Hop Scene' – is indisputable.

2. Denise's debut EP, *Duel Citizenship* was well-received by critics, tastemakers and music fans and has already opened several doors. It challenged the notion of rap music being gendered ("What's female rap?" she raps on *Copper Bullet*) and discusses her real-life Zambian-Irish heritage, too. On the title track, she pledges: "I could show you the spirit of Lucan, Limerick and Lusaka."

3. Denise Chaila was born in Chikankata, a rural village 125 km south of Zambian capital, Lusaka. Growing up, music was hard to come by, apart from her father's cassette collection and the gospel CDs she swapped with the nurses in the hospital he worked in. "There weren't very many instruments; there wasn't very much access to the global conversation about music," she explains. "Most of my formative musical experience was simply using what was available. There wasn't a lot of electricity in Chikankata, so we had to make do. We used to have clapping games, and stuff that you can do back and forth with other people. That's why I really love making music where I can have a back and forth with people."

4. The family relocated when her father, a doctor, was offered a post in Dublin and it was in Lucan that Denise discovered her love of reading and books, getting lost in fantasy tales by CS Lewis, Tolkien and Terry Pratchett. She once aspired to be a children's



fantasy novelist. Music would come later, in her teens. The band Destiny's Child was important to Denise because, "Beyoncé showed me what it was possible to do and be as a black woman living in primarily white spaces. Finding yourself, and having confidence, and not constantly being apologetic about the fact that your experiences just don't match the people around you." That led into hip-hop, although she covers her face and groans dramatically as she recalls her first steps into recording as a teenager. "I didn't think I could rap at the time," she admits.

5. Her dad's job moved the family to Limerick at an important juncture in the young Denise's life. After completing her Leaving Cert she was struggling to find a direction in life. Denise's mother encouraged her to channel her thoughts and emotions creatively, nudging her towards the YouTube videos of spoken-word artist, Genetics. "I was really struck by how honest it was," Chaila nods. "And the more I investigated poetry, and the spoken word in particular, I was like – this is a mixture of acting and prose. This is a mixture of poetry and passion. It was just frank, and blunt and real – and I was like – I need to do this."

6. Despite her blooming creative life, Denise would go on to study Politics and International Relations at the University of Limerick, with the intention of returning to Zambia to work to promote women's health. However, her life took another direction when she crossed paths with fellow African-Irish rappers GodKnows and Murli, members of the band Rusangano Family, in Limerick in 2014. Murli would go on to produce Denise's solo material.

7. Denise claims that there are more

similarities between Zambian and Irish cultures than most people realise. She says, "I went from a culture of storytellers in Zambia to a culture of storytellers in Ireland. A culture of musicians to a culture of musicians; from poets to poets, from immigrants to immigrants. It's important to recognise that you shouldn't bend to fit the world and its labels," she insists. "It's like, hey, this is who I am – when it comes to gender, when it comes to race, when it comes to identity and culture, I have some opinions, and this is what they are."

N.B. Answer only **ONE** question in Section I: either one Question A **OR** one Question B on **ONE** text.

Question A – 40 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 1, explain three significant influences on Denise Chaila's life so far. Support your answer with reference to the text. (10)
- (ii) Drawing on the information provided in the passage above, how do you think Denise Chaila has benefitted from her engagement with music? Support your response with reference to the text. (10)
- (iii) (a) Denise Chaila has lived both in Zambia and in Ireland. Identify a country, other than Ireland, where you would like to live and explain the reasons for your choice. (10)
- (b) Music is extremely important in Denise Chaila's life. Explain the importance of music in your life. (10)

Answer only **ONE** question in Section I: either one Question A **OR** one Question B on **ONE** text.

Question B – 40 Marks

Write a **review** of any **one** of the following: an album or a fictional or non-fictional book or a film with a music related theme. Your review will appear on a website popular with music fans. In your review you should: provide readers with some information about the item you have chosen to review, provide a fair and balanced account of what you found good or bad about this item and give reasons why, on balance, you would or would not recommend it to your readers.

TEXT 2 – THE END OF MUSIC AS WE KNOW IT?

This text, which draws on a variety of sources, considers how we have always used music to make connections with others and how technology is changing our musical experiences.

1. From ancient times humans have made music. Historians suggest that our earliest ancestors may have developed primitive forms of music as a means of communication. Cave-dwellers probably clapped and sang together, helping to create important social bonds. The enduring human urge to connect through music is still evident today. We can see it in the familiar songs and nursery rhymes passed down by generations of parents to their children.

2. Until recently in human history, music was hard to come by. If people wanted to listen to music they had two choices: they could go somewhere where musicians were playing or they could play it for themselves. Nowadays, we are spoiled for choice. From gramophones to smartphones, technology has revolutionised our musical experiences. The arrival of virtual assistants (such as Alexa and Siri) means we only have to say the title of a song for music to blare out of our Bluetooth speakers. Music streaming services, like Apple Music and Spotify, deliver a world of music to our various devices. We no longer need physical shops in order to purchase records and CDs or the machines required to play them. We can buy music online at any hour of the day or night.

3. Now, music is constantly in our lives. We carry it around in our pockets on our phones and listen to it through our high-tech headphones. We can't escape it in elevators and in supermarkets. We make lasting memories when we enjoy music together at concerts and festivals. As we are surrounded by music it is just as well that the invention of Auto-Tune means we no longer have to listen to performers struggling to sing in tune! Social media platforms have enabled us to



Hatsune Miku

share songs, albums and playlists with our friends. These platforms have helped to make music simultaneously both a highly sociable and an entirely virtual experience.

4. This virtual experience of music can even extend to the performers we engage with. Artificially manufactured pop-star, Hatsune Miku, is a turquoise-haired teen idol. This vocaloid was created by music-software company, Crypton Future Media. She is an avatar or virtual performer. Her name is made up of Japanese words meaning “the first sound of the future”. This virtual singing sensation at one time had 2.5 million fans on Facebook. She has appeared on American prime-time TV, opened a concert for Lady Gaga, collaborated with Pharrell Williams, and sung more than 100,000 songs, dabbling in every musical genre. Her phenomenal success even prompted a headline in the *New York Times* which read; “Does Hatsune Miku’s Ascent Mean the End of Music as We Know It?”

5. While we can only guess what our future musical experiences will be like, it is obvious that technology, especially online technology, will play an important part in shaping this aspect of our lives. By the middle of 2020, Spotify alone had over 144

million premium subscribers worldwide. The use of artificial intelligence allows streaming services to offer listeners a highly personalised service. We are offered a unique selection of music based on our previous playlists and personal music preferences. While a future filled with affordable and convenient access to an almost limitless variety of music chosen specially for us may be good news for music fans worldwide, this prospect has not been so warmly welcomed by recording artists. Many performers complain that the royalties or fees paid by the streaming giants are too

low. As their income from royalties fall, many performers have been forced to undertake constant touring in order to make a living from their music.

6. For many music lovers, making a human connection will always be the most important aspect of any musical experience. A view Neil Hannon from the band, The Divine Comedy, appears to share. He's been quoted saying, "music only gets worse the further you take people and humanity out of it." Whatever the future holds, it seems safe to assume that it will be filled with music.

N.B. Answer only **ONE** question in Section I: either one Question A **OR** one Question B on **ONE** text.

Question A – 40 Marks

- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 2, explain three ways in which people have connected with one another through music. Support your answer with reference to the text. (10)
- (ii) From the information in the passage above, do you think the impact of technology on music and our musical experiences has been entirely positive? Support your answer with reference to the text. (10)
- (iii) (a) Would you prefer to attend a concert that featured a real-life performer, like Lady Gaga, or a virtual performer, like Hatsune Miku? Explain the reasons for your choice. (10)
- (b) Music has been important to human beings from earliest times. Explain the importance of music in your life. (10)

Answer only **ONE** question in Section I: either one Question A **OR** one Question B on **ONE** text.

Question B – 40 Marks

Several significant inventions are mentioned in TEXT 2. You have been asked to give **a talk to your class** about what you consider to be the three most important inventions ever. In your talk, which can be serious, or humorous or both, you should: identify the three inventions that you think are the most important of all time, explain why you believe these particular inventions are so important and outline how you think the world would be different without the existence of the inventions you have identified. Write the text of the talk you would deliver.

TEXT 3 – SHARED MUSICAL EXPERIENCES

The images that make up TEXT 3 capture different shared musical experiences.

IMAGE 1



IMAGE 2





IMAGE 3 Fans singing in support of the Irish soccer team

N.B. Answer only **ONE** question in Section I: either one Question A **OR** one Question B on **ONE** text.

Question A – 40 Marks

- (i) Explain some of the similarities and differences between the type of musical experience presented in IMAGE 1 and that presented in IMAGE 2. Make three points in your response. Support your answer with reference to both of the images. (10)
- (ii) In your opinion, what type of atmosphere is evident among the Irish team's supporters in IMAGE 3? Explain your response with reference to IMAGE 3. (10)
- (iii) (a) Which one of the three musical experiences, pictured in TEXT 3, do you think you would most enjoy? Explain the reasons for your choice. (10)
- (b) Music is important to people in many different ways and in a wide variety of settings. Explain the importance of music in your life. (10)

Answer only **ONE** question in Section I: either one Question A **OR** one Question B on **ONE** text.

Question B – 40 Marks

Identify your favourite type of music and write **the text for a podcast** which you hope will encourage more people to listen to this type of music. In the podcast you should: describe some of the features that make your favourite type of music unique or special, introduce a couple of well-known performers in this musical genre and explain why you think your listeners would enjoy this type of music.

SECTION II

COMPOSING

(100 marks)

Write a composition on **any one** of the following composition assignments in **bold print** below.

Each composition carries 100 marks.

The composition assignments are intended to reflect language study in the areas of information, argument, persuasion, narration, and the aesthetic use of language.

1. TEXTS 1, 2 and 3 all deal with the theme of music.

Write a short story set in a world where all music has been banned. The main character in your story should be a singer or a musician.

2. In TEXT 1, Denise Chaila says, “this is who I am – when it comes to gender, when it comes to race, when it comes to identity and culture.”

Write a personal essay in which you reflect on what contributes to your sense of identity and who you are.

3. Some incredible technological developments are outlined in TEXT 2.

Write an article, for publication in a popular magazine, in which you consider whether technological developments are always good for us, either individually or as a society.

4. In TEXT 1, Denise Chaila says that, “you shouldn't bend to fit the world and its labels.”

Write a personal essay in which you give your views on the statement, “you shouldn't bend to fit the world and its labels.”

5. In TEXT 2, we learn about the virtual pop star Hatsune Miku.

Write a short story in which Hatsune Miku, the turquoise-haired virtual singer who is pictured in Text 2, escapes from her computerised world into the human world.

6. In TEXT 3, we can see a range of different shared musical experiences.

Write an article, to be published in a community magazine, about the different kinds of activities and experiences that can help to bring people living in a local community together.

7. In TEXT 1, Denise Chaila explains how story-tellers, musicians and poets have contributed to her cultural experiences.

Write the text of a talk you would give to a group of students and teachers visiting Ireland on an exchange programme about the contribution made by creative people, such as musicians, actors, artists, poets, film-makers, writers, etc. to life in Ireland.

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Acknowledgements

Images and texts that appear on this examination paper were sourced as follows:

TEXT 1: <https://www.independent.ie/entertainment/music/you-shouldnt-bend-to-fit-the-world-and-its-labels-38950016.html>

Image: <https://nialler9.com/denise-chaila-wins-the-choice-music-prize-2020/>

TEXT 2 draws on information from the following sources:

Five Visions of the Future of Music by Paul Glynn, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-42359324>

Hatsune Miku Is a Piece of Software. She May Also Be the Future of Music by Lindsay Zoladz,

<https://www.vulture.com/2014/11/hatsune-miku-the-future-of-music.html>

<https://www.singireland.ie/participation/benefits-of-singing>

Image: <https://www.gettyimages.ie/photos/hatsune-miku?phrase=hatsune%20miku&sort=mostpopular>

TEXT 3:

Image 1: <https://www.goldenplec.com/galleries/kodaline-electric-picnic-2019/>

Image 2: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8b/David_Allan_%281744-1796%29_-_James_Erskine_%281722-1796%29%2C_Lord_Alva%2C_and_his_Family_-_NG_2690_-_National_Galleries_of_Scotland.jpg

Image 3: <https://www.irishmirror.ie/sport/soccer/soccer-news/german-football-magazine-praises-crazy-6598493>
(INPHO Donall Farmer)

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Leaving Certificate – Ordinary Level

English

Wednesday 9 June

Morning 9.30 – 12.20