UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/21**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2010**

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **all** questions.
Dictionaries are **not** permitted.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **5** printed pages and **3** blank pages.

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Part 1

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2.**

Passage A

A Great Conductor

This passage describes a series of three sequences in a television programme about a great orchestral conductor. These sequences trace the course of some very unusual events.

In the first sequence, the elderly Signor Alessandro sits at a table in a restaurant. Tonight he will conduct Beethoven's powerful Fifth Symphony yet again. Tomorrow he will conduct the much gentler Sixth Symphony. At least he thinks they are in that order. His memory frequently fails him these days. Already in his mind he hears the magnificent opening chords of the Fifth Symphony and sees his own powerful gestures as he drives his orchestra forward. He smiles. Great conductors instinctively know which gestures best communicate with the players. His chicken curry arrives. Always a chicken curry before a concert. His excuse is that it helps the adrenalin to flow. This curry has been cooked to perfection. The aroma tickles his nostrils and the chicken – ah, so succulent – tempts his taste buds. The chillies excite all the senses as he takes the first heavenly mouthful. It is indeed fit for the gods – it *is* Heaven. Da-da-da DAH ring out the first notes of the Fifth Symphony. Like all great conductors, Signor Alessandro knows all his music by heart and he never even glances at the music on the stand when he conducts a concert. Thus his eyes are free to control his players and to show them exactly what he wants.

In the second sequence we see him in a taxi. He always travels to a concert in a taxi, even though he owns a limousine and employs a chauffeur. It is so much a habit that one suspects he feels that everything would go wrong if he arrived by any other form of transport. He claims it reminds him of his humble origins in the olive growing regions of Southern Italy, but Signor Alessandro has reached the age where, unfortunately, humility has given way to arrogance. Now he is thinking of how he teaches his students to become great conductors like him – no, they must never move their feet, only their arms and the upper parts of their bodies. He smiles as he commands them never to talk too much during a rehearsal.

At this point he realises he is caught in a traffic jam. Looking ahead he sees nothing but a sea of metal roofs. The noise is terrible, a symphony of motor horns – no, the very opposite, a ghastly discord, like the most experimental of contemporary music. Drivers lean out of their windows staring vacantly into the motionless… Signor Alessandro feels the need to close his eyes, to drift into his own thoughts. Soon the sounds become soporific. After all there is still time, and great conductors never panic. They are essentially in control and, here he smiles again, they never, never commit the ultimate rudeness of tapping their sticks to start a rehearsal.

We see the third sequence through the eyes of two members of the audience who have brought their twelve-year-old daughter to hear Beethoven's Sixth Symphony for the first time. The concert should have begun fifteen minutes ago, so the audience is irritated and the little girl is restless. The players look quizzically at the chief violinist, the leader of the orchestra, who shakes his head. After all, great conductors are always on time.

Suddenly there is a banging and a thumping, a door is flung open and Signor Alessandro strides on to the stage. His hair flows behind him and his bow tie, only half tied, hangs down (how are they to know his strangest habit of all, fixing his tie one minute before he begins a concert?). As he mounts the podium, he nearly stumbles and the leader moves forward to prevent the possibility of an accident. There is muted applause. Signor Alessandro immediately raises his arms and brings them crashing down in a grand gesture appropriate to the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

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There is total silence from the players. The orchestra and the audience look dumbfounded and the leader places his violin to one side, moves to the podium and points authoritatively to the music on the stand. Although great conductors always rely on and respect their orchestral leaders, this leader shows little in return for Signor Alessandro.

The little girl looks accusingly at her father. 'I thought you said that Beethoven's Sixth Symphony was all about the countryside and had a very quiet beginning. Is that why I can't hear anything?' she asks cheekily.

1 Immediately after the sequences that you have just read about, Signor Alessandro gives a TV interview. The interviewer asks three questions:

- Some people say you are an eccentric man whose behaviour is odd at times. Are they right?
- Can you explain the unexpected happenings that took place at the beginning of your Beethoven concert?
- Do you think that the time has come for you to retire from conducting?

Write the words of the interview. Base your answer on what you have read in Passage A.

Begin the conversation as follows:

Interviewer: Some people say you are an eccentric man…

You should write between 1½ and 2 sides, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to fifteen marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to five marks for the quality of your writing.

[Total: 20]

2 Re-read the descriptions of:

(a) Signor Alessandro's enjoyment of the curry in paragraph 1;

(b) the traffic jam in paragraph 3.

Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.

[Total: 10]

[Turn over for Part 2]

Part 2

Question 3 is based on both **Passage A** and **Passage B**.
Read **Passage B** carefully, and re-read **Passage A**.

Passage B

Awfully Good

This article is about some adults who are passionate about playing musical instruments together, and so have formed an orchestra. Unfortunately, none of them can play well.

There is a band of hopeless players that has become so popular that the leader has had to stop recruiting new members of what amounts to little more than a group of musical illiterates. It is called *The Really Terrible Orchestra*.

All this awfulness began twelve years ago as a parents' revenge. So fed up with their constant ferrying of talented children to and from music lessons, choirs, rehearsals and concerts, a group of parents decided to start up some of their own music making. The fact that they hadn't touched an instrument in decades, and could only read the music if it did not include any very high or low notes, did not deter them.

So they enlisted the help of their children's choirmaster, Richard Neville-Towle, who was not convinced there was much merit in their plan: 'I really did not want to do it. The idea is to make music beautifully, and that wasn't going to be possible with them.' However, the first gathering turned out to be so much fun that they made it a regular meeting. *The Really Terrible Orchestra* was born.

Soon doctors, lawyers, bankers and teachers were dusting off instruments from the attic to join. 'There was a sheer delight in playing music with other people, which by rights we should not be entitled to do, not having the musicianship to justify it,' says Alexander, who owns over thirty wind instruments but can barely play any of them.

Since auditions were not appropriate, there was never going to be any balance in the orchestra – whatever instrument you played was welcome. 'If I decided that I was giving up the piano and going to come in one day with an accordion, I could still sit somewhere and have a go,' says Margaret, an orchestra member. The RTO now has sixty 'squawkers', and ten 'terribles' have to be turned away each month because there is no room for them in the orchestra.

In the tradition of all esteemed conductors, the players have bestowed an honorary knighthood on their conductor. Sir Richard, as he is affectionately known, is the key to their 'success'. His witty comments keep everyone entertained and he treads the fine line between nurturing the little skill they have and letting them enjoy the experience. 'My job is to make it fun for the players,' he says, adding wryly, 'if you put pressure on them they get flustered and play even worse, so getting them to practise something again is counter-productive.'

You only have to witness them in rehearsal to hear what a job he has on his hands. The speed of the music is decided by what they can play, not by the music itself: as Neville-Towle admits, 'The music is merely a guide; it is by no means something we adhere to.'

'We've had other guest conductors, but the serious ones don't work out so well because they get frustrated. We are very frustrating,' says Susie, the percussionist. 'Alexander, for example, refuses to play anything with C-sharp in it, and it's not uncommon for members of the orchestra to be playing the wrong piece without noticing.' Ever resourceful, however, the orchestra has developed a system where members can ask others in their sections to play tricky parts that they cannot manage themselves.

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Finding the right music for the group has often been difficult, but it's not for lack of offers: eight different composers have been persuaded to write for them, with varying degrees of success. 'Competence is not a word in our vocabulary. If the music is too hard for us, we just sulk!'

3 Summarise:

(a) the evidence that the orchestra described in **Passage B** is 'really terrible';

(b) what Signor Alessandro thinks are the qualities of a great conductor, as described in **Passage A**.

Use your own words as far as possible.

You should write about 1 side in total, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to fifteen marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to five marks for the quality of your writing.

[Total: 20]

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