Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/13**

Paper 1 Reading **October/November 2023**

INSERT **2 hours**

8299209970-I

INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

11_0500_13_2023_1.14
© UCLES 2023

Read **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: Violin playing

The violin is a musical instrument of high pitch, played with a bow. It has four strings and a round body, narrowed at the middle, and two f-shaped soundholes.

An ingenious feat of mechanical design, the violin is also an immensely beautiful instrument. Violin makers often take pride in showcasing their great skill, paying particular attention to the scroll, a decorative piece of woodcarving on the violin's neck. They intricately carve and even personalise a violin for customers.

Just about anyone can learn to play a violin from a relatively young age. However, professional violinists must build up their knowledge and skills if they are going to compete for places in good orchestras. A superior playing technique is an obvious skill: violinists must be able to bow, finger and pluck the strings of their instrument in a wide variety of ways. Knowledge of great works for the violin is another requirement. From historical pieces by Beethoven to more recent compositions by Chen Yi, there is violin music in all genres that players may be expected to be familiar with.

Besides playing in orchestras, a trained violinist may find other career opportunities. Many supplement their incomes by giving music lessons. Some may be lucky enough to find work at special events, such as weddings. Others might take their interest into business, for example by opening a music shop, where they can talk knowledgeably to customers about something they love.

Violinists usually need to perform minor maintenance on their own instruments. They also need to understand its components in order to have a meaningful dialogue with other musicians. But exceptional violinists will understand their violin in a deeper sense and are not motivated by a need to make a living. Training alone can never enable those musicians who lack great talent to penetrate the heart of their own instrument or to know how to make it sing in that hauntingly beautiful way that makes audiences tremble in the presence of genius. A few violinists live to make music for its own sake.

© UCLES 2023

Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: A career in music

This text is about how a young person first became interested in violin playing and how they made a career of it later on.

At 11 years old, I approached my school music department in search of violin lessons. Others were enrolling for the orchestra, so I decided to join. Who wanted to be different? Not me. Realistically, I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

But to my surprise and delight, I found it was fun. Soon I was spending my entire break-times in the music room, learning about bowing, fingering and plucking my violin. And I made several lifelong friends.

In fact, violin playing began to change my life in a way that was pleasing. Before, I was considered 'below average' and my general school grades were poor. Now, suddenly, music was turning everything the other way around. I was considered successful by classmates and teachers, and I rose to that version of me.

Hearing my violin create awesomeness in the school orchestra also became life changing. Once, I had no clue what my career was to be. Now I knew I was born to play orchestral music.

I wanted to live among those musicians who practised hard to be good at the thing it seemed I was naturally good at: performing. Work would not be work. Work would be satisfying and fulfilling.

There was one problem though. According to society, my friends and I were too smart to have careers in music. You see, where I come from, nobody makes a living playing the violin, or with music at all – unless you're a celebrity or something. Even the teachers told us to become doctors or engineers.

My science teacher said, 'Music is not for you: your average point score is too good.'

Little did she realise that her attempt to define my future path only made my desire to play my violin with others like me even stronger.

And, yes, after leaving school, my two best friends went to do scientific work, but I joined orchestras. Since then, I have played my violin to audiences who pay me the immediate compliment of – sometimes rapturous – applause, while my friends do their science research behind closed doors, uncertain of when or how their work will be received.

They claim to be happy with this, but I would not be able to stand the stress myself. Occasionally we share nostalgic conversations, when they tell me wistfully how they'd love to experience the release, the creative expression and the sheer magic maybe just once again.

© UCLES 2023

[Turn over

Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: The violinist

This text is taken from a story about a violin player called Seth who plays in a travelling orchestra. The orchestra has arrived in a town where Seth will be playing a violin solo in the evening.

Seth was roaming the streets and looking in shop windows. A few hours' idle distraction made for a more focused mind later, he found. More significantly, he really enjoyed getting to see the locality he would perform in while possibly learning a bit about the people who might attend the concert.

He stopped in the presence of a small music store and decided to look inside.

Partially concealed at the back of the shop was a display of string instruments, at the centre of which sat an absurdly squat violin. To Seth it looked just like a plump monarch holding court amidst other carefully arranged instruments. He stared at it, drawn by its commanding presence. The maker had put considerable effort into carving the decorative top (or scroll) into a magnetically charming face with generous lips pulled sideways and flattened into an expression of permanent merriment. But it was the cheerful eyes, now apparently winking and dancing at Seth, that really captivated him.

'I dare you …' the violin's eyes teased.

'How quirky yet attractive,' thought Seth. 'I wonder if it plays well.'

'May I try that violin, please?' he asked a shop attendant.

Violin in hand, Seth stopped four strings with his fingers, and drew the bow over them with one rapid sweep. He'd produced a rich chord. He was surprised by how strong the sound was. He raised his bow again and the violin replied enchantingly.

Seth felt excitement shooting through him. He turned to the attendant. 'How much is it?' he asked.

'You can have it for a fair price,' said the attendant. 'I didn't pay much for it. A local brought it in last month. Said he'd found it a long time ago. Tried to find out who owned it at the time, but without success. Then he just forgot about it.'

Later in the concert hall, Seth opened the violin case and looked contentedly at his purchase. He had his old trusty violin by his side but knew he would play this new one tonight. It felt irrational, but it was almost as if the violin longed to be played and especially in this venue. The last hour of rehearsing had proved what a magnificent instrument it was.

The arrival of the audience and the preparations of the other musicians were now taking place. A multitude of subdued murmurs in the audience accompanied the discordant scraping of strings and sharply persistent blowing of reeds. Now and then a loud trombone would assert itself, or an oboe's plaintive notes would rise, demanding immediate attention to its great misery.

It was time for Seth's solo. His new violin sang out beautifully around the hall. The audience was completely still, apart from a woman who had inclined forward, as if straining to see the instrument he was playing.

© UCLES 2023

An hour later, as he left, he saw the same woman waiting outside. ‘Hello, I’m Sylvia,’ she said. ‘Well, that was a surprise! I haven’t heard that violin played for years.’

‘It’s one of the best violins I’ve ever played,’ Seth replied. ‘Do you know the story of this scroll?’

In reply, Sylvia showed Seth a photograph on her phone. Seth found himself staring back at a pair of bright, cheerful eyes that winked and danced at him. ‘Father,’ Sylvia explained. ‘My parents played in the orchestra at this very concert hall years ago. Mother had this violin made with father’s face on the scroll. It disappeared after a show about five years ago. The orchestra had to leave straight after to go on tour and mother was devastated not to be able to take that violin. My parents don’t play at all these days, though they sometimes attend concerts here to support the local orchestra.’ She paused. ‘I think mother will be pleased to hear that the violin has been found.’

‘May I contact your parents?’ asked Seth.

© UCLES 2023

BLANK PAGE

BLANK PAGE

© UCLES 2023

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of Cambridge Assessment. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which is a department of the University of Cambridge.

© UCLES 2023