

# 2018 VCE VET Music Industry: performance examination report

## General comments

In the VCE VET Music performance examination, students were assessed in relation to the following units of competency:

- CUAMPF301 Develop technical skills in performance
- CUAMPF402 Develop and maintain stagecraft skills

Students were also assessed in relation to either of the following units of competency, depending on the elective they had undertaken:

- CUAMPF404 Perform music as part of a group
- CUAMPF406 Perform music as a soloist

The performance examination focused on an understanding of the performance and knowledge evidence, as described in the elements and performance criteria, and the assessment conditions set out in the assessment requirements document for each unit of competency.

Each student was assessed on the extent to which their live performance demonstrated accomplishment of the assessment criteria. In this context, the term 'extent' refers to the range of ways in which each criterion is met and the degree of difficulty involved in meeting each criterion.

A number of students presented programs that were well short of the allotted time. Although students are not required to present more than three works and it is not a requirement to use all the allocated time, students whose programs were significantly short were typically unable to meet the criteria at a high level.

The option for assessed students to change instruments should not be interpreted as a recommended strategy. Students are advised to perform their programs on the instrument(s) that allow them to meet the criteria at the highest level possible and to prepare for the examination accordingly. This may differ from the approach taken to delivering their coursework.

Thought should be given to the set-up of the sound reinforcement equipment, particularly speaker placement. Front-of-house speakers placed close to the ground, or the use of installed speakers placed near the roof limits the assessors' ability to hear the performances clearly, especially vocalists.

A careful sound check should be undertaken before the examination to ensure that the assessors can clearly hear all the instruments and vocalists.

Teachers should ensure that there are opportunities within the program for all assessed members of a group to be featured and avoid doubling parts. In a number of instances, guitar players were playing the same parts and vocalists were singing in unison.

Students should ensure that interacting with their band members/accompanists does not prevent the assessors from clearly seeing what they are doing and that they are not obscured by equipment or other performers.

Non-assessed performers must contribute in a supporting role only. Any direction from non-assessed performers, such as a teacher, including cueing, and adjusting an assessed performer's equipment, may potentially disadvantage the assessed performer.

## Specific information

### Criteria

#### 1. Compliance with the requirements of the examination

- Minimum of three works performed
- At least one work performed from memory
- Performance configurations (solo or group) and use of non-assessed accompanist(s)/group performers, when needed, are met
- Performance Program Sheet and Industry Statement Form completed and submitted prior to commencement of examination
- Program of works performed in accordance with information contained in the Performance Program Sheet and Industry Statement Form
- Work health and safety (WHS) principles applied appropriately in the performance

Most students complied in all areas and received full marks for this criterion.

Some students had a music stand in front of them that they appeared to look at for every musical item. Where sheet music/charts are used, students are advised to move the stand away or remove all sheets from the stand for at least one work.

#### 2. Skill in performing with accuracy and control

- Accuracy and control of the rhythm, pitch, articulation, timing and phrasing, and tuning, as appropriate to the instrument/technology/voice and area of specialisation

In this criterion marks are awarded for accuracy and control, taking degree of difficulty into consideration. High marks cannot be awarded to students who perform a program with a low degree of difficulty. Equally, students who perform challenging material with poor accuracy and control will not be awarded high marks.

Singers are advised to select a suitable key that may not be the same key as the original/reference recording. Singers are also advised to use a reliable strategy to pitch the first note if choosing to enter at the beginning of the piece with no instrumental introductory section to establish the tonal centre. Although expressive tonal quality is assessed in criterion 3, lack of control of tone production will affect the marks that can be awarded for this criterion.

#### 3. Skill in realising the expressiveness and versatility of instrument(s)/technology/voice throughout the program

- Use of performance techniques such as phrasing and shaping music, maintaining a strict tempo, and artistic use of accent, crescendo, diminuendo, staccato, silence, legato, tenuto, rubato, ritardando, accelerando, pitch bending and other techniques, as appropriate to the area of specialisation

Students who maximised their marks for this criterion chose a program of works that provided opportunities to use a range of appropriate approaches and took advantage of those opportunities.

The relationship between criteria 3 and 4 is worth noting as programs that lacked variety in musical elements and conventions also limited opportunities for students to demonstrate versatility. For example, students who consistently used similar approaches to embellishment and ornamentation

(e.g. drum fills and accents) both in repeat sections and across their whole program, were unable to score well in this criterion.

Students who successfully tailored their tone to specifically suit each item in their set were able to access higher marks.

#### **4. Ability to demonstrate variety in musical elements and conventions relevant to the area of specialisation**

- Skill in using variety of duration (rhythm, meter, pattern) and/or melody and harmony (scales, chords, chord progressions), and music systems relevant to the area of specialisation

Although students are required to identify an area of specialisation, demonstrating a variety of musical elements and conventions within the chosen area of specialisation by choosing contrasting works is required to access higher marks. This may present more of a challenge in some areas of specialisation than others. Alternatively, students may choose to broaden their area of specialisation to allow more opportunities to demonstrate variety in musical elements and conventions.

Students who used a limited range of keys, tempos and time signatures, and similar approaches to beat subdivision, did not score well in this criterion.

#### **5. Ability to demonstrate originality and innovative approaches in interpretation within the performance configuration (solo or group)**

- Skill in creativity and interpretation, and the ability to demonstrate appropriate musical nuance, an individual style of musical expression, and original and innovative approaches to stage performances relevant to the area of specialisation

Students who scored well in this criterion used convincing and appropriate expressive devices to create personal interpretations within the context of their area of specialisation. Marks were not awarded for unsuitable innovative approaches, which detracted from rather than enhanced their interpretation.

Students may include original works in their program; however, this should not be considered a recommended strategy. Students are not awarded marks for composing an original work, and although an original work may offer opportunities to demonstrate original and innovative approaches to interpretation, it may result in lower marks in other criteria if the original work is included at the expense of another more appropriate work.

#### **6a. Ability to listen critically to one's own performance and continuously adjust one's own performance to produce the required outcomes relevant to the area of specialisation (Solo performance)**

**OR**

#### **6b. Ability to listen critically to the performance of others and respond, interact and collaborate appropriately, adjusting the performance to achieve required outcomes relevant to the area of specialisation (Group performance)**

Solo performers who made sophisticated adjustments and who demonstrated synchronisation with and responsiveness to accompaniment met this criterion at a high level.

Students who scored well as a member of a group created numerous opportunities to demonstrate their ability to respond and interact musically with other group members and adjust their playing appropriately. This was often achieved through sophisticated arrangements that involved changes of tempo, time signatures, dynamics, band accents, and stops and starts within pieces.

## **7. Skill in presenting a cohesive program of music**

- Skill in presenting an authentic (in relation to the selected area of specialisation), dynamic and well-constructed program of music with appropriate sequencing of items and appropriate choice of repertoire

Students who scored well in this criterion delivered a well-planned set that was not only cohesive, through appropriate choice and sequencing of items, but also had an overall sense of vitality and contour. The presentation of a program that has a sense of dynamism can present more of a challenge in some areas of specialisation than others, for example, acoustic/'stripped back' versions of rap/R'n'B.

Students who presented highly cohesive programs also moved smoothly from each piece to the next. Students, especially soloists, who use a backing track are advised to develop strategies to avoid disrupting the flow of the program that can be caused by stopping and starting the backing track. For example, students who used backing tracks that ran continuously with timed and appropriate gaps between songs and/or segues were able to demonstrate cohesion.

In some cases, overly long spoken introductions to pieces detracted from the presentation.

Students should seek opportunities to perform their examination performance prior to the examination to enable them to address any issues that may impede flow and cohesion.

Criteria 8, 9 and 10 relate specifically to CUAMPF402 Develop and maintain stagecraft skills. The key concepts to consider are communication and audience engagement.

A number of students used non-musical elements effectively to enhance their performance.

In some cases, the presentation of the program did not effectively match the Industry Statement. Students should ensure that they are familiar with the relevant performance conventions.

## **8. Ability to observe and maintain protocols appropriate to the area of specialisation**

- Skill in communicating effectively through original and innovative approaches to personal stagecraft, expressing appropriate dramatic nuance, while taking venue and style performance into account

The key concept to consider in this criterion is the use of dramatic nuance, which includes reactive gestures. Students who convincingly aligned their use of dramatic nuance with an appropriate Industry Statement scored well in this criterion.

Students who chose an industry context that provided limited opportunity to demonstrate dramatic nuance did not score well in this criterion.

To maximise their marks, students should ensure that they are familiar with the relevant performance conventions.

## **9. Skill in presenting a confident performance through consistent focus and energy, and with pacing appropriate to the area of specialisation**

- Skill in applying a range of personal stagecraft skills to engage audiences while performing a suitably paced and focused performance

Students who maintained a confident demeanour and delivered an engaging performance for the entire examination, including between works, scored well in this criterion. The relationship between criterion 7 and criterion 9 is notable as students who presented programs where a high level of organisation and preparedness was apparent typically demonstrated higher levels of confidence, poise and composure.

**10. Ability to demonstrate key stagecraft skills in relation to the selected area of specialisation and market appropriate for the program of music**

- Skill in applying a range of stagecraft skills to present a coherent and appropriate image that enhances performances
- Effective use of non-musical elements in performance including movement, facial expressions, way of holding instrument(s) or equipment and effective use of the performance space

A number of students used lighting, audiovisual equipment such as videos and props to enhance their performance. Although the use of this equipment is not directly assessed, it can assist in creating atmosphere/mood and context.

Students who maximised their use of the performance space, presented a well-developed and convincing image that aligned with their Industry Statement and who performed with a strong sense of crafting their performance for an audience scored well in this criterion.

Students who did not score well demonstrated minimal enhancement of their musical performance and minimal awareness of communication with the audience.