



2013 Music Performance (Solo/Group) GA 2: Performance examination

Solo Performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance examination is the major focus of VCE Music Performance and contributes 50 per cent to the study score. The overall standard of performance was high in 2013. The statistics reflect the high level of dedication and passion of a large number of students. There were many outstanding performances and also a large number of performances that had been prepared with integrity. Performances that gained the highest marks fully explored the assessment criteria within the 25 minutes allowed. The programs explored the widest range of styles, genres, tonal effects, structures and techniques. Each work was performed in a different manner and in a different style, demonstrating unique techniques, structures and tonal colours through the use of phrasing, dynamic variation, appropriate tempo variation and a wide range of articulation.

The highest-scoring students were also clear about the conditions of the examination and the specific requirements for each instrument (which can be found on the VCAA website).

High-scoring students prepared and performed from the best editions of sheet music available. This was evident in their accurate and authoritative performances. Outstanding use of presentation techniques was also evident. The students played within their stamina levels, and made appropriate and careful selection of works, which enabled them to both fulfil the criteria and play to their strengths.

A high level of professionalism and preparation was evident in the accompanied works (where appropriate). Performances were well synchronised and well balanced, allowing the important parts to always remain prominent, whether in the solo or accompaniment. It was obvious that many students had gone to much trouble to choose the most competent accompanists, whose ability to play in appropriate styles supported the students' demonstration of stylistic understanding.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The following information provides guidance for the preparation of successful programs for particular instruments and is written for consideration by students and teachers. Some of these comments are made in relation to specific instruments, but many have broad applicability for all instruments.

Equipment used in the examination room

Students and teachers should be aware of the equipment that will or will not be provided by the VCAA. The examination specifications and criteria document states that 'Students should bring to the examination all equipment required to present their performance, including instruments, music stands, amplifiers, leads, PA systems and playback equipment as required'.

Some students presented for contemporary popular exams (for example, Guitar, Electric bass and Drum kit) without amplifiers for either their instrument and/or playback equipment for backing tracks. Some did not check that they had all the necessary cables, including extension leads. It is the student's responsibility to provide this equipment. Often, not enough silence was included at the end of the backing track, meaning that the next backing track started before the student had stopped the player.

Presentation and examination conduct

This exam should be treated as a recital. In that respect, students need to present their program to an audience. Appropriate stance in relation to the audience and accompanist is essential. In 2013, some students put their music stand between themselves and the audience (the assessors), making it impossible for the audience to see what the student was doing. Others addressed their accompanist, facing away from the audience.

Performances should be rehearsed thoroughly (and not just a compilation of pieces played without consideration for the movement from one piece to another).

Students are reminded that, under the general rules of conduct, discussion with assessors about the assessment is not allowed. It is not appropriate for students to identify themselves to assessors, either by introducing themselves or by presenting assessors with any document that includes their name or other information about themselves.



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The use of mobile telecommunications devices to play their backing tracks is discouraged. If this option is used, students need to be able to demonstrate to assessors that only the playback application is running and that other functions of the phone have been switched off.

Programs: timing and order

The maximum time allowed in the examination room for students presenting as soloists is 25 minutes. To demonstrate the widest range of performance techniques, styles, tonal colour and effect, structures and textures, students are encouraged to prepare programs that maximise their capabilities within the time allowed. The highest marks were awarded to programs that had the greatest range (explicitly required in 6 of the 10 assessment criteria). In the most effective programs, each work demonstrated a different aspect of style, technique, tone, structure and texture. In the best performances of such programs, these elements were clearly brought out so that each work sounded very different. Program order can help to highlight a wide range of the elements listed above.

Using an extra work(s) as a 'filler' to simply make up more time in the program may not be advisable if the work(s) is not known as well as other works in the program. It may also not be advisable if the student lacks the stamina to complete all works on the program to the same degree (this is especially pertinent to wind players and vocalists). Students should not perform repeats simply to maximise the time. If repeats are played, students should use this as an opportunity to demonstrate different stylistic elements through embellishment or improvisation as appropriate (improvisation in itself is not assessed, but may contribute to the demonstration of a higher stylistic understanding of the work or passage).

Compliance

Students and teachers are reminded to check the Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works for the current year on the VCAA website and to read it carefully to establish that the requirements have been met. The arrangement/edition used is critical, as arrangements other than the ones listed may constitute a different piece or version (for example, a simplified version) from the one prescribed.

Criteria

The performance examination is the most important assessment task in this study. From year to year, students seem to continually raise the bar in terms of the overall performance standard. The most outstanding performances were able to fully exploit the assessment criteria within the 25-minute timeframe. These performances used the widest range of techniques, styles, structures and tonal effects. Each work was chosen to display a different facet of style and technique. A number of students were able to address each of the 10 criteria to the highest degree.

Criterion 1 – Compliance with the requirements of the task

The definition of 'requirements of the task' is different for different instruments. The requirements are made clear in the preamble for each instrument in the Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works for that instrument, including the number of total works required, the number of categories from which works must be chosen, the number of works that should be performed unaccompanied or with accompaniment, and so on. Students should carefully read the preamble and contact the VCAA if they are unsure of any requirement.

This year, there was a marked improvement in compliance, with the majority of the cohort gaining full marks. Errors made included

- leaving out a category (Voice – Contemporary popular, Voice – Classical)
- performing the wrong arrangement of a Piano – Contemporary work
- performing a work that was not on the current prescribed list
- leaving out a section of a work (Guitar – Contemporary popular, Electric bass, Drum kit)
- using too many backing tracks or not enough live accompaniments.

Failure to fully comply with the requirements of the task will restrict access to the highest marks.

Criterion 2 – Skill in performing accurately and with clarity

Assessors mark the level of accuracy (at tempo) of performances of a notated score or reference. For some contemporary popular instruments, such as Voice – Contemporary popular or Guitar – Contemporary popular, accuracy tends to be judged more heavily against an audio reference than the score, where the score approximates the referenced recording. For classical instruments, accuracy is judged against the notated score. Where appropriate, intonation is considered under this criterion. Of course, appropriate stylistic or conventional deviations from the score will not bring the mark down for this criterion. For example, the addition of appropriate articulations, dynamics and ornaments in a



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baroque work, originally written for a different instrument than the one being performed, would not, of course, be penalised under the criterion.

Students gained a wide variety of marks for this criterion; there were some very low scores and also quite a number of perfect scores. There is a significant correlation between students who achieved the highest marks in this criterion and students who achieved very high marks in all other criteria.

Criterion 3 – Skill in performing a range of techniques with control and fluency

The discriminator in this criterion is the range of techniques performed. Access to the highest marks is gained by having the widest range of techniques in the chosen program, as well as having the skills to perform those techniques with control and fluency. This meant that students who chose the simplest works from the prescribed list or who chose works that all had similar techniques were disadvantaged, as were students who just performed the minimum number of works required for compliance. The maximum time allowed is 25 minutes, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate a greater range of techniques. Many students performed very similar programs with some instruments, particularly Voice – Contemporary popular or Guitar – Contemporary popular, with a top 10 ‘preferred works’ easily discernible by assessors. In general, students who had the most adventurous programs tended to score more highly. A student’s skill in performing the range of techniques with control and fluency was typified by evenness of passage work, clarity of articulation, fluent performances uninterrupted by stops and starts, and internal synchronisation of technique, all through any dynamic level. An example of some extended techniques in Guitar – Contemporary popular could include two-handed tapping, guitar percussion, extended legato phrasing, strict alternate picking, strumming and the use of the thumb pick.

Criterion 4 – Skill in producing a range of expressive tonal qualities

Again, the highest-scoring students in this criterion chose programs that contained a wide variety of possible tonal effects. A guitarist, for example, could use a variety of tones through the amplifier setting, guitar pick-ups, effects pedals and even through the use of different guitars. A guitarist could perhaps use an acoustic guitar for chordal or finger style, producing a rich tone without amplification. For singers, it is important to manipulate tone colour and vocal placement to clearly reflect the style of a song. Drummers should make sure the kit is tuned to bring out the best tone in the instrument. Drummers could also use different sticks, as appropriate to the different styles being performed, and consider adding extra equipment to the kit, such as a cow bell, wood block, cymbals and so on. For the snare solo, consider using a different snare, appropriately tuned.

Criterion 5 – Skill in expressive communication through articulation and phrasing

This is where music starts with the expression found in speech patterns, applying all of their expressive phrasing and articulation. From there, it takes sounds that have no inherent meanings, and by applying that phrasing and articulation, the music takes on a meaning way beyond words. In this criterion, that skill is assessed. Technically, this happens through the subtle, dynamic shaping of phrases and the use of accents to make sense of a phrase, in the same way a particular language has a unique accent or sound. This should be easiest for singers, where there is text involved, as well as the music. The highest-scoring singers expressively communicated each song in a convincing way, taking the listener through a journey. This is no less true of any highly skilled musician, where tonal inflection is present in every phrase. It is also not restricted to any one genre, but applies to art music as well as popular music.

Criterion 6 – Skill in differentiating the musical lines

Most music will contain a number of musical lines or textures. A pop song will typically contain at least a melody, harmony, rhythm and bass, and sometimes will contain other lines, such as a counter-melody (second singer or instrument[s]) and perhaps some special effects (textures). A fugue contains a number of melodies. An unaccompanied flute work will contain parts that are main melodies or motifs, and other material, which is of lesser significance. In this criterion, skill in the use of a range of textures to enhance or subdue certain parts, as well as the synchronisation between soloist and accompanist (or internal synchronisation within a self-contained texture), is being assessed. Of course, there needs to be a range of textures in the program – this can be read as ‘many opportunities for the performer to demonstrate a range of different textures, and interactions between melody and accompaniment’. Much has been said over the years about the role of the accompanist (or backing) and how that can enhance or even, in some cases, diminish a performance. Students who perform with an accompanist are strongly advised to try to get the best accompanist available and to rehearse often throughout the year. The accompanist should be a specialist in the style. A jazz singer is advised to use a jazz pianist rather than a classical pianist. The accompaniment should not have the solo line in it and must be empathetic to the soloist. The soloist should know how to work with an accompanist, and how to lead and demand the elements needed, such as tempi, dynamics, style, breath and so on. Accompanists should not dominate the performance. Students who use backings should have equipment of an appropriate quality to be able to match the tone



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and volume of the soloist. For example, a contemporary singer will need to have a backing track that is both loud enough to blend with and can produce an appropriate tonal quality; a tiny speaker will not do that.

Criterion 7 – Skill in differentiating the structures and characteristics of each work

To score well in this criterion, the program must include a variety of structures typical of the chosen instrument. This could include short or condensed structures, longer formal structures (for example, sonata form), free ‘improvisatory’ structures, structure based on tonality (dodecaphonic or twelve-tone), strophic (verse–chorus) and many more, as appropriate to the instrument and genre. Think of musical structure like the crafting of a story – it always leads somewhere, but different storytellers or authors will have different ways of taking the audience on the journey. Some performances may sound like a random succession of notes, while others may sound like a musical journey, responding to tension and release of harmony, thematic development and so on. A well-crafted story includes tension and a release from tension. It is no different for a well-crafted musical performance. Depending on the instrument, some of the elements involved include discreet tempo changes (typically an increase heightens tension and a decrease lowers it), dynamic or volume changes, and surprise elements, such as a slightly longer breath before a climax or at a pause. Two other very important factors are the appropriate use of pulse, so rather than accenting every beat in the bar, the focus is on the main beat(s), and accent (particularly in contemporary styles) to make each work sound different.

Criterion 8 – Skill in presenting an informed interpretation of a range of styles

Students are expected to perform in a range of different styles. When they choose to limit this because of a preference for a particular style, they limit their ability to score higher marks in this criterion. It is essential that students have a clear understanding of the different styles in their program. The best way of gaining this understanding is to listen to the range of styles as reflected in their program. This may require some guidance but will be well rewarded. An informed understanding of a style is gained through mimetic listening – listening and copying or mimicking the style. As this is practised more and more, the style becomes a part of the student’s musical repertoire, so that they can adopt the main elements of the style without necessarily copying another performance (see next criterion).

Criterion 9 – Skill in performing with musicality through creativity and individuality

The musical reference (notation, referenced recording or both) should be the starting point for the learning of a work. Recorded versions of a contemporary work usually offer a more authentic reference than the notated score; however, students should aim to interpret the work rather than trying to perform the recording. A student’s creativity and individuality are considered in this criterion, as appropriate to the styles of music performed. Sometimes a student might score very highly in terms of creativity, but without any consideration given to the style of music performed. Elements that a student might modify could include distortion settings on a guitar, vocal inflections, use of tempo modifications or length of pauses, embellishments on repeated sections, dynamics, pedalling (piano), and so on.

Criterion 10 – Skill in presenting a musical program within appropriate performance conventions

The performance exam is a formal recital (performance, gig) and students should treat it as such. At times, students may ask assessors’ permission for a range of things relating to their own performance, such as page turning. While it is the students’ responsibility to understand the performance examination conditions published by the VCAA, the performance space and time is theirs. Although this is an examination, students are invited to treat it as a formal performance. Students must consider what that means in terms of program order, tuning, flow of the program, dress, stage management, and so on. Students who excel in this criterion make the space theirs, and deliver a flowing and often polished performance. Some formally introduce the works they perform, whereas others do not. As appropriate to the styles being performed, some students use movement and others do not. However, they all remain poised throughout the performance. Many students take time and make effort to dress appropriately as it helps them to get into a performance mindset.



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Issues to consider

General

- Accompanists are to be chosen wisely (criterion 6).
- Playback equipment for backing tracks needs to be appropriate, with levels set wisely. Students should do a quick sound check in the room before the performance starts (criterion 6).
- Students must ensure that the program complies with the conditions published for the student's instrument (criterion 1).
- Students should choose the correct pieces. For contemporary instruments, the arrangement is vital (criterion 1).
- The program must be a performance and students should practise performing the program as a whole (criterion 10).
- Students should utilise opportunities to demonstrate a diversity of styles, techniques, tonal qualities and structures within the 25 minutes allowed (criteria 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).
- Students should try to craft their programs so that every work chosen sounds different and enables them to focus on showing different skills.
- Program sheets must be completed clearly, using the titles and movements as listed in the Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works.
- Students should choose pieces within a manageable level of difficulty.
- If a student's program uses close to the full 25 minutes, they should ensure that they have the stamina to perform every piece at the same standard.
- There is opportunity for embellishment or improvisation (as appropriate to the style) if repeats are performed (criterion 8).
- Students should have a contingency plan. They should bring extra leads and cables, extension cords, strings, reeds, sticks, etc., as for any particularly important performance (criterion 10).
- Contemporary instrument performers should consider performing one or a few works with a live accompaniment – second guitar or bass perhaps (criterion 6).
- Except for a drum kit, equipment brought into the examination room must be easily and quickly brought in and removed. Students should aim for quality and portability.
- If a student decides to verbally introduce the pieces in their program, they should make sure the introduction informs the performance and does not detract from it.
- Occupational health and safety (OH&S) standards must be met when using amplifiers and drum kits. Sound must not exceed safe levels.
- Nervous students tended to overuse water bottles. With the exception of a particularly hot day, no more than a few discreet sips should need to be taken. Overuse and misuse of water bottles often detracts from criterion 10.

Instrument-specific comments

Contemporary guitar

- Be aware of the revamp of the list of works and associated compliance issues.
- Try to explore a wider range of styles – many guitarists play the same group of favourites on the list.

Electric bass

- The pre-1910 works tend to be the weakest work in most students' programs.

Drum kit

- Explore as wide a variety of styles as possible.
- Brushes piece and snare rudiments tend to be the weakest areas with this instrument.

Voice

Students should

- be aware of vocal hygiene. They should avoid trying to make their voice do things it is not developmentally ready to do
- take the vocalises seriously. Many singers miss out on marks in this area.
- be aware of the category that each song comes from and sing the song in the appropriate style.

Contemporary piano

- Many students demonstrated little knowledge of how to use the sustain pedal.
- Some programs are performed with a lack of discipline, suggesting a higher degree of preparation is needed.

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Pianoforte

- Students are advised to not take on programs that are too difficult for them to master.
- Sometimes students had a poor understanding of how to use the sustain pedal.

Wind and brass

- Students should make sure that articulation and phrasing are given due attention.

Strings

- Students should avoid the temptation to take on works that are too difficult.
- Often, intonation was the area of greatest weakness with these instruments.

Group Performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2013, students were assessed against 10 criteria. Each student was assessed by two assessors and a maximum of 10 marks was available for each criterion. Many of the criteria were identical to those used in the Solo Performance examination. Thus, students were assessed in both solo and group using either identical criteria or criteria of equal importance. Each student was assessed on their performance according to the criteria, not globally. The criteria were applied equally to all students across all instruments.

Students who presented for the Group Performance examination performed with a diverse range of instruments, including voice, in the context of many different types of groups and ensembles. Students' ability to address the criteria varied and was influenced by their performance skills, understanding of the music styles being performed and experience in performing in a group context.

Students who attained high marks confidently exhibited a high level of musical, technical and interpretative skills, and displayed excellent interaction with the other members of the group.

Students should be conscious of maximising their marks in the criteria that relate to group interaction and the balance of the musical instruments. In many cases, students seemed to have focused on instrumental skills and had neglected to develop their skill at performing as a member of a group. Many students would benefit from consciously listening to and acknowledging the other group members, and adjusting their musical contribution to enhance the overall group sound.

In some cases, the role (where appropriate for the group style) of introducing each item could have been shared more equitably in relation to the criteria of presentation. Students should allow time between items to check their tuning. A student may improve their results if they can demonstrate their ability to adapt positively to unforeseen situations; for example, if another band member forgets their part or breaks a string.

Students need to make decisions about the group composition and performance program that will be advantageous to the group as a whole. For example, it may be preferable to have two vocalists perform in separate examinations even though the rest of the assessed band will play for both singers. In this case, the instrumentalists will be assessed in the first examination, leaving them free to accompany the second vocalist in the second examination. Some of the songs from the first program can be repeated, along with additional songs suited to the second singer. As a result, the two vocalists avoid direct comparison and can present programs that are more suited to each individual.

It is important that groups choose keys for songs that are suited to the vocalists as well as the instrumentalists. The focus should be on selecting songs that support each student to maximise their possible score. At times, students should consider transposing the songs themselves to find more appropriate keys for all students. Students should be careful when using transcriptions from the internet; it is worth checking the original recordings for accuracy.

Students consistently met the requirement to perform two musical items from the Prescribed List of Group Works. A number of students performed additional works from the list, which is permissible. It can be difficult for groups with two or more assessed performers to address the criteria at the highest level if they select only two works from the list. In this case, students should consider performing more than two prescribed works to allow all of the assessed performers to meet the criteria.



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Teachers and students should also ensure that they put together the strongest possible program for the assessed students when they are performing an entire program of items from the list. When determining the musical program for the examination, students should be careful about selecting a majority of original compositions; they need to consider their selections in relation to the criteria, especially regarding a range of musical styles.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Prescribed List of Group Works

Students must include at least two works from the Prescribed List of Group Works in their end-of-year performance examination program. This list is available on the VCAA website.

Assessment criteria

The criteria for awarding grades are applied to the whole program, not to individual works. There are 10 criteria covering all instruments and the performance of all works in the program.

In 2013, almost all students fulfilled all the requirements of criterion 1 concerning ‘compliance with the requirements of the task’.

The examination specifications and criteria for this examination also includes annotations to help unpack each criterion into components more relevant to particular instruments. Comments made in relation to solo performances should also be considered by students who select to perform as members of a group.

Selection of instrument

The term ‘instrument’, as used in the study design, includes voice. Students may choose to perform on more than one instrument in their performance examination; however, they should consider the likelihood of scoring well in the assessment criteria when making this decision. For example, students may not maximise their marks if they try to assist the balance of their group by playing an instrument that they are not particularly competent with for a considerable part of the program. The student should be careful not to compromise the amount of time spent performing to their strengths.

An opposite example might be where the student is a strong performer on more than one instrument. In this situation, there are certain criteria in which the student may benefit from performing on more than one instrument, such as ‘skill in performing a range of techniques with control and fluency’ (Criterion 3) and ‘skill in performing as a member of the group’ (Criterion 8).

The examination

Assessed students perform as members of a group or ensemble, and are assessed in this context. The level of ability of other members of the group does not directly affect the assessed student’s results. Assessors concentrate on the performance of the student being assessed and on how well they meet the criteria for assessment.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that the assessed student’s ability to maximise their results depends upon the context within which each individual performs. For example, a drummer who keeps irregular time or rhythm will affect the assessed student’s ability to maintain an even tempo and accurately interpret rhythm patterns, and will therefore indirectly influence the assessed student’s ability to obtain their highest score.

Composition of the group

A group is defined as two or more students enrolled in a secondary school. Where a group comprises two performers only, that group may not have a non-student performer as a member. The musical parts should be arranged so that each performer is equally able to take a leading role during the performance.

However, the assessed performer(s) can vary the composition of the group during their performance as they wish, which may enhance the ability of the assessed performer(s) to demonstrate a variety of styles and techniques. Students must decide how best to organise their group contexts in a program to help them give their best performance.

Students should also be aware that non-students may only assist as part of the group within certain guidelines, as outlined in the examination specifications. Teachers and other non-assessed performers are advised that their role, if they are participating, should not distract from, or limit the ability of, the assessed performer(s) to present a program that will maximise their marks. Assessed performers should perform in a way that allows them to maximise their results in all criteria. Hence, non-assessed performers should not count in, conduct, tune, adjust instruments and equipment, lead or otherwise play a dominant or distracting role during the performance examination. This will only reduce the number of opportunities for the assessed performers to address all of the criteria.



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Program selection

The program should contain at least four contrasting works, including at least two works from the Prescribed List of Group Works. Works should be selected from the published list for that examination year, as the list is revised annually. If selecting works from Section B, it is important that students ensure they perform the actual section, movements, etc. that are listed.

The program selected by the student(s) is the foundation for achieving their best result. It is strongly recommended that students carefully consider the selection of works for their program, on the basis that each work contributes to a program that meets the assessment criteria.

All assessed performers should ensure that they participate significantly in presenting all works in their program. Assessed performers should present the works selected from the prescribed list at a standard that is consistent with the rest of the program. This may involve arranging works to create appropriate parts and/or allowing opportunities for improvisation, as appropriate to the style.

When performing a work from Section A, or similar music styles, performers do not necessarily need to present accurate note-for-note transcriptions, but it is essential that the original integrity of the music be retained. Chord progressions and the main melody should be faithful to the original. Variations may occur for a number of reasons, particularly if students have sourced transcriptions via the internet. While the internet can be a great resource, students must be aware that many transcriptions sourced from it are often overly simplified or inaccurate.

Students should avoid only performing works from styles that they are most familiar with, as this may limit their ability to perform in a variety of styles. The assessed performer's primary focus should be on performing a program that is diverse in style and mood. However, it is acceptable to present a program that has a range of styles within a particular type of group, as contrasting styles can exist within particular genres, such as rock or jazz. Groups can perform music that has contrasts in styles within a broader genre or style; for example, a jazz group could perform swing, bebop, west coast and/or fusion. Students should not necessarily perform styles that are not associated with the type of group that they represent.

As well as scoring highly in the criterion that assesses their ability to perform a variety of styles (Criterion 7), assessed performers who present a diverse program can also score higher marks in other criteria. For example, by performing a diverse program stylistically, the assessed performer(s) could also score more highly in the 'skill in using a range of performing techniques' criterion.

Students should demonstrate their ability to use a range of performance techniques. Each instrument is capable of producing different timbres, dynamics and effects, and has an inherent potential to allow the performer to apply a range of performance techniques. Students should be able to demonstrate their awareness of this in their performance. A guitarist, for example, could use a plectrum, finger style, sliding, bends, double stopping, tapping and/or alternative tunings.

The assessed performer(s) should also avoid performing material that merely repeats material previously presented. This may require development of arrangements or the use of improvisation, embellishment and ornamentation.

Time limits

The time allowed for the examination varies according to the number of assessed performers in a group (this can be found on page 46 of the *VCE Music Study Design*).

- groups of one assessed performer: 25 minutes maximum
- groups of two or three assessed performers: 30 minutes maximum
- groups of four assessed performers: 35 minutes maximum
- groups of five or six assessed performers: 40 minutes maximum

Assessed performers are advised to make full use of the time available. Specifically, students should make sure changeovers between performances are well rehearsed to ensure that they make the most of their performance time. It is recommended that the prescribed works be performed early in the program to ensure that criterion 1 is met within the time limit.

Setting up at the examination venue

Students are advised to check their equipment carefully before leaving for the examination. They must remember to pack all the required equipment, including replacement strings if appropriate. They should also bring extra power

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boards and extension leads so that their planned set-up is not compromised by the placement of power points at the venue.

Students are advised to arrive at the examination centre at least 30 minutes before their start time. Students will have access to the examination room at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the examination and should use this time to set up and adjust equipment, tune their instruments and warm up. Non-assessed performers may assist in adjusting the equipment before the examination; however, once the examination has started, only the assessed performers may adjust their instruments and equipment. When setting up, students may need to restrict their volume if another examination is underway in a nearby room. All examination performances must be presented at safe volume levels.

During the year, students should practise in a variety of rooms in order to become accustomed to different performance spaces with varying qualities of acoustics and volume requirements.

Groups should plan how they will sit or stand during the performance. Assessed performers must ensure that assessors can observe all performance techniques and technical skills. This may mean setting music stands so that finger movement and breathing techniques are visible. The seating plan or group organisation may be varied across the program to achieve the best performance environment for each work in the program.