



2007 VCE VET Music Industry GA 2: Performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

There appeared to be a general improvement in the performance standard of students in 2007, and there was a real sense that the community of students and trainers continue to embrace the spirit and intent of the VCE VET Music Industry program. The lowest score and the mean score were both higher than for the previous year's performance examination, which indicates that there was a better understanding of the criteria and that the standard of performance had improved.

In 2007, we saw some truly outstanding young artists present highly competent, well planned and well executed performances that could easily pass for being 'professional'.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Criterion 1 – Compliance with the requirements of the task

Students generally scored very well on criterion 1. There were still a few students who failed to memorise at least one piece and there were occasional performances that contained fewer than three works, but all other areas of compliance were well understood and implemented.

It is useful for students to start to formulate the Industry Statement when they first begin preparing for the examination, perhaps even a year in advance, as this will provide a solid framework and focus for the year's work. The Industry Statement and Performance Program Sheet are made available to schools by the VCAA. Students should always play to their strengths and keep their programs stylistically true to the personal musical vision reflected in their Industry Statement. To compliment this, teachers and trainers should make sure that all students are thoroughly familiar with the examination conditions and criteria. These should be constantly referred to throughout the performance preparation phase.

Criterion 2 – Skill in using performance techniques relevant to the area of specialisation with accuracy and control

Criterion 3 – Skill in realising the potential expressiveness and versatility of instrument(s) (or voice(s)) or technology throughout the program

Criteria 2 and 3 deal with mechanical technique and accuracy, and expressiveness and fluency in performance respectively. Within this program, these are the only two criteria that directly focus on specific technical 'playing' issues. When preparing for this area of assessment, students need to focus on:

- accuracy and articulation of the rhythm, pitch, timing, phrasing, texture and structure
- fluency and control in the execution of expressive techniques, such as variations of tempo and groove, accent and other dynamics, tone and texture relationships and interplay, variations in mix and tone colour and manipulation of electronic production devices, etc.

These criteria, and the musical skills they assess, are interrelated and fundamental technical aspects of training that tend to differentiate and reward skilled players.

There were some cases where students possessed minimal technical facility, or their mental preparation seemed to prevent them from presenting in the best light. These situations can be difficult to deal with, and outside circumstances may have precluded the development of discipline and focus through good practice habits. When possible, however, maximum dedication to the craft of music has a very positive effect on the student and their examination outcome.

Criterion 4 – Skill in performing with musicality through creativity, individuality and originality

Criterion 4 focuses on **performing** with creativity, individuality and originality. It is not enough to simply present original work, as this is not the focus of the criterion. All musical works must expressively communicate music ideas beyond simple rote learning or score reading. In order to achieve new interpretations of specific works, or new re-inventions of particular genres, students require strong technical skills. Technical facility as a basis for individual improvisation within the music form is the bedrock upon which all else is created.

Criterion 5 – Ability to place the sound of the instrument or voice within the performance environment and/or interact with other performers when appropriate

Criterion 5 assesses skill in performing as a member of a group, including interaction with other group members, and/or skill in performing as a solo performer, with a particular focus on placement of sound in the performance environment or context.



For this criterion solo performers need to focus more on relative balance between individual parts within an arrangement and artistic execution of dynamics. The same is true for group performers, with the added element of needing to coordinate their part and maintain its character within the whole, while at the same time contributing in a positive way to the overall musical structure of the performance. A good balance of instruments is achieved through clever arrangement of music as well as good sound production.

In the group context, students who scored well in this criterion demonstrated engaging and intuitive interactions with other group members. Solo performers who presented with an accompanist were assessed similarly. Solo performers without an accompanist achieved high scores by demonstrating consistent interpretations of each work and the ability to project well and maintain full control over the delivery of musical ideas in the performance environment.

Criterion 6 – Skill in presenting a cohesive program of music

In general, this area of the program is being achieved. However, some students do less well in constructing, maintaining and presenting a cohesive program of music because they do not have sufficient technical and expressive skills to achieve this.

Students may include a variety of styles in their program if that is appropriate for their industry context, or they may chose to demonstrate the extent of their ability within a more stylistically similar set. In 2007 some programs consisted of a kind of neo-classical background music, which, by its very nature, prevented a dynamically-shaped set from being realised.

Some students presented programs that were too long and they were therefore stopped at the required time limit. The performance examination must be completed within the time limits as described in the examination conditions, which are outlined on the VET Music Industry exam description and criteria page on the VCAA website.

Criterion 7 – Ability to communicate through the use of non-musical elements of the performance, such as stage management, visual appearance, performance etiquette, manner and/or movement, as appropriate to the performance

There were some outstanding examples of staging and other visual aspects of performance from students who had obviously put a lot of thought into this area of their program. Even when presenting in a basic classroom space, many students used subtle lighting, props and costumes. But even in instances where little preparation was evident, there were still last minute efforts that demonstrated a limited understanding of the pivotal role of non-musical elements to the success of a performance.

Criterion 8 – Skill in OHS principles appropriate to the performance program

In almost all cases students performed well in this area. This criterion assesses the application of general workplace safety. There were some excellent examples of stage areas that were well set up, with all cables laid safely and taped down. There were virtually no volume concerns this year, and most students performed at an appropriate, yet safe, volume. This criterion also covers specific health issues directly related to singing and/or playing technique and posture, etc.