



**2004 Music Performance Solo GA 3: Aural and written examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The format of the 2004 paper was the same as for the 2001 to 2003 examinations, comprising of a total of 100 marks. There were nine questions, all of which were compulsory. Aspects of the paper were very similar to the 2001 to 2003 examinations. The content of all questions was based on sample questions in Supplement 1 of the VCE Bulletin No. 160, December 2000 (pp. 175-204).

Teaching and learning programs for Music Performance Solo: Outcomes 3 and 4 should include preparation for each section of the examination. This could include a discussion of the requirements and appropriate response formats for the different question types. A range of material, including Assessment Reports and the Assessment Support CD-ROM provided by the VCAA during 2002, is available to assist teachers in preparing students for this examination.

Overall, the standard of responses for this examination was the highest so far. Most students negotiated the tasks with a fair degree of skill and appeared to possess a reasonable understanding of the necessary procedures for answering the questions. Some students, however, continued to experience the same difficulties as those referred to in previous Assessment Reports. It was unfortunate to note that many students almost certainly had not read Assessment Reports from the previous year(s). Students and teachers are strongly encouraged to spend time together discussing and methodically working through these documents, as they are intended specifically to optimise student outcomes for this examination.

Students are advised to present an answer for every question, as marks are not deducted for incorrect responses.

The average mark for Section A was 31.84 out of 60 (53.1%). The average mark for Section B was 25.75 out of 40 (64.4%). The overall average for the entire examination was 57.6%.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

**Section A: Aural comprehension**

Students are reminded that the aural comprehension section was worth 60 out of 100 possible marks in the examination, therefore perhaps more preparation time (both in and out of class) should have been spent practising this area. General music literacy seemed to have improved since previous years, although there is still scope for improvement.

In preparation for Section A, students should:

- be familiar with basic rules of music theory that apply to these question types and especially concentrate on issues of musical 'grammar', systems and procedures. A reasonable standard of general theoretical knowledge will allow students to predict probable and/or eliminate improbable responses
- develop skills in notating pitch and rhythm accurately and ensure that stems and beams/flags on notes are clear and unambiguous
- learn to recognise the four cadence types prescribed for study
- develop transcription skills in melodic, harmonic and rhythmic applications
- learn to identify intervals within melodic contexts
- avoid using pens, as it is clearly difficult to make legible changes or corrections. Also, students should not obscure the bar lines on the staff, particularly when using a black pen or a 'finepoint', felt-tipped pen.

**Part 1: Intervals and melody**

**Question 1**

**1a. Recognition of intervals**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	19	24	22	24	2.3

Identification of interval distance (quality and number)

- Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>
- Major 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Tritone (+4 / °5)
- Minor 3<sup>rd</sup>



Most students correctly identified at least two of the intervals correctly, although a small number failed to identify any of them. Some students labelled interval one as a 'Major 5<sup>th</sup>'. Most students identified the 'Major 2<sup>nd</sup>' (interval two) although many incorrect intervals were labelled as well, including 3<sup>rd</sup>s, 4<sup>th</sup>s and 5<sup>th</sup>s of various qualities. The 'tritone' (interval three) was difficult for many students, with the most common incorrect answers being Major or minor 6<sup>th</sup>s and 7<sup>th</sup>s. The minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (interval four) was commonly mistaken for a 'Major 3<sup>rd</sup>'. Some students wrote only arrows up or down, and some wrote either the number or the quality of the interval, but not both.

It was pleasing to note that fewer students wrote m's (or 'seagulls') for the labelling of Major and minor interval qualities; however students are advised to use 'Major'/'Maj'/'Ma' or 'Minor'/'Min'/'Mi' rather than 'M' or 'm' when identifying the given interval's quality.

Results suggested that students should practise identifying intervals in context (within a melody) rather than in isolation. A useful approach to this question type is to memorise the melody so that each interval can then be treated slowly during the working time at the end of the playings. This will also make it easier to establish the tonic, work out each of the scale degrees and thus identify the tonality.

**1b. Tonality of the excerpt**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	38	0	62	1.3

Melodic minor

This was a 'textbook' example of a melodic minor melody, clearly containing Major 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> degrees when the line ascended and minor ('flatted') 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> degrees when it descended. A large number of students identified the tonality as being of the 'Mixolydian Mode' or the 'Dorian Mode'. A 'Dorian' response is perhaps understandable, although the descending 6<sup>th</sup> and the ascending 7<sup>th</sup> of the 'Melodic Minor' are different from those of the 'Dorian Mode' (these are the two scale degrees which define the differences between most of the minor-sounding scales and modes). When compared with the 'Melodic Minor' scale, the 'Mixolydian Mode' has the correct ascending (but not descending) 6<sup>th</sup> and the correct descending (but not ascending) 7<sup>th</sup> (as does the 'Dorian Mode'); however the 'Mixolydian Mode' has a 'Major 3<sup>rd</sup>' – it is a major-sounding mode.

A surprisingly large number of students who correctly identified all four intervals of Question 1a incorrectly identified the tonality of the excerpt. Perhaps some students might benefit from adopting the strategy of identifying the tonality of the excerpt before working on the intervals (for example, try to establish the tonality and not more than the first interval in the first playing). It seemed that many students need to improve their music literacy skills in order to be able to eliminate some of the tonalities as possibilities or to verify other methods of identification (for example, if one hears a 'tritone' anywhere in the melody, the scale cannot be 'Pentatonic'). Although less frequent than in previous years, quite a few students did not circle **any** of the tonalities.

As always, Questions 1a and 1b provided a reasonable indicator of the student's standard for the remainder of Section A.

**Question 2. Melodic Transcription**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	1	2	2	3	4	5	5	7	8	8	8	9	8	9	8	14	9.8

Again this year, most students transcribed this Major melody reasonably well, especially those who performed well on Question 1; however, a significant number of students who experienced difficulties with the intervals of Question 1 also



transcribed this melody ably, perhaps indicating weaknesses in identifying specific intervals within melodic contexts. Given the compound time signature, a commendably high number of students notated most, or all, of the rhythm correctly and indicated the melodic contour fairly accurately. Students are encouraged to notate the rhythm as accurately as possible and, if standard (mensural) notation is a significant problem, notate at least the melodic contour of the excerpt, even if this is done using a line graph. A significant number of students would benefit from learning to memorise the melody and then breaking up the more difficult sections into manageable units. In addition, once the melody is memorised it becomes possible to (internally) sing the notes of any leaps in order to check their intervals. Many students would benefit from learning to read bass clef so that the accompaniment parts can be of use when transcribing melodies. Students would also benefit from an awareness of the fundamentals of harmony.

The following is a list of observations and common problems regarding the transcription of this melody.

- Some students seemed confused about the second group of quavers in the first bar and started on a note other than the G. This created problems in the next bar. In some cases, the ascending steps were mistakenly notated as arpeggios (broken chords).
- One or the other of the descending steps in bar two was sometimes written as a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> as a step.
- At the beginning of bar three, some students notated the first note as an 'E' and some as a 'C'. Most recognised that the bar featured one ascending and one descending arpeggio but failed to understand what types they were. This seems to reinforce the view that some students did not evaluate the sonorities/chords delivered by the other instruments – G minor and F Major/D minor (see comments above regarding the need to read bass clef and to learn some fundamentals of harmony). In a few cases, the two arpeggios were both written as ascending.
- In bar four, quite a few students seemed to think that the melody ended on the mediant (the third degree of the scale – the 'A') instead of the tonic, and either used a wider interval than the 2<sup>nd</sup> or forced the contour upwards to cater for that idea. Many of those ending on the mediant still wrote a correctly contoured (though transposed) version of the final bar (that is, 'G'–'Bb'–'A'). A few students ended on the dominant after 'leaping' for the first two notes of the bar, while a handful of others ended on notes unrelated to the tonic chord (commonly 'G' or 'Bb'). Given that the melodic excerpt for this question was played six times, average students were expected to establish that:
  1. the last note of the excerpt and the first note of the excerpt were different (to be checked when the melody played the next time)
  2. the violin and the oboe ended on different notes, so the oboe's final note was definitely not an 'A'
  3. the oboe, 'cello and bassoon all played 'Fs' (assuming the student could work out that the two bass parts both play 'Fs').

It was unfortunate to note that, yet again, some students did not know how to approach this task, whether logically or intuitively. There are many methods for teaching and learning the basic skills necessary to undertake melodic transcriptions, and proficiency can only be established over time via a diligent, multifaceted and systematic application. One successful approach is for students to challenge themselves to learn melodic material that they hear regularly (perhaps starting with the music for simple radio and television ads and working up from there) using either number or sol-fa syllables to distinguish scale degrees. At first this may indeed require checking/confirmation using an instrument, but fairly quickly the necessary skills should develop. Once the aural elements are mastered, attempts at notation (probably starting with rhythm) can begin to be incorporated.

## Part 2: Chords and harmony

### Question 3. Recognition of chord types

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	11	15	15	19	19	17	3.6

1. minor 7 chord
2. (full) diminished 7 chord
3. augmented chord
4. major 7 chord
5. dominant 7 chord
6. major chord

This question was answered fairly well, with most students identifying at least three of the sonorities correctly. Almost all students identified the 'major' chord, but many had difficulties with the '(full) diminished 7' and/or 'augmented' chords. The 'minor 7' and 'dominant 7' sonorities were also problematic for some; the 'minor 7' was most often incorrectly identified as simply 'minor', and the 'dominant 7' was quite frequently incorrectly labelled 'major 7'. Some students identified chords that are not examinable in the Music Performance: Solo Victorian Certificate of Education

# 2004 Assessment Report



Study Design, even though a list of the examinable chords was printed on the examination paper. Some students wrote sevenths for every chord, presumably because they expected non-seventh chords would feature arpeggios with only six (three times two) rather than eight notes. All arpeggios have eight notes. Chords without sevenths will have the note of the octave sounded (twice) at the top (1-3-5-8-8-5-3-1), while chords with sevenths will have the seventh sounded twice at the top (1-3-5-7-7-5-3-1).

Only one of the 7th chords prescribed for study has a major 7<sup>th</sup> (semitone below the octave) – the ‘Major 7’ sonority – and only one of the remaining does not have a minor 7<sup>th</sup> (tone below the octave) – the ‘(full) diminished 7’ sonority. This chord has a diminished 7<sup>th</sup> (which actually sounds as a Major 6<sup>th</sup> above the note of the tonic or root note). Although the list of chords was expressed quite clearly on the paper, many students did not seem to be aware of how important this list can be for working out the quality of chords. In addition, many students did not seem to be aware of the interval distances for each degree of the given chord. The following information is included to assist students experiencing difficulties in this respect.

Major chord	1 to 3 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to 5 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 to 8 – Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	the high note is the octave
minor chord	1 to 3 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to 5 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 to 8 – Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	the high note is the 8 <sup>ve</sup>
Augmented chord	1 to 3 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to (#)5 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(#)5 to 8 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	8 <sup>ve</sup> on top
diminished chord	1 to 3 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to (b)5 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(b)5 to 8 – Tritone	8 <sup>ve</sup> on top
Suspended 4 chord (sus 4)	1 to 4 – Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	4 to 5 – Major 2 <sup>nd</sup> (tone)	5 to 8 – Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>ve</sup> on top
Dominant 7 chord	1 to 3 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to 5 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 to 7 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(min) 7 <sup>th</sup> on top
Major 7 chord	1 to 3 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to 5 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 to 7 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(Maj) 7 <sup>th</sup> on top
minor 7 chord	1 to 3 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to 5 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 to 7 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(min) 7 <sup>th</sup> on top
half-diminished chord (min7/flat5)	1 to 3 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to (b)5 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(b)5 to 7 – Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(min) 7 <sup>th</sup> on top
(full) diminished 7 chord (dim 7)	1 to 3 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 to (b)5 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(b)5 to 7 – minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	(dim) 7 <sup>th</sup> (sounds a Maj 6 <sup>th</sup> above root) on top

In order to ‘internalise’ these arpeggios, with the ultimate aim of being able to distinguish them by sound (first when arpeggiated and later when sounded simultaneously), it is suggested that students memorise the order of the 3<sup>rd</sup>s and 4<sup>ths</sup> (and tritone) for each sonority and learn to sing them. Students can use sol-fa syllables, numbers, or both.

### Question 4. Recognition of chord progressions

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	5	11	11	9	7	8	10	11	7	8	5	4	2	2	5.3

Either:

- |                          |  |  |                   |                |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. <i>E-flat (Major)</i> | 2. C minor – 2 <sup>nd</sup> inv           | 3. F minor 7 – 1 <sup>st</sup> inv                                       | 4. B-flat (Dom) 7 | 5. C minor     |
| or                       |  |  |                   |                |
| 1. <i>E-flat (Major)</i> | 2. C minor / G                             | 3. F minor 7 / Ab  | 4. B-flat (Dom) 7 | 5. C minor     |
| or                       |  |  |                   |                |
| 1. <i>E-flat (Major)</i> | 2. vi <sub>c</sub>                         | 3. ii <sup>7</sup> <sub>b</sub> / II minor 7 <sub>b</sub>                | 4. V 7            | 5. vi / VI min |
| or                       |  |  |                   |                |
| 1. <i>E-flat (Major)</i> | 2. vi / VI min – 2 <sup>nd</sup> inv       | 3. ii 7 / II min 7 – 1 <sup>st</sup> inv                                 | 4. V 7            | 5. vi / VI min |
| or                       |  |  |                   |                |
| 1. <i>E-flat (Major)</i> | 2. vi / VI min <sup>6</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 3. ii <sup>6</sup> / <sub>5</sub> / II (min) <sup>6</sup> / <sub>5</sub> | 4. V 7            | 5. vi / VI min |

or:

Harmonic Grid	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bass Note	<i>E-flat</i>	G	Ab	Bb	C
Character/Quality/Type	<i>Major</i>	minor	minor 7	Dominant 7	minor
Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion	<i>E-flat (Major) (Root)</i>	C minor / G or C minor - 2 <sup>nd</sup> inversion	F min 7 / Ab or F minor 7 - 1 <sup>st</sup> inversion	Bb (Dom) 7	C minor (Root)



## Cadence: Interrupted (V[7] – vi)

The harmonic grid allowed students to demonstrate the systematic working out of the various components of the chords in the progression. Correct identification of the bass line was common, but many students had trouble with the inverted chords (chords two and three), especially the minor 7 chord in first inversion (chord three). Pleasingly, a high percentage of students correctly identified the interrupted cadence.

Overall this question was not handled particularly well by many students, and responses suggested that much more preparation was needed in this area. In particular, some students continued to show fundamental misunderstandings about the nature of diatonic harmony. The key of this progression was identified as 'E-flat major', yet many students identified chords that are not of the E-flat major chord scale. To prepare for this question, students are advised to sing and play both the major and harmonic minor scales and then sing and play the triads and chords with sevenths that can be constructed above each scale degree. Students who took a methodical approach to answering this question (which was evident in their rough workings) often did quite well, even though their understanding was sometimes not complete.

The overall results for this question were somewhat disappointing, particularly given that it was a fairly basic progression (I – vi – ii – V – vi) in a major key. The trend tended towards the recognition of two or three bass notes or two or three qualities, often not both. Many students failed to pick up the root progression via the bass notes (primarily moving down in 3<sup>ths</sup>), and a large number either included no 7<sup>ths</sup> or wrote 7<sup>ths</sup> for most (or all) chords to be identified. Some students recognised the given 7<sup>th</sup> but not the chord's quality; that is, they simply wrote a '7' in the middle box, which was acceptable for the 'Bb (dominant) 7' (chord four) but not for the 'F minor 7' (chord three).

The following is a list of observations and common problems regarding this question.

- There was frequent use of inappropriate or confused musical grammar.
- The bottom boxes in the harmonic grid required the full chord and position identification, not just the inversion. For chord two (Cm/G), for example, many students wrote 'G' in the top box, 'minor' in the middle box and '2<sup>nd</sup> inversion' in the bottom box. Although all of these are correct, full marks could not be awarded as the full chord was not named.
- There was frequent identification of non-diatonic chords (for example, 'G# minor'; 'C# Major' in the key of three flats) or chords that were not examinable (for example, 'D diminished' – the 'leading note' [vii<sup>o</sup>] chord of 'E-flat Major', or 'G minor' – its mediant [iii] chord).
- The diatonic chord qualities were confused by many students (for example, common answers included 'F Major', 'D Major' and 'C Major' none of which are diatonic to 'E-flat major').
- Often the last chord (vi) was correctly identified, but the cadence was incorrectly named. Some students correctly identified the bass notes, but not the chord qualities or the cadence, while in the harmonic grid a few named the bass notes and the cadence but not the qualities of the chords (or their complete names). When using the harmonic grid, students should complete all of the boxes so that nothing of importance is overlooked.
- Many students did not identify the cadence at all. Perhaps they did not notice part b of the question, or maybe they were not familiar with previous examination papers and/or the sample questions for this examination.
- Some of the labels for the cadence included 'unfinished', 'incomplete', 'interjected' and 'half'; however, the only names that will be accepted are: 'perfect', 'plagal', 'imperfect' or 'interrupted', without exception. It was apparent that many students still did not know the characteristics of these cadence types: 'perfect' – V to I/i; 'plagal' – IV/iv to I/i; 'imperfect' – a chord other than V to V (commonly the tonic, supertonic or subdominant to the dominant); 'interrupted' – V to a chord other than I/i (commonly the dominant to the submediant, subdominant or supertonic).
- The inverted chords (chords two and three) were frequently incorrectly identified as 'E-flat Major/G' (or 'Eb<sup>Δ</sup>7/G') and 'A-flat Major' (or 'Ab<sup>Δ</sup>7') respectively.
- Regarding the 'Ab minor 7' chord, it seems that some students have been taught that a '7' added to a chord indicates the 'minor 7<sup>th</sup>' note (and requires 'dim'/'<sup>o</sup>' or 'maj'/'<sup>Δ</sup>' to change this). However, this rule does not automatically indicate that the chord is minor just because its 7<sup>th</sup> is; for example, a 'dominant 7' chord is a Major triad with a minor 7<sup>th</sup>. In this respect, it seemed that many students are not clear about exactly what constitutes each of the chords with 7<sup>ths</sup> ('minor 7', 'half-diminished', 'Major 7' and 'Dominant 7'). Although not examinable for this question (but it is for Question 3), it is useful for students to know the characteristics of '(full) diminished 7' chords as well. In addition, many students identified chord four as a '(Bb) Major 7', indicating that they did not know the difference between 'Dominant 7' and 'Major 7' sonorities. Several students identified the last chord as a 'minor 7', 'Dominant 7', or 'Major 7' despite its not containing a 7<sup>th</sup> at all.



- Some students used Arabic numbers for both diatonic position and inversion (for example, ‘6 – 2’), presumably indicating the submediant (vi) chord in 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion. Although there are some very rare examples of this style of nomenclature, students are requested to use standard figured notation (featuring Roman numbers for the diatonic position of the chord). Students who are not confident using figured notation are advised to use the harmonic grid, and it is suggested that students who use the grid avoid using figured notation (for example, in the bottom boxes) unless they are very confident in both styles.
- Despite specific advice to the contrary in Assessment Reports since 1998, some students used upper case Roman numerals exclusively, thus they identified only the root note which was an incomplete answer as the quality/character/type of the chord had not been identified. Students should use upper case Roman numerals for Major chords and lower case for minor and diminished chords, unless there is a sound reason for their not doing so. If a student uses only upper case Roman numbers, they should clearly identify the quality/character/type of the chord, along with the scale degree; for example, VI minor or VI min. This year’s paper allowed for a figuration where one of the qualities did not need to be identified specifically provided that diatonic (baroque) figured notation was used; that is, chord three – the II<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> (being the diatonic supertonic 7 chord in 1<sup>st</sup> inversion, ‘F minor7/Ab’). Interestingly, the few students who used this style of figuration made the triad’s quality clear anyway, most commonly by writing ii<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>.
- Upper and lower case for Major/minor tonalities were often used inconsistently and/or interchangeably. One example that was very difficult to mark: *E-flat Major – c/G – F7/Ab – bb* [small ‘b’ with a ‘flat’ symbol] - C. In this instance, if chord two is taken as being ‘C minor/G’, then chords three and four must be viewed as being ‘F (dominant)7’/A-flat and ‘B-flat minor’ and chord five is ‘C Major’. Alternatively, it might be assumed that this student did not differentiate between upper case and lower case characters with **some** of the letters, thus the ‘F’ and the ‘c’ might be taken as meaning ‘minor’ and the ‘b’ as being ‘Major’. Even so, the contradiction between the lower case ‘c’ and the upper case ‘C’ makes the marking of the question very conjectural. This student should have used the harmonic grid rather than the lines, as the intentions would have been clearer.
- Some students intermingled letters of the alphabet and Roman numbers and/or figured notation with AMEB-style analytical notation to indicate inversions (that is, intermingling chords classified as ‘<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>’ or ‘<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup>’ with chords in ‘b’ or ‘c’ position within the same response). Once again, students are requested not to mix styles of harmonic nomenclature.
- Some students answered using both the lines and the harmonic grid, not infrequently with contradictory responses, although this was not as common as in previous years. Students are advised to use the blank paper provided in the examination booklet for their rough working out and then to transfer their answers to the lines **or** grid, **not both**.
- Many students confused the recognition of the chord progression with the recognition of chord types, hence neither bass notes nor any indication of diatonic position (scale degree) were presented, rather only chord types. Sometimes chord qualities were labelled as ‘Augmented’ and/or ‘full diminished’ (7) – chords that are not examinable for this question type.

The higher scoring answers generally used the harmonic grid; however, some of the students who used it demonstrated serious misunderstandings about diatonic harmony. The following student response demonstrates the level of confusion that some students seemed to experience regarding diatonic chord progressions as well as the nature of chords with 7<sup>th</sup>. This response should be compared to the correct answer above, noting the various contradictions and the serious misunderstandings that are demonstrated here. Only three marks could be awarded for this response: one for the bass note of chord two, one for recognition of the ‘Dominant 7’ chord quality, and one for the bass note of chord five. Nevertheless, this student was probably stronger in the area of harmonic transcription than the given marks indicated.

Harmonic Grid	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
<b>Bass Note</b>	<b>E-flat</b>	G	A	B	C
<b>Character/Quality/Type</b>	<b>Major</b>	Major	minor	Dominant 7	Major 7
<b>Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion</b>	<b>E-flat (Major) (Root)</b>	G Major – 1 <sup>st</sup> inversion	A minor	B (Dom) 7	C 7

**Cadence:** Interjected

Teaching activities that focus on this type of question should develop students’ familiarity with common root progressions, the structural characteristics of major, minor and diminished chords (with and without 7<sup>th</sup>), as well as the



sound quality of each of the examinable chords. One method is to teach the relationship to the chord that either precedes or follows; the development of an awareness of issues regarding voice-leading and function joined with sound quality or 'feel'-based considerations. It was clear that a large percentage of students were unaware of the meaning of a 'diatonic' chord progression, not to mention that sonorities based on the mediant (iii) and leading note (vii<sup>o</sup>) degrees are not examinable for this question type. Students need to be aware of the chord types that are diatonic to the major and the harmonic minor forms (the only scale forms examinable for this question type).

In order to deal successfully with diatonic chord progressions, it is essential that students know:

- the names of each degree of both the Major and the harmonic minor scales between three sharps and three flats inclusive – a total of **14** scales (A Major/F# minor; D Major/B minor; G Major/E minor; C Major/A minor; F Major/D minor; B-flat Major/G minor and E-flat Major/C minor)
- the precise nature of the **sounds** of all chords prescribed for study, including their first and second inversions
- the specific nature of common diatonic chord progressions. These are essential as a starting point for recognising chord progression
- the character/quality/chord type for the tonic, supertonic, sub-dominant, dominant and sub-mediants triads and their seven chords for all 14 of the examinable scales (although chords of the mediant and leading note degrees are not examinable, they abound in music; hence, knowing them is useful as well). Students should note the following regarding the qualities of the examinable diatonic triads and 7 chords from the Major and Harmonic minor scales:

Major scale:

- Tonic (I) triad – Major / Tonic 7 chord – Major 7 sonority (Major triad plus Major 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Supertonic (ii) triad – minor / Supertonic 7 chord – minor 7 sonority (minor triad plus minor 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Sub-dominant (IV) triad – Major / Sub-dominant 7 chord – Major 7 sonority
- Dominant (V) triad – Major / Dominant 7 chord – Dominant 7 sonority (Major triad plus minor 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Sub-mediator (vi) triad – minor / Sub-mediator 7 chord – minor 7 sonority.

Harmonic minor scale:

- Tonic (i) triad – minor / Tonic 7 chord – minor 7 sonority (minor triad plus minor 7<sup>th</sup>, with the 7<sup>th</sup> taken from the natural/relative/aeolian minor scale so that the tonic 7 chord is stable)
- Supertonic (ii<sup>o</sup>) triad – diminished / Supertonic 7 chord – half-diminished sonority (diminished triad plus minor 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Sub-dominant (iv) triad – minor / Sub-dominant 7 chord – minor 7 sonority
- Dominant (V) triad – Major / Dominant 7 chord – Dominant 7 sonority (Major triad plus minor 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Sub-mediator (VI) triad – Major / Sub-mediator 7 chord – Major 7 sonority (Major triad plus Major 7<sup>th</sup>).

### Part 3: Rhythm

#### Question 5. Transcription of Rhythms

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	6	12	15	14	13	12	13	14	4.6

# 2004 Assessment Report



Musical score for Pan Flute, Trumpet in C, Viola, and Bassoon. The score is in 3/8 time and consists of three measures. The Pan Flute part is mostly rests. The Trumpet in C part has a melodic line with an asterisk above the second measure. The Viola and Bassoon parts have sparse accompaniment.

Musical score for P. Fl, Tpt, Vla, and Bsn. The score is in 3/8 time and consists of three measures. The P. Fl part has a melodic line. The Tpt part has a melodic line with an asterisk above the second measure. The Vla and Bsn parts have accompaniment.

Musical score for P. Fl, Tpt, Vla, and Bsn. The score is in 3/8 time and consists of three measures. The P. Fl part has a melodic line. The Tpt part has a melodic line. The Vla and Bsn parts have accompaniment.

Musical score for P. Fl, Tpt, Vla, and Bsn. The score is in 3/8 time and consists of three measures. The P. Fl part has a melodic line with an asterisk above the second measure. The Tpt part has a melodic line. The Vla and Bsn parts have accompaniment.

This question was answered well by a pleasingly high proportion of students, although the weaker students experienced considerable difficulties with it. Many students misunderstood the characteristics of compound time signatures,



especially with respect to the grouping of notes. Some had too many or too few beats in the bars, while others wrote (or grouped) the notes as for a simple time signature. A number of students wrote straight quavers and/or semi-quavers in all of the bars to be identified, probably in the hope that some of the time they would be correct.

Following are some comments regarding each of the bars that needed to be transcribed.

- Bar one (trumpet in C) was generally well done. The most common problem was the total number of semi-quavers (six).
- In bar two (trumpet in C), the four consecutive semi-quavers caused problems for students who did not recognise that the first sound of the bar was a crotchet (the length of two of the six quavers in 6/8 time). It seemed that these students did not compare the trumpet and viola parts to notice that the first of the four semi-quavers sounded in alignment with the 'D' (tied quavers) from the viola.
- In bar three (bassoon), those students who aligned the 'fall' of the third and fourth quavers to the pan flute fared very well. Some students seemed to have been confused by the relative 'busyness' of the trumpet and viola parts.
- The rhythmic figures in bar four (pan flute) posed the most problems for the greatest number of students, particularly the crotchet tied to the semi-quaver. It seemed that students who had difficulty with this figure failed to notice that the semi-quaver on the 'and-of-three' (the sixth semi-quaver) aligned exactly with those in the trumpet and viola parts. The figure in the second dotted-crotchet beat of the bar sometimes appeared on the first dotted-crotchet beat as well (that is, it was written twice). Interestingly, some students tied the first two notes of that figure, which made their answer correct (although unusual). In the figure of the second dotted-crotchet beat, a frequent mistake was the placement of the dot on the first instead of second note. In some cases, this bar featured straight quavers and semi-quavers, sometimes tied in a variety of creative combinations.

A number of students made their task considerably more difficult by attempting to transcribe the pitches of the notes as well, rarely with total success. These students should have noted that extra credit was **not** available for a full melodic transcription, only for transcriptions of the **rhythms** of the parts where the bars are blank.

#### Question 6. Transcription of a rhythm

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	2	6	10	12	15	12	11	7	6	5	5	5	4	5.4



Although many students handled this question very well indeed, many others had difficulties, for a range of reasons. The following is a list of observations and problems regarding this question.

- Most students transcribed the first bar correctly, and many were able to notate most of the rhythm correctly.
- A significant percentage of students had difficulty with the crotchet triplet figure in bar two. In this bar, some students wrote duplets, unusual combinations of quavers or even dotted quavers, and sometimes included rests within their figure. Some students wrote five-and-a-half beats to represent the notes that constituted bar two.
- It appeared that a large percentage of students were confused by the crotchet triplet figure in bar two – so much so that they lost track of the pulse. The ties in bars three and four presented problems for some students as well.
- Many students had difficulty with the syncopations, especially those in bar four.
- Some students wrote ligatures/beams across bar lines (which were accepted when the rhythmic integrity was maintained).
- Where the beams of quavers were written directly atop a stave line, it was very hard to distinguish if the note was a single quaver, joined semi-quavers, or a crotchet.
- A few students thought that the paper was wrong, sometimes commenting that there were not enough bars to write out the rhythm.

Many students would benefit from conducting the excerpts that they are transcribing. By so doing, they are more likely to identify the exact position of figures within the bar, the nature of syncopations, the relative durations of notes both less than and more than a complete beat, and offbeat entries.



When writing rhythms, students should be encouraged to use note heads as 'stick notation' is often unclear. Indeed, many students who used 'stick notation' appeared to have confused themselves, especially with respect to the ties in bars one, three and four. Also, students should use the blank manuscript paper to work out their answer and then transfer a legible version to the stave provided, thereby ensuring that the notes are evenly apportioned within the bars.

## Section B: Prescribed ensemble works

	Mozart	Holst	Bach	Westlake	Lennon/McCartney
<b>Work Chosen (%)</b>	22	15	13	17	33
<b>Average Mark (out of 40)</b>	29.04	26.89	29.08	25.74	21.82
<b>Average Mark (%)</b>	72.6	67.2	72.7	64.4	54.6

There was a large number of highly insightful responses to the questions in Section B that often demonstrated the student's significant understanding of both the set works and issues related to performance style and interpretations in performance. It was pleasing to observe that the number of responses obviously prepared beforehand had diminished noticeably. There were a lot fewer insults written regarding artists, ensembles and/or conductors than has been the case in previous examinations.

The following are some general observations regarding Section B of the 2004 examination.

- Students should develop a better knowledge and understanding of their chosen prescribed ensemble work. The work should be studied from various analytical perspectives to enable the student to achieve a higher standard.
- Students should be aware of exactly which songs and movements of the given prescribed ensemble work are examinable. Some students wrote responses that included songs or movements from their chosen work that were not prescribed for study. Movement 3 of the Mozart, Movement 5 of the Westlake, and five of the Lennon/McCartney/Harrison songs ('Getting Better', 'Lovely Rita', 'Good Morning, Good Morning', 'Sgt. Pepper's – Reprise' and 'Within You, Without You') are not prescribed for study. Responses that included movements or songs not prescribed for study could not be accepted as answers or parts of answers (nor could cover versions of songs if they were not prescribed for study).
- Many students did not identify the work they had studied, even though pages 14 and 19 of the examination were included specifically for this purpose.
- Students should allocate time more carefully, as some clearly ran out of time in the last question. Students might consider first addressing the questions in Section B worth the most marks, especially any which require a discussion or integrated extended response.
- Students should use reading time prudently to decide how best to approach questions with several parts. Many students did not read the questions thoroughly; hence it was common for significant elements, issues and/or considerations to be omitted from their answers.
- Many students wasted considerable time unnecessarily restating the question.
- Students should use the marks available for each question as an indication of the depth/breadth that is required in their response.
- Some students' handwriting was extremely difficult to read, making it difficult for assessors to follow the response.
- Many students used shorthand symbols within their prose (for example, a triangle to mean 'therefore'), which is fine, provided well-known symbols are used. Students should be certain that what they are trying to say is clear, particularly if any shorthand is used.
- Some students used highlighters or underlining to identify the key points of the question. This approach was very effective.
- Students who responded very well to the questions often used clear methods of structuring their responses, including using dot points, underlining/highlighting key words and/or using subheadings. Students were generally more successful in Section B when they answered questions using dot points. Some students who wrote in extended paragraphs made it very difficult for the assessors to follow their train of thought, and, at times, sentence structure was poor and paragraphs were rambling and unfocused. Prose-based responses should be organised, cohesive and show an awareness of the requirements of an appropriate answer to the question.
- Many students would have benefited significantly from greater familiarity with the terms and concepts that are included within the Music Performance: Solo Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design. For example, many students seemed to be completely unaware of the musical meanings of 'dynamics' and 'articulation', while other students presented musical terms within the body of their writing which were either out of context, inappropriate or simply incorrect.



- Students should be aware of exactly what each question type requires them to do and know the applicable terminology, including the requirements of different response formats such as 'identify', 'describe', 'explain' and 'discuss'.
- Some students obviously presented rote-learned responses that often did not answer the question very well (if at all). In attempting to relate their prepared response to the question on the paper, some students presented fairly lengthy introductions followed by a statement such as '...and this must be considered when...' This type of approach was rarely successful. In addition, some students tried to use their prepared response for more than one question. Students and teachers should be aware that examination questions are set with an intention both to hinder prepared and/or generic responses and to make them stand out to assessors.
- Some students compared a single performance by a school-based ensemble to a professional recording. Although this approach is acceptable, it would be prudent for teachers to present a second, professional recording as well, so that students can make well-considered comparative comments about some of the more refined issues related to 'expressive and artistic interpretation in performance'. This consideration would be particularly relevant where the school-based ensemble's performance did not include all parts of the selected prescribed work and/or where parts were not played accurately. Some students compared a notated score to **one** recording of their chosen prescribed work, rather than **two** interpretations in performance as directed. This happened even in situations where two interpretations in performance were indeed written in the appropriate boxes on page 19.
- Responses to questions in Section B should refer to only **one** of the prescribed ensemble works and to **two** interpretations in performance of that **same** work, not to the chosen prescribed work and another ensemble work, more than one of the set works, or to two ensemble works, neither of which are prescribed for study. The following examples were not acceptable for comparison in Section B: different songs from *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*; performances by the same artist of one of the songs within the collection and one that was not; a set work and another work by the same composer; the chosen prescribed work and a different, **non-prescribed** piece that the student had performed in a school-based ensemble.
- With respect to questions that included a fair amount of text (for example, those with suggestions for answers, response styles and what **not** to focus upon), it appeared that many students did not read all of the guiding text. It appeared that many simply scanned the text, read through the topics looking for key words and then launched themselves into their prepared, often irrelevant, answer.
- Although students were instructed not to focus upon the score excerpt printed in the data book when answering Questions 8 and 9, once again this year, many of them did so anyway.
- Parts b and c of Question 7 required a description and justification of the significance of the melodies/melodic ideas and then a discussion of salient ways of preparing for performance the two melodies or melodic ideas that were identified in part a. Before deciding on the melodic ideas or melodies for part a, students should have checked to ensure that they could address all of the aspects of parts b and c.
- Although certainly not as frequently as in some previous years, a number of students made inappropriate value judgments regarding the calibre of performance/performers with respect to interpretation(s) of the work they had studied. Question 9 required students to 'discuss ways that two specific resources are used' with respect to the two interpretations in performance. Several students' answers contained some very critical comments regarding instrumentalists, singers, conductors, recording engineers and microphone placement within the studio (or performance venue). Although students are entitled to an opinion, such comments were frequently unfounded and almost never supported by relevant written evidence or analysis. The very nature of the question made the presentation of such value judgments superfluous; hence it was a waste of time and effort to include them.

The following comments relate to the specific prescribed works.

- Most students who selected the Bach cantata and the Mozart quintet fared well overall, with average scores for Section B around 73% and mean scores for the entire examination above 60% (the best ever). Students who selected these two works continued to deliver responses of a notably higher standard across all questions, including those in Section A.
- Students who wrote on the Holst and Westlake suites fared comparatively better than their counterparts in 2002 and 2003; their mean scores for Section B increased by about 11% and 7% respectively (as did the marks for the Bach and Mozart cohorts).
- Students who chose to discuss *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (about a third of the enrolment) also showed significant improvement, with the mean score for the section increasing by more than 11% (43.1% in 2003 to 54.6% in 2004). Nevertheless, although weak responses ranged across all of the set works, answers from some of the students who had studied The Beatles' work were often seriously weak (in fairness, however, some of the finest responses were also written regarding this work). Many of the weaker answers on this work demonstrated a poor grasp of appropriate terminology. Although contemporary musicians tackling

# 2004 Assessment Report



the work are perhaps advantaged in their understanding of context and genre, many seemed to have extreme difficulty articulating their knowledge and understanding within their written responses. Teachers and students should consider carefully the degree to which they are confident teaching and studying The Beatles' work, especially given the relatively small amount of resource material available that focuses on formal analytical perspectives.

- Some students wrote about dot points that either did not suit their selected prescribed work and/or that they knew very little about. In addition, some students selected performance contexts and/or resources for performance that were so inappropriate that they had almost nothing to say about them (see comments below regarding Question 8). An ability to identify, describe and discuss appropriately and knowledgeably an array of relevant musical concepts should be included in the teaching and learning program for this part of the study.

**NOTE:** The following possible responses are a **guide** only and are not exhaustive. The possible responses or characteristics include examples of salient points and/or characteristics of the considerations to be addressed for each of the question's components. A brief discussion about student responses, both overall and with focus upon the specific prescribed work, follows each segment.

**Question 7a. Identify the instrument(s) and/or voice(s) of two melodies and/or melodic ideas in the excerpt.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	1	2	97	2.0

Composer	Average Mark
Mozart	1.93
Holst	1.97
Bach	1.98
Westlake	1.99
Lennon/McCartney	1.96

MOZART	HOLST	BACH	WESTLAKE	LENNON/McCARTNEY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* clarinet part, anywhere</li> <li>* violins one and two where they have a theme (see bars 17-20)</li> <li>* Viola and 'cello imitation of the theme (see bars 21-24)</li> <li>* in principle, pretty much anything might be considered melodic provided the pitch alters in some kind of 'horizontal pitch orientation' manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* solo clarinet</li> <li>* solo bass clarinet (see five bars after 'C')</li> <li>* flute solo (see nine bars after 'C')</li> <li>* pretty much anything could be considered melodic – clear justification was sought later, given that one of these was selected for part b</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* either of the vocal parts</li> <li>* violone piccolo with counter-melody</li> <li>* lines from interior parts (for example, viola from full score) have counter-melodic function (see bar 11)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* flute two and alto flute</li> <li>* solo guitar (especially from 177, although from 170 if justified later)</li> <li>* A clarinet from bar 176</li> <li>* the harp part is really an ostinato. If identified here, it was necessary for it to be justified later</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* the two vocal parts</li> <li>* the string parts (particularly in the last system on the page) provided an argument was made that clearly demonstrated <b>melodic</b> prominence or significance in some clear sense</li> </ul>

As indicated by the mean scores, this question was answered well by almost every student. However, the following points should be noted.

- A few students identified an instrument(s) or voice(s) that were unquestionably in an accompanying role.
- A few students listed every instrument (or voice) of the excerpt, even those that had blank parts and that would not have played at the time.
- Some students wrote full sentences that paraphrased the question (for example, 'the first instrument I would like to identify which appears in the score excerpt presenting a melody is...'); these students often ran out of space for their answer. Questions which ask students to 'identify' require no more than a few words per

# 2004 Assessment Report



element or component, not sentences. Students are reminded that a question worth only two marks (especially where two elements or components are to be identified) does not require an elaborate response.

**Question 7b. Describe the melody or melodic idea that you consider to be the most prominent or significant in the excerpt, giving three reasons that justify your decision.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	3	10	21	24	23	18	4.1

Composer	Average Mark
Mozart	4.49
Holst	4.24
Bach	4.27
Westlake	4.18
Lennon/McCartney	3.50

Matters of particular relevance might include:

- timbre
- relative volume/dynamics or ‘mix-based’ issues
- register-based considerations
- text-based issues
- issues of rhythmic complexity and relationship
- relationship to thematic content from other sections of the movement or song (especially from ‘elsewhere’)
- use of idiomatic writing for specific instruments (especially Westlake)
- the highest part
- because ‘it’s the tune’ (this observation must be justified, not simply stated).

Students needed to do two things when responding to this question:

- describe the features or characteristics of the melody or melodic idea chosen as the most prominent or significant in part a
- give three reasons to justify why they chose that melody or melodic idea as the most prominent or significant.

Obviously the notion of significance or prominence was important; nevertheless three valid points of justification needed to be **described**, not simply mentioned. It was possible to say that none of the melodies were of greater significance, but this needed to be justified as well. Students should remember that something can be significant without necessarily being prominent.

As indicated by the mean scores, most students complied fairly well with both requirements of the question (describe and justify). However, the following points should be noted:

- some responses indicated that students were not able to describe a melody or melodic idea effectively. This seemed to stem from limited musical vocabulary and/or unfamiliarity with relevant musical terminology
- students often either described a melody/melodic idea **or** justified why they thought a melody/melodic idea was important. High-scoring answers included both a description and a justification
- a number of the justifications provided had no relevance at all to the music
- many descriptions of the melody or melodic idea lacked detail. The following matters were worth considering:
  - the use of pitched material (especially regarding contour-based issues). Does it move primarily by step? Is it lyrical? Does it feature (or include) leaps? Is it angular or jagged? What is its range and/or register? Is it focused on a few notes, and if so, which notes and why? What is its role within the texture?
  - relative volume levels. Are there changes of dynamics, if so, where and for what reason(s)?
  - are there implied harmonies (for example, via arpeggiation)? Are there cadence points?
  - use of ornamentation
  - rhythmic considerations. For example, levels of complexity, use of rhythmic variation, use of rhythmic modes and so forth.
- students should avoid making relative value judgements in their responses when describing the significance of a melody or melodic idea. For example, ‘the piece/song/movement would be boring without this melody’ does not suffice as a justification of prominence or significance. Significance involves looking at the role and/or placement of a particular melodic constituent within the work as a whole. The melody might contribute to the



structure, it might be part of a compositional device used by the composer, it might contain a fragment or idea that is further developed within the work, and so forth. Simply stating that the music would be ‘boring without it’ tells the assessors nothing of much use

- although students were asked to focus upon only one melody or melodic idea, quite a lot of students dealt with two or more and some sought to explore the roles of all of the instruments within the score. In such instances, issues of justification were either overlooked or addressed very superficially
- some students dealt with a melody or melodic line not identified in part a
- surprisingly few students stated that the vocal parts in the Bach and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* were prominent or significant because they delivered or explained the story or message (which is a **very** valid point)
- a number of students who answered on the Mozart and the Westlake wrote as one of their justifications that the work was written for the clarinet (Mozart) or for the guitar (Westlake) and therefore it had to be the most prominent or significant. Some went on to comment that, for this reason, the question was not really appropriate for students of that prescribed work
- quite a few students who answered on the Holst excerpt did not realise that the flute and clarinet were playing the same melody, simply doubled at the octave (perhaps unaware that the B-flat clarinet is written a tone higher than it sounds)
- there was a considerable variety of responses on *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* regarding whether the upper (sustained) line was the melody and the lower (moving) line the countermelody or vice versa. Unfortunately, many of these students contradicted their own assessment for Question 7b in their response to Question 7c
- a significant number of students wrote wonderful descriptions of the accompaniments, particularly on Westlake (harp) and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (strings), often stating that the role of the identified part(s) was to accompany, therefore negating a potential argument that the part was a prominent or significant melody or melodic idea within the excerpt. The obvious problem here was that students were not to describe and justify the **accompaniment**. There seemed to be some difficulties with clarification of musical terminologies and roles - for example, ‘accompanying line’ means it is **not** the melody and, therefore should not be dealt with as if it is.

**Question 7c. Discuss ways of preparing for performance of both of the instrumental and/or vocal parts you identified in part a. Your response should**

- focus on ways of realising the characteristics of the identified melodies from the excerpt
- provide details of the preparation rather than simply identifying ‘individual practice’.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	4	11	19	24	20	18	3.8

Composer	Average Mark
Mozart	4.38
Holst	4.10
Bach	4.27
Westlake	4.18
Lennon/McCartney	3.10

Answers required a relevant discussion regarding preparation, with reference to some of the following:

- register
- dynamic
- articulation
- tonguing/bowing/phrasing
- matching of qualities when in imitation (or not)
- awareness of the significance of the part(s) being discussed (foreground/background, melody/counter-melody/accompaniment)
- breathing
- blend and balance, both throughout the ensemble and within given sections
- sonic ‘placement’ (where appropriate)
- control/avoidance of ‘shout tessitura’ (or not)



- ensemble rehearsal practices (conducted or not, building-up of parts to highlight an increase of density, intonation issues, and so forth).

Quite a few students handled this question fairly well. Where the question was clearly understood and all instructions/requirements complied with, answers were usually very good indeed. The best students discussed how preparation for performance is primarily a decision-making process; for example, decisions are made regarding various interpretations, the use and/or roles of various articulations, consistency of standards, approach, rhythms, what the performer(s) and/or conductor(s) were or should have been trying to achieve, and so forth.

Another very successful method of response was to identify potential technical problems by listening carefully to the music and trying to establish strategies to overcome these problems and realise the characteristics of the identified melodies from the excerpt. Issues commonly addressed by the students who took this approach included: ensemble (how two particular parts work together); rhythmic considerations (especially consistency and accuracy); and antecedent-consequent relationships. Suggestions for preparing a melody should flow logically from the features of the melody (identified in the previous section) and the challenges that these features might pose for performers. For example, a melody with wide leaps might pose challenges with intonation and/or register changes. Preparation might include various methods or approaches taken to address such challenges.

The following is a list of observations and points to note.

- Some students made no reference at all to the melodies or melodic ideas identified for part a. Some students dealt with five or more melodies or melodic ideas – two for part a, a different one for part b, and yet another two for part c. Unfortunately, most (if not all) of the excerpts did not contain that many genuine melodies, certainly not significant ones in any case.
- Far too many students failed to connect their discussion to the relevant music excerpt; their answers were often generic and clearly had been prepared beforehand. It cannot be stressed enough that this type of approach is rarely effective, therefore it is not a sensible one.
- Many students did not demonstrate an understanding of the issues involved with preparation for performance.
- Some students simply stated that the best way to prepare an ensemble work is for the group to practise (and/or practise slowly), presumably meaning to rehearse together as an ensemble at a range of tempi (especially slow tempi). This observation is fine as a starting point but does not constitute a discussion on its own.
- There were many answers that stated something like, ‘I would just play it over and over and over again until it sounded right’. Such responses indicated that some students have not learned how to prepare for performance effectively, efficiently and/or appropriately.
- ‘Preparation for performance’ does not mean individual practice regimes exclusively. Even though the second dot point of the question asked students to ‘provide details of the preparation rather than simply identifying “individual practice”’, many students’ answers were based **solely** upon issues of individual practice.
- Weaker students often discussed warm up exercises, getting in the ‘right frame of mind’ to perform, and listening to the work until its performance is ‘automatic’. Although these were legitimate points, at least to some degree, discussion of these issues made it very difficult for students to ‘focus on ways of realising the characteristics of the identified melodies’.
- A few students mentioned, even elaborated on, performance preparation based upon meditation, massage, group bonding, visualisation, aromatherapy, and so forth. This is a music subject and such answers are not appropriate in this forum.
- Many students failed to deal with the issue of realising the characteristics of the melodies/melodic ideas, instead they simply presented a description of what they might do in a rehearsal setting and frequently made no mention at all of the melodies or melodic ideas.
- Although most students identified some aspect(s) of performance preparation, a significant percentage did not present a **discussion**. Students often **listed** issues or aspects, but did not elaborate upon them appropriately – if at all.
- Many students did not demonstrate much knowledge or understanding of instrument/voice-specific matters with respect to issues of preparation for performance.
- When the question asked for a discussion of **two** issues, elements or things (in this case, melodies or melodic ideas) this was exactly what should have been done. The **depth** of the response was adversely affected when too many considerations, aspects or entities (in this case, instrumental/vocal parts) were addressed.
- As mentioned above, quite a few students did not realise that the flute and clarinet were playing the same part (doubled at the octave) in the Holst piece. Fortunately, many of these students dealt with instrument-specific issues whenever possible, although it was difficult for them to focus upon ‘ways of realising the characteristics of the identified melodies from the excerpt’ as the characteristics were essentially the same.

# 2004 Assessment Report



- Some students who wrote on the Mozart focused their discussion upon issues of clarinet technique even though it could be assumed from the inaccuracy of many comments that they did not play the instrument.

**Question 8. Identify one other movement, section or song from the prescribed ensemble work you have studied and identified on page 14. Identify a performance context in which the movement, section or song you identified above could be performed.**

Performance contexts could include

- church or cathedral
- large concert hall
- outdoors
- club or dance venue
- classroom
- small hall or theatrette
- recording studio

Discuss performance style considerations relating to three of the following dot points that could influence preparation for a performance in the context you identified above.

- articulations
- balance
- choice of instruments and/or other equipment
- dynamics
- ensemble set-up or seating plan
- tempo choice(s)
- one other technical challenges (specify)

Your response may be organised using dot points from the list above as subheadings or you may present your writing in an integrated manner. Where you write in an integrated manner, make clear the three dot points to which you are referring. Your answer may refer to, but should not be focused upon, the score excerpt printed in the data book.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	3	1	2	3	4	7	11	11	13	14	14	8	8	7.7

Composer	Average Mark
Mozart	8.71
Holst	8.27
Bach	8.81
Westlake	7.52
Lennon/McCartney	6.33

Students were to deal with **three** considerations in a reasonable degree of detail, and needed to ensure that it was clear where and what in the selected excerpt/section/segment/movement was being referred to. Marks were awarded for a written **discussion** that demonstrated knowledge of performance style considerations that might influence preparation for a performance of a specific movement, section/segment or song from the selected prescribed work. To receive high marks, students needed to make links between preparation and relevant considerations. Students might also have referred to performance conventions, contemporary and/or historical issues and attempts at 'buffa' or parody. Students needed to show that they knew the work well and had applied their knowledge to demonstrate an understanding that was relevant. Assessors were instructed to watch out for generic or prepared responses and to avoid rewarding them generously.

There were some excellent answers describing performance style considerations. The better responses articulated features of the performance style that needed to be brought out in performance, and were able to discuss what was needed in the preparation and how the chosen venue (performance context) might affect this. Many students provided a detailed discussion of performance style considerations that showed an in-depth knowledge of the work being studied. The best responses focused their discussion on the performance context they had identified.

The following is a list of observations and common problems regarding Question 8.

- The opportunity to choose the performance context allowed a creative side to be revealed in some students. Many students were able to demonstrate their considerable discernment by applying their knowledge and understanding to a specific and relevant performance context. Unfortunately, a high percentage of answers



- posed reasonable questions or observations but showed little genuine understanding of the prescribed ensemble work, especially with respect to performance style considerations and various influences upon preparation for performance regarding three of the dot points from the list provided.
- Many students did not refer at all to the performance context, perhaps somehow missing the purpose of the question. In some cases, the three performance style considerations under discussion were not made clear at all and it was a struggle for assessors to decipher the essential points being raised.
  - Many students seemed to find it difficult to relate their chosen dot points to the notion of preparation for performance within their selected context. For example, some students selected 'outdoors' as their performance context and chose to write about articulation, balance and dynamics. Oddly, such answers commonly failed to demonstrate that these three issues might indeed be affected by playing outdoors, let alone present how they might influence preparation for a performance of the work in an outdoor context. It was as if these students felt that the question's requirement of selecting a performance context was an isolated duty without purpose.
  - Some students selected multiple performance venues, as if they thought they were required to list and deal with all venues appropriate to the particular prescribed work.
  - Some students dealt with only two dot points, often giving a disproportionate amount of attention to one of them. When three aspects were discussed, often the last was given cursory attention. Frequently, the answer presented was very short, rather than a detailed response as was indicated by the required response type (a **discussion**), the number of marks available and the amount of space provided for the answer.
  - Some students wrote about all seven of the dot points listed in the question, while a few tried to deal with more than three of the dot points with reference to two or more of the performance contexts. This was unnecessary as the question required a discussion of three dot points only. This approach raises three issues: within the time available, it is almost impossible to present a genuine discussion with sufficient depth and/or breadth; it is almost always obvious that the student is presenting the **whole** of a prepared response incorporating everything they could think of; and there are no extra credit marks available for any question on this examination.
  - Some students didn't read the question accurately and focused their writing on the score excerpt for Question 7.
  - Some students wrote fairly good answers (that is, 'musical' and analytically sound) but did not refer to their selected context. As such, the answers could have referred to almost any of the contexts from the list. Responses of this type almost invariably were generic and/or obviously had been prepared beforehand.
  - With respect to the issue of selecting a 'performance context', some students reasoned something like, 'What if I put the movement, section or song from the prescribed ensemble work that I have studied into a completely new context?' (ostensibly one with which they were not familiar). This is fine, provided they could discuss issues regarding the chosen performance context and how it affected preparation for a performance with respect to various performance style considerations; however, in the vast majority of instances, such an approach was not prudent. Very often, it was apparent that the performance context and its various acoustic issues had never been considered with reference to the music about which the student was writing, hence they simply did not know what to write or even how to go about answering the question. The question did not require students to write about performance style considerations and preparatory issues for a performance context with which they were unfamiliar.
  - A reasonable number of students seemed not to realise that this 12-mark question demanded some insight and a demonstration of genuine familiarity with the chosen prescribed ensemble work. Many students gave superficial responses that simply stated the obvious without much (if any) detail at all.
  - Tempo, dynamics and articulation were not well handled generally and were rarely discussed with reference to the performance context, even when they seemed to have been comprehended correctly.
  - When 'one other technical challenge' was discussed, there were quite a few answers that simply stated 'practise the part'.
  - Some students discussed the original recordings and critiqued them with virtually no reference to the question.
  - A very large number of students who studied the Lennon & McCartney chose to deal with the 'seating plan' of the **audience** (not the 'ensemble set-up') as one of their issues. Some of these students went on to write about how many tickets should be sold and even in what order. None of these students were able to link performance style considerations and/or influences upon preparation for a performance in any manner.
  - A few students tried to discuss the Bach cantata in a dance venue as part of a rave. Although potentially clever, most of the students treated it as an opportunity for comedy but failed to deal with the myriad issues from musical perspectives. Likewise, a handful of students located *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in a cathedral, with even less success.
  - It appeared that many students did not read the instructions that followed the question regarding issues related to the optimal presentational formats.

# 2004 Assessment Report



**Question 9. ‘To achieve an expressive and artistic interpretation in performance, the ways that available resources are used should be carefully considered.’**

**Discuss ways that two specific resources are used to achieve expressive and/or artistic aims in the two interpretations in performance you identified on page 19. Be certain to include within your response direct reference to specific movements, sections and/or songs.**

**Resources for performance can include**

- **instrumentalist(s), singer(s) and/or conductor(s)**
- **performance spaces such as indoor and outdoor venues**
- **instrument(s) and/or other equipment such as microphone(s)**
- **personnel such as PA operators**
- **information about the work and/or its music style used by performers and/or others in making decisions about the way(s) the work could be interpreted.**

**Your response may be organised using dot points from the list above as subheadings or you may present your response in an integrated manner. Where you write in an integrated manner, make clear the two specific resources to which you are referring. Your answer may refer to, but should not be focused upon, the score excerpt printed in the data book. Be certain that you discuss two interpretations in performance of the same prescribed ensemble work.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	7	2	3	3	4	4	7	10	9	9	11	8	9	7	9	<b>8.3</b>

Composer	Average Mark
Mozart	9.54
Holst	8.32
Bach	9.75
Westlake	8.13
Lennon/McCartney	6.95

Resources that might have been discussed included:

- performance in a different genre (for example, Beatles songs done by a cello quartet, or Swingle singers arrangements)
- changes of instrumentation (for example, period versus modern instruments, alternative instruments, the use of electronic rather than acoustic instruments – especially for the Lennon/McCartney)
- differences/similarities in the balance of instruments in relation to the performance space.
- interpretative differences based upon information about the work and/or its music style(s)
- choice of performers (for example, a female singer versus a male singer)
- decisions made by soloists (particularly with reference to performances of the Westlake, the Lennon/McCartney and the Mozart)
- in score-based scenarios, issues related to authentic versus modern performance practices. Issues related to ‘editor as mediator’, ‘editorial license’ and ‘standard editorial practice’
- differences/similarities in technological production/post-production (for example, the incorporation of effects and filters)
- properties of different performance venues and how these affect performance and performance presentation (for example, indoor versus outdoor and studio versus stage)
- issues of performer-led versus conductor-led performances.

Answers to Question 9 featured many outstanding discussions that presented highly insightful observations into ways that various resources were used to achieve expressive and/or artistic aims with respect to the interpretations in performance chosen by the student. Students who used a table or a dot point approach tended to handle this question best. Their answers were more descriptive and noticeably better focused upon the question. The stronger responses at all times linked their comments to the quotation at the start of the question, ‘To achieve an expressive and artistic interpretation in performance, the ways that available resources are used should be carefully considered.’

The following is a list of observations and common problems to be noted.

- Some students did not complete both of the boxes of the chart on page 19, while others did not write anything at all on page 19. This chart was included as a way for students to inform assessors of the two interpretations in



performance they were going to discuss and as a mechanism to assist students in focusing their thoughts and enhancing their organisation.

- Some students did not refer to the two interpretations they had identified on page 19 at any point within the body of their writing, while some mentioned only one and others seemed purposely vague about the interpretations they claimed to have studied.
- A few students tried to deal with more than one prescribed ensemble work; one student tried to write about three of them. Although this student made a reasonable attempt, it was difficult for a sufficient level of depth and breadth to be demonstrated regarding any of the works. Once again, students and teachers are reminded that there are no extra credit marks available for such an approach.
- A reasonably large number of students cited a class or school-based ensemble performance (or even rehearsals, which are not performances) as one of their interpretations in performance. It is strongly advised that students focus their study upon two professional, standard versions of the given prescribed ensemble work and use a class (or school-based ensemble) performance as a third version used primarily for pragmatic learning.
- Yet again this year, a fairly large percentage of the students who wrote on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* did not deal with two interpretations in performance of the same songs, and a few students did not refer to the Beatles' version of the songs (for example, they compared Joe Cocker's version of 'With a Little Help From My Friends') and a song not from the prescribed list for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, such as Joe Cocker's version of 'Unchain My Heart'. Another common anomaly involved the discussion of two different cover versions from *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, for example, Elton John's 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' and Joe Cocker's 'With a Little Help from My Friends'. Although it is possible to answer the question using these two works, it would have been complicated and fairly onerous. Students and teachers are reminded that Question 9 required students to deal with the same songs, movements or sections in a fairly comparative sense. Comparison of disparate works is both difficult to accomplish and highly complicated to mark.
- Some students discussed only **one** interpretation and/or **one** resource.
- Many students treated the question as if it were, 'Write an essay comparing two performances of your prescribed ensemble work', and presented rote-learned tables comparing interpretations in performance. These responses were almost always devoid of reference to specific resources and the notion of achieving 'expressive and/or artistic aims'.
- A large number of students referred to the quote for Question 9 from the 2003 examination and wrote at length about the notion of 'different interpretations in performance bring(ing) new life to the same piece of music'. Although this approach sometimes worked, at least to some degree, no reference was made to specific resources (as per the question) so it was clear to the assessors that the response had been prepared, and probably memorised, beforehand. One student wrote at length about textural issues, seemingly answering various parts of Question 7 from the 2003 paper. Many students made no reference at all to 'specific movements, sections and/or songs'.
- A few responses were only a few sentences long: a 14-mark question demands more than a 20-word response.
- Quite a few students were unable to relate their answers back to the context of the question, hence the opening statement, or its principal constituents, was rarely referred to.
- Some students still seemed unclear about the meaning of the term **interpretation**. Given that 'interpretation in performance' is so fundamentally significant to many of the components of the Music Performance: Solo Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design, it is imperative that students understand what the term means and that they practise comparing interpretations of the **same** material from a variety of perspectives and contexts.
- Some students seemed preoccupied with which interpretation was more authentic or more 'correct', whether historically, artistically, analytically, or a combination of these considerations.
- Students who had studied Mozart and Bach generally answered the question very well. These students frequently wrote high-standard responses featuring 'information about the work and/or its music style used by performers and/or others in making decisions about the way(s) the work could be interpreted'. A couple of the answers on Bach described making a recording of the work, hence focusing on the use of microphones and the performance (recording) space, rather than the actual performances of the work.
- Many students who wrote on Holst provided prepared answers that lacked substance and did not focus upon the question. Many assessors espoused a view that students had learnt what they thought would be assessed and churned out a manufactured, generic answer that commonly said fairly little. Yet again this year, much attention was devoted to an assumed ethos of nationalistic characteristics depending on the country of origin and location of the performers. British/American traits were a source of comment regarding the interpretations of the selected works, and this point was frequently seized upon as being the most significant of all resource considerations to be discussed. This was particularly evident from comments that the American interpretation(s) tended to be noisy and boisterous with fuller instrumentation versus the more genteel and



refined version(s) of their British counterparts. Better responses focused on the various merits of choice between the original Holst orchestration and the later, contemporary expansion of available instrumentation. Interestingly, only a few Holst students chose to write about the merits and perhaps greater suitability of the American instrumentation/interpretation(s) in outdoor venues and the British instrumentation/interpretation(s) in indoor settings. Those who focused upon this issue as one of their two specific resources did so noticeably well.

- Most of the students who dealt with two interpretations of the 'Suite for guitar and orchestra' wrote very fine responses, many of which were directed to differences in interpretation by the soloists, differences in tempo, matters related to differences in balance either within the given ensemble or between the soloist(s) and the ensemble(s), issues regarding recording quality, and so forth. It was again unfortunate to note, however, the very large number of Westlake students who dealt with the 'Suite for guitar and orchestra' and the music for the IMAX film, 'Antarctica'. Although some of the melodic material is the same and there are some scoring overlaps, these are fundamentally different pieces of music. Importantly as well, the IMAX score is **not set for study** in this subject. Although a cursory study of the IMAX work might be of some use in providing background and context regarding the creation of the 'Suite for guitar and orchestra', it does not and should not constitute one of the two interpretations in performance of the work set for study in this Study Design. In 2005, students who do not focus their responses on interpretations in performance of works that are set for study will **not be awarded marks** for that part of their response.
- For the fourth year in a row, some students who studied *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* did not compare two performances of songs from the prescribed collection (see comments above). Many students discussed two cover versions and two original *Sgt. Pepper's...* songs (which were sometimes songs not prescribed for study), thus discussing four recordings/versions in their answers. Such answers tended to be general and rather vague, rarely achieved the necessary level of detail, and often did not address the critical issues of the question. Students who write on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* should consider that each song (and its second interpretation in performance) is analogous to a movement of the other works. This does not mean that other songs may not be brought into the discussion, especially to reinforce or elaborate upon a point, but students do not usually need to focus upon more than two versions of one song. One student named two different songs, two different performances and two different resources, and applied one resource to one performance and the other resource to the other performance. This response was almost unmarkable.