

2016 VCE Music Performance examination report

General comments

The 2016 Music Performance written examination comprised 17 questions across two sections and was worth a total of 100 marks. This was the final examination for the current study design.

Many students attempted the entire examination and the overall standard of results was good. In general, students' level of music literacy and aural perception was inconsistent.

Students are encouraged to use a sharp pencil for Section A, as pen can smudge and become difficult to read. Students may find it easier to notate more clearly using a pencil.

Examination technique

- Students are advised to read each question carefully to ensure they identify information that will assist them to respond correctly.
- Many students who achieved high scores underlined important words or highlighted clefs and parts in the recognition questions.
- In the melodic transcription question, students who achieved higher scores often used the chord progression to assist them to work out which notes fit.

Students are advised to attempt all questions on the examination.

Advice

- When undertaking transcription questions, students are advised to complete their rough work on the blank manuscript paper provided and then transfer a neat, legible copy of their final response to the space provided for the answer.
- If students complete their rough rhythmic transcription work using 'stick' notation (stems and flags without note heads) or slashes across lines representing rhythmic subdivisions/segments of each beat, they need to be very careful when they transfer their work from the 'rough work' page to the answer space to ensure that they notate their response accurately.
- Where possible, students should have access to appropriate aural training software and a computer music 'sequencer', especially to program rhythms, chords and chord progressions for aural practice.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Theory and aural comprehension

Part 1: Intervals, scales and modes

Question 1 – Identify intervals presented aurally

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	4	9	11	12	13	14	14	24	4.4

1. perfect 4th
2. major 2nd
3. minor 3rd
4. augmented 4th/diminished 5th/tritone
5. major 7th
6. major 3rd
7. perfect 8ve

Many students answered this question well. Most students correctly identified interval 1 – the perfect 4th.

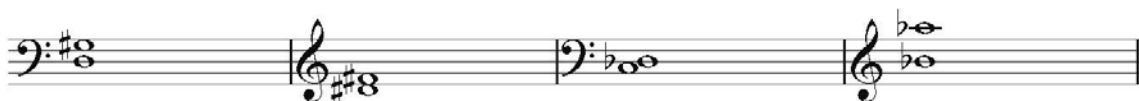
To prepare for this type of question, students are advised to sing and play intervals in class as listed in the key knowledge and skills for this outcome.

For interval 4, augmented 4th/diminished 5th or tritone was accepted as the interval was presented aurally.

Students are advised to ensure that they clearly identify both the size and quality for each interval; for example, by writing out the quality in full rather than using abbreviations.

Question 2 – Identify written intervals

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	3	7	15	24	50	3.1



1. augmented 4th
2. minor 3rd
3. minor 2nd
4. minor 7th

This question was generally well answered. Interval 1 needed to be identified as an augmented 4th as this was a written interval. Many students seem to have missed the significance of D sharp in interval 2.

Question 3 – Identify intervals and tonality in a melody**Question 3a.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	38	34	28	0.9

Opening interval: perfect 4th Closing interval: minor 2nd

Students are advised to prepare for this type of question by identifying opening and closing intervals in melodies whenever they are listening to music.

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	53	47	0.5

Major

Students can practise this skill by always identifying the tonality of melodies in music they listen to or perform.

Question 4 – Identify scales and/or modes presented aurally

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	8	15	24	49	3.1

1. Dorian mode
2. Mixolydian mode
3. major pentatonic scale
4. harmonic minor scale

Students were required to unambiguously identify each scale or mode. Responses such as 'pentatonic' or 'minor' were not accepted.

Question 5 – Identify written scales and/or modes

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	6	7	18	70	2.5

1. blues scale
2. natural minor scale (Aeolian)
3. minor pentatonic scale

Only responses that provided a complete and unambiguous identification of each scale or mode were accepted. For example, 'natural minor' and 'Aeolian' or 'Aeolian mode' were accepted as correct identification of scale/mode 2. 'Minor' was not accepted. Students should note that three types of minor scale/mode were assessable in this examination.

Pentatonic was not accepted as a correct identification of scale/mode 3 because further detail was required to distinguish between 'minor pentatonic' and 'major pentatonic'.

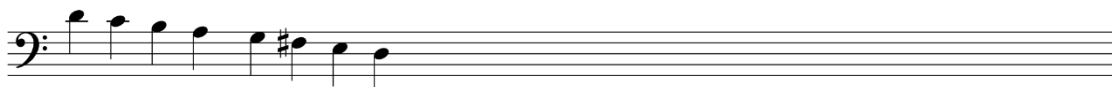
Question 6 – Write scales and/or modes

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	8	6	11	5	17	3	50	4.3

Melodic minor scale one octave ascending and descending



Mixolydian mode one octave ascending



Many students answered both parts of this question correctly.

Some students did not seem to understand the structure of the melodic minor scale. Some students only wrote it ascending and not descending. Students who received full marks for this question often underlined or highlighted important words such as ‘ascending’ and ‘descending’.

Many students did not use the rhythmic value given and stem directions were not always correct.

Students should sing and play all scale and mode types so that they understand the structure and formation of each.

Part 2: Chords and chord progressions**Question 7 – Identify written chords**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	8	11	21	54	3.1

- Note name: G Quality: augmented
- Note name: B ♭ Quality: minor 7th
- Note name: F# Quality: diminished 7
- Note name: C Quality: major 7

This question was generally well answered. For chord 2, many students identified it as B ♭ dom 7; however, the 3rd has been flattened, so it cannot be a dominant 7.

Some students identified chord 3 either as diminished or half diminished. Students must be aware of the structure of diminished, half diminished and full diminished 7 chords. Diminished 7 or dim 7 was accepted.

Question 8 – Write chords

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	9	12	22	49	3



IV
(subdominant)
in c minor

V⁷
(dominant 7)
in C major

iii
(mediant)
in a minor

I
(tonic)
in B \flat major

or



IV
(subdominant)
in c minor

V⁷
(dominant 7)
in C major

iii
(mediant)
in a minor

I
(tonic)
in B \flat major

- Chord 1 – F – A or A \flat – C
- Chord 2 – C – E – G# or G.
- Chord 3 – C – E – G#. Also accepted was C – E – G.
- Chord 4 – B \flat – D – F. A majority of students identified this chord.

Question 9 – Identify chords presented aurally

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	11	20	17	19	17	17	2.6

1. Major 7
2. augmented
3. diminished
4. minor
5. sus 4

Many students confused the augmented chord with a diminished chord.

Question 10 – Harmonic recognition

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	66	0	34	0.7

C.

It is suggested that students circle or highlight the differences in each chord progression. Students who were able to hear that chord 6 included a 7th whereas chord 7 did not were able to answer correctly.

Question 11 – Harmonic transcription

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	11	14	12	10	8	6	7	8	7	11	4.8

1. B ♭ major 2. d minor 3. E ♭ major 7 4. c minor 5. F dom7 6. g minor
or

1. I major 2. iii minor 3. IV major 4. ii minor 5. V dom 7 6. vi minor
or

Harmonic grid 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

bass note	B ♭	d	E ♭	c	F	g
quality	major	minor	major 7	minor	Dom 7	minor

Students who were familiar with the qualities of chords built on each scale-tone of the major scale were able to use this information to complete their responses. The question also required students to be familiar with the structure of the interrupted cadence.

Part 3: Melody

Question 12 – Melodic recognition

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	14	0	86	1.8

A.

Students are advised to identify the differences in each of the possible responses.

Question 13 – Melodic transcription

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	3	5	8	10	10	10	8	8	7	6	7	8	12	6.5

trumpet in C

piano

Bar 1: E – G – F# – D#

- E was given.
- G is a note of the e minor chord.
- F# and D# are notes of the right hand of the piano part.

Bar 2: E – D – C – B

- E is the third of the C major chord.
- D is a passing note between E and C.
- C is a note of the a minor chord.
- B is a passing note between C and A.

Bar 3: A – A2 – G – F#

- A is the third of F# half dim (the first chord in the piano part).
- A2 is an octave higher.

Bar 4: E – B – C# – D# – E

- E and B are notes of the e minor chord.
- C# and D# are required as the melody uses the melodic form of the minor scale.
- E is the tonic note of the e minor chord.

Students are also advised to check that they transcribe the given rhythm correctly.

Part 4: Rhythm

Question 14 – Rhythmic recognition

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	18	0	82	1.7

C.

High-scoring students circled the differences in the score. This is a good technique to adopt.

Question 15 – Rhythmic transcription

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	7	12	14	13	10	8	6	6	5	3	4	5	7	4.8

The image shows a musical score for Piano and Percussion. The Piano part consists of two systems. The first system has a treble clef with a melody and a bass clef with a bass line. The second system has a treble clef with a melody and a bass clef with a bass line. The Percussion part consists of two systems, each with a single staff and a drum set icon. The first system has a 9/8 time signature and a melody with a '2' above it. The second system has a '3' above the first measure and a '2' below the second measure.



Students are advised to:

- feel the snare drum rhythm as their pulse and remember that rhythm is constructed of patterns
- listen to the features of the provided part, such as the duplet in bar 1, which also occurred in the part to be transcribed in bar 3.

Section B – Analysis of pre-recorded works

- Students need to answer the question rather than write a commentary or listening guide.
- Students are advised to develop their understanding of terms in this section of the study design such as phrasing and articulation.

In this section of the examination students are required to use the question or prompt as a basis for their response. An unstructured listening guide is not an appropriate response.

Question 16

Work: 'Deception Bay' (single; Sureshaker, 2015)

Artist: Boo Seeka

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	30	32	21	11	2

Possible responses included but were not limited to:

- The wistful character of the voice: the male vocalist primarily uses the mid-range. Occasional movement into his more strained higher range contributes to the 'wistful' character of the work.
- The voice has been overdubbed at the octave to create a more resonant, but subtle, 'chorus' effect.
- The vocalist's decision not to use vibrato but a straight tone complements the words or story.
- Other words that may have been used to describe the qualities of the vocal sound included but were not limited to: non-abrasive, husky, breathy.
- Some students commented that the use of 'ah' and 'oh' gives an intriguing mood.

Question 16b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	17	36	27	14	6	1.6

Student responses could have related to any of the instrumental lines or parts in the song – piano, voice, percussion or synthesised instruments. Responses could have focused on two issues of phrasing within one part and still achieved full marks.

Possible responses included but were not limited to:

- Piano: The performer begins the piece by using slow-moving, primarily conjunct motion that descends to a wistful point of rest. This descending phrase is taken up by the other performers (using other instruments) and operates as the main instrumental motive in the work.
- Voice: The performer uses primarily conjunct motion with a series of bell-shaped contours. Production has worked to minimise the human element here (breath and so on – in the context of a recorded work, this is a performance decision). The contrasting phrase lengths used by the performer also contribute to the character of the work.
- Percussion: The kaleidoscopic use of different percussion samples, with constantly changing riffs/beats, operates to establish the character of the opening of the work. The percussion parts then settle into a slow rock beat with a 16th note backing that provides a stable underscore for the work of the other parts. In this excerpt insufficient information is available to determine whether the percussion parts were realised during the performance or whether a backing track was used. For the purposes of the examination it was assumed that the parts were realised by performers.
- Synthesised instruments: Long, languid phrases operating on a different rhythmic plane from the vocalist have the effect of creating a measured, introspective character.

Question 17

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	1	2	4	5	10	13	16	15	13	7	7	4	3	6.4

Work: Wild Swans Concert Suite – Eliza Aria

Composer: Elena Kats-Chernin

Track from the album: *Wild Swans* (ABC Classics, 2007)

This excerpt has changing moods.

Possible responses included but were not limited to:

- mood/character
 - delicate, wistfully sad
 - imploring, becoming more so as the work develops
 - slightly mechanical, like a music box
- blend/balance
 - the featured line is the solo voice, which sings on a neutral ‘ah’ syllable, very pure tone, high tessitura (like a vocalise)
 - the voice is accompanied by a small ensemble consisting of strings and high woodwind, harp and piano
 - during the course of the work the strings use more and more bowing for a more intense/rich/soaring sound
 - flutes use a pure tone and the oboe uses a somewhat nasal tone

- darker tone colour is high/light/delicate like a music box
- articulation
 - solo voice opens with a very delicate staccato. The end of the phrases features articulation in the vocal part that gestures a long, accented subphrase
 - pizzicato – strings/piano/glockenspiel/harp mirror the staccato articulation in the vocal part
 - the work becomes increasingly legato as it progresses
 - reverberant pizzicato in the string parts – delineates the start of the bar
 - legato material is generally foregrounded once it appears (for example, cello solos in the second section or break)
 - bowed strings (arco) support legato voice line, set off staccato winds in first instrumental section or break