



2003 Music Performance Solo GA 3: Aural and written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The format of the paper was the same as for the 2001 and 2002 examinations and comprised a total of 100 marks. There were nine questions with no options. Aspects of the paper were very similar to the 2001 and 2002 examinations and the sample questions in the Supplement 1 of the VCE Bulletin No. 160, December 2000 (pp. 175–204). The 2001 and 2002 examination papers and their sound files can be downloaded from the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au> (with answers for Section A included in the relevant Assessment Report). The complete recording of the 2001 examination is included on the Music Performance Solo Assessment Report CD-ROM distributed by VCAA in 2002.

Teaching and learning programs for Music Performance Solo: Outcomes 3 and 4 should include preparation for each section of the examination. This could include discussion of requirements/appropriate response formats for the different question types. A range of material including the VCE Assessment Report and the Assessment Support CD-ROM is available to assist teachers to prepare students for this examination.

Overall, the standard of results for this examination was slightly lower than those for the 2002 paper. Most students negotiated the various tasks with a fair degree of skill and appeared to possess a reasonable understanding of the necessary procedures for answering each of the questions. Some students, however, continued to experience the same difficulties as those referred to in previous reports. Issues for particular attention include the need for students to:

- be familiar with basic rules of music theory focusing on musical ‘grammar’, systems and procedures
- attain a reasonable standard of general theoretical knowledge which will allow them to predict probable and/or eliminate improbable responses
- develop skills in notating pitch and rhythm accurately
- learn to recognise the four cadence types prescribed for study
- learn to identify intervals within melodic contexts
- develop harmonic transcription skills in melodic and rhythmic applications
- develop skills regarding the recognition of chord progressions, especially those that include inverted chords
- develop knowledge and understanding regarding their chosen prescribed ensemble work
- be aware of what each question type in Section A requires; the look of a correct answer and applicable terminology
- become aware of the characteristics, requirements and components of different response formats required in Section B; for example, differences between ‘identify’, ‘describe’, ‘explain’ and ‘discuss’
- allocate time more carefully in Section B (some students clearly ran out of time in the last question).
- use reading time to decide how best to approach written questions with several parts and which excerpts and choice of instruments within questions allow the most detailed responses
- avoid using pens, especially in the aural section as it is difficult to make changes or corrections legibly.

Students are advised to use the 15 minute reading time prior to the commencement of the examination to:

- read all questions, particularly those in Section B
- plan which sections, songs or movements of their selected work would be most appropriate to refer to for specific questions or parts of questions
- consider the order in which they will answer Section B questions; for example, whether to start with the question which is worth the most marks
- plan the amount of time they will allocate to completing responses for each question.

Section A – Aural comprehension

Part 1 – Intervals and melody

Question 1

a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	22	38	21	10	9	1.45

Recognition of intervals

Identification of interval distance (quality and number)

1. Major 3rd
2. Perfect 5th
3. Minor 6th
4. Minor 7th

Most students could not correctly identify more than two intervals, with the greatest number managing to identify only one. Many students labelled interval 2 as a ‘Major 5th’. Most students could identify the ‘Major 3rd’ (interval 1), although many labelled the interval as a 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th of various qualities. The ‘Minor 6th’ and ‘Minor 7th’ were problematic for many students. Some wrote only the number, not the quality of the interval while others wrote only the quality. Fewer students wrote ‘M’s (or ‘seagulls’) for the labelling of major and minor interval qualities. However, as in previous years, it is advised that ‘M’ or ‘m’ **not** be used when identifying the given interval’s quality. Instead, students should write ‘Major’/‘Maj’/‘Ma’ or ‘Minor’/‘Min’/‘Mi’. More than 20 per cent of students failed to identify any of the intervals correctly. This suggests that students need further practice in identifying intervals in context, that is, within a melody – not 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 also makes it easier to establish the tonic, work out each of the scale degrees and thus identify the tonality.

b

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	57	0	43	0.86

Tonality of the excerpt

PENTATONIC

The melody clearly contained no 4th degree and no ‘leading note’ (7th), hence a (major) pentatonic excerpt, and more than 40 per cent of students correctly identified the tonality of the ‘Pentatonic’ melody. Nevertheless, a large number of students identified it as being of the ‘Lydian Mode’ or ‘Major’. Notably, comparatively few students circled ‘Harmonic minor’ but quite a few did not circle any of the tonalities. Some students might benefit from adopting the strategy of identifying the tonality of the excerpt before working on the intervals. Questions 1a and 1b provided a reasonable indicator of the student’s standard for the remainder of Section A.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	1	3	4	4	5	7	8	9	10	8	8	5	5	4	5	14	8.72

Melodic Transcription

Most students transcribed this Major melody reasonably well, especially those who performed well on Question 1. Interestingly, however, a significant number of students who experienced considerable difficulty with Question 1 transcribed this melody well, perhaps indicating weaknesses when identifying specific intervals within melodic contexts (see teaching and learning suggestions above). Many students could notate most of the rhythm correctly and were able to indicate the melodic contour, although a vast array of ‘impossible’ notes were presented – for example, an F# on beat 3 of bar 1 (against ‘E’s in the bass voices and a ‘G’ from the flute), an F# on beat 2 of bar 2 (against a ‘C’ from the contrabassoon and a ‘G’ from the flute). Many 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 sing the notes of any leaps (internally) in order to check their intervals. Many students would benefit from learning to read notes in bass clef so that the accompaniment parts can be of use to them when transcribing melodies. Students would also benefit from an awareness of the fundamental rules of harmony. The second of the tied notes were often written as rests (which was marked as correct) although their lengths were aurally clear and supported both harmonically and durationally by other parts. Students could also consider using reading time for this question to scan the harmonic language of the given parts. The strategies students used to transcribe this melody should have allowed

them to recognise that it only includes three intervals greater than a diatonic step (one 4th and two 3^{rds}), in simple time, in a major key, with 2 ties, one triplet and one syncopated note (which is in rhythmic unison with the flute note above it). In addition, the other parts always provided clear and logical support.

Teaching and learning relating to this question type **must** provide students with one or more strategies for approaching the task. This could include:

- a plan, for example, sketch the rhythm during first hearing
- complete the last and first bars, then the middle bars
- identify first note/s of each bar then complete bars in subsequent hearings
- identify chord/arpeggio movement, step-wise movement, significant intervals (ascending or descending).

The following is a list of observations and common problems:

Bar 1 – generally accurate, although the descending perfect 4th at the end of the bar was often misjudged, as was the major 3rd from beat 4 to the first beat of bar 2.

Bar 2 – an error at the end of bar 1 frequently generated an incorrect starting note for bar 2 which, in turn, led to a higher- or lower-pitched melodic contour. The rhythm of the bar was generally correct. The descending major 3rd was a problem.

Bar 3 – both the rhythm and the pitches were significantly less secure in this bar. Problems with the rhythm are understandable, but many students wrote large to very large melodic intervals despite the motion being totally stepwise.

Bar 4 – many students placed the last note anywhere other than on the 3rd beat and often not a pitch that is, consonant to the G major chord.

Part 2 – Chords and harmony

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	12	18	20	17	14	15	3.36

Recognition of chord types

1. Diminished chord
2. Major chord
3. Augmented chord
4. Minor 7 chord
5. Dominant 7 chord
6. Half-diminished chord (\emptyset ; m7/b5)

This question was answered fairly well with most students identifying at least three of the sonorities correctly. Almost all students could identify the ‘major’ chord. Perhaps predictably, many students had difficulties with the ‘diminished’, ‘augmented’ and ‘half-diminished’ chords with chord 6 being least often identified correctly. The ‘minor 7’ and ‘dominant 7’ sonorities were also vexatious for some, the ‘minor 7’ most often incorrectly identified as simply ‘minor’ and the ‘dominant 7’ incorrectly labelled ‘major 7’. Some students identified chords that are not examinable in this Study Design, even though a list of the examinable chords was printed on the paper. Some students had sevenths for every chord – presumably because they expected non-seventh chords would be arpeggiated using only six (3 x 2) rather than 8 notes. An example of the playing format is provided on page 183 of December 2000 VCE Bulletin Supplement 1.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	4	7	10	12	11	11	10	12	10	6	3	2	1	1	5.21

Recognition of chord progressions

EITHER

1. A *minor 7*
2. F Major 7 – 1st inv
3. D minor – 2nd inv
4. B \emptyset or half-dim. or m7/b5 – 1st inv
5. E (Major)

1. A *minor 7*
2. F Major 7/A
3. D minor/A
4. B \emptyset or half-dim. or m7/b5/D
5. E (Major)

1. A *minor 7*
2. VI Δ^7 _b
3. iv/IV minor _c
4. ii/II \emptyset or half-dim. or m7/b5 _b
5. V (Root)

1. A *minor 7*
2. VI Δ^7 – 1st inv
3. iv/IV min – 2nd inv
4. B \emptyset or half-dim. or m7/b5 – 1st inv
5. V (Root)

1. A *minor 7*
2. VI ^(Maj7 or Δ^7) ₅ ⁶
3. iv/IV (minor) ₄ ⁶
4. ii/II (\emptyset or half-dim. or m7/b5) ₅ ⁶
5. V (Root)

OR

Harmonic Grid

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bass Note	A	A	A	D	E
Character/Quality/Type	<i>minor 7</i>	Major 7	minor	half-diminished (m7/b5; \emptyset)	Major
Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion	A <i>minor 7</i> (Root)	F Δ^7 /A or F Major 7 - 1 st inversion	D min/A or D minor - 2 nd inversion	B \emptyset (m7/b5)/D or B half-diminished – 1 st inversion	E Major (Root)

Cadence: *Imperfect* (ii \emptyset - V)

This type of question continues to provide difficulties; however, identification of the bass line was handled noticeably well and many students correctly identified the imperfect cadence. The harmonic grid allows students to demonstrate the systematic ‘working out’ of the various components of the chords in the progression. As for other answering formats, students should have a plan for their approach to answering this question. For example:

- bassline
- chord qualities
- chord positions root or inversion, which inversion?

The following is a list of observations and common problems:

- inappropriate or confused musical grammar
- the bottom boxes in the harmonic grid require the full chord and position identification, not just the inversion
- the frequent identification of non-diatonic chords (for example, ‘C minor 7’ or ‘B Major’) or chords that are not examinable (for example, G# diminished – the ‘leading note’ [vii^o] chord of ‘A harmonic minor’)
- the diatonic chord qualities were confused (for example, ‘B Major’, ‘D Major’ and ‘F minor’ are not diatonic to ‘A harmonic minor’)
- correct identification of the last chord (V) but incorrect naming of the cadence. Some students correctly identified the bass notes but not the chord qualities or the cadence, while a few named the bass notes (in the harmonic grid) and the cadence but not the qualities of the chords (nor their complete names). When using the harmonic grid, it is prudent for students to complete all of the boxes so that nothing of importance is potentially overlooked
- many students failed to identify chord 2 as a ‘Major 7’ sonority – even those with a correct ‘A’ bass note most commonly identified it as an (A) ‘minor 7’ chord, even though the sound of it was clearly different from the first sonority of the progression
- incorrect identification of the inverted chords (2, 3 and 4 - the ‘F^A7/A’, ‘D minor/A’ and ‘B^o’ chords). Some students labelled them as ‘A Major’ (or ‘A7’), ‘A minor’ and ‘D Major’ respectively
- several students identified chord 5 as a ‘Major 7’, a ‘Dominant 7’ or both (see below) despite it not containing a 7th
- many students did not identify the cadence at all. They may not have noticed part b. of the question or were not familiar with the 2001 and 2002 examination papers and/or the sample questions for this examination (see Supplement 1 – VCE Bulletin No. 160, December 2000, pp. 184-5) and were not expecting this part of the question
- some of the labels for the cadence: ‘unfinished’; ‘church’; ‘automatic’; ‘not a cadence’ (when it will *always* be ‘perfect’, ‘plagal’, ‘imperfect’ or ‘interrupted’, without exception). Many students do not know the characteristics of these cadence types (being: *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])
- there remain students who use Arabic numbers for both diatonic position and inversion – for example, ‘4 – 2’, presumably indicating the subdominant (iv) chord in 2nd 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) when writing their answers in figured notation for this examination. Students who are not confident users of figured notation are advised to use the harmonic grid. It is suggested that students who use the grid avoid using figured notation (in the bottom boxes, for example) unless they are very confident in both styles
- some students intermingled letters of the alphabet and Roman numbers and/or figured notation with AMEB-style inversion notation (that is, the intermingling of chords classified as ‘⁶₅’ or ‘⁶₄’ with chords in ‘b’ or ‘c’ position within the same response). Students are requested not to mix styles of harmonic nomenclature.

Despite specific instructions not to do so, some students answered using both methods (the lines and the ‘harmonic grid’), often with contradictory responses. Students would be well advised to use the blank manuscript paper (provided in the examination booklet) for their ‘rough’ ‘working out’ and then transfer their answers to the preferred and appropriate method of response (lines **or** ‘grid’, **not both**).

Many higher scoring answers used the Harmonic Grid. However, there were students who used it and demonstrated some serious misunderstandings about diatonic harmony. The following response demonstrates many of the points referred to.

<i>Harmonic Grid</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bass Note	A	A	A	D	E
Character /Quality/Type	<i>minor 7</i>	Dominant 7	minor	Major	Major 7
Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion	<i>A minor 7 (Root)</i>	A 7 (Root)	A minor (Root)	D Major (Root)	E 7 (Root)

Cadence: Not answered

Upper and lower case for Major/minor tonalities were often used inconsistently and/or interchangeably. One example that was very difficult to mark: **A minor 7 – f/A – A – B/D – e**. In this instance, if chord two is taken as being ‘f minor/A’ (even though A-flat is the 3rd of ‘f minor’), then chords 3 and 4 must be viewed as being ‘A Major’ and ‘B Major/D’ and chord 5 is ‘e minor’. Alternatively, it might be assumed that this student does not differentiate between upper case and lower case characters with *some* of his/her letters, thus the ‘F’ and the ‘E’ might be taken as meaning ‘major’ and the ‘A’ and ‘B’ as minor. This student would have been much better served to approach the question via the ‘harmonic grid’ rather than using the lines as the intentions would have been clearer.

Note: Despite specific advice to the contrary in these reports for the ‘Aural and written examinations’ for this Study Design since 1998, some students continue to use upper case Roman numerals exclusively, thus they identify only the root note and, therefore, present incomplete answers. Students are requested to utilise the upper case (for Major chords)/lower case (for minor and diminished chords) Roman numbers system for chord progression answers in the future, unless there is a sound reason for not doing so; for example, an advanced theory student who has years of experience using only the upper case Roman numbers system. In such an instance it is a requirement that the quality/character/type of the chord be identified clearly along with the scale degree in instances where upper case Roman numbers are used exclusively by a student – for example: *IV Minor* or *IV min*; *II diminished*, *II dim* or *II°*. Exclusive use of upper case Roman numbers without the identification of the quality/character/type of the chord is viewed as an incomplete answer, in that the quality/character/type of the chord will be deemed as having not been identified. This year’s paper allowed for a figuration where two of the qualities did not need to be identified specifically provided *diatonic* (‘Baroque’) figured notation was used - VI₅⁶ (being the diatonic submediant 7 chord in 1st inversion – F Major 7/A) and ii^(∞)₅⁶ (being the diatonic supertonic 7 chord in 1st inversion - B[∅]/D). Interestingly, the very few students who used this style of figuration made the chords’ qualities clear anyway, most commonly by writing VI^(Maj⁷ or Δ⁷)₅⁶ and ii/II^(∞ or half-dim. or m7/b5)₅⁶ and IV minor₄⁶.

Part 3 – Rhythm

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	3	7	12	12	11	11	10	9	25	4.92

Transcription of Rhythms

The image displays two systems of musical notation for transcription. Each system consists of four staves: Pan flute, Horn, Nylonstr. Gt., and Bass. The first system shows a sequence of notes and rests across these staves. Asterisks are placed above certain notes in the Pan flute and Horn staves, and below a note in the Bass staff, indicating specific rhythmic features to be transcribed. The second system shows a similar sequence of notes and rests, with asterisks placed above notes in the Pan flute and Horn staves, and below a note in the Bass staff.

This question was answered well, although weaker students experienced considerable difficulties. Nevertheless, most students appear to have worked out that all of the rhythmic figures to be transcribed appeared elsewhere in other parts.

The following is a list of observations and common problems:

- Bar 1 (Pan Flute) – generally well done, the most common problem being the quaver ~ semi-quavers ('ti-tika') figure on the 4th beat.
- Bar 2 and 3 (Horn) – the quaver ~ semi-quavers figure ('ti-tika') of beat 2 was a problem for many. The tied note at the end of the bar was often missed and/or not 'covered' by a rest on beat one of (transcribed) bar 3, causing odd displacements within this rhythmically simple bar. Some students seemed to think the two bars were much more complex than they were and created all sorts of strange patterns, often including very convoluted groupings of semi-quavers.
- Bar 4 (Bass) – the dotted crotchet of beat 3 was vexatious for some. Some students interchanged the first and second halves of this bar as if they believed the first half 'had to be' in rhythmic unison with the nylon string guitar and the second half had to be aligned with the pan flute.

Oddly a fairly large number of students reversed the second halves of bars 3 and 4 (i.e. dotted crotchet to quaver for beats 3 and 4 of bar 3 and 4 quavers for beats 3 and 4 of bar 4). It was as if these students did not 'trust' their ears and decided that the rhythm of the horn part in the second half of (transcribed) bar 3 'must' be in rhythmic unison with the bass and pan flute parts and the second half of (transcribed) bar 4 'must' align (almost) with the pan flute part. A number of students made their task more difficult by attempting to transcribe the pitches of the notes as well, and rarely with complete success. These students should note that extra credit is not available for attempting to transcribe the rhythms *and* their pitches.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	6	10	9	8	6	7	6	6	5	5	6	8	18	6.33

Transcription of a rhythm



Although many students wrote excellent transcriptions, others had difficulties with this question to varying degrees and for a range of reasons, most of which appeared to be based upon problems with the meaning and implications of a compound time signature. In particular, many students seem to think that a crotchet 'gets' one beat – no matter what.

Some observations and problems included:

- many students were able to notate most of the rhythm correctly
- correct groupings for six-eight were more apparent this year
- counting 6 quavers per bar appears to have assisted many students greatly with their placement of semi-quavers
- many students transcribed the rhythm in six-four time. When they tried to 'force' the rhythms into simple time groups most ended up becoming thoroughly confused
- a significant number of students transcribed bars 1 and 2 correctly but then lost their way and became muddled in bars 3 and 4
- many students wrote a dot after the first quaver in bar 3 and the first (and sometimes second) quaver in bar 4
- bar 4 often included a 'run on' of quavers and semi-quavers for the second half of the bar (the second dotted crotchet)
- many students had difficulty with common six-eight rhythmic elements, especially any syncopations
- some students wrote ligatures across bar lines (this practice was accepted when the rhythmic integrity was maintained, but almost invariably it was not)
- where the beams of quavers are written directly atop a staff line it is very hard to distinguish if the note is a single quaver, semi-quavers joined or a crotchet (for some students engaged in the practice; this observation is consistent to other melodic and rhythmic transcription questions as well).

The various difficulties experienced in notating this rhythm highlight the need for students to become more familiar with rhythmic structures common to particular time-signatures/metres. For example, many children's songs and 'nursery rhymes' are in 'skipping rhythms' that are commonly and most easily notated in compound time signatures. Many 'standard' marches are also in compound time signatures.

Overall, students would benefit from the practice of conducting or 'clapping and stamping' (beat in feet, rhythm in hands) the excerpts that they are attempting to transcribe. 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 (dotted crotchet beat in this instance) and offbeat entries.

Note: When writing rhythms, students should be encouraged to use note heads. ‘Stick notation’ is often unclear and many students confused themselves with groupings and the use of dots. Also, students should be encouraged to spread the notes they are writing across the available space within bars rather than squeezing them to the front and leaving large gaps at the end. This problem might be overcome were students to use the blank manuscript paper to work out their answer and then transfer a legible version to the stave where the response to be marked is to be written.

Section B – Prescribed ensemble works

There was a large number of highly insightful prose responses to the questions in Section B that often demonstrated significant understanding of the set works and issues related to performance style considerations and interpretations in performance.

The following is a list of general issues to be noted with many having been included in previous Assessment Reports:

- some students should spend more time studying the chosen prescribed work from various analytical perspectives to achieve a higher standard
- students should use the relative marks available for each question as an indication of the necessary levels of depth/breadth appropriate to their responses
- some students wrote very much the same answer for several questions, with varying levels of success, hence much of what was written commonly lacked relevance and/or focus
- many responses for Questions 7bi and 7bii (especially) contained large amounts of unfocused, often confused, generic language or purposes of description/discussion – students are reminded that their responses must focus on the question on the examination paper
- some answers for Questions 7bi and/or 7bii were much better suited to Question 8
- there was considerable evidence of prepared answers, which hardly ever answered the questions appropriately. Some students presented fairly lengthy ‘introductions’ followed by a statement such as ‘...and this must be considered when ...’ attempting to relate their prepared response to the question on the paper – an approach that was rarely successful
- some students compared a single performance by a school-based ensemble to a professional recording. This approach is acceptable, although it would seem 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 ‘interpretations in performance’. This consideration is particularly relevant where the school-based ensemble’s performance of the selected prescribed work (or songs from it) did not involve all parts being played or having been played accurately. Such an approach to teaching and learning is of course useful, but is perhaps best utilised in a supplemental or pragmatic (experiential) role
- some students compared the notated score to one recording of their chosen prescribed work, seemingly ignoring or being unable to ‘describe two ‘interpretations in *performance*’ ‘ and/or to ‘compare the two *performances* ... with reference to ...’ a range of considerations and/or elements
- some students compared performances, for example, of different songs from *Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band*; some compared performances by the same artist of one of the songs within the collection and one that is not; some compared the set work to another work by the same composer; some students compared their chosen prescribed work to *different* (not prescribed) pieces that they had performed in a school-based ensemble or had heard at some other live performance. Responses to questions in Section B should be with regard to one of the prescribed ensemble works and about two interpretations in performance of the same work, not the chosen prescribed work and some other ensemble work, more than one of the set works, or indeed any two ensemble works, neither of which are prescribed for study
- students need to develop skills in making analytically based observations. They should also be familiar with music terminology and elements of music from the study design
- students could consider strategies such as underlining key words and using a blank page to make rough notes
- questions that included a fair amount of text – for example, suggestions for answers, response styles, what not to focus upon were ignored by many students; many simply scanned the text, read through the topics looking for key words and then launched themselves into their prepared, often irrelevant and/or dubious, answers
- some students used the material within the data book and then wrote generic comments like: ‘not too loud but not too soft’, ‘be aware of the dynamics’ and other such observations that demonstrated lack of depth and musical perception
- students were instructed not to focus upon the score excerpt printed in the data book when answering Questions 8 and 9, but many did anyway
- many students did not identify the work they had studied, even though pages 14 and 20 of the examination paper were included for this reason
- comments such as ‘try to play in tune ...’ or ‘play in time ...’ are pointless responses when one is describing or discussing matters related to interpretation
- students were generally more successful in Section B when they answered questions in dot points. Some students who wrote in extended paragraphs made it very difficult for assessors to follow their train of thought. Sentence structures at times were rambling and unfocused

- many students wrote prose answers in virtually illegible handwriting, making it difficult to follow the logic of the response
- many students would benefit from practice in writing responses to examination type questions in examination style settings and learning to spell (and to use) correctly terminology that they are likely to include in their responses. Many students clearly needed significantly more practice constructing prose using accepted English syntax and standard modes of written expression (even when utilising outlines and/or dot point-based responses). Rambling, ‘stream-of-consciousness’ answers invariably lack cohesion and salience and are, therefore, very difficult to follow let alone attempt to decipher, hence understand
- a number of students made highly inappropriate value judgments regarding the calibre of performance/performers with respect to interpretation/s of the work they had studied. One of the questions asked students to discuss style considerations with respect to ‘interpretations in performance’. Within answers presented by several students were some very critical comments regarding players, recording engineers, the awareness of the composer regarding issues of orchestration/arranging and instrumental timbres and/or capabilities. Students are entitled to an opinion, but often such comments were unfounded and not supported by evidence of any kind. They were blatant value judgments that made no useful contribution to the answers.

Comments about the prescribed works:

- most students who selected the Bach cantata and the Mozart quintet seemed to respond well to the questions. ‘Texture’ (for example Questions 7a. and 7bi.), though a difficult area for many, was often addressed extremely well by a high percentage of students who had studied the Mozart and the Bach. Response from students who selected these works continued to be of a noticeably higher standard, across all questions. Students who selected the works by Westlake and Holst fared comparatively better than their counterparts in 2002, their mean scores for Section B having become slightly closer to those for the Bach and Mozart (which went down slightly). Results for students who responded to Section B questions with respect to *Sergeant Pepper’s* (about 36 per cent in Section B of the enrolment), however, were not particularly pleasing. Although very weak responses ranged across all of the set works, responses to the questions from students who had studied *Pepper’s* were often particularly poor (although some of the very best responses were written regarding this work). Teachers and students could 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, particularly material from analytical perspectives
- students of Lennon/McCartney and Mozart must be careful to focus their answers upon the examinable songs or movements only. (Movement 3 of the Mozart and 5 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 included for study)
- many students would have benefited significantly from greater familiarity with terms and concepts that are included within the Study Design. For example, many students seemed to be completely unaware of the meaning of ‘texture’ in music. Students and teachers are directed to pages 44 and 48 of the Study Design, bullet-point 3 of both Unit 3, Area of Study 4 (Analysis of ensemble work) and Unit 3, Outcome 4 – Key knowledge, respectively, where it is written that students are to study and know about ‘characteristic ways **textures** are used to shape the musical statement from the selected work ...’
- some students had significant difficulty describing and/or discussing issues such as approaches to interpretation, performance style considerations and representativeness and/or reflection of particular music style/s. In addition, it was evident that some students found it difficult to deal with matters related to structure, balance, and the solving of technical challenges. Discussion about relevant musical concepts should be included in the teaching and learning program for this part of the study.

Note: The following possible responses for each of the questions are a **guide only**. The various aspects/issues presented are not exhaustive. The possible responses or characteristics include examples of salient points and/or characteristics of each of the considerations to be addressed regarding 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.

TEXTURE: 1) Instruments/voices in combination 2) processes involved with instruments/voices when in combination (homophony, polyphony, heterophony, monody) 3) Issues of density (additive/subtractive) 4) Issues of timbral characteristics of specific instruments – in particular their different registers and dynamic/sonic emphases/foci – and their contribution to ‘colour’ in these realms.

Question 7

QUESTION	RESPONSES
<p>a Describe how the composer/s achieve/s a variety of musical texture in the excerpt. In your response, refer to at least two textural changes found within the relevant score excerpt. (4 marks)</p>	<p>MOZART</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in instrumentation (density) • homophony/polyphony • onbeat-afterbeat block chords • imitation suggested.

	<p>HOLST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in instrumental density (number and register) • chorale or block-style harmony contrasted with harmonically static rhythmical ‘fanfare’ figure with percussion • <i>ffff</i> side drum added to punctuate ‘fanfare’ figure • trills added in the woodwinds. <p>BACH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dotted-quaver, semi-quaver <i>accompagnato</i> figure contrasted with the counterpoint of the voices and the sometimes flowing lines of the treble instruments • final bar has an overlaying of the flowing figures and the <i>accompagnato</i> figure.
	<p>WESTLAKE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>moto perpetuo</i> from ‘celli followed/contrasted by triple semi-quaver figure from solo guitar • rhythmic motifs differentiated by instrumental density (see b.60 versus b.65 versus b.69) • prominent rhythmic motives are passed between sections of the ensemble • brasses instructed to play ‘brassy’ at 69 contrasted with repeated, detached quavers in woodwinds at 65 (shift in emphasis from woodwinds to brass) • suspended cymbal crashes ring over punctuating quavers from other <i>marcato</i> instruments at 69 • different consonance/dissonance issues could be mentioned. <p>LENNON/McCartney:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase in instrumental ‘busyness’/density at statement of chorus or ‘hook’ phrase (‘Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I’m 64?’) – 4 bars before Letter B. • addition of chorus at 1 bar after rehearsal B plus clarinets and chorus (then piano) operating as a section • piano enters at rehearsal B with crotchet rhythms reminiscent of previous clarinet figure • 4 bars after rehearsal B piano presents ‘busyer’ rhythmic figure which answers and is then contrasted with melody vocal part • rhythmic figures from rhythm section itself change at chorus.
<p>bi Choose any two instrumental and/or vocal parts from the excerpt you have selected and discuss the contribution/s that each of these instrumental and/or vocal parts make to the overall musical texture. (5 marks)</p>	<p>The notion of contributions to the texture of the movement or song is the most important consideration. In particular, dealing with issues of the ‘role’ or ‘function’ of the chosen instruments and/or voice/s was viewed as a discriminator. A discussion involves the application of knowledge to demonstrate understanding.</p>
<p>bi Choose any two instrumental and/or vocal parts from the excerpt you have selected and discuss how best to prepare both of the instrumental and/or vocal parts you selected in Question 7bi. Your response should discuss details of the preparation rather than simply identifying ‘individual practice’. (5 marks)</p>	<p>Responses should feature a relevant discussion regarding preparation with reference to some of the following: registers; dynamics; articulations; tonguing/bowing/phrasing; matching of qualities when in imitation (or not); awareness of significance of part/s being discussed (foreground/background – melody/counter-melody/accompaniment); breathing; issues of blend and balance (both throughout the ensemble and within given sections); issues of sonic ‘placement’ (where appropriate); control/avoidance of ‘shout tessitura’ (or not); ensemble rehearsal practices (conducted/led – or not, building up of parts to highlight increase of density, intonation issues).</p> <p>Discussion involves the application of knowledge to demonstrate understanding.</p>

a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	11	28	31	26	2.62

Mozart: (2.85); Holst: (2.72); Bach: (2.75); Westlake: (2.99); Lennon/McCartney: (2.28).

Overall, this question was answered fairly well, with a significant number of responses that were succinct, clear and relevant.

However:

- in general, students had difficulty differentiating between a description of texture and a *change* of texture
- students demonstrated little or no understanding of the meanings of ‘texture’ in music. Some students referred to ‘texture’ as if extrapolated to textiles or painting (both walls and canvas) with the use of terms such as ‘hard’, ‘soft’, ‘rough’ and ‘smooth’
- many students presented a highly detailed, general description of the given excerpt from the Data Booklet rather than dealing with ‘texture’ specifically. Indeed, some who provided highly detailed, general descriptions of their relevant excerpt did not address (sometimes not even mention) the issue of musical ‘texture’ in any manner
- some students simply categorised and/or outlined the general texture, rather than identifying two (or more) textural changes and describing how they were achieved (as required by the question)
- some students identified a principal melody instrument (refer to the 2001 paper) or identified a ‘motif’ (refer to the 2002 paper), seemingly having not read the question and/or perhaps hoping that ‘texture’ is related to melody or ‘motif’ in some way (that is, ‘write something – perhaps from a previous paper – rather than nothing at all, this even if you do not know the meaning of the term or the concept to which you are to address your response)
- although many students had some general grasp of the meaning of ‘texture’, a fair number focused their descriptions upon issues related to the ‘mood’ or ‘feel’ of the music (but not in any way relating to how ‘texture’ might influence or connect with notions of ‘mood’ or ‘feel’)
- very few students included terms such as ‘homophony’ and ‘polyphony’ in their answers, and, in some instances, there was considerable confusion about the meaning of these terms
- many students wrote too much for this 4-mark question and ran out of time; failing to complete the final question either thoroughly or sometimes not at all
- some students reiterated their answer in each part of this question (7a., 7bi. and 7bii.), with very slight modification

bi

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	4	7	22	35	22	10	2.93

Mozart: (3.19); Holst: (2.94); Bach: (3.10); Westlake: (3.23); Lennon/McCartney: (2.62);

Most students were able to identify two relevant instruments and describe their contribution to varying degrees.

More successful answers selected two instruments which had some significant relationship with each other which in turn gave rise to meaningful discussion regarding the instruments’ contribution to the overall musical texture for Question 7bi. They then allowed for further development from the point of preparation as required for Question 7bii. For example, in the Mozart, a choice of the clarinet and either violin 1 or viola commonly resulted in fine answers for both Questions 7bi and 7bii.

However:

- many students did not know the meanings of ‘texture’ so they had considerable difficulties addressing the question appropriately
- some students did not make a wise choice in their selection of two instruments – for example, by selecting two instruments about which they had written at some length already (for Question 7a) and/or about which they would repeat themselves when answering 7bii.
- this question required an analysis of what each instrument (of the two) was doing in the excerpt, (that is, what was its role?) outlining chords, providing main melody and rhythmic support. Many students did not provide this information in their response
- some students did not refer to the excerpt from the Data Booklet at any stage and in some instances this was the case for all three parts of Question 7 (7a, 7bi and 7bii).

bii

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	14	10	22	30	17	7	2.49

Mozart: (2.99); Holst: (2.62); Bach: (2.86); Westlake: (2.75); Lennon/McCartney: (1.93);

Many students handled this question fairly well with answers that were of a good standard featuring relevant and extended discussions of appropriate length and focus.

However:

- many responses either focused on or simply stated the need for ‘practice’ and ‘slow practice’ as a basis for a discussion regarding how best to prepare the instrumental and/or vocal parts selected in Question 7bi. despite fairly specific instructions against doing so
- some students thought the question was asking them about preparation with reference to issues of ‘texture’ (which, clearly, it was not)

- some students simply stated that the best way to prepare an ensemble work is for the group to practise (and/or ‘slow practise’), presumably meaning to rehearse together as an ensemble at a range of tempi (this observation is fine as a starting point but does not constitute a discussion)
- many students failed to discuss the issue, rather simply presenting a description of what they would do (sometimes what was done) in rehearsal settings (fine as a starting point, but commonly did not go on to demonstrate understanding of the issues involved with preparation for performance)
- although most students could identify some aspects regarding performance preparation, a significant percentage did not present a discussion. Indeed, some students clearly did not know the requirements of a ‘discussion’, that is, putting knowledge into a context ordering and/or grouping knowledge, predicting consequences inferring causes. Students often *listed* an array of issues or aspects but did not elaborate them appropriately, if at all
- although there were some quite outstanding responses, many students could not demonstrate much knowledge and virtually no understanding regarding instrument/voice-specific matters with respect to issues of preparation for performance
- a few students mentioned, even elaborated upon, performance preparation based on meditation, visualisation and aroma therapy for example. This is fine – to a degree – but perhaps somewhat ‘lateral’, especially if/when comprising the basis for the entire response
- when the question asks for a discussion of *two* issues, elements or things, this is what should be done. The *depth* of the response is adversely affected when too many considerations, aspects or entities (in this case, instruments/voices) are presented and addressed.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	6	2	3	6	8	9	17	13	11	10	8	5	2	6.34

Mozart: (7.42); Holst: (6.83); Bach: (7.40); Westlake: (6.63); Lennon/McCartney: (5.02);

Marks were awarded for a written **discussion** that demonstrated, via the application of relevant knowledge, an understanding of strategies to prepare for and/or interpret the work (or specific section/segment of the work) for a performance, with particular emphasis upon three of the listed considerations.

Higher marks were awarded for links being made between preparation and/or interpretation and connecting these appropriately to performance-related considerations. Note that ‘rehearsing the performers’ is not a rehearsal *technique*. The music itself, however, may present clarification in this regard and/or suggest a particular approach to rehearsal.

Strong answers discussed a range of issues and strategies relating to what the ensemble was or may have been attempting to achieve with reference to three aspects of the movement to prepare for and/or interpret the work for a performance (or specific section/segment of the work). Issues to which responses were addressed included:

- characteristics of the three aspects with particular reference to common practice of the period/era/style
- the significance of the aspects selected to the given prescribed work (or section/segment of the work)
- matters related to instruments in combination (balance and tone colour addressed individually or together)
- issues related to accuracy (rhythmic, technical, authenticity)
- musical trends of the time of the writing of the selected excerpt/work
- experience with a range of tempi (slower and faster) with a view to optimising ultimate performance outcomes
- salient approaches for getting the desired/required outcomes from the performers during rehearsal/s
- identifying and overcoming technical challenges (individual, ensemble, electronic, acoustic, electro-acoustic).

There were many outstanding responses to this question. Issues related to tempo choices, articulations, balance and solving technical challenges were those aspects addressed most frequently. The best responses indicated in-depth understanding of the music (via the relevant application of knowledge) such that students could refer to specific points in the selected movement, section or song (not necessarily by quoting bar numbers, although many did). Strong students clearly articulated the preparational decisions that needed to be made and/or stated their objectives, resulting in well-focused writing and clear arguments. Students who used subheadings tended to fare rather better than those who did not as they kept to the point and made their answers relate to the question more directly.

Although at times this question was well answered, problems that arose included:

- many students who did not fare very well tended to present repetitions of answers better suited to the analogous question/s on previous examination papers
- many students presented a prepared response by writing a detailed description of the chosen movement/section/song (even the entire work) and, for example, its features, structural components, compositional characteristics and historical significance rather than responding to the question as required
- many students dealt with only two aspects, often with a disproportionate amount of attention given to one of them. When three aspects were discussed often the last was given cursory attention, or there was a lot of repetitive discussion from one aspect to another. 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

- some students wrote about all eight of the aspects listed in the question; unnecessary as the question required a discussion of three aspects only, not *at least* three aspects. This kind of ‘scatter-gun’ approach causes at least two problems within the time available. It is almost impossible to present a genuine discussion with sufficient depth and/or breadth and it is almost always obvious the student is presenting the *whole* of a prepared response incorporating everything they could think of
- some students did not refer at all to the work that they claimed to have studied
- some students referred substantially to movements or songs not prescribed for study (for example, movement 3 of the Mozart, ‘Good Morning, Good Morning’ from *Sgt. Pepper’s ...*)
- some responses failed to ‘discuss how (one) would approach three of the ... bullet points when preparing the movement, section or song for performance and/or interpreting movement, section or song in performance’ to any degree at all. In such instances, students often presented generic descriptions of three of the listed aspects but did not relate them back to the work itself nor locate them relevant to issues of performance and/or interpretational preparation
- when headings were not used, it was often unclear which of the three aspects was being written about.
- the question’s preamble instructed students to ‘... identify **one other** movement, section or song ...’ but some continued with the extract from the data book while others wrote about two (or more) movements, sections or songs
- many students did not refer to three aspects and often none of their chosen aspects were selected from the list of suggestions
- many answers were so general that they lacked relevance and/or substance
- many students (possibly misreading the question or answering Question 8 from a previous paper) provided a description of one of the performances or recordings that they had studied, or provided a comparison of two recordings
- some responses did not refer to specific examples from the work to substantiate their discussion of particular aspects identified
- terminology used in the question was often misinterpreted or not located within the context of preparation and/or interpretation
- some students did not choose their headings/points very sensibly; for example, discussing ‘harmony’ when ‘balance’ was clearly the more appropriate category with respect to the response presented
- students who chose to write about ‘tempo choices’ rarely made observations with any substance or relevance
- when the issue of ‘solving technical challenges’ was discussed, quite a few ‘practise the part’ answers were presented
- students not reading the instructions that followed the question regarding issues related to the optimal ways of presenting this response
- answers presented for this question that were better suited to Question 9; students are advised to use the reading time effectively and beneficially.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	9	3	3	5	7	6	9	12	10	8	9	6	8	3	2	6.91

Mozart: (7.90); Holst: (7.32); Bach: (8.59); Westlake: (7.33); Lennon/McCartney: (5.39);

Many students seemed to be unclear about the meaning of the term *interpretation*. Given that ‘interpretation in performance’ is of such fundamental significance to many of the components of this 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.

Not all students completed the chart on page 20 of the Question and Answer Book. It is included as a succinct way for students to inform assessors of the two interpretations in performance they will discuss in their response. Some students did not refer to the two interpretations they had identified at any point within the body of their writing while some mentioned only one and others seemed purposely very vague about the interpretations.

Issues that might be described included:

- rhythmic differences/similarities
- alterations to dynamics/instrumental ‘prominence’
- tempo differences
- use of rubato
- performance in a different genre
- reharmonisations

- melodic variations
- inclusion of improvisation or different cadenza
- changes of instrumentation (for example, 'period' versus 'modern' instruments; use of electronic rather than acoustic instruments; alternative instruments)
- differences/similarities of balance of instruments and/or across sections
- interpretative differences, especially by conductors and soloists
- alterations of articulations/phrasing
- differences of register of the solo performer/s (for example, female singer versus male singer of the same piece/s)
- rhythmic articulations by soloists
- issues related to authentic versus modern performance practices
- issues of quality; 'value' judgments
- issues related to 'editor as mediator', 'editorial license', 'standard editorial practice'
- differences/similarities in technological production/post-production (for example, incorporation of effects, filters)
- properties of different performance venues (for example, indoor versus outdoor, studio versus stage).

Question 9 featured many outstanding discussions that presented highly insightful observations into performance style and interpretative characteristics, particularly in regard to eras and genres. Students who used a table or a dot point approach tended to handle this question best. Such answers were more descriptive and noticeably better focused on the question. The stronger responses at all times linked their comments to the quotation at the start of the question: 'different interpretations in performance bring new life to the same piece of music'.

However:

- some students only discussed only one interpretation
- many students wrote about fewer than 'three considerations that have affected the performance style of the interpretations'
- many students made no reference to 'specific songs, sections and/or movements'
- some responses were not more than a length of two (often very short) sentences
- many students included value judgments and emotive terms from time to time. In general the selected items were discussed with reference to opposites, that is to say, fast/slow, loud/soft, with/without ornamentation, dreamy/funky, happy/sad, committed/uncommitted, interesting/boring. These adjectives were rarely explored fully (or at all) within the text and tended to remain as statements with a paucity of supporting evidence
- many students did not support their observations with specific references to particular interpretations in performance, simply mentioning whatever they could think of and with little or no organisation
- the question was generally very well answered by students who had studied Mozart and Bach as they frequently alluded to the use of 'period' versus contemporary instruments and stylistic interpretations
- some students rote-learned tables comparing interpretations in performance and simply wrote them out in the hope that they would meet the criteria
- some students were preoccupied with which interpretation was more authentic or more 'correct' rather than addressing the focus of the question.

Mozart

Responses were generally very good. Most students discussed two interpretations in performance with reference to their three chosen performance style considerations with a fair degree of flair, insight and demonstrated understanding. The strongest answers discussed the two performances with focus upon issues regarding 'period' versus 'modern' instruments and performance conventions (for example, the use of 'Romantic vibrato' by the strings) and the degree to which rhythms, phrases, articulations and ensemble balance heard in each of the performances discussed agreed with 'accepted' or 'authentic' approaches for music of the 'Classical' period.

Holst

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 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.

Bach

Many students wrote very fine discussions and some were outstanding. Perhaps understandably (and as with the Mozart) many of the best responses tended to focus upon issues regarding 'period' versus 'modern' instruments and performance conventions, and the degree to which rhythms, phrases, articulations and ensemble balance heard in each of the performances discussed agreed with 'accepted' or 'authentic' approaches for music of the 'Baroque' period.

Westlake

Many students chose to compare the *Antarctica: Suite for Guitar and Orchestra* to the score for the documentary film, which features cello as the principal solo instrument. Discussions of ‘three considerations that have affected the performance style of the interpretations’ were frequently superficial when an approach involving a discussion of the ... *Suite for Guitar and Orchestra* and the film’s soundtrack was presented. Frequently students adopted an attitude that the solo instruments (guitar versus mostly cello) dictated the respective performance styles (which is fine) but without much supporting evidence regarding how, why, or where. Many students focused the whole of their discussion on a comparison of the two versions of the work (the ... *Suite for Guitar and Orchestra* and the IMAX film score) rather than two interpretations of the same composition (that is, the ... *Suite for Guitar and Orchestra*). Comparative discussion of music that is common to both compositions is appropriate, but references to the music found only in the film are not relevant because they are not dealing with issues related to bringing ‘... new life to the *same* piece of music ...’

Lennon/McCartney

Some students who had studied *Sgt. Pepper’s ...* did not compare two performances of songs from within the prescribed collection. It was not infrequent for students of *Sgt. Pepper’s ...* to discuss two different songs or even a song from The Beatles’ collection and one not from the collection but recorded by the same artist as was The Beatles ‘cover’ - for example, ‘Lucy in the Sky ...’ and ‘Candle in the Wind’, both as recorded and released by Elton John – this despite the question’s concluding statement/advice – ‘Be certain that you discuss two interpretations in performance of the **same** prescribed ensemble work’. Students who studied *Sgt. Pepper’s ...* invariably did not understand that The Beatles’ version of a particular song is an interpretation in performance of that song. Many students discussed two ‘cover versions’ and two original *Sgt. Pepper’s ...* songs (sometimes songs not prescribed for study) thus discussing four recordings/versions in their answers. Such answers tended to be very general and rather vague, rarely achieving the necessary level of detail and often not addressing the critical issue of effects upon the performance style of the interpretations. The strongest answers tended to discuss two performances with respect to contribution/s by key performers, representativeness and/or reflection of particular music style/s or genre/s (the original version and a ‘new wave’, ‘orchestral’, ‘instrumental’, ‘heavy metal’, ‘a capella’ version), live versus recorded performances (of the same song/s), and the use of recording technologies and/or techniques, especially with focus on issues such as clarity, balance, recording and mixing principles, prominence of the rhythm section (bass and drums) and dance mixes.

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