



2005 Music Performance Solo GA 2: Solo performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students presented programs of music at the Music Solo Performance examinations in 2005 which showed the diversity of choices available from the *Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works*. Some students performed at an incredibly high standard. Their performances were powerful, showing a strong understanding of each work, and they took listeners on an artistic journey. Assessors enjoyed hearing every performance, and were often in awe of the excellent work of the students. A number of student performances were showcased in the VCAA Season of Excellence Top Class and Top Acts concerts during Terms 1 and 2 of 2006. (Information about Season of Excellence 2007 can be found on the VCAA website.)

Some students came to the examination less prepared than others. Some students performed works that were incomplete. Approximately 80 students, almost seven per cent of the cohort, did not meet the examination requirements; for example, they played works that were not on the prescribed list or did not include works from the required categories.

This report provides information about the Music Solo Performance examination. Teachers and students should also refer to the Assessment Reports from 2004 and 2003 on the VCAA website (www.vcaa.vic.edu.au) for advice. Other VCAA documents that are relevant to this exam include the:

- *Music VCE Study Design*, 2006–2009, pages 75–98 and 103–111
- *VCE Music Solo Performance Assessment Handbook* 2006–2009, recital examination page 36
- *Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works* 2006.

Other relevant information can be downloaded through VASS, including the:

- Examination Advice Slip, which states the time, date and location of the recital examination
- Recital Performance Program Sheet, which is a statement of the works to be performed in program order
- Music Solo Performance booklet, which contains information about the performance recital examination description, procedures, conditions and requirements.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Preparing for the examination

When designing the performance program, students and teachers must refer to the *Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works*. New instruments to be included from 2006 are the Contemporary pianoforte and Contemporary double bass. Students must be aware that they can only select works from one list. The *Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works*:

- contains a wide range of choices, allowing personalised programs
- consists of 37 lists
- allows students to demonstrate a range of techniques and characters
- is only available online on the VCAA website (www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)
- is updated every few years, with clarifications periodically.

The end-of-year Solo Performance Examination generally comprises of a program of at least four approved works on an approved solo instrument in a live performance. The exceptions to this are:

- Contemporary piano and percussion, which must include five works
- Contemporary double bass, drumkit, electric bass and both voices, which must include six works.

The program chosen must be selected from the *Prescribed List of Notated Solo Works* and include:

- two works that are examples of 20th and/or 21st century music
- at least one unaccompanied piece
- at least two pieces that are performed with piano accompaniment, except for performances on synthesizer, fretted stringed instruments, some folk and traditional instruments, non-pitched percussion, and keyboard instruments other than keyboard percussion. That is, no accompaniment is required for accordion, bagpipes, Contemporary piano, guitar – classical, harpsichord, organ – electronic, organ – pipe, pianoforte, recorder, and synthesizer. (Information about instruments which may provide accompaniment is provided in the introduction to specific instrument lists on the prescribed list. For some works on some instrument lists, students must perform the work with a pre-recorded backing. For other works on some instrument lists, students may choose to use a pre-recorded backing.)



As students and teachers work together to prepare a program, they should consider:

- the student's interests
- available resources; for example, accompanists
- ways of demonstrating the student's strengths
- including contrasting works in a range of styles and characters and a range of techniques
- giving the student every chance to achieve the highest possible mark.

Teachers should also help students prepare for their performance by regularly monitoring the program of solo works, ensuring that all works are approved, keeping track of the Examination Advice Slip, and making sure the Recital Performance Program Sheet is correctly filled in.

Students must be aware of the following information relating to the Music Solo Performance examination.

- The venue, date and time for exam are provided for each individual and are usually made available during August.
- The Recital Performance Program Sheet must be read carefully and filled out correctly. Students should get the completed form checked by their teacher and bring the form to the examination.
- Students should bring their own playback equipment for backing tracks. They should cue the recordings correctly, and, if possible, copy all tracks onto one CD.
- No PA system or microphones are to be used during the examination.

The examination

On the day of the examination, students should:

- arrive at the examination centre with time to spare
- ensure that they have brought their ID, two examination slips and Recital Performance Program Sheet (filled out correctly)
- bring their own copy of the paperwork if performing Alternative Works, just in case the paperwork has not reached the exam centre
- bring a roadie or two to help with the instrument if it is large (there may be stairs at some venues)
- bring their own music stands if extras are needed
- be confident on what to do and fully ready to perform when they come to the room
- follow a well-practised preparation and warm-up routine when checking and setting up their equipment
- assemble their instrument before entering the examination room to avoid losing valuable performance time.

Students who scored highly in the 2005 examination generally:

- presented a program that had an immediate positive impact and contained a contrast of styles and characters
- placed the most difficult work earlier in the program, showed a concept of the program as a whole, and ended their program with something 'up'
- presented the program with excellent poise and flow, while still clearly differentiating each piece
- correctly faced their audience and used excellent non-verbal communication to enhance the music making
- correctly placed the music stand, adjusted their seat, checked their sight lines, tuned, balanced, and showed an awareness of presentation issues.

Students who did not perform as well in the recital examinations often:

- were unsure and tentative in their opening
- presented programs with works that were too similar
- presented their most difficult work first or last
- performed so that all the works sounded the same, even though the works were different
- showed hesitation while reading the music, due to not reading ahead of where they were playing
- struggled to perform in the time allowed or presented only a very short program
- faced away from the listeners and hid their hands.

Students should not:

- overwork themselves prior to the exam, resulting in a struggle to finish a work and the need for long breaks in between works
- perform works that are not approved.
- forget to bring support equipment such as power leads, power boards, a CD player and playback equipment

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- attempt to have a conversation with the assessors, asking after their health and the time of day – assessors enjoy listening to students' performances, but they are not there to chat.

In 2005 some students performed their entire program from memory, while others performed just as well using sheet music (note that singers should perform all works from memory). Instrumentalists who choose to use sheet music must take care when positioning themselves. Some students chose to introduce each work before playing it. This can be an effective approach; however, it is not required or assessed