VCE Music Advice for teachers 2017–2022

Connecting areas of study resources

In VCE Music, learning about a range of over-arching concepts is embedded into the practical, analytical, theoretical and aural knowledge and skills across the Areas of study and outcomes in each sequence of units. Planning needs to consider how relationships between areas of study will be developed, particularly where there is more than one teacher involved in teaching the course. Developing students’ awareness of these connections will build their capacity to manage their learning and consequently enhancetheir presentation of performance program/s. Each set of skills is developed over time as students work with more complex material, different repertoire or new styles. Opportunities for students to reflect on connections between practical and other learning should be embedded throughout the course.

Examples:

Create a mind-map that tracks/unpacks key terms across Areas of study. For example, students could:

* track connections between key knowledge and skills in different areas of study such as, the way that Music Performance
* Outcome 1, key knowledge:
  + the possibilities for arranging and shaping works in performance … ,
  + musicianship skills used by performers to realise works and to create character in performance ...

connects with

* the Outcome 3 key skills relating to *listening and interpretation.*
* list aural skills they use consciously and unconsciously when they are practising/rehearsing/performing as an individual and when they are playing/performing with others and connect these aspects of musicianship with knowledge and skills in Music Performance Outcome 3
* use a single journal/workbook to document their learning across Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in Music Investigation.

Maintain a digital learning journal that includes material such as:

* listening/aural analysis of works/excerpts studied for Music Performance Outcome 3 – interpretation or Music Investigation Unit 3 Outcome 1 linked to ideas for how they could trial/incorporate approaches taken by those performers to their own performance
* research evidence to support their interpretation of a work
* a practice journal.

Music Performance

Across Units 1-4 students develop and practise Musicianship skills in aural, practical and theoretical contexts. The ability to hear and comprehend how music language including the elements of music is manipulated to achieve expressive effects and apply this knowledge in performance is central to this study. Specific references to musicianship skills and music language are embedded in all Areas of study.

Music Investigation

The Music Investigation course requires students to undertake Performance Research. All work should be undertaken from the perspective of a performer rather than a composer or from an analytical point of view. In these units theoretical and experiential learning are connected. The three areas of study are interrelated and interdependent, linked by study of a sample of works selected to allow the student to study a broad range of material relating to the Investigation Topic. Opportunities for students to reflect on connections between theoretical and experiential learning and performance practice should be embedded throughout the course. A series of evaluative questions designed to reinforce these connections can be used at regular intervals throughout each semester.

Study of a broad and representative sample of works through listening, analysis and creative work across Unit 3 Outcomes 1 and 2 scaffolds students’ work and allows them to maintain focus on the main purpose of their investigation – that is, demonstration of the depth and breadth of their understanding of performance practice and related issues relevant to the Investigation Topic. The sample of works should include at least one work selected for performance and must also include works that are not part of the performance program. The number of works in the sample will vary according to the Investigation Topic. Most students will study 5 to 8 works or sections of works.

In Unit 4, students draw on learning about the sample of works in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Music Style and Composition

While the three areas of study in each unit of Music Style and Composition are presented separately and all aspects must be covered in developing a course, the design of these units is most suited to an integration of content across areas of study in each unit.

For example, a work chosen for focused study for Area of Study 2 ‘Organisation and context’, may lead to further listening activities using excerpts from other works that use similar (or contrasting) treatment of music elements or devices. These listening activities may then form part of Area of Study 1 ‘Responses to music’. Essential musical features uncovered in both these areas of study may then become the focus of a creative response in Area of Study 3.

In developing any unit, teachers should approach the selection of works for focused study in terms of how their characteristics may lead to further listening and creative activities. In Unit 1, for example, Area of Study 2 ‘Organisation and context’ might focus on study of a Mozart Piano Sonata first movement (for example, K545 or K257) involving:

* analysis of characteristics, including sonata form structure, nature of contrasting melodic material, harmonic progressions of main themes and overall modulation system, use of imitation, overall clarity of sectional design (contextualised by an outline of features of Classical and eighteenth century architecture).

Unit 1 Area of Study 1 ‘Responses to music’ might include listening to:

* a sonata movement in the same form
* an excerpt to hear the contrast in two themes from a Mozart symphonic movement in sonata form (or an excerpt from a symphony by another composer)
* excerpts/performances of songs that use primary triadic harmony such as children’s songs
* a country song using the same three chords
* a gospel choir or a drumming ensemble excerpt using call and response imitation
* an excerpt from a Bach invention focusing on the imitation between parts.

Unit 1 Area of Study 3 ‘Creative responses’ might involve:

* creating a contrasting melody to a given one via contrasting contour, dynamics, articulation, key and register
* creating three separate melodies over the same primary triad harmonic progression
* creating a 30-second piece to be performed by the class, built on one melodic idea and which must include imitation and contrast.