

## Music Performance: Group GA 3: Aural and written examination

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### GENERAL COMMENTS

The format of the paper was different from that of previous years and comprised a total of 107 marks. There were nine questions, eight of which had to be answered, students having the option of responding to either Question 7 or Question 8.

In general, the standard of the results for this examination were higher than those for similar examinations of previous years. In Section A (Aural comprehension), students continued to be weak in at least two of the four areas of focus (intervals and melody, chords and harmony, rhythm and characteristics of a pre-recorded work), although overall results demonstrated some improvement. Nevertheless, basic notational skills remain the most serious of the weaknesses.

Most deficiencies derived from the following areas:

- lack of basic theoretical knowledge, especially regarding interval names, chord names and the meaning and significance of 'diatonic'
- difficulty identifying intervals when in context (both within melodies and bass/root progressions)
- difficulty identifying tonalities (scale forms)
- lack of basic notational skills, including an inability to recognise notated rhythmic figures
- failure to apply consistent musical grammar
- confusion of terminology, particularly intervallic versus harmonic.

Prose answers were often hard to decipher because students wrote illegibly or with blunt pencils. There were some highly insightful prose responses for Questions 6 to 9 that demonstrated high levels of understanding of specific stylistic differences in contemporary popular music genres.

Many students did not differentiate between the requirements of 'discuss', 'describe', 'comment' and 'identify'. For example, 'discuss' does not mean 'identify' or 'list'. The relative marks available for each of these response types should provide an indication of the level of depth/breadth necessary for each response type.

Terminological confusion arose between timbre, tone and texture; also 'rhyme' was even confused with 'rhythm' by a few students.

Students often included value judgments about the works that they studied and made excessive value judgments about the 'wonderful' standards of their own performance and/or improvisation skills or part-writing/harmonisation capabilities. Some students also tended to put across exactly the same point for each part of a given question, i.e. just 'rewording' that failed to say anything new at all.

The 15 minutes of reading time prior to the commencement of the examination could have been better used by some students. In such cases prose-based answers (in particular) frequently lacked organisation, cohesion and a demonstrated awareness of what the given question requested or required.

### Section A – Aural comprehension

#### Part 1 – Intervals and melody

##### Question 1 - Recognition of intervals

a. Identification of interval distance (quality and number)

1. Major 6<sup>th</sup>    2. Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>    3. Major 6<sup>th</sup>    4. Minor 2<sup>nd</sup> (semitone)

Most students could not correctly identify more than one of the intervals, with the greatest number failing to identify any of them correctly, e.g. labelling interval 2 as a 'Major 5<sup>th</sup>'. Many students wrote: only 'ascending' or 'descending' (or only arrows pointing up or down); 'major', 'minor', 'augmented', 'diminished', 'sharp' or 'flat' (but without numbers); or, numbers only. Half marks are not available for this question and the identification of the interval direction (up or down) is not required (see bullet 2 of part a. of the question). Many students are writing 'M's that appear to be deliberately ambiguous. As in previous years, it is advised that 'M' or 'm' **not** be used when identifying the interval's quality – instead students should write 'Major' / 'Maj' / 'Ma' or 'Minor' / 'Min' / 'Mi'.

b. Tonality of the excerpt

MAJOR

It was also disappointing to note that about 30% of students failed to identify that this melody was from a major scale.

## Question 2 – Melodic transcription

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is for Flute, the second for Vibraphone, the third for Keyboard, and the bottom for Bass. The time signature is 4/4. The key signature has two flats (D minor). The Keyboard part shows a chord progression: Dm, Gm, B<sup>b</sup> maj<sup>7</sup>, and A<sup>7</sup>. The Vibraphone part shows a melodic line with notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B<sup>b</sup>4, C5, B<sup>b</sup>4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The Flute and Bass parts show a simple melodic line: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B<sup>b</sup>4, C5, B<sup>b</sup>4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.

Overall, results for this question were fairly consistent with those for the ‘transcription of a melody’ question from the aural and written examination of 2000. Most students failed to recognise that the tune ended on the tonic. Featuring very predictable rhythms, only one fourth, and only one ‘accented passing note’ (the ‘A’ on beat 4 of bar 1), it is surprising how many students appeared to be unable to approach the question with any system that demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of the relationship between melody and harmony. Many students seemed not to realise that the example was in *D minor*, even though the chords of the harmonic progression made this clear. Few students identified the ‘C sharps’ and it was common for the transcription to be ‘forced’ into F major, presumably so that it would start and finish on the same note.

Some students did not use (or did not know how to use) the information provided by the chord progression to identify notes consonant to the particular chord. Indeed, if students understood more about this relationship, much of the melody could have been guessed fairly accurately. A surprisingly large number of students had problems with the 3rds, whether ascending or descending, and few could identify the (only) fourth – on beat 2 of bar 3.

Some students did not make certain that the rhythmical values of the notes in each bar added up to what was required by the ‘four-four’ time signature while some students wrote all crotchets, all minims, or notes indicating ‘four-two’ as the time signature. Many students notated only the rhythm of the melody. Some went on to draw its general contour as a simple line graph across the staff, often without note heads.

Most problems were based on:

- limited notational skills with reference to both pitch and rhythm
- limited understanding of the characteristics of keys
- limited understanding of the relationships between melody and harmony
- limited awareness of the characteristics of logical melodic structures and/or intervallic function in melodic contexts
- limited understanding of the relationship between the direction of the pitch and its vertical placement on the staff (i.e. pitch goes higher ... note is higher up on the staff)
- limited understanding of the meaning and implications of the given time signature, especially the need for the lengths of notes to add up to the number of beats in the bar and to be expressed using the proper unit of duration (e.g. ‘4/4’ means exactly four crotchet beats in the bar)
- noticeably weak intervallic skills, especially when the melody is not moving by step
- limited awareness of the rhythmic constraints for this question (e.g. not more than two subdivisions of the unit beat nor durations exceeding 2 unit beats in length)
- limited understanding of the ‘mechanics’ or procedural aspects of how to undertake melodic transcription tasks (for example, first notating the rhythm is generally agreed to be the best approach, especially for the weaker or more inexperienced students).

**Part 2 – Chords and harmony**

**Question 3 – Recognition of chord progressions**

1. *F Major*                      2. D minor 7 (D-7)                      3. C (major)                      4. B-Flat (Major)                      5. F (Major)

OR

1. *F Major*                      2. vi 7                      3. V                      4. IV                      5. I

OR

1. *F Major*                      2. VI minor 7                      3. V                      4. IV                      5. I

OR

*Harmonic Grid*                      1.                      2.                      3.                      4.                      5.

<b>Bass Note</b>	F	D	C	B-flat	F
<b>Character / Quality / Type</b>	<i>Major</i>	minor 7	Major	Major	Major

Results for this question were good, although some students were unaware of which chords are diatonic to *F major*. For example, few students knew that the chord built on the sixth degree of a major scale is minor, let alone even worrying about the nature of its 7<sup>th</sup>, or indeed that the dominant and sub-dominant chords are major in major keys. Some students seemed unaware that the fourth degree of *F major* is ‘b-flat’, not ‘b-natural’. It was disturbing to note the number of students who mixed together chords with sharps and flats (e.g. *F major*, G-sharp, E-flat minor, F-sharp, A). Some students added sevenths to every chord and some included ‘diminished’ and/or ‘augmented’ sonorities that were not present (nor are they examinable in major keys and/or within the guidelines for this examination).

Nevertheless, a greater number of students than ever before were able to identify correctly some of the bass notes and some of the chord qualities, indicating that positive progress is being made in this area. A substantial number of students indicated that the progression ended with a ‘standard’ cadence (as always), although many indicated a (‘perfect’) V to I rather than a (‘plagal’) IV to I cadence. It was pleasing to note that a fair number of students could hear that the final chord of the question was the tonic. All such issues are imperatives of a basic understanding of harmony and harmonic function.

It is important that students note that the instructions for responses to this question call for ‘**either**’ / ‘**or**’. Students are **not** to write responses on the lines *and* the harmonic grid as this, more than anything, increases the likelihood of their answers being contradictory.

### Part 3 – Rhythm

#### Question 4 – Transcription of rhythms

Most students managed this question better than the melody and chord progression questions. Nevertheless, a series of problems were consistently evident:

- many students transcribed something other than four beats in the relevant two bars
- many students did not attempt to divide their response into bars and/or two bars of four beats
- many students were clearly unsure how to notate syncopations, as often they appeared to have heard them but had no idea how to write them down
- the two semi-quavers and a quaver ('tika-ti') figure on beat one of bar 3 was rarely notated properly.

Students generally disregarded vertical alignment in their responses. Although certainly not imperative, such a practice can help students overcome several of the problems identified above. Students should practise with rhythms presented in four-part contexts.

#### Question 5 – Recognition and transcription of rhythms

Although several students wrote perfect transcriptions, many had considerable difficulties with this question. Issues common to many responses included:

- neglecting to circle the notes that are different, as per the instructions
- being unaware that every rhythmic figure but one appeared somewhere within the notation. (The only figure that did not was the quaver/2 semi-quavers ['ti-tika'] rhythm of the altered kick drum part [beat one of bar 2] and the ride cymbal part [beat 2 of bar 4]).

## Part 4 – Characteristics of a pre-recorded work

### Question 6

**Excerpt:** ‘It’s okay’ performed by Ruby Hunter on the CD *Feeling Good* (2 minutes 20 seconds).

**Note:** The *italicised* entries following each segment of the question are a guide only and the various aspects/issues presented are certainly not exhaustive. The list of possible responses or characteristics are examples of salient points and/or aspects of each of the considerations to be discussed regarding each of the question’s discrete components. A brief discussion about student responses follows each segment.

#### a. Role of Instruments

i. Identify two instruments heard in the excerpt and describe their role.

Bass guitar – Underpins harmonies; supplies pitch-based rhythmic support

Drum kit – Basis of the rhythmic ‘groove’

Marimba/Xylophone – Presentation of principal ‘riff’; ‘woody’ colour

(Muted) Trumpet – Presentation of melodic fragments of both the ‘riff’ and the vocal line.

Rhythm guitar – Chordal accompaniment; some off-beat rhythmic drive

‘Riff’ or ‘melody’ guitar – On-going delivery of the ‘riff’

Solo guitar – Improvised solo

Congas/Bongos – Underpinning and ‘topping’ of the groove; solo segment

Cowbell/Agogo Bell – Supporting pulse in the conga solo segment

Shakers/Maracas – Steady, even rhythm (slight accenting, occasionally)

This component of the question was generally well answered. Most students were able to identify two instruments and give adequate descriptions of their role. Those who identified the guitar, however, generally did not differentiate between the rhythm, solo and ‘riff’ guitar parts. Most students spoke of percussion as if it were an instrument rather than a family or category of instruments. Some identified percussion, rather than identifying specific percussion instruments.

ii. Describe two ways in which the vocal parts are characteristic of the style/s of the excerpt.

*A ‘call and response’ type of relationship. Accompanying vocals often responding literally to the ‘it’s okay’ statement. Some aspects of melisma in the response. Occasional embellishments of the principal melody. The responding vocal line is almost invariably in the register an octave higher than the principal vocal line. The (muted) trumpet might be considered a vocalising instrument as it presents fragments of the principal melody (as well as fragments of the ‘riff’). However, this stance needed to be argued cogently as the trumpet is not a vocal part per sé.*

Many students mentioned a tribal feel to the song, one described glottal attacks and slides and several noted that the voice was used percussively. The lead vocal was variously compared to Bob Marley, Aretha Franklin, Jon Bon Jovi, James Brown and Violent Femmes. Some spoke of the lead voice range as being high – apparently assuming that it is high for a male voice – perhaps indicating a view that Ruby Hunter is not the lead singer on the track or excerpt, or perhaps a view that Ruby Hunter is male.

Most students stated that the two voices were harmonising, which presented an erroneous description of the imitative relationship between voices. Many students did not refer to the device of scattling.

A Caribbean holiday feel to the song was often identified, as were its syncretic stylistic aspects (latino, dance, reggae, funk, blues, fusion, Moroccan, Cajun). Many pointed out that the voice did not overpower the accompaniment, and perceptive comments emerged on the group groove or collective nature of the music. Some astute analytical comments came up such as ‘the short hooks are akin to those of James Brown, only using a few words to carry the message of the song’.

#### b. Rhythmic features

Guitar Solo – *The rhythmic approach is generally fairly ‘free’, indeed somewhat frenetic at times. There is no highly-discernible, underlying rhythmic principle, approach, style or ‘mode’.*

Rhythm Solo (Congas/Bongos with Cowbell/Agogo Bell) – *The ‘feel’ is basically Latin or Afro-Cuban. The approach features embellishments of an underlying, two-bar pattern.*

Many students tended to comment about what was happening generally rather than describing or even referring to the *rhythmic* features of the selected solo, as the question required. Some students thought the melodic excerpt played by guitar (just before the solo) was actually the solo. Only a few students referred directly to the Latin/Afro-Cuban feel of the rhythm solo while most who identified the guitar solo indicated a view that it was primarily based

in a rock style or a country feel. However, responses rarely addressed how/why the rhythmic features of the guitar solo are characteristic of a rock style, a country feel, or anything else. Students must focus their attention upon answering the question.

**c. Use of chords**

*The song basically features only two chords/harmonies (A7 to D). The sonorities change on the bar and are driven by the fundamental harmonic implications of the 'riff'.*

A small number of students recognised the I(7)-IV progression and many realised that only two chords were used (some mentioned three). Generally, students commented that the use of only two chords in the extract provided a fairly static basis for the other parts to build upon. A few students mentioned a harmonic relationship between the chords and the 'riff'.

## **Section B – Part-writing or Improvisation**

Section B required the choice of either: Question 7 (*Part-writing*) or Question 8 (*Improvisation*) according to the option selected for study in Unit 3.

### **Question 7 – Part-writing**

During Unit 3 (Semester 1) you harmonised a melodic excerpt to create an arrangement.

**a. Describe two** characteristics of the melody upon which your harmonisation was based.

Descriptions highlighted characteristics such as:

- intervallic components/aspects
- leaps and recoveries
- contour
- range
- implied harmonies
- diatonicism/chromaticism
- linearity

Many students appeared not to have read the question correctly and presented responses that were totally unrelated to the question, rarely describing 'two characteristics of the *melody* upon which (their) harmonisation was based'. As such, most students wrote about the harmonisation of the melody without mentioning the melody at all. In most responses it was difficult to gauge what the original melody was actually like.

**b. Describe** the treatment of musical ideas used in your arrangement. Refer to **three** of the following in your response.

- chord selection
- voicing
- voice leading
- basic arrangement technique
- the relationship between parts
- harmonic rhythm

*Chord selection – Issues related to implied harmonies. Selection of the given harmony via placement of the note as a member of the triad (as the root, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>) or as an extension of the harmony (as for example the 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>).*

*Voicing – A description based upon the logic behind placement of pitches in relation to one another. Such considerations took note of such issues as register, range and tessitura (however these were described, the use of exact terminology was not a requirement of the answer).*

*Voice leading – Particularly with instrumental or vocal arrangements where voice leading is an issue, such responses highlighted some level of consideration given to the use of 'non-traditional' consecutive intervals (particularly 5<sup>ths</sup> and octaves). This did not mean, however, that the use of such consecutives was deemed as being incorrect). The notion of voice leading within the accompaniment was also presented; for example, similar considerations regarding the parts of chording instruments, especially piano/keyboards and guitars.*

*Basic arrangement technique:*

- *instrumental combinations to create different tone colours, densities and/or sonic effects*
- *issues related to instrumental 'doubling'*
- *contrary versus parallel motion between parts, both in the same register and in different registers; harmonic density (eg. how many instruments should deliver the chords)*
- *the use of different inversions in the chording instruments in order to 'spread' the sonority across registers*
- *the groove, the role of rhythm and the 'rhythm section' (if used)*
- *the general (and specific) interrelationships between melody, harmony and rhythm.*

*Relationship between parts:*

- *parallel harmonisation*
- *contrary motion*
- *conjunct versus disjunct motion*
- *polyphony*
- *direct imitation*

- *call and response*
- *homophony*
- *'free-part' style*
- *heterophony (e.g. simultaneous variation)*

Harmonic rhythm:

- *consistent/regular changes of harmonies*
- *chordal ostinati*
- *harmonic cycles created via the use of additive rhythms*
- *extended segments (phrases) with regular or irregular subdivisions*
- *multiple rhythmic strata aligned to harmonic 'macro events'*

Most students handled the question well. However, some students were obviously not familiar with the concepts/terms and some with only limited knowledge could not discuss them in relation to their own arrangement. There was an array of discussions/explanations that were rather difficult to understand. For example, 'My piece had a very confusing arrangement. I think I chose three different chord sets for three different parts.' Too many students stated that their arrangement technique was 'simple' or that the relationship between parts was 'simple'. There was little or no discussion of what they actually did, particularly with any reference to the musical concepts/terms upon which they were asked to base their response; they simply presented very general statements of limited use. Alternatively, many students regurgitated rules of harmony without referring to their own piece. Although they demonstrated an adequate knowledge of basic arrangement techniques, they did not really answer the question.

**c. Discuss** considerations that arose in the harmonisation of your melody with respect to any **three** of the following:

- instrumentation
- tone colour
- texture
- harmonic basis
- rhythmic relationships
- dynamics
- articulations
- register
- analyses of other arrangements
- use of digital technology

Responses for this question were expected to be context specific. Students were expected to exhibit a reasonable degree of understanding of issues relevant to the selected aspects/intercepts with respect to their impact upon and relevance to their harmonisation.

Some students had difficulty responding with a reasonable level of detail. Students often answered with, 'you must do this or this', rather than, 'in my arrangement/improvisation I did' this or that. Often it was not possible to establish which three aspects/concepts were being addressed. Students could consider underlining such features if their response is not in a point-based style. This practice might help with issues of organisation and serve to ensure that the question is answered fully and with focus. Many students commented that having had access to digital technology for their harmonisation was greatly appreciated.

## Question 8 – Improvisation

During Unit 3 you prepared and performed an improvisation.

**a. Describe two** stylistic characteristics that formed the basis of your improvisation.

**Characteristics that might have been described included:**

- *chord changes/established harmonies*
- *structurally based issues*
- *issues of melodic/intervalllic imitation*
- *groove based considerations (e.g. swing, bop, folk, Latin, heavy, rock)*
- *rhythm as the pervasive element*
- *free improvisation.*

Many students did not answer this question particularly well, with most answers being quite superficial. Basic improvisational techniques were named, but rarely described in any detail. It appeared that many did not know very much about stylistic characteristics, neither with respect to the practice of improvisation nor regarding the piece/s selected. It was rare for students to mention the format/structure of the particular piece (e.g. AABA, 12-bar blues, etc). Some capable students only discussed ‘stylistic characteristics’ purely with respect to blues contexts, the blues form and the performance styles of blues musicians, even if the music was not of the blues tradition. Nevertheless, most responses were at a much higher standard than those for the part-writing questions (Question 7).

**b. Describe** improvisational techniques that you used to develop your improvisation.

Refer to **three** of the following in your answer

- note selection
- melodic development
- rhythmic development
- realisation of stylistic characteristics

Responses for this question were expected to be context specific. Students were expected to exhibit a reasonable degree of understanding of issues relevant to the selected techniques with respect to their impact upon and relevance to their improvisation. Generally, it was expected that students would select those three techniques that would be sufficiently relevant to their improvisation as to allow them to describe at least two component considerations in some degree of detail and at least to make informed comment on one other.

Few students managed to relate the question to what they actually did with respect to improvisational techniques used to develop their improvisation for their selected piece, and most answers were quite superficial. Basic improvisational techniques were sometimes named, but rarely described in any detail. Most students based their description around improvisation in a blues style but presented by far the most vague of the responses, as if simply writing ‘blues style’ therefore required no further level of description or detail. Many students tended to present superficial rules such as, ‘the scales used must complement and highlight the melody’, but with no description about improvisational technique, how one might realise this complementing and highlighting, and how melodic development was accomplished. Many students wrote something like ‘the improvisation mustn’t sound ‘off’...’ – certainly not a description of improvisational techniques in any developmental sense. When discussing melodic development, some students stated that they simply ‘added more notes’.

In a similar way to parts b. and c. of Question 7, many students could not make the distinction between describing improvisation techniques and discussing their own development/preparation/performance. However, there were some notably outstanding and very imaginative responses, often featuring sophisticated jazz terminology (in particular) used appropriately and clearly demonstrating high levels of understanding.

**c. Discuss three** musical issues that were important in the preparation and/or performance of your improvisation.

In your answer you may wish to select issues from the following list.

- scale forms/tonality
- rhythmic relationships
- harmonic progression/s
- influences
- articulations
- use of the instrument/s
- variation
- contrast



Students were expected to exhibit a reasonable degree of understanding of issues relevant to the three musical issues selected, particularly with respect to their impact upon and relevance to preparation for and performance of their improvisation. Generally, it was expected that students would select three musical issues that were sufficiently relevant to their improvisation as to allow them to discuss at least two component aspects/considerations in some degree of detail, demonstrating some reasonable level of knowledge and/or insight, and at least to make informed comments on one other.

This question was generally answered with evident enthusiasm. It was pleasing to note that some students are developing their improvisational skills with understanding and flair. Scales and modes were frequently mentioned, as were 'influences' – many waxed lyrical about the jazz greats (sometimes at the expense of the other two issues that students were asked to select and discuss). Answers ranged from outstanding in some cases to somewhat lacking in depth for most. Nevertheless, many students presented fairly cogent responses to the question. Less successful responses failed to bring their descriptions to life by relating comments more directly to the music and to their preparation and/or performance/s.

## Section C – Aspects of performance

### Question 9

During Unit 4 you analysed strategies and techniques for preparing and presenting ensemble performances that would realise the characteristics of a range of musical styles. Select one work that you have prepared for performance and identify it by name and composer/s. List the composition (line up) or your group/ensemble. Indicate the style of your group/ensemble. Identify one venue at which your group/ensemble presented a performance. (If it was in a school hall or regional venue, **do not** identify the school, suburb, city or township.)

Name of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Performer/s/Composer/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Composition of your group/ensemble: \_\_\_\_\_

Style of your group/ensemble: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

**a. Describe** physical aspects of the venue that you identified under Question 9.

In your response refer to **structural materials**, **stage dimensions** and **seating capacity**. You may wish to use a diagram to illustrate your answer.

As the question required a physical description of a performance venue, responses should have focused on a description of the venue with some degree of relevance to performance-related issues.

Many students veered away from the actual question and discussed acoustics as a stand-alone issue. A large number of students wrote excellent responses for this question, featuring very detailed diagrams in many instances.

High level responses considered:

- the space in three dimensions, giving particular significance to the 'fly space' above the stage and/or the height of the ceiling if the space is not proscenium-based
- the significance/implications of the structural materials, stage dimensions and seating capacity of the venue/performance space.

**b. Discuss three** strategies that were implemented in order to maximise the performance impact of the work that you identified under Question 9. One of the strategies that you discuss in your response should refer to the realisation of the characteristics of the style of the work.

Responses might have included discussions of:

- *adjustment/s to tempo, dynamics, articulation, tonal balance*
- *use of effects (sound enhancement/alteration devices such as digital delay, reverb, echo, distortion, overdrive)*
- *addition of introductions, (extended) improvisation/s and other alterations to the arrangement of the piece/s*
- *position of the piece within the programme*
- *(planned) interaction with the audience ('working' the crowd)*
- *issues related to staging – such as backdrops, lighting, other visual effects*
- *historical and/or conventional and personal interpretation of works within the context of the performance style/s*
- *use of costumes*
- *intonation*

Although there were some outstanding answers, many students treated this section too generally, frequently failing to relate their responses to the musical work itself. Often students did not refer to the realisation of the

characteristics of the style of the specific work and/or isolate specific passages in the music that might have caused them problems with respect to the maximisation of performance impact.

Many answers referred to such things as tuning, warming up, practising together and separately, dressing in a certain way, which are all relevant. Yet, how the main characteristics of the style of the work were realised in the performance was sometimes completely overlooked. In one instance, for example, the student commented that their piece, 'So What', was in a cool jazz style, so in order to enhance the piece stylistically they 'used appropriate tone and articulation'. However, exactly what constitutes 'appropriate tone and articulation' was not addressed.

**b. Discuss two** technical considerations relating to the sound production and/or sound reinforcement of your group's performance within the venue that you identified under Question 9.

In your response you may refer to

- any work/s in your performance program
- issues relevant to the presence and/or absence of an audience.

Responses might have included discussions of:

- *positioning of instruments and/or performers, particularly regarding visual contact and ease of interaction*
- *use of mutes and other sound reduction devices*
- *use of risers or similar devices*
- *alterations to the sonic focus of acoustic (especially wind) instruments*
- *placement of sound reinforcement equipment (e.g. PA)*
- *size of sound reinforcement equipment*
- *placement of the mixing desk*
- *use of graphic (or parametric) equalisation*
- *use of acoustic baffles*
- *use of sound enhancement/alteration devices (e.g. equalisation, digital delay, reverb, echo, distortion, overdrive)*
- *placement of amplifiers*
- *placement of monitors ('foldback')*

Generally students did not relate their answer to sound production/sound reinforcement or did not discuss sound production/sound reinforcement at all. Answers ranged from extremely good, showing excellent understanding of the technical requirements necessary for a good performance in a certain type of venue, to somewhat vague, simply referring to the fact that performers had to play as loudly as they could when there was an audience because the sound would be absorbed.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- Students should write as clearly as possible, especially when notating on a staff. Notes should be either on a line or in a space – not both.
- Students should use a pencil rather than a pen when notating music.

## Section A – Aural comprehension

### Part 1 – Intervals and melody

- Question 1 – Recognition of intervals (and identification of tonality): Generally speaking, high standards for this interval question tended to indicate high standards for most of the remainder of the aural comprehension section of the paper.
- Question 2 – Melodic transcription: Results for this question indicate that some students have very weak reading and notational skills regarding both melody and rhythm. Many students seemed to have trouble establishing the interval direction (higher or lower) relative to the one that preceded it.

### Part 2 – Chords and harmony

- Question 3 – Recognition of chord progressions: Students need to be familiar with the structural characteristics and the sound quality ('feel') of each of the chords that are examinable. Most students were able to notate some of the bass line, but often missed out on recognising the quality of the chord. The difference between triads and chords with 7ths needs to be emphasised. The chords of this question were diatonic. Some students were unaware of the chords that belong (are diatonic) to major keys. The use of the harmonic grid was definitely useful for most students.

### **Part 3 – Rhythm**

- Question 4 – Transcription of rhythms: It appeared that many students do not read rhythms very well at all. As student competencies with rhythmic recognition skills improve, their competencies with all aspects of rhythmic notation should be similarly enhanced.
- Question 5 – Recognition and transcription of rhythms: Notational skills at every level can be improved.

*Note:* regarding Rhythm-based tasks: Some students were unaware of what various rhythmic figures and groupings of figures sound like as well as what they look like when notated. Practice with rhythmic recognition and then rhythmic transcription/dictation would be of considerable benefit to these students. Students need to understand the meanings of time signatures, especially with respect to issues regarding how many notes of a various duration ‘fit’ within each beat, how many beats there will be within each bar, etc. The introduction of some rudimentary conducting skills in basic time signatures would probably benefit many students, particularly to ensure that the pulse is not lost when undertaking rhythm-based tasks, especially transcription.

### **Part 4 – Characteristics of a pre-recorded work**

- Many students presented excellent work for this section.
- Some students had considerable difficulty locating the style/s of the excerpt.
- Some students wrote responses that did not seem to be based upon the excerpt, as if they were presenting pre-prepared responses from almost a ‘generic’ perspective.

## **Section B – Part-writing or Improvisation**

### **Question 7 – Part-writing**

Some students re-presented information given for Question 7b in their response for Question 7c, often failing to answer either question thoroughly. Sometimes information that might best have been included for Question 7b was presented as a response for Question 7a. Most students failed to provide useful details regarding the precise nature of their melody, the stylistic attributes of their arrangement, the instruments used, etc.

### **Question 8 – Improvisation**

Singers did not refer to the lyrics of their selected music or even the content matter of the song/s. Singers like drummers, need to develop a broader approach to, and understanding of, the relevant issues in this section.

## **Section C – Aspects of performance**

### **Question 9**

Some students did not name the piece they had studied at the beginning of the question (as requested) while many did not refer to their specified work within the body of their responses. Such an approach might work in rare instances, but generally it is not advised. As per the instructions students **should not** name their school, its hall, or the exact performance venue. Some students did not fill in the details of their group.