



## **2005 VCE VET Music Industry GA 2: Performance examination**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The study score in the VCE VET Music Industry program is generated, in part, from the performance examination held during the October examination period. This examination is intended to test underpinning knowledge and skills in the following units of competence:

- CUSMPF04A Prepare self for performance
- CUSMGE01A Maintain self or group in music
- CUSMGE12A Maintain and expand music knowledge and critical listening skills
- CUSMPF06A Extend technical skills in performance

With this in mind, the examination performances should reflect **at least** one year of work on repertoire and performance presentation, and the performance must be clearly informed by study in each of these units of competence.

Some rule of thumb advice for teachers and students in preparing for the Music Industry performance examination is that students should always play to their strengths and keep their programs stylistically true to their Industry Statement and personal musical vision.

### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

#### **Industry Statement and Performance Program Sheet**

The importance of diligently completing the Industry Statement and Performance Program Sheet **before** the examination cannot be stressed too strongly. These documents are faxed to training providers well in advance of the examinations and they must be distributed promptly to allow students enough time to construct an accurate statement of performance intent and target audience. The Industry Statement sets the context within which assessment will take place. For example, when a student suggests that he or she is performing in a local beer garden, at a rave party, in a formal concert at a concert hall, or busking on a street corner the examiners can then assess the degree to which the student has achieved their specified goal. The student is attempting to demonstrate the extent to which they can successfully achieve their stated aim in a given industry context, measured against industry standards. This inevitably involves an element of role playing.

#### **Supporting musicians**

The work of each student who presents for assessment within a group should always be clearly discernible. Some students' parts were masked by supporting instruments, and on several occasions supporting performers played long solos, leaving the assessed performer with little to do (except perhaps dance). This time could be better used to present the skills of the student being assessed.

Some accompanists played too loud and some accompanists were clearly under-rehearsed. Given that the performance should represent the culmination of a year's work, it is clearly unacceptable for an accompaniment to be sight read. Additionally, some instruments were badly out of tune. It is essential that instruments be made ready for examinations. Some performers found it useful to employ several accompanists on different instruments. This is entirely appropriate and often enhanced the performances. If recorded backing tracks are used, these should be transferred onto a single CD or tape and played through appropriate sound reinforcement equipment. Whatever backing is used must blend with and support the assessed performance, not detract from it.

#### **Examination criteria**

The examination criteria were reviewed early in 2005 and new criteria were implemented for the October examination sessions. The examination criteria were simplified in order to more clearly indicate what was actually being assessed. Teachers and trainers should refer to the VET Music Industry program page on the VCAA website.

Each student was assessed on the extent to which their performance demonstrated accomplishment of each of the criteria. In this context, the term 'extent' refers to the range of ways in which each criterion was met, and the degree of difficulty involved in meeting each criterion. It is important for teachers and trainers to work through each of the criteria



with students and discuss how best to optimise their scores, analysing the relevant issues and considerations in each criterion

**Criterion 1 – Compliance with the requirements of the task**

Students who complied with the Conditions and Group Composition requirements were able to obtain full marks on this criterion; therefore, there is really no reason to lose marks on this criterion. Students and teachers/trainers should refer to the VET Music Industry program page on the VCAA website and/or VCAA Bulletin 24, Supplement 1 April 2005 for details about compliance.

**Criterion 2 – Skill in using performance techniques relevant to the area of specialisation with accuracy and control**

Students who scored well on criterion 2 demonstrated a very high level of precision in timing and rhythm, and, when appropriate, precision of intonation and clarity of diction. It is important to remember, however, that this criterion assesses accuracy 'relevant to the selected area of specialisation'. Therefore, a student could demonstrate the highest level of accuracy in timing and rhythm within the confines of, for example, the punk rock medium, and could score very well. Similarly, a cellist in a string trio could demonstrate the highest level of accuracy in timing, rhythm and intonation within the confines of their chosen repertoire and could also score very well. It should be stressed again that the Industry Statement is a very important guide for the examiners in ascertaining the context of the performance.

**Criterion 3 – Skill in realising the potential expressiveness and versatility of instrument(s) (or voice(s)) or technology throughout the program**

Students who scored well on criterion 3 demonstrated seamless instrument and/or sound setting changes, precise dynamic control and dexterity and fluency on their instrument(s). Additionally, criterion 3 seemed to be better addressed by the performer if they were comfortable with the style of music being presented. At times the student's choice of program determined this.

Criteria 2 and 3 deal with mechanical technique and accuracy, and expressiveness and fluency in performance respectively. These are the only two criteria that focus on specific 'playing' issues, which means that these are the criteria that best differentiate and reward skilled or even virtuosic players. These criteria refer directly to the level of skill the performer has on her or his instrument or voice. In a number of cases, a student's actual ability to sing/play the instrument was not quite up to a standard that facilitated good accuracy and control, and therefore the ability to be expressive and fluent. More guidance in specific techniques of playing or singing would assist in this development.

Clearly, if a student has a high level of skill in mechanical technique and accuracy, and expressiveness and fluency in performance they are in a strong position to also score well in subsequent criteria.

**Criterion 4 – Skill in performing with musicality through creativity, individuality and originality**

Criterion 4 focuses on creativity, individuality and originality in performance. Again, some students did not have the playing/singing skills to be able to play creatively and with individuality and originality. Despite this skill issue, however, more creative approaches could be encouraged by focussing on the non-musical or theatrical aspects of performance. Many students seemed to imitate other performers completely, rather than discover their own particular approach to the interpretation and performance of music. Students are encouraged to develop and present their own unique musical 'voice'.

High marks can be awarded if a student presents original compositions, but only if these compositions demonstrate creativity, individuality and originality **in performance**. It is not enough to simply present original **work**.

**Criterion 5 – Ability to place the sound of the instrument or voice within the performance environment and/or interact with other performers when appropriate**

Criterion 5 deals with skill in performing as a member of a group, including interaction with other group members, and/or skill in performing as a solo performer with a particular focus on placement of the sound of the instrument or voice in the performance environment. This is an area where many performances were impaired by a lack of preparation or instruction. Additionally, it was difficult to actually give a fair assessment of a student if the volume levels of the accompanying musicians overwhelmed the performance that was being assessed.

In the group context, students who scored well in this criterion demonstrated positive and intuitive interactions with other group members and an ability to balance the sound of their individual part with that of the group. Solo performers who presented with an accompanist were assessed in the same way. True solo performers achieved high scores by



demonstrating consistent interpretations of each work, projecting well and maintaining full control over the delivery of musical ideas in the performance environment.

**Criterion 6 – Skill in presenting a cohesive program of music**

Clearly, the type of program presented depends on the target audience and the area of specialisation. For example, if a student presents a program aimed at a mature audience at a given venue, then the program may include many styles and eras of music. This diversity of styles is not necessarily contrary to the idea of a cohesive set. That said, it is also entirely appropriate to eschew a variety of styles in favour of a more stylistically similar set, if that is in keeping with the stated target audience and area of specialisation.

The essential consideration is that students must demonstrate their ability to structure a cohesive program of music and also maintain the continuity of the program throughout. Students should use suitable language to address the audience and should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner for their selected style.

Some students presented programs that were too short and were therefore unable to demonstrate an appropriate range of skills. The examination must be completed under the time limits as described in the examination conditions, which are outlined in VCAA Bulletin 24, Supplement 1 April 2005 and on the VET Music Industry program page on the VCAA website.

**Criterion 7 – Ability to communicate through the use of non-musical elements of the performance, such as stage management, visual appearance, performance etiquette, manner and/or movement, as appropriate to the performance**

Criterion 7 focuses on the use of non-musical performance elements. There were some outstanding examples of staging and visual aspects of performance from some students, who had obviously put a lot of thought into this area of their program. However, in general, this is an area that could be developed further. Even a simple classroom can be transformed into an atmospheric performance space by the use of basic props and lighting.

Students scored well in this area if they presented a believable, well-structured and engaging performance within the context of their area of specialisation. Some students employed theatrics and other non-musical movements on stage. Others clearly demonstrated personal expressiveness and versatility on their instrument, drawing on the 'x' factor – that intangible charismatic force inherent in a compelling performance.

**Criterion 8 – Skill in OHS principles appropriate to the performance program**

In most cases students performed well in this area. This criterion covers general work place safety issues as well as specific health issues directly related to singing and/or playing; for example, the increasingly widespread problem of vocal forcing, or posture issues relating to technique. In other words, this criterion, as with all the others, has an assessable purpose. However, there can be some conflict between the theatre of performance and OHS issues. For example, a guitar solo played behind a performer's head is not necessarily an issue for concern if it is done with awareness of safe body use and is part of rock'n'roll theatre; however, a performer could be marked down in this criterion for such a display if it was clearly unsafe, and yet still score highly in non-musical elements of performance. Some OHS areas are clearly more important than others; working safely with electricity is certainly an issue of importance, but perhaps putting one's foot on a monitor wedge as part of a theatrical gesture is not.