



## **2003 Music Performance Group GA 2: Group performance examination**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Students presenting for Group Performance represent a diverse range of instruments including voice in the contexts of many different groups and ensembles. The ability of students to address the criteria varies and can be influenced by their performance skills, understanding of music styles being performed and experience in performing in a group context perhaps as a member of a school ensemble.

### **Study Design**

Units 3 and 4: Group Performance in the current VCE Music Performance Study Design contains the key knowledge and skills for, and the description of, the examination. This document is available online. Reference should also be made to the 'Examinations' section of the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook which is published annually (in print and online).

### **Prescribed List**

Students must include two works from the *Prescribed list of arrangements for Music Performance: Group* in their end-of-year performance examination program.

### **Assessment criteria**

The criteria for the award of grades are applied to the whole program and not to works individually. There are eleven criteria that cover all instruments, and the performance of all approved works in the program. The document which lists the criteria also includes annotations which provide commentary about each criterion to help unpack general criteria into components more relevant to particular instruments. For 2004, the criteria can be found at <[www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/bulletins/2004/february/2004FEBSUP3.pdf](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/bulletins/2004/february/2004FEBSUP3.pdf)>. Note that this document is published annually. Only the current version should be used.

### **Selection of instrument**

The term 'instrument' as used in the study design includes voice. Students may choose to perform on more than one instrument in their performance examination. The decision to perform on more than one instrument should be informed by the student's likelihood of additional opportunities to score well in the criteria used for assessment.

For example:

1. The group wants an assessed performer to assist the balance of the group by playing an instrument that they are not particularly competent with. This may result in the student losing opportunities to maximise their marks if the student performs for a considerable part of the program. The student should be careful to not compromise the amount of time spent performing to their strength.
2. The student is a strong performer on more than one instrument (or voice). Here the student will benefit from performing on more than one instrument in specific criteria, such as 'skill in performing a range of techniques', 'skill in performing as a member of a group'.

### **The examination**

Assessed students perform as members of a group or ensemble and it is in this context that they are assessed. The level of ability of other members of the group does not directly affect the assessed student's results. The assessors concentrate on the performance of the student being assessed and make their judgments on this basis as to how well they meet the criteria for assessment. On the other hand it is undeniable that the assessed performer's ability to maximise their results is contingent on the context that they perform within. For example, a drummer who keeps poor time or rhythm will affect the ability of the assessed performer to play well and hence, indirectly influence their ability to maximise their results.

### **Composition of the Group**

A group is defined as two or more students enrolled in a secondary school.

The assessed performer/s have the option to vary the composition of this group during their performance group as they wish. This may enhance the assessed performer/s ability to demonstrate a variety of styles and techniques. Students must decide how best to organise their group context/s to a program that will facilitate their best performance according to the assessment criteria.

Students should also be aware that non-students may assist as part of the group within certain guidelines as outlined in the study design on page 38.

It is the expectation that assessed student performers will perform in their examination in a context that allows them to maximise their results in all criteria. Hence non-assessed performers should not count in, conduct, tune, adjust instruments and equipment, lead or otherwise play a dominant or distracting role during the performance examination. This will only lessen the opportunities for the assessed students to address all of the assessment criteria.

### **Program selection**

The program selected by the student/s is the foundation that will allow them the opportunity to achieve their best results in each and every criterion.

It is important that assessed performers ensure that they participate significantly in the presentation of the prescribed list of works. Assessed performers should present the selected works from the prescribed lists at a standard that is consistent with the rest of the program.

It is strongly recommended that students carefully consider the selection of works/songs for their program on the basis that each work contributes to a program that meets the assessment criteria.

Students should not be distracted by their inclination to perform works within styles that are familiar but limited in demonstrating their ability to perform in a variety of styles. The assessed performer/s primary focus should be on performing a program that it is diverse in style and mood.

It is acceptable to present a program that has range of styles that are related to the type of group. Contrasting styles exist within particular genres such as rock or jazz. These groups can perform music that has contrasts in styles. For example a jazz group could perform swing, bebop, west coast and fusion. It is not always the case that a group should perform styles that are not associated with the type of group that they represent. However, the assessors have the scope to acknowledge when students extend their variety of styles to successfully perform styles uncharacteristic of their group composition or instrumentation.

When the assessed performer presents a program with a variety of styles this enhances their ability to score more marks on additional criteria to the specific criteria that students must present a program that has a variety of styles. By performing a diverse program stylistically the assessed performers will create more opportunities to score well in other criteria, including 'skill in using a range of performing techniques'.

Students should demonstrate their ability to perform a range of performing techniques. Each instrument is capable of producing different timbres, dynamics, and effects. A guitarist, for example, could utilise plectrum, finger style, sliding, bends, double stopping, tapping and/or alternative tunings. Each instrument has an inherent potential to allow the performer to apply a range of performing techniques. The student should be able to demonstrate that they have an awareness of this in their performance.

The assessed performer/s should also be aware of the need to avoid performing material that is merely a repetition of material previously presented.

### **Time limits**

The time limits for examinations as listed in the study design are maximum times only – no minimum time is prescribed. Students will not be penalised if they finish before the maximum time limit. However, the student/s is advised to make full use of the time available. Each song or item performed should demonstrate a further ability musically and not merely repeat previously demonstrated skills.

### **Performance program information form**

Prior to the examination, students will receive their individual VCAA Examination Slip and a Performance Program Information Sheet. The examination slip states the student's name, and the date, time, venue of the examination and address of the venue. The Program Information Sheet is completed prior to the examination and presented at the examination. The works selected should be written in order of performance and the prescribed list selections identified. The Examination Slip is sent direct to schools electronically through VASS, usually in August each year.

### **Arrival at the examination venue**

Students are advised to arrive at the examination centre at least 30 minutes before this starting time as they have access to the examination room at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination. Students should use this time to set up and adjust equipment, tune their instruments and warm-up. At times the students will need to restrict the volume level if another examination is proceeding in a nearby room.

During the year students should perform in a variety of rooms with different acoustics in order to become accustomed to adjusting to different performance spaces with varying quality of acoustics and volume requirements.

## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **Group Performance**

Students who have attained high grades perform a program which confidently communicates a high level of musicality, technical and interpretative skills along with excellent interaction with the other members of the group.

Students can easily increase their marks in criteria related to group interaction and presentation. They need to be fully aware of all of the criteria when rehearsing and practising during the year. In many cases students have tended to focus on their instrumental skills but neglect to develop their skills as a member of a group. Many students would benefit from consciously listening and acknowledging the other group members and adjusting their contribution musically to enhance the overall group sound.

Sometimes one student introduces all the songs when this could have been shared among the group. Students should not be reticent to spend a moment or two between items in order to check their tuning. Additionally, the student's ability to adapt to an unforeseen situation, e.g. where another band member forgets their part or breaks a string can enhance their result if they demonstrate an ability to adapt positively to the changed musical situation.

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