

2022 VCE Music Performance written external assessment report

General comments

The examination was structured in three sections: Sections A, B and C.

Section A – Listening and interpretation involved listening to three previously unheard works and analysing the ways performers used elements of music to achieve expressive outcomes. A thorough understanding of the elements of music is required as well as the ability to discuss the interpretative decisions made by performers and/or conductors. Although students were required to identify the expressive outcomes of each excerpt, the responses needed to focus largely on what the performers did to achieve the expressive outcomes.

Students do not need to repeat the question as an opening paragraph. Very clear responses tended to use subheadings to refer to specific elements of music. Dot points were also useful, enabling students to write concisely and make points within the time constraints of the examination. Students need to ensure that their responses are clear and legible.

Students are encouraged to use their reading time efficiently and make mental notes of the key points of what is required in each question so that when the music is played, they can use their listening time efficiently, rather than being distracted by other aspects of the music. This is imperative given the time constraints of the examination. Practise writing responses under examination conditions during the year is essential for students to develop examination techniques.

When addressing the questions for Section A, a narrative of ‘what happens’ in the piece without addressing the question resulted in some very superficial responses. The use of terms of foreground/background can be useful for students to direct their listening, but further exploration was required.

For some students, Sections B and C were problematic because of unclear notation. When notating pitch, it is essential that students make it clear as to whether the note sits in the space on the staff or on a line. Failure to do so makes it unclear as to the intent of the student. For example, is the note a C or a D? This would have an impact on the accuracy of the written response.

Rhythmic notation needs to include correct grouping of notes to show the beats. Students also need to ensure that there is a clear distinction between crotchets and minims, with fully coloured-in note heads to indicate crotchets, quavers and semiquavers. Conventions of notation need to be covered and reiterated during the year, so students are able to respond to these questions accurately.

Regular practice during the year of the aural and written tasks is required for students to develop the skills necessary and to complete Sections B and C successfully, within the time constraints of the examination. The completion of the aural recognition tasks requires a sound theoretical basis as well as the ability to complete the tasks within question-time restrictions. Aural training software for regular practice is highly recommended along with tasks devised by teachers that gradually and systematically build the aural comprehension and writing skills of students.

Specific information

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Listening and interpretation

Question 1a.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	0.3	4	12	26	31	23	6	3.8

This question required students to describe how the performers used articulation and tone colour to contribute to the expressive outcomes. The musical excerpt for this question involved a singer accompanied by instrumentalists. The question stipulated ‘performers’, so students were free to describe the singer as well as the accompanying instrumentalists. However, efficient use of the reading time would have enabled students to note that the second part of the question referred to the accompaniment, so a greater focus on the singer for Question 1a. would have enabled students to concentrate on the accompanying parts as required for Question 1b. The highest-scoring responses were able to identify the expressive outcomes concisely and draw a link between the treatment of the elements of music and the expressive outcomes.

The following are examples of possible relevant points.

Tone colour:

- Strings dominated, creating a gentle waltz to reflect the title.
- After the introduction featuring guitar and cello a solo harp took over.
- The vocalist sang with a slight rawness or huskiness to suggest an older voice to contribute to the wistful, reminiscing character.
- The breathiness of vocal tone created a sighing effect.
- In verse 2, the addition of upper strings and guitar add a richer sound.
- The warmth of the violin counter melody increased the intensity.

Articulation:

- The voice did not extend the phrases. The delivery was almost speech-like with very little vibrato and a breathy tone.
- Vocal fry was evident at the ends of some phrases on lower notes, such as ‘misty eyes’ and ‘sweet surprise’.
- The lyrics were delivered with clear diction and some emphasis on certain words, such as ‘to entrance’ and ‘to light my way’, suggesting that these were especially happy memories.

Question 1b.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	13	37	35	13	2.5

This question was a broader question that required students to describe how the accompaniment contributed to the character of the work. There was some misinterpretation. This was not just a question about balance or maintenance or mood; it required some discussion of the instruments in the accompanying role and what they contributed, or how they supported the solo and enhanced the soloist.

The highest-scoring responses described how the accompaniment carried the voice, but without intrusion. After the introduction of guitar and cello, when the voice entered, the accompaniment effected a subtle change of tone colour by using a solo harp. The harp continued the arpeggiated figures of the guitar's introduction, but the texture was lighter, and the voice's vulnerability was highlighted. The gentle waltz of the accompaniment reflected the title as the singer reminisces. The addition of upper strings gave a feeling of strength as the memories grew stronger.

Question 2

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	0.2	1	5	11	23	21	21	14	4	5.0

Students were given the choice of discussing up to four elements of music that created character. Most students referred to dynamics and/or tone colour. This was a relatively broad question. Students need to ensure that they did not write a narrative of the musical events without a discussion of how they created character. Some students spent most of their writing time outlining the character without actual reference to the music, narrating a story about a snake. Students need to ensure that they give details about the treatment of elements of music. Stating the element of music does not in itself address the question adequately. For example, 'use of tone colour to create a tense atmosphere' was insufficient. Students needed to unpack the treatment of tone colour in the excerpt.

Some of the high-scoring responses referred to the following.

Dynamics:

- Sudden decrescendo in dynamics after a sudden accented loud entry of melodic material created uncertainty and tension in the music.
- Slowly building crescendos combined with the rapid tremolos builds intensity.
- Full range of dynamics were explored, using long and short crescendos to build tension.

Tone colour:

- The mellow low/bass clarinet contributed to the intriguing and contrasting nature of the melodic content.
- The stark wooden tone of the clave and percussion created suspense.
- The menacing strings, using fast bowing, created tension

Phrasing:

- Short phrases of fast, layered tremolos, glissandi, homophonic accented tutti stabs, and ascending and descending melodic lines contributed to the urgency of this piece. The melodies were short and stabbing, often accompanied by strings playing scalar passages, creating confusion.

Question 3

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	0.2	0.2	1	3	6	9	16	14	17	13	11	7	2	7.4

This question required students to compare the ways in which the two interpretations created different characters and expressive outcomes, selecting three of the following: tone colour; balance of musical lines; improvisation/embellishment/ornamentation; phrasing; or dynamics.

The highest-scoring responses tended to divide the writing into two halves, addressing the treatment of one element of music in the first interpretation, then comparing it to the treatment of the same element in the second interpretation. Dot points were useful, enabling students to make points in a concise manner. Students need to ensure that they write their responses clearly and concisely. Students need to ensure that

when selecting an element of music, that the points made actually address the treatment of the element of music. For example, a list of instruments on its own did not constitute an outline of the treatment of balance of musical lines.

The following are examples of possible relevant points.

Interpretation A

The character of restlessness and intensity is created through the following.

Tone colour:

- electric guitars in opening – strummed sustained chords with reverberation
- foggy, sludgy electric guitar sound
- use of pedals for distortion and feedback
- the vocalist uses a forced, harsh tone colour that increases the intensity in the chorus.

Balance of musical lines:

- Begins with solo rhythm guitar, drums and lead guitar enter.
- Guitars reduce in volume when vocal enters in verse.
- Guitar lick prominent.
- Lead vocal is clear and prominent in the mix.
- Use of pedals and distortion to make lead guitar prominent during introduction and chorus.
- Drums and bass guitar are clearly audible and their constant drive adds to the intensity.
- Simple bass guitar part providing harmonic and rhythmic support.

Improvisation/embellishment/ornamentation:

- vocal line yodelling on the second syllable of 'zom-bie'; sharp break from chest voice to head voice
- rapid repeated changes in pitch of vocal line
- vocal embellishment, particularly in chorus
- improvised drum fills at the end of phrases.

Phrasing:

- regular four bar phrases with pick up into the next phrase in introduction and verse
- chorus – also in four bar phrases with accents on particular words and syllables e.g. Zombie.

Dynamics:

- begins *mp* with solo guitar
- sudden louder entry of drums and lead guitar immediately louder sets up the aggressive quality
- verse 1 is *mp*, gradual crescendo in vocal line during verse into chorus
- *ff* in chorus adds to the intensity.

Interpretation B

An introspective, soulful, wistful character is created through some of the following.

Tone colour:

- Muted trumpet (cup mute) entering after the subdued piano chords provides a warm tone colour.
- Female vocal enters, descending to lower notes, exploiting the warm tone to add to the soulful character.
- Much more warm tone colour for all instruments compared to Interpretation A.
- On higher pitches, the vocal tone becomes brighter, adding to intensity of the words.

Balance of musical lines:

- Female vocalist prominent in the mix.
- Trumpet clearly audible when playing.
- Bass guitar played quietly in the background.

- The dropping back to vocalist and piano accompaniment increases the feeling of wistfulness.

Improvisation/embellishment/ornamentation:

- Melodic line is altered with lots of ornamentation from the female vocalist. Vibrato on held notes, belt, melisma.
- Vocal line is heavily improvised and decorated
- More improvisation as excerpt progresses increases intensity. The vocal improvisation includes the lower warm notes to the thinner upper notes.
- Vibrato on trumpet.
- Piano part was partly improvised.

Phrasing:

- regular four-bar phrases in piano
- more gaps between words, gives feeling of shorter phrases in the vocal part
- short phrases by trumpet.

Dynamics:

- piano plays *mf* throughout introduction and verse
- less dynamic contrast than Interpretation A
- drums are restrained *mp* when enter
- swells from trumpet in bridge.

Section B – Music language (aural)

Question 4

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	5	13	18	23	17	24	3.0

- The first interval was a perfect fourth.
- The second interval was a major third.
- The third interval was a minor second.
- The fourth interval was a minor sixth.
- The fifth interval was a minor third.

In order to gain full marks for this question, students needed to indicate both the size and quality of the interval. This was handled reasonably well by most students, with most students able to identify the major third and minor second correctly. Some students confused the perfect fourth with the perfect fifth and the final two intervals were problematic for some.

Harmonic presentation of the fifth interval proved problematic for a few students. Intervals may be presented melodically as well as harmonically. To prepare for the harmonic presentation, students should practise recognising intervals melodically, then progress to recognition of intervals presented harmonically. In order to do this, students should practise hearing the two notes of the harmonic interval played together, then sing the two notes. When the two notes are determined, students can then recognise the interval. After this practice, inner hearing of the two notes will prepare students for work under quiet examination conditions. Singing of intervals is also recommended to assist in the recognition of intervals.

To obtain full marks, both quality and quantity needed to be correct. The use of 'm' to indicate major or minor was insufficient as it does not clearly distinguish between major and minor.

Question 5

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	17	22	23	30	2.5

- The first was a melodic minor scale.
- The second was a mixolydian mode.
- The third was an aeolian mode or natural minor scale.
- The fourth was a major scale.

The scales/modes may be presented ascending or descending or both ascending and descending. The descending mixolydian mode proved difficult for some students. Singing of all the scales/modes ascending and descending is very useful. Following this, practise singing scales descending-only will assist. Most students were able to identify the melodic minor scale and the major scale. To distinguish between the different types of minor scales, students had to stipulate that the third scale was a natural minor scale (i.e. harmonic minor without the raised seventh). Analysis of the difference between the aeolian mode (or natural minor scale) and the dorian would have demonstrated that there is only one note difference between the two scales/modes. In a dorian mode, the sixth degree of the mode is a major sixth from the bottom note, whereas in a natural minor scale the sixth of the scale is a minor sixth. Students should practise writing and singing scales and modes to be able to identify relatively subtle differences between the scales and modes.

Question 6a.

Mark	0	1	2	3	Average
%	29	27	20	24	1.3

- The first interval was a perfect octave / perfect 8ve.
- The second interval was a perfect fifth.
- The third interval was a minor second.

Many students were able to identify the first and third intervals correctly. The question required the identification of intervals by size and quality. This meant that all intervals required the number and the quality of the interval to be identified. The complete answer for the first interval was a perfect octave. Octave on its own did not stipulate its quality. The middle interval was difficult for many students. Memorisation of the melody is strongly recommended so that students can replay the melody in their heads during the silent working time, stopping on the notes that require identification of intervals.

Question 6b.

Mark	0	1	Average
%	67	33	0.3

The melody was based on the melodic minor scale. Many students identified minor, without stipulating the type of minor scale. Responses that chose harmonic minor scale failed to hear the raised sixth leading to the raised seventh in the third bar. Singing of melodies in different modes and scales can be highly beneficial.

Question 7

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	18	18	18	35	2.5

- The quality of the first triad/chord was major seventh.
- The quality of the second triad/chord was dominant seventh.
- The quality of the third triad/chord was major.
- The quality of the fourth triad/chord was minor seventh.

Most of the triads/chords were presented melodically and harmonically. Class practice in hearing triads and chords presented harmonically needs to be undertaken so students can practise identifying the individual notes that make up the triad or chord and then work out the quality. Singing of the triads/chords can also assist greatly. A thorough understanding of how the triads/chords are built is required for students to be able to identify them both aurally and visually. Some students confused the dominant seventh and the minor seventh, failing to recognise that the quality of the third above the bottom note in a dominant seventh is a major third, whereas it is a minor third in the minor seventh chord. 'M' or 'm' was not accepted as an identification of major seventh or minor seventh.

Question 8

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	15	11	22	22	32	2.4

The correct answer was as follows.

Bass note	C	G
Quality	Minor	Major

The chord progression consisted of a total of five chords, with students being required to identify the fourth and fifth chords. Many students were able to hear the final chord as the dominant chord, forming an imperfect cadence. The C minor chord returned to the bass note of the first chord, which was already identified as the C minor chord. Students should always try to hear if a chord repeats a chord that has previously been played.

Question 9

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	6	14	13	12	10	9	10	7	11	7	5.0

The correct answer was as follows.

Bass note	G	C	A	B	C
Quality	Major 7th	Major	Minor 7th	Minor	Major 7th

Four chords were fully identified in the harmonic grid and students were required to identify the middle five chords. The progression started with the tonic chord of G major. As all the chords are in root position, the G was in the bass part. For the first chord that students were required to identify, memory of the tonic note would have indicated that chord 3 was, in fact, the tonic chord again. The subtle difference was that the tonic chord was a seventh chord, in this case a major seventh. Many students did not hear the seventh chords in

the progression. Students need to spend time hearing chord progressions that feature seventh chords, so they can learn to discern the difference between, for example, a tonic chord and a tonic seventh chord. This question is based on the concept of diatonic harmony, however, when working out chords that are in root position, it can be useful for students to think of the bass part as a melody in the bass part. Writing the bass notes in this progression would have shown that after returning to the note G in chord 3, the 'bass melody' jumped up to a C, then down to A. It was then followed by stepwise motion B and C. This continued the stepwise motion to the D bass line that was given for chord 8.

Question 10

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	10	13	14	10	8	11	7	9	18	3.9

The correct answer was as follows.



Students were meant to transcribe the missing 8 notes from the melody that was presented by the vibraphone, accompanied by piano. The piece was in the key of F major and many students were able to identify that the first note to be identified was a step higher than the previous, given note C at the end of bar 4. When analysing the music before attempting the task, students should be aware of the accompaniment, as it often contains chords and there is a high probability that the melody to be notated will contain notes that belong to the chords in the accompaniment. For example, the second note of bar 5 proved problematic for some students because it involved a leap from the note D. Looking at the chords in the accompaniment would have indicated that the first half of bar 5 was based on the subdominant chord and the second half of the bar was based on the dominant seventh of F major. The leaping notes all belonged to those chords. Many students were able to identify the tonic of F major, F as the first note of bar 6. The highest-scoring responses were able to hear that the tonic chord was outlined in the first half of bar 6, so the notes in the melody were F and C and they were able to note before the given note in bar 7 proceeded down by step to the Bb, so it was C. Memorisation of the tune, and subsequent internal playing of the melody during silent working time, should have alerted students to the repeat of the note C in bar 6. Regular sight singing and practising melodic transcription is required throughout the year.

Question 11

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	11	0	89	1.8

The correct answer was alternative D.

Many students were able to identify this correctly.

Question 12

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	2	7	13	12	11	9	5	6	7	29	5.3

The correct answer was as follows.



Bar 2 and 3 tambourine:



Bar 6 concert bass drum:

High-scoring responses demonstrated the ability to count the three beats in each bar and identify which pattern occurred on each of the nine beats that was required. Many students heard that there was a crotchet on the first beat and a note on the second beat of the bar. Careful counting would have indicated that there was no sound at the beginning of the third beat, having two semiquavers following. Most students were able to identify the quaver triplet in the second bar of notation. Some students placed the quaver triplet in the incorrect position in the bar. To identify the quaver triplet, the number three must be placed above or below the three quavers. Failure to do so resulted in an incorrect rhythm. Students are advised to look at the rhythmic patterns that are given in the question. The pattern at the beginning of bar six was identical to the tambourine pattern. When notating four semiquavers, students need to ensure that there are two beams, so that the notes look like semiquavers, rather than quavers. To prepare, students should write rhythms that include different groupings of quavers and semiquavers and then perform the rhythms. When fluency is achieved, rhythmic transcription exercises should be devised ranging from short to more extended rhythms, including different forms of syncopation.

Section C – Music language (written)

Question 13

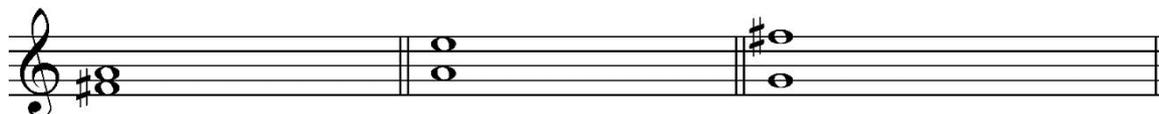
Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	7	22	70	1.6

- The first interval was a perfect fourth.
- The second interval was a major sixth.

Although the upper note of the first interval was presented first, the student was required to work out the interval of A up to D. Intervals are always measured from the lowest pitch, regardless of the order in which the two notes are written or played. The second interval was incorrectly identified by students who did not check the key signature of F sharp. The interval was A up to F sharp, a major sixth.

Question 14

Mark	0	1	2	3	Average
%	11	8	27	54	2.2



Minor 3rd below

A perfect 5th above A

major 7th above G

The minor third below A was problematic for some students who did not see that if they wrote the third note below A, it was F – this is a major third. To make the interval a minor third, the bottom note needed to be raised by a semitone to F sharp. Many students were able to write the perfect fifth above A correctly. For the final interval, some students wrote G and when writing the F, omitted the F sharp. When writing accidentals, students need to ensure that the note is level with the note head. The writing of intervals required the use of semibreves. Students need to read the questions carefully to ensure that they followed the directions of the question. In this case semibreves were required, not crotchets or minims.

Question 15a.

Mark	0	1	2	3	Average
%	12	17	6	65	2.2



This question was handled reasonably well by most students. Students were given the choice of using accidentals or key signature. There are various ways of notating the Lydian mode, so as long as the correct notes were listed in correct order, the scale was accepted. Unfortunately, some students did not read the instructions carefully, to note that the upper tonic was required. The scale started on the note D, and therefore, was required to finish on the note D. Incorrect stems made it impossible to award full marks. Adherence to conventions of musical notation is required, so stems that are written below the note must be on the left side of the note.

Question 15b.

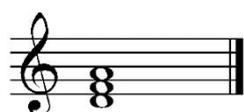
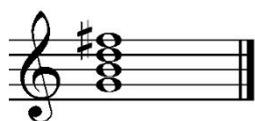
Mark	0	1	2	3	Average
%	1	6	19	74	2.7

- The first scale/mode was G melodic minor.
- The second scale/mode was Bb mixolydian.
- The third scale/mode was F major pentatonic.

The identification of modes and/or scales was handled well by most students. Efficient use of reading time would have enabled students to analyse the differences between the alternatives given. Some students identified the second mode as Bb major. When the scale is presented in a descending form, it can be useful to read the note ascending backwards. The scale, starting on Bb, had an Ab. This was a lowered seventh, compared to a major scale, so it was a mixolydian mode.

Question 16

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	22	23	54	1.3



Students were required to write chords in given keys, using principles of diatonic harmony. Most students used accidentals instead of key signatures. This means that only accidentals that occur in the key can be used. D major contains F# and C#. Students were required to work out which note is the IV of D major (G) and then build a seventh chord on that note using notes that belong to D major. The question will not always stipulate the quality of the chord in its use of upper case or lower case, as the student is required to work out the chord in context of the given key.

Question 17

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	9	17	21	45	2.8

Diatonic function	VI / vi / 6 / submediant	iv / IV / 4 / subdominant
Quality	Major	Minor 7 th / -7

Students were required to identify the diatonic function of two chords in the key of D minor and the quality of each chord, including whether it was a triad or a seventh chord.

Various ways of identifying the diatonic function were accepted. Some students wrote submediant or 6 for the first chord. As the quality of the chord was identified in the bottom grid, it was not essential for students to use upper case to identify a major triad and lower case to identify a minor triad or chord. Others used Roman numerals. The quality of the chord was major, but some students missed that the second chord was a seventh chord. The required answer for the second chord was minor seventh, not simply minor. Careful analysis of the notes was required.

Question 18a.

Mark	0	1	Average
%	18	82	0.8

Many students were able to correctly identify the chord as a C major.

Question 18b.

Mark	0	1	Average
%	33	67	0.7

The correct answer was E natural minor. Those students who identified the tonality as G major looked at the key signature, but did not consider that the key signature can indicate a major scale or its relative minor. The relative minor of G major is E minor. Careful analysis of the music would have indicated that the tonality was based on E minor, but the fact that the seventh degree of the scale (D) was not raised by a semitone made it E natural minor. The bass part starting and ending on the note E and the use of the tonic chord of E reinforced the identification of E natural minor, rather than G major.

Question 18c.

Mark	0	1	Average
%	25	75	0.8

Students who correctly identified the interval as a major second were able to take into account the effect of the key signature, which contained F#. This meant that the two notes of the interval were E up to F#. The use of 'm' on its own to identify the interval was deemed incorrect. As a minimum, 'maj' is required to indicate major and 'min' to indicate minor. When identifying intervals, students also need to check the clef; in this case the notes were written on the bass staff.