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Musical Styles

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

A broad range of topics were studied as part of the Skills Development assessment, and in all cases they differed substantially from the core topics chosen by each class. It is pleasing to see that through the three assessment tasks, students undertaking this subject were exposed to a wide variety of musical styles and genres.

Task design in this assessment type was good, with the school tests generally covering all elements of musical style. The best tests elicited answers that were relevant to the topic, sought a range of responses from students, engaged critical thinking in response to sophisticated musical techniques and thoroughly tested the student’s knowledge of the aural, historical, cultural, stylistic and musical aspects of the topic. It was particularly pleasing to see evidence that this could be achieved in topics covering more popular musical styles.

Assessment Type 1: Skills Development (30%)

**The more successful responses**

* successfully answered a range of questions using musical terminology which was appropriate for the chosen style
* demonstrated an understanding of musical terminology
* demonstrated a high level of aural understanding and knowledge of the works studied
* creatively, perceptively and accurately explored a wide range of musical elements
* cohesively discussed musical, historical, social and stylistic factors in longer answer/essay questions
* had an opportunity to discuss and examine sophisticated musical techniques in their answers.

**The less successful responses**

* were less confident and precise in the use of appropriate musical terminology
* tended towards a more basic, descriptive explanation of the musical material studied, with limited focus on analysis.

**General information**

To assist with the moderation process, teachers should provide an answer sheet for their Skills Development test.

Assessment Type 2: Investigation (40%)

It is encouraging to see a range of topics being studied and students’ passion and interest in their selected topics. The selection of the investigation topic remains a pivotal part of the success of the investigation. When the topic is chosen with consideration to the scope of the required research, the ability to access a variety of source material, and the consideration of the length of the investigation with regard to appropriate level of detail, students are able to produce perceptive, creative and comprehensive investigations which answer the topic question.

**The more successful responses**

* formulated a question which could be answered effectively within the word limit, and allowed opportunity for discussion of all the elements of musical style within the body of the investigation
* used musical examples to inform the reader and provide further understanding of the topic. These musical examples were labelled clearly, included clefs/instrument names/bar numbers etc. where appropriate, read ‘fluently’ within the text of the investigation, and aided the readers understanding of the topic
* focused the majority of the investigation upon discussion and analysis of the music
* demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the chosen topic through in-depth, accurate and detailed analysis
* provided a bibliography which demonstrated a comprehensive study of the topic, including written, audio/visual and online source material.

**The less successful responses**

* focused the majority of the investigation upon discussion of biographical content, with little reference to the music
* used either few or no musical examples to supplement their discussion
* relied heavily, and at times exclusively, upon online source material
* included limited or no footnoting
* chose an investigation topic which did not allow opportunity for perceptive analysis or discussion of the music
* chose an investigation topic for which there was limited source material.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination (30%)

Topics studied in 2016 were:

* Topic 2. Beethoven: Music Finds Its Voice
* Topic 3. Schubert: The Romantic Voice
* Topic 4. Stravinsky: A New Musical Direction
* Topic 6. The Blues: Of Sadness and Joy
* Topic 9. The Beatles and the Beach Boys: Soundtracks of a Generation

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated detailed knowledge of the score/music by providing multiple examples to support their answers
* demonstrated a depth of understanding of the topic through detailed discussion of various elements in the music
* showed an understanding of the historical and musical context of the work studied when answering questions
* used highly appropriate musical language, and demonstrated through its use an understanding of that language.
* provided detailed answers to questions which asked for an extended response.
* successfully analysed the music in question and articulated their responses creatively and effectively.
* were succinct in their responses, but answered all parts of the question.

**The less successful responses**

* provided only brief 1-2 sentence answers for questions that required an extended response
* did not examine a range of aspects of an essay question, focusing instead on one or two points only
* limited the discussion of the elements of musical style as pertaining to their topic
* described the music in question rather than analysing it
* included incorrect information in their answers.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

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Chief Assessor