



2008 VCE VET Dance GA 2: Performance Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Selection of Solos

The selection of the two solos was good and demonstrated a sound awareness of the characteristics of each dance style. The movement vocabulary selected for the dances was generally appropriate for the students' level of technical skill. It was of the correct length, stylistically consistent with the stated style and enabled the students to demonstrate their proficiency in all criteria. In the styles of dance that may not lend themselves easily to the assessment criteria, such as falling in ballet or tap and locomotion in some genres of jazz, it was evident that teachers had given consideration to selecting repertoire that allowed students to address all criteria.

Dress requirements

Students were well groomed and clothing was not only style specific but tight fitting enough to reveal the student's body lines while allowing them to move safely and freely. Students should ensure that their hair is fastened back so it does not fall over the face and become a distraction. Flicking the hair breaks the performance quality and results in a loss of focus. Students' footwear was consistently appropriate for their dance styles.

Some students and music operators still presented for the examination wearing school uniforms that showed information such as their name, school and cluster group. Students should avoid wearing their school uniform to their performance examination.

Music Preparation

Teachers should ensure that students are familiar with using the VCAA supplied audio equipment (see the VCAA website for more information about equipment supplied). Many students had difficulty using the cassette function and time was wasted as they were unable to cue their tapes after their run through, requiring assistance from the assessors. It was pleasing to see that teachers had acknowledged the VCAA directive of supplying tapes only and very few students presented CDs for their accompaniment.

Most recording(s) accompanying the performance were of good quality and were played at a suitable volume, with sufficient 'lead in' time. Students should also be encouraged to bring a backup copy of the music for both dances.

Teachers should instruct students on how to fully utilise their run-through time. They should 'mark through' the dance to orientate themselves within the performance area, and check that their spatial orientation and music volume are appropriate. It should be noted that there can be some slight variation in playing speeds between various tape players and students should prepare for this during the rehearsal period.

Safe Dance

Most students presented repertoire that underpinned the knowledge, understanding and application of safe dance principles and was within their physical capabilities, enabling them to execute the movement vocabulary safely.

Other Advice

The dance solos must be presented as an uninterrupted performance. Teachers need to ensure that students are sufficiently familiar with their assessment pieces so that they can perform their dances without any memory lapses. If the performance is interrupted for any reason, the student should continue performing as soon as possible. The music should not be turned off unless the student clearly indicates to the assessors that he/she does not wish to continue with his/her performance. Music operators must not interfere, assist or interact in any way with the student being assessed. Through careful planning teachers can ensure that their students have had time to not only learn the repertoire but to refine and rehearse it so that technical proficiency and performance quality are addressed. When students are presenting a 'class dance' teachers must ensure that all students have had equal access to rehearsing it as a solo without the security of dancing with others.

Spatial orientation was not as good as in previous years, with students often presenting their performance too close to the assessors. Teachers should consider the specified size of the performance area and tarquette floor surface when selecting repertoire.

Teachers and providers should familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria on the VCAA website.



The Task

The task is designed to assess students' technical ability and interpretive skills in performance. The two dances must not be in the same style and each should be presented as a single, uninterrupted performance. In some classical variations students spent the first quarter of their two-minute solo on an entrance consisting solely of a pose arabesque, grand promenade and a static position. This would seem disproportionate to the overall solo as the task is designed to assess the student's technical ability and interpretive skills in performance.

Students who presented accomplished solos demonstrated significant technical prowess and an assured performance quality in both solos. Their repertoire pieces enabled them to demonstrate a range of movements in each of the performance criteria.

Low-scoring performances lacked technical application and performance awareness. The range of movements was limited or the movements were executed poorly. Students who scored low marks were unable to complete their solo as an uninterrupted performance.

The Solos

Each student is assessed on two solos learnt from the dance repertoire of a choreographer/teacher. In 2008 these dances should have been between two and seven minutes in duration and in two distinct styles selected from ballet, jazz, contemporary, social, tap, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander styles, or any other nominated culturally specific style. (As of 2009, the dances will be between two and five minutes in duration.) The selected styles should have been nominated previously and should be stated on the student's examination advice slip. The dances selected should allow students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge developed in the following modules from the Certificate II in Dance:

- VBJ677 Dance Technique – Elevation
- VBJ678 Dance Technique – Turning
- VBJ679 Dance Technique – Falling
- VBJ680 Dance Technique – Locomotion
- VBJ682 Dance Repertoire – Solo.

Interpretation of Criteria

In order to distinguish between levels of performance in the demonstration of various skills, a common understanding of the term 'skill' must be reached. For the purpose of the VCE VET Dance performance examination, skill encompasses: the level of ability that a student demonstrates in each criterion, the use of a range of skills in each criterion and the degree of difficulty involved in meeting each criterion. The same set of criteria applies for both solos.

The repertoire selected must include movement content in each of the technique areas: elevation, turning, falling and locomotion. A good guide would be approximately three or four different types of movement for each of the criteria. If a student's dance does not allow them to demonstrate a range of movements in each of these areas or if the student's technical execution is not proficient in a specific technical area, they will score a lower mark for those criteria. Therefore, the repertoire selected must be technically challenging for the student but within their technical expertise.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria are designed to assess performance skills and a range of technical movement skills. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7).

Listed below are the assessment criteria that are used in assessing both solo performances. Aspects of technique consistent with each selected dance style are also included. The first seven criteria address students' technique, while the next five criteria address interpretation.

Technique

1. Posture and alignment

This includes correct posture, such as the appropriate use of muscle tone and the safe placement and alignment of the spine, shoulder girdle, hip, knee and ankle joints. The focus is on the head and body. In general, posture was good and appropriate to the selected style.



2. Bodyline

This includes demonstrated skill in creating appropriate bodylines and shapes using both upper and lower body parts. It is important that both upper and lower body shapes are equally considered. Generally this was well executed. Teachers should give equal consideration to both aspects, ensuring neat footwork and well defined arm lines.

3. Elevation

This includes demonstrated skill in the safe use of elevation techniques involving a range of different elevations with safe take off and landing techniques.

Teachers are encouraged to reinforce aspects of safe dance, including maintaining body alignment, and the correct techniques of propelling the body into the air and landing softly through the hips, knees, ankles and feet. This should be addressed in the rehearsal period and in technique classes.

When selecting a range of movements of elevation, teachers should ensure the repertoire they select includes elevations such as, from two feet to two feet, from one foot to two feet and from one foot to one foot.

4. Turning

This includes demonstrated skill in the safe use of a range of turning movements while maintaining balance, flexibility, transference of weight, coordination and control and articulation of individual body parts in an integrated manner. This was generally well executed, with students demonstrating appropriate 'spotting' and a range of different turns in their solos.

5. Falling

The selected dance should allow the student to safely demonstrate a number of ways of falling that are style specific. The execution of falls should involve balance, flexibility, transference of weight, coordination and control and articulation of body parts in a safe integrated manner. Generally this was well executed.

6. Locomotor

Students must demonstrate a range of locomotor skills involving balance, flexibility, transference of weight and coordination. Teachers need to consider not only the means of locomotion but the pathways being created, and that the spatial orientation of the dances is suitable for the performance space. A dance that does not travel and remains static on the spot will not allow the student to score as highly as a dance that demonstrates a variety of pathways and patterns.

7. Spatial arrangement

This criterion involves aerial and floor pathways. The dances selected must use a range of movement pathways; for example, forwards, backwards, sideways, diagonal and circular. Again, teachers must ensure that the spatial orientation of the dances is suitable for the performance space.

Interpretation

1. Movement dynamics

This criterion involves the demonstration of a range of stylistically appropriate dynamics in the selected solos. The range of movement dynamics was generally satisfactory. Their execution could have been improved. Teachers can assist by drawing their students' attention to the execution of movement dynamics within the solos during rehearsals.

2. Stamina

This criterion relates solely to the student's ability to sustain their energy levels throughout their solo and maintain an appropriate level of physical stamina. Teachers should allow students sufficient time to rehearse their solos in order to build up their stamina prior to the examination.

3. Movement transitions

This criterion refers to the way the student moves from one movement to another. Transitions need to be maintained throughout the dance. Movement transitions should be consistent with the selected dance style. This was generally satisfactory.

4. Movement and music

In general, students' interaction with the accompanying music was satisfactory. However, a few students did have difficulty in maintaining timing and tempo when the musical accompaniment was particularly slow or fast.



5. Performance presentation

Students should present a solo that demonstrates projection through appropriate eye focus and the use of appropriate facial expressions. A number of students were not able to demonstrate their understanding and application of this criterion. Teachers should remind students that this is a performance examination and should be treated as such. Performance skills should be developed during the rehearsal period and students should be given opportunity to develop their performance skills by performing their solos under examination performance conditions throughout the year prior to assessment.