

2003

Dance GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

As in previous years the examination questions were based on the key knowledge and skills specified for each of the examinable outcomes, and required students to demonstrate their understanding of dance as a medium of expression and specific aspects of practical dance studies.

All questions were compulsory and students could not gain high marks if they did not answer all parts of each question. In general the standard of student responses was good on most questions. An area that was well understood by students was the dance-making processes involved in their own solo dance works in Unit 3 and Unit 4. Areas that were less understood included the impact of cultural influences on both solo and group works in Units 3 and 4, the expressive use of phrases and sections in solo dance works in Unit 3 and the expressive use of asymmetrical groupings in prescribed dance works in Unit 4.

Students who gained high marks over the paper demonstrated consistent use of correct terminology as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the elements of movement, the expressive relationship between the elements of dance design, dance-making processes and cultural influences on solo and group dance works.

For Outcome 1 in Unit 3 and Unit 4, students were required to study dance works selected from the Prescribed List of Dance Works published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin*. Questions 4 and 5 relating to the Prescribed Dance Works in Units 3 and 4 were generally well understood.

The marks awarded for each question are indicated at the end of each question. Students should use this information to plan the length and/or amount of detail required for each response. For example, a maximum of 2 marks was awarded for Question 1a and therefore a short response in the form of a list was expected. However, a maximum of 14 marks was awarded for Question 4a which required a more extended response in the form of an analysis. Students undertaking VCE Dance in 2004 can also use the 2001, 2002 and 2003 written examinations and other material on the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au> to assist in their examination preparation.

Students need to read each question carefully to ensure they understand what it is asking and have covered all aspects of the question. This means students will be less likely to miss out on marks they might otherwise be able to attain.

A significant number of students did not respond to one or more questions on the paper. This trend was particularly evident in Questions 1, 2 and 3 which focus on dance-making processes. Teachers should ensure that students develop an understanding of processes they are using. Students must be able to articulate this understanding clearly and with appropriate references to specific examples. The first three questions on the 2003 examination paper asked students to either list or describe processes involved in dance making or describe ways in which various elements are used in the dance. When writing about processes involved in dance making, students should outline experiences they went through when composing, interpreting, rehearsing or performing their dance works rather than analysing aspects of their completed dance works.

Some students were not familiar with the correct use of dance terminology. For example, some students defined the term *dimension* incorrectly. Generally, dimension refers to the relative size of specific movements and can be identified as small, medium or large. It can also be identified in more specific detail, for example a contracted movement or an expansive body shape.

Explanations of the terms used in *VCE Dance Study Design* and other associated terms are provided on pages 15–17 of *The Arts VCE Dance Implementation Resource Kit, April 2001*. It is essential that students are familiar with these terms and use them consistently in all written tasks including the examination.

Generally, responses which gained less than high marks included those which provided insufficient detail, limited understanding of the concept involved and/or limited knowledge of the use of correct terminology. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided additional information to written responses.

Students are strongly advised to revise their understanding of the relationship between the elements of dance design and the elements of movements prior to the examination. This revision is important as aspects of work undertaken in Unit 3 build on an understanding of the concepts of expressive intention, form and movement vocabulary, as well as time, space and energy.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Question 1

This tested students' understanding of dance-making processes involved in the learnt group dance work in Unit 3.

1a

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	23	60	1.43

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- clear comprehension of the question focusing on listing two dance-making processes specifically involved in learning group formations in the learnt group dance work
- a clear listing of two processes involved in learning group formations in the learnt group dance work.

Points to note:

- some students did not respond in the form of a list and presented too much information in paragraph form
- marks were only awarded when examples of general processes were given with a clear link to the learning of group formations. For example:
I paid attention to the choreographer's instructions about the placement of each dancer within the dance space.

1b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	26	4	26	4	40	2.28

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- clear comprehension of the question focusing on dance-making processes specifically involved in learning to use specific qualities of movement in the learnt group dance work
- a clear understanding of two processes involved in learning to use a quality of movement in the learnt group dance work
- a coherent description of two dance-making processes specifically involved in learning to use different qualities of movement.

Points to note:

- some students did not understand the term 'learning' and confused this stage of the dance-making process with refining
- some responses indicated a lack of understanding of the term *qualities of movement*
- no marks were awarded for describing the expressive qualities of movement used if the dance-making processes were not identified.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark:

In my Unit 3 learnt group dance work the teacher told the group to visualise a fern when unfolding our arm so the movement expressed a free flow and a light force. I also imitated the choreographer's quality used when executing a movement. In the second section I imitated the qualities of swinging and suspension used throughout the movement.

Question 2

This tested students' understanding of the expressive use of phrases and sections and dance-making processes involved in their own solo dance work in Unit 3.

2a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	3	27	5	55	2.92

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear grasp of the question focusing on dance-making processes involved in selecting a form to structure the student's dance work
- a clear understanding of two processes involved in selecting a form to structure the student's solo dance work
- a coherent description of two processes involved in selecting a form to structure the student's solo dance work.

Points to note:

- no marks were awarded for describing the form used to structure the dance work if the dance-making processes involved were not identified.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark:

In selecting a form to structure my Unit 3 solo I used the process of listening to my chosen music. The first section of the music was repeated at the end, creating a ternary or ABA form, so I selected the same ternary form to structure my solo.

2b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	2	21	4	62	3.04

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear grasp of the question focusing on dance-making processes involved in refining the movement in the student's own solo
- a clear understanding of the concept of movement vocabulary
- a clear description including relevant examples of two processes involved in refining the movement vocabulary in the student's solo dance work
- a coherent description of processes involved in refining the student's movement vocabulary.

Points to note:

- the term refining refers to the dance-making processes involved after the dance work has been composed and before the final performance
- no marks were awarded for describing the use of movement vocabulary throughout the solo if the dance-making processes involved were not identified.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark:

To refine my movement vocabulary I used the process of breaking down complex movements and practicing them at slower speeds. For example, the elevated combination in my development was difficult to perform at the correct speed, so I repeated each jump slowly until I could perform each movement accurately and in time with the music.

2c

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	15	1	14	4	21	2	43	3.92

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear grasp of the question focusing on describing three ways in which time was used expressively
- a clear understanding of the concept of time
- a coherent description of three ways in which time was used to communicate the expressive intention.

Points to note:

- no marks were awarded if the student did not identify their expressive intention.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark:

I included a phrase of quick turns followed by a slow and sustained balance of long duration in order to show a range of tempos in my Unit 3 solo dance.

Question 3

This question tested students' understanding of the expressive use of spatial organisation and dance-making processes involved in their own solo dance work in Unit 4.

3a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	25	1	20	2	19	2	31	3.16

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear grasp of the question focusing on the processes involved in the selection of head, eye and/or body focus
- processes involved in selecting different uses of focus in the student's solo dance work
- a clear understanding of head, eye and/or body focus
- a coherent description of processes involved in selecting different uses of focus.

Points to note:

- students did not have to identify the expressive intention to answer the question successfully
- no marks were awarded for describing the expressive use of time throughout the solo if the dance-making processes involved were not identified.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark:

I played the beginning section of my music and improvised with my prop, which was a black veil, to spontaneously explore how different uses of focus would communicate my expressive intention effectively. I decided to use an eye focus which was up and forward as the music was dramatic and I wanted to express pain.

3b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	29	0	12	1	17	1	40	3.37

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear grasp of the question focusing on the expressive uses of dimension
- a clear understanding of three ways in which dimension was used to communicate the student's expressive intention
- a coherent description of the expressive use of dimension.

Points to note:

- no marks were awarded if the student did not identify their expressive intention
- no marks were awarded for giving a reason for the use of dimension if the type of dimension was not identified.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark:

To communicate my expressive intention of a caterpillar being inside an egg waiting to hatch, I used a small crouched over and contracted dimension and body shape.

Question 4

This tested students' understanding of cultural influences on, and the expressive use of, phrases and sections in solo dance works choreographed between 1900 and 1969.

4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average
%	8	0	3	3	9	5	9	7	10	8	10	4	7	3	14	7.94

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear understanding of the question focusing on analysing different ways in which choreographic devices were used to arrange movement into thematically related phrases to communicate the choreographer/s expressive intention in one of the selected solo dance works
- a clear description of the choreographer's expressive intention
- a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the expressive intention and the arrangement of movement into phrases
- a coherent analysis of the expressive use of choreographic devices in arranging movement into thematically related phrases.

Points to note:

- marks were awarded for the analysis of choreographic devices used if linked to the expressive intention
- marks were not awarded if the expressive intention was not identified.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark. The work analysed is *Singin' in the Rain*:

Kelly built and arranged phrases using the choreographic device of time, displaying phrases of even rhythm in the initial walking pattern where he is carefree and happy, and phrases of uneven rhythm in for example, the tapping sequence where his emotions convey his exhilaration at being in love. Kelly included phrases of long duration when he put his arms out to welcome the rain, as not even the pouring rain could dampen his high spirits.

4b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	13	1	22	2	28	2	32	3.65

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear understanding of the question focusing on a description of the relationship between cultural influences and movement vocabulary in one of the selected solo dance works
- a clear description of three cultural influences relevant to the period in which the solo dance work was choreographed
- a coherent description of the impact of three cultural influences on the movement vocabulary.

Points to note:

- marks were not awarded for identifying cultural influences without discussing the impact. A high-scoring response linked the influence and the impact. For example:
(in relation to the work *Poppy*), training at the imperial Ballet School of the Marinsky Theatre in Russia held Anna Pavlova to a tradition of strict technical classical ballet purity seen in her use of bourees, pas de chats, arabesques and in the overall carriage of the head, arms and body.

Question 5

This tested students' understanding of cultural influences on, and the expressive use of, group structures and spatial organisation in group dance works choreographed between 1970 and the present day.

5a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	27	2	38	4	29	2.06

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- clear understanding of the question focusing on a description of the relationship between cultural influences and the form in one of the selected group dance works
- a clear description of three cultural influences relevant to the period in which the group dance work was choreographed
- a coherent description of the impact of three cultural influences on the form.

Points to note:

- marks were not awarded for identifying cultural influences without discussing the impact.

5b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	26	1	41	1	31	2.09

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear understanding of the question focusing on a description of the relationship between cultural influences and one production aspect in one of the selected group dance works
- a clear description of three cultural influences relevant to the period in which the group dance work was choreographed
- a coherent description of the impact of three cultural influences on one production aspect.

Points to note:

- marks were not awarded for identifying cultural influences without discussing the impact
- marks were not awarded if more than one production aspect was discussed.

5c

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	19	3	21	9	20	5	10	3	10	3.41

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear understanding of the question focusing on an analysis of ways in which asymmetrical groupings were used to communicate the expressive intention of the choreographer in one of the group dance works
- a clear analysis of the use of asymmetrical groupings
- a coherent analysis of ways in which asymmetrical groupings communicated the choreographer's expressive intention.

Points to note:

- marks were awarded for the analysis of asymmetrical groupings used if linked to the expressive intention.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark. The work analysed is from *Café*:

Lunchtime was choreographed to be a realistic and natural reproduction of the midday race to be served lunch first in a busy 1980's inner city café. In the beginning section the movements of shoving, pushing, reaching and jumping for attention at the counter were performed using an asymmetrical grouping to reinforce the idea of customers competing to be served first.

5d

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	11	2	9	5	16	4	17	5	31	5.01

Responses which gained high marks demonstrated:

- a clear understanding of the question focusing on a description of ways in which level was used to communicate the expressive intention of the choreographer in one of the group dance works
- a clear description of the use of level
- a coherent description of ways in which level communicated the choreographer's expressive intention.

Points to note:

- marks were awarded for the description of the use of level used if linked to the expressive intention.

The following is an excerpt from a response where the student achieved a high mark. The work analysed is from *Cats*:

Medium level was used at the start of Jellicle Cats when Monkeystrap lunges in front of Deuteronomy to show that he is protecting him from Macavity.

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