

Music Performance: Solo GA 3: Aural and Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The format of the paper was the same as for the 2001 examination and comprised a total of 100 marks. There were a total of nine questions with no optional questions. Aspects of the paper were very similar to the 2001 examination which in turn were almost identical to sample questions in Supplement 1 to the December 2000 VCE Bulletin, No. 160 (pp. 175–204).

Teaching and learning programs for Music Performance Solo: Outcomes 3 and 4 should include preparation for each section of the examination. This could include discussion of requirements/appropriate response formats for the different question types. A range of material including the VCE Assessment Report and the Assessment Support CD-ROM provided by VCAA during 2002 is available to assist teachers to prepare students for this examination.

Overall, the standard of results for this examination was slightly better than those for the 2001 paper. Most students negotiated the various tasks with a fair degree of skill and appeared to possess a reasonable understanding of the necessary procedures for answering each of the questions. Some students, however, continued to experience the same difficulties as those referred to in previous VCE Assessment Reports (formerly *Report for Teachers*). Issues for particular attention include the need for students to:

- establish a clear understanding of the meaning of ‘diatonic’ and the highly significant (especially key-related) implications of the term, particularly with regard to chord progressions and melodic ‘probabilities’
- attain a reasonable standard of general theoretical knowledge which will allow them to predict probable and/or eliminate improbable responses
- develop skills in notating pitch and rhythm accurately
- concentrate more on issues of musical ‘grammar’
- learn to recognise the four cadence types prescribed for study
- learn to identify intervals within melodic contexts
- develop transcription skills in melodic, harmonic and rhythmic applications
- develop knowledge and understanding regarding their chosen prescribed ensemble work
- be aware of exactly what each question type requires them to do, the possible correct field/s of response and the applicable terminology
- become aware of the characteristics, requirements and components of different response formats, for example differences between identify, describe and discuss.

There were students who did not use the 15 minutes of reading time prior to the commencement of the examination to their best advantage. Some prose-based responses lacked organisation, cohesion, and even a lack of awareness of what the given question requested/required. Some students ran out of time during the last question. Students might consider first addressing those questions in Section B worth the most marks, especially those questions requiring a discussion/extended response.

Section A – Aural comprehension

(Average mark 31.3/Available marks 60)

Part 1 – Intervals and melody

Question 1

a. (1.6/4)

Recognition of intervals

Identification of interval distance (quality and number)

1. Perfect octave (8ve)
2. Minor 3rd
3. Major 6th
4. Tritone ($\circ 5$ / +4)

Most students could not correctly identify more than two of the intervals, with the greatest number managing to identify only one of them. Many students labelled interval 4 (the ‘Tritone’) as a ‘Perfect’ (or ‘Major’) 4th. Most students could identify the ‘Perfect octave’ (interval 1) although a broad range of incorrect intervals were labelled as well, including 2^{nds}, 3^{rds} and 5^{ths} of various qualities. The ‘Major 6th’ and ‘Minor 3rd’ were also problematic for a significant number of students. Some wrote only the number, not the quality of the interval while others wrote only the quality. Many students continued to write ‘M’s that appeared to be deliberately ambiguous. As in previous years, it is advised that ‘M’ or ‘m’ **not** be used when identifying the given interval’s quality. Instead, students should write ‘Major’/‘Maj’/‘Ma’ or ‘Minor’/ ‘Min’/ ‘Mi’. A significant number of students did not obtain any marks for this question, many having made no attempt to answer it. Results suggest that students need further practice in identifying intervals in context, that is, within a melody – not in isolation.

b. (0.98/2)**Tonality of the excerpt**

MAJOR

Only a small number of students correctly identified the tonality of the melody as major, however it was pleasing that very few students circled the 'melodic minor' as being the correct tonality. Many students did not answer the question (that is, they did not circle any of the tonalities). Some students would benefit from adopting the strategy of identifying the tonality of the excerpt before working on the intervals.

Questions 1a and 1b provided a reasonable indicator of the student's standard for the remainder of Section A.

Question 2 (7.86/15)**Melodic Transcription**

Most students transcribed this Dorian melody reasonably well, especially those who performed well on Question 1. Interestingly, however, a significant number of students who experienced considerable difficulty with Question 1 transcribed this melody well, perhaps indicating weaknesses when identifying specific intervals within melodic contexts. Many students could notate most of the rhythm correctly and fairly accurately indicate the melodic contour, although a vast array of accidentals appeared in some transcriptions – one included 'D-flats' and 'B-sharps', neither of which can be included within a melodic transcription question for this Study Design. Some students were clearly confused by the modal melody, as if they were unaware that such tonalities are examinable. Several students tried to 'force' the melody into F (natural) minor by adding four flats into their transcription as accidentals. Some students had significant problems with the compound time signature (6/8) with many transcriptions in 6/4, some in a 'strange' 4/4, or an odd kind of 3/4, or an array of non-discernible metrical orientations. A significant number of students would benefit from learning to memorise the melody and then breaking up the more difficult sections into manageable units. In addition, once the melody is memorised it becomes possible (internally) to sing the notes of the leaps in order to check their intervals as well as their relationship to the tonic (even during silent working time). Many students would benefit from learning to read notes in bass clef so that the accompaniment part/s can be of use to them when transcribing melodies. Students would also benefit from an awareness of the fundamental rules of harmony.

The following is a list of consistent problems:

- Bar 1 – Most students transcribed this bar fairly successfully, although the ascending perfect fourth and the descending minor third were not recognised by some students.
- Bar 2 – Many students had difficulties with the rhythm of this bar, especially the semi-quavers and the crotchet (2 quavers tied) at the end. The descending perfect fourth and ascending minor third were often wrongly transcribed.
- Bar 3 – Some students had difficulties with the ascending 5th at the beginning and the descending 5th at the end of the bar. Some students had difficulty hearing the i to IV relationship in this bar which was clearly supported by the bass part. A significant number of students wrote an F major arpeggio for the first half of the bar.
- Bar 4 – Many students notated the modal so-la (natural 7 to tonic) correctly at the end, but some tried to force the melody into D harmonic minor via a 'C#' while many more tried to force it into a tonality based upon F (Lydian?).

The difficulties experienced in accurately notating the rhythm of this excerpt highlight the need for students to be familiar with rhythmic structures common to particular time-signatures/metres. For example, many children's songs and 'nursery rhymes' are in 'skipping rhythms' that are commonly and most easily notated in compound time signatures. Many 'standard' marches are also in compound time signatures.

Part 2 – Chords and harmony**Question 3 (3.12/6)****Recognition of chord types**

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Major 7 | 2. (Full) Diminished 7 | 3. Major chord |
| 4. Dominant 7 | 5. Augmented chord | 6. Diminished chord |

This question was answered fairly well with most students identifying at least three of the sonorities correctly. Perhaps predictably, many students had difficulties with the ‘diminished’, ‘augmented’ and ‘(full) diminished 7’ chords (2, 5 and 6). The ‘major 7’ and ‘dominant 7’ sonorities were also vexatious for some. Some students identified chords that are not examinable in this study design, even though a list of examinable chords was printed on the paper.

Question 4 (5.96/13)

Recognition of chord progressions

- EITHER -

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>C Major</i>
or | 2. D minor – 1 st inv | 3. A minor – 2 nd inv | 4. G (dominant) 7 | 5. A minor |
| 1. <i>C Major</i>
or | 2. D/min / F | 3. A/min / E | 4. G (dom) 7 | 5. A min |
| 1. <i>C Major</i>
or | 2. ii $\frac{6}{3}$ | 3. vi $\frac{6}{4}$ | 4. V 7 | 5. vi |
| 1. <i>C Major</i>
or | 2. ii \flat | 3. vi \flat | 4. V 7 | 5. vi |
| 1. <i>C Major</i>
or | 2. II minor $\frac{6}{3}$ | 3. VI minor $\frac{6}{4}$ | 4. V 7 | 5. VI minor |
| 1. <i>C Major</i> | 2. II min \flat | 3. VI min \flat | 4. V 7 | 5. VI min |

- OR -

Harmonic Grid

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bass Note	C	F	E	G	A
Character/ Quality/ Type	Major	minor	minor	Dominant 7	minor
Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion	<i>C Major</i> (Root)	D min/F <i>or</i> D minor – 1 st inversion	A min/E <i>or</i> A minor – 2 nd inversion	G (dom) 7 (Root)	A minor (Root)

Cadence: *Interrupted* (V – vi)

Overall this question was not answered particularly well by many students. The harmonic grid allows students to demonstrate the systematic ‘working out’ of the various components of the chords in the progression. Identification of the bass line was handled noticeably well and many students correctly identified the interrupted cadence.

The following is a list of consistent problems:

- inappropriate or confused musical grammar – in particular, many students labelled the V (dom) 7 (‘G 7’) chord as ‘V major 7’ (‘G maj 7’)
- the frequent identification of non-diatonic chords (for example, ‘E-flat minor’, A-flat Major’) or chords that are not examinable (for example, ‘E minor’ – the mediant [iii] chord of ‘C Major’)
- the diatonic chord qualities were confused by many (for example, ‘D Major’, ‘A Major’, ‘E Major’ and ‘F minor’ are not diatonic to ‘C Major’)
- correct identification of the last two chords (V7 [or V] to VI) but incorrect naming of the cadence – and vice versa (or correct cadence but no bass notes *or* chords). Some students correctly identified the bass notes but not the chord qualities or the cadence, while a few named the bass notes (in the harmonic grid) and the cadence but not the qualities of the chords (or their complete names). When using the harmonic grid, it is prudent for students to complete all of the boxes so that nothing of importance is potentially overlooked
- incorrect identification of the inverted chords (2 and 3 – the ‘D minor/F’ and ‘A minor/E’ chords). Many students labelled them as ‘F minor’ and ‘E minor’ chords. Others became confused so the ‘F’ chord was made ‘Major’ and the ‘E’ – based chord’s quality was not identified. Some labelled it as ‘II – 2nd inversion’, indicating ‘Major’ as the quality of the chord and with an ‘A’ in the bass
- many students did not identify the cadence. Perhaps they did not notice it or maybe they were not familiar with the 2001 examination paper and/or the sample questions for this examination (see Supplement 1 to the December 2000 VCE Bulletin, No. 160, pp. 184–5)
- some students used Arabic numbers for both position and inversion; for example, ‘2 – 1’, presumably indicating the supertonic (ii) chord in 1st inversion. Although there are some very rare examples of this style of nomenclature, students are requested to use ‘standard’ figured notation (featuring Roman numbers for the diatonic position of the chord) when writing their answers for this examination. Students who are not confident users of figured notation are advised to use the harmonic grid

- some students intermingled letters of the alphabet and Roman numbers and/or figured notation with AMEB-style inversion notation (that is, the intermingling of chords classified as ' $\frac{6}{3}$ ' or ' $\frac{6}{4}$ ' with chords in 'b' or 'c' position within the same response). Students are requested not to mix and match styles of harmonic nomenclature.

Despite specific instructions to the contrary, a surprising number of students answered using both methods (the lines and the 'harmonic grid'), frequently with conflicting answers. Students would be well advised to use the blank manuscript paper (provided in the examination booklet) for their 'rough working out' and then transfer their answers to the preferred and appropriate method of response (lines or 'grid').

Many of the higher scoring answers used the Harmonic Grid. However, some students who used it demonstrated some serious misunderstandings about harmony. The following response demonstrates many of the points referred to.

Harmonic Grid

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Bass Note	C	F	E	G	A
Character / Quality / Type	Major	major	minor	major 7	minor 7
Complete name of chord indicating position/inversion	C Major (Root)	F Major Root	A Major 1 st inversion	G 7 Root	F Major 1 st inversion

Cadence: *Imperfect* (although it does not in any way finish on the V [dom] chord)

Upper and lower case for Major/minor tonalities were often used inconsistently and/or interchangeably. One example that was very difficult to mark: **C Major – d/F – A – g 7 – A**. In this instance, if chord two is taken as being 'D minor', then chord 4 should be as seen as 'G minor 7' and chords 3 and 5 are ambiguous – presumably both Major. This student would have been much better served to approach the question via the 'harmonic grid' rather than using the lines.

Note: Despite specific advice to the contrary in the *Report for Teachers* for the 'Aural and written examinations' for this study design since 1998, many students continued to use upper case Roman numerals exclusively, thus they identified only the root note of, for example, minor chords and, therefore, presented incomplete answers. Students are requested to utilise the upper case (for Major chords)/lower case (for minor and diminished chords) Roman numbers system for chord progression answers in the future, unless there is a sound reason for their not doing so: for example, an advanced theory student who has years of experience using only the upper case Roman numbers system. In such an instance it is a requirement that the quality/character/type of the chord be identified clearly along with the scale degree in instances where large case Roman numbers are used exclusively by a student - for example: *IV Minor* or *IV min*; *II diminished*, *II dim* or *II°*. Exclusive use of upper case Roman numbers without the identification of the quality/character/type of the chord is viewed as an incomplete answer, in that the quality/character/type of the chord will be deemed as having not been identified.

Part 3 – Rhythm

Question 5 (4.69/8)

Transcription of Rhythms

The image displays a musical score for a four-piece band (Flute, Horn, Guitar, Bass) across five systems. The score is in 4/4 time and features various rhythmic patterns. The first system shows a steady eighth-note pattern in the Flute and Bass, with the Guitar playing a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The second system introduces a more complex pattern in the Flute, including a dotted quarter note and a half note. The third system features a syncopated rhythm in the Flute, marked with an asterisk (*), and a seven-measure rest in the Horn. The fourth system shows a more active Flute part with eighth notes and a dotted quarter note. The fifth system features a complex Flute part with a dotted quarter note and a half note, marked with an asterisk (*), and a seven-measure rest in the Horn. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

This question was generally very well answered. Most students appear to have worked out that almost all of the rhythmic figures to be transcribed appeared elsewhere in other parts. As might be expected, problems experienced were most commonly with the dotted crotchet in the first bar (guitar part) and the second bar (flute part), plus the crotchet tied to the quaver across the second and third bars to be transcribed. The minim in the third bar presented problems for some students as well. Perhaps understandably, many of the weaker students had trouble with the semi-quavers on the offbeat of '2' and the six consecutive semi-quavers from the offbeat of '3' through beat '4' in the fourth bar to be transcribed (the horn part). The problems with the six consecutive semi-quavers was a bit surprising given that the

previous bar in the same (horn) part featured seven consecutive semi-quavers within the realms of beats 3 and 4. A number of students made their task more difficult by attempting to transcribe the pitches of the notes as well.

Question 6 (7.05/12)

Transcription of a rhythm



Although many students wrote excellent transcriptions, others had difficulties with this question to varying degrees and for a range of reasons.

Some of the problems included:

- use of an odd mixture of durations, often not summing to 4 crotchet beats in each bar
- the dotted quaver/semi-quaver figure on beat 4 of bar 1
- the dotted quaver/semi-quaver and then dotted crotchet/quaver 'syncopations' in bar two
- some students transcribed much of the excerpt as if it was in '4/2'
- a few students wrote crotchets or minims exclusively and rarely with any clear durational correlation to the relative lengths of the quavers, semi-quavers, crotchets, dotted crotchets, quaver triplets, etc.
- it appeared that many students did not keep track of the pulse as given from the count-in. As a result, many transcriptions did not end on the correct beat (the 4th crotchet beat of bar 4)
- the quaver triplets (beat 2 of bar 3) were frequently present but often placed on the wrong beat (see previous comment about keeping track of the pulse)
- the tied quavers (offbeat crotchet or quaver followed by quaver rest) in bar 4 were often handled poorly
- some students wrote ligatures across bar lines. This practice was accepted when the rhythmic integrity was maintained, but almost invariably it was not.

Many students would benefit from the practice of conducting the excerpts that they are attempting to transcribe. By so doing, they are more likely to identify the exact position of figures within the bar, the nature of syncopations, the relative durations of notes both less than and more than a complete beat (crotchet beat in this instance), offbeat entries, etc.

Note: When writing rhythms, students should be encouraged to use note heads – 'stick' notation is often rather unclear. Also, students should be encouraged to apportion notes within bars rather than squeezing them to the front and leaving large gaps at the end. This problem might be overcome most easily by encouraging students to use the blank manuscript for the working out of their answer and then transferring a legible version to the stave where the answer is to be entered.

Section B – Prescribed ensemble works

(23.1/40)

There were a large number of highly insightful prose responses to the questions in Section B that often demonstrated significant understanding of the set works and issues related to performance style considerations and interpretations in performance.

The following is a list of general issues to be noted:

- some students seemed to be unaware that **all** the questions in Section B related to the prescribed work that they identified as having studied. For example, one student wrote about the Westlake suite for Question 7d and 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' for Question 8
- some students should spend more time studying the chosen prescribed work from various analytical perspectives to achieve a higher standard
- students should use the relative marks available for each question as an indication of the necessary levels of depth/breadth
- some students wrote very much the same answer for several of the questions, with varying levels of success, hence much of what was written often lacked relevance
- many answers were obviously prepared (and perhaps memorised) prior to the examination. Some students commonly presented a fairly lengthy 'introduction' followed by a statement like '... and this must be considered when ...', attempting to relate their prepared response to the question on the paper. This type of approach was rarely successful
- some students did not tick the relevant box (on page 14) to indicate which prescribed work they had studied

- regardless of the chosen set work, some students indicated (or it was obvious) that they were unaware of at least two versions of their chosen prescribed work – a revelation of some considerable concern. Students are required to study at least two ‘interpretations in performance’ of their chosen set work
- some students compared a single performance by a school-based ensemble to a professional recording. This approach is acceptable, although it would seem prudent for teachers to present a second (professional) recording as well, so that students can make well-considered comparative comments about some of the more refined issues related to ‘interpretations in performance’. This consideration is particularly relevant where the school-based ensemble’s performance of the selected prescribed work (or songs from it) did not involve all parts being played or having been played accurately. Such an approach to teaching and learning is useful, but is perhaps best utilised in a supplemental or pragmatic (experiential) role
- some students compared the notated score to one recording of their chosen prescribed work, seemingly ignoring or being unable to ‘describe two “interpretations in performance”’ and/or to ‘compare the two performances ... with reference to ...’ a range of considerations and/or elements
- some students wrote about an ensemble work that was not one of the five set works. A few students indicated that they had studied as many as all five of the prescribed ensemble works and then attempted to compare the works to each other. Other students compared performances, for example, of different songs from Sgt Peppers; some compared performances by the same artist of one of the songs within the collection and one that is not; some compared the set work to another work by the same composer; some students compared their chosen prescribed work to *different* (not prescribed) pieces that they had performed in a school-based ensemble or had heard at some other live performance. Responses to questions in Section B should be on one of the prescribed ensemble works and about two interpretations in performance of the same work, not the chosen prescribed work and some other ensemble work, more than one of the set works, or indeed any two ensemble works, neither of which are prescribed for study
- some students used the material within the data book and then wrote generic comments like: ‘not too fast but not too slow’, ‘be aware of the dynamics’ and other such observations that demonstrated lack of depth and musical perception. Students are instructed not to focus upon the score excerpt printed in the data book when answering Questions 8 and 9b
- comments such as ‘try to play in tune ...’ or ‘play in time ...’ are pointless responses when one is describing or discussing matters related to interpretation
- many students wrote prose answers that were very hard to decipher because they were written in illegible handwriting. Students would benefit from practice in writing responses to examination type questions in examination style settings and learning to spell (and to use) correctly terminology that they are likely to include in their responses
- a number of students made inappropriate value judgments regarding the calibre of performance/performers with respect to interpretation/s of the work they had studied. One of the questions asked students to compare two ‘interpretations in performance’ that they had studied. Within answers presented by several students were some very critical comments regarding players, recording engineers, the awareness of the composer regarding issues of orchestration/arranging and instrumental timbres and/or capabilities, etc. Students are of course entitled to an opinion, but often such comments were basically unfounded and not supported by any evidence of any kind. They were blatant value judgments that made no useful contribution to the answer
- several students used white out liquid/tape, which is not allowed (see cover of the answer book – bullet point 2).

Comments about the prescribed works:

- most students who selected the Bach cantata and the Mozart quintet seemed to be fairly much on top of the situation. Students of the works by Westlake and Holst did not fare as well as their counterparts in 2001, but their mean scores for Section B of the exam were close to those for Bach and Mozart. Results for students who had chosen ‘Sergeant Peppers Lonely Heart’s Club Band’ as their prescribed ensemble work (about 34% of the enrolment), however, were not particularly pleasing. Although least successful responses ranged across all of the set works, responses to the questions from students who had studied Sgt Peppers ... were often particularly poor
- students of the Lennon/McCartney and the Mozart must be careful to focus their answers upon the examinable songs or movements only
- many students would have benefited significantly from greater familiarity with terms and concepts that are included within the study design. For example, many students seemed to be unaware of the meaning of basic terms such as ‘meter’ and ‘motif’. Meter was sometimes dealt with as if it related to issues of ‘mood’ while ‘motif’ was sometimes changed to ‘motive’ and then treated as if it referred to the reason for something happening. Tempo choice/s was sometimes confused with rhythmic elements. Many students did not understand how to ‘*notate* the rhythm of a motif in the excerpt ...’. Some students had significant difficulty describing and/or discussing issues such as approaches to interpretation, performance style considerations and representativeness and/or reflection of particular music style/s. In addition, it was evident that some students found it difficult to deal with matters related

to structure, balance, and the solving of technical challenges. Discussion about relevant musical concepts should be included in the teaching and learning program for this part of the study.

Note: The following possible responses for each of the questions are a **guide only**. The various aspects/issues presented are certainly not exhaustive. The possible responses or characteristics include examples of salient points and/or characteristics of each of the considerations to be addressed regarding each of the question's components. A brief discussion about student responses, both overall and with focus upon the specific prescribed work, follows each segment.

Question 7 – Possible responses

QUESTION	Marks	MOZART	HOLST	BACH	WESTLAKE	LENNON/McCARTNEY
a. Identify the meter at the beginning of the excerpt you have selected.	1	Simple dupe (Cut common – 2/2)	Simple triple (3/4)	Compound dupe (6/8)	Compound dupe (6/8)	Simple quadruple (Common - 4/4)
b. Notate the rhythm of a motif in the excerpt that is important in shaping the structure of the movement or song.	2	Refer to highlighted motifs within the data book with respect to each of the excerpts. In shaping the structure of the movement or song is an important consideration (that is, not simply in this excerpt.)				
c. Describe one way in which the composer uses the motif you notated in part b. above to structure this section of the work.	3	Description refers to compositional devices, such as: repetition; variation; fragmentation; its prominence within the texture (e.g. how it contrasts with or interlocks with other figures); combination; augmentation; diminution; use as a structural and/or unifying device; etc.				
d. Discuss one performance style consideration relating to rhythm that performer/s are likely to consider in developing a performance of this section of the work.	4	<p>For example:</p> <p>Mozart: 3 versus 2; articulation; precision (and authenticity) of dotted notes; execution of trills.</p> <p>Holst: balance (perhaps contrast) between the theme (bass voices) versus the quaver-semi-quaver pattern of the accompaniment parts; division of rhythmic phrase across wind parts (e.g. w/winds to brass); precision of parts when counter-rhythms are in operation (e.g. on-beat versus off-beat quavers).</p> <p>Bach: rhythmic structure and/or accuracy in performance of the mordents; rhythmic antiphony between soprano and bass (bass replies in a different rhythm); need for feeling of two beats per bar rather than 6 (the rhythmic flow); fitting the demi-semiquavers against the semis; the appoggiaturas (both quaver to crotchet and semi-quaver to quaver); dotted versus straight rhythms; maintenance of rhythmic precision in the continuo part.</p> <p>Westlake: polyrhythms (see from bar 30) – 3/4 versus 12/16 versus 6/8); syncopations; false and/or agogic accents (e.g. ties in bassoon and 'cello 1 parts set up 7s and 3s); rhythmic canon between bass voices and clarinets and violin 2a; accuracy of relationship between guitar and bongos.</p> <p>Lennon/McCartney: maintaining steady, 'straight-eighths' feel; dotted quaver-semi-quaver figures versus straight-eighths; syncopated organ figure versus other parts; offbeat anticipations ('pushes') in slide guitar and bass versus straight feel from other parts (especially vocals); rhythmic accuracy of vocal harmony parts, especially syncopations and quaver/semi-quavers figures; maintaining consistency of pulse through a fade out.</p>				

a.

Average mark for all set works: **0.61/1**

Mozart: 0.49/1

Holst: 0.59/1

Bach: 0.66/1

Westlake: 0.69/1

Lennon/McCartney 0.64/1

Overall, this question was answered well.

However:

- some students demonstrated a lack of understanding of what 'meter' is – many identified the time signature, but many others identified the tempo (even using metronome markings), the key signature, issues of 'mood', even the identifying of information from the data book, for example, the verbatim copying of 'HOLST: 1st Movement – 'Chaconne', bars 25–38 (from upbeat to rehearsal letter A)

- some students did not attempt the question
- some students identified the time signature for the Bach extract as 3/4 and the Mozart extract as 4/4
- some students named the melody instrument (as per the 2001 paper), obviously having not read the question and seemingly assumed that the 7a questions for the 2001 and 2002 examinations would be the same.

b.

Average mark for all set works: **1.39/2**

Mozart: 1.45/2

Holst: 1.67/2

Bach: 1.25/2

Westlake: 1.55/2

Lennon/McCartney 1.29/2

Most students fared well with this question, although:

- some students did not understand what a motif is. Others notated rhythm patterns that were far too long and not a motif but an entire theme or subject (and sometimes written at pitch on a staff added by the student). Others notated motifs which were not used to structure the song/section/movement
- a surprising number of students seemed not to understand that the term 'notate' requires them to write notes in some form of music notation (even if in words, for example 'a crotchet followed by a quaver and two semi-quavers ...', etc.). 'Notate' was sometimes misinterpreted as 'take note of'
- some students included a mood-based or character/quality-based description of the motive (or an entire theme or melody), often with the identification of the instrument/s that played it, but did not notate its rhythm, as required
- with Mozart there were many very good answers, although the triplet accompaniment figure of Variation 2 was often identified as a motif used to shape the structure of the movement
- most 'Holst' students had no trouble identifying a motif, although some wrote out the rhythm of the bass part to the length of up to all 14 bars
- there were many very good answers for the 'Bach' although the quaver accompaniment figure of the continuo was often identified as a motif used to shape the structure of the movement
- Westlake: most answers demonstrated a clear awareness of the meaning of the term 'motif'
- Lennon/McCartney: many students wrote out the drum part (which is indeed a rhythm, but not a motif) and most students included the slurs in their rhythmic notation (which, of course, become *ties* when pitch is not involved).

c.

Average mark for all set works: **1.82/3**

Mozart: 1.87/3

Holst: 2.11/3

Bach: 1.96/3

Westlake: 2.10/3

Lennon/McCartney 1.50/3

Quite a few students handled this question very well.

However:

- many responses did not address structure at all
- some students compared the motif to the rest of the movement or song (especially 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' where the verse/chorus contrast of 3/4 to 4/4 was a common description) despite the question stating that the focus was to be upon '... *this* section of the work'. Some students referred to the *entire* work, which was not required and wasted time and thought
- some students simply restated the question without adding any extra information, for example - 'Mozart used this motif [notated for Question 7b] to structure the work'
- Mozart – Some of the students who had incorrectly identified the triplet figures (violin 2 and viola) as a motif gained mark through relevant discussion of the contribution made to the harmonic structure
- Holst – Students who had written out the entire bass part (the melody) indicating that it was a motif had difficulty responding appropriately to this question
- Bach – Some of the students who had incorrectly identified the continuo's 6-quaver figure as a motif (Question 7b) nevertheless were able to gain marks here through relevant discussion of the underpinning of the harmonic structure
- Westlake – Many very good answers most commonly focused upon the use of polyrhythmic relationships and/or cycles of accents
- Lennon/McCartney – Many students confused the question requirements regarding 7c and 7d.

d.

Average mark for all set works: **2.15/4**

Mozart: 2.55/4

Holst:	2.31/4
Bach:	2.53/4
Westlake:	2.46/4
Lennon/McCartney	1.55/4

This question was generally answered well.

However:

- some students clearly did not know what ‘discuss’ requires of them. Students frequently listed an array of ‘performance style considerations related to rhythm’ but did not discuss (or even describe) any of them. A discussion is not a list of superficial items
- when the question asks for a discussion of *one* aspect, issue or element, this is exactly what should be done. The *depth* of the response is adversely affected when too many matters are presented
- although most students could identify a ‘performance style consideration relating to rhythm ...’, a significant percentage could not discuss the matter
- many students made statements such as ‘performers have to stay in time with each other’ which made no contribution whatsoever to a discussion about a ‘performance style consideration’
- the answer had to relate to rhythm. Unfortunately many students wrote irrelevant responses featuring, for example a discussion of the muting of strings, tempo (not rhythm), various timbral effects, issues of volume and balance, etc. many of which would have been better suited as answers to questions on the 2001 examination paper
- several students used the word *unison* perhaps instead of accurately or *together*, for example ‘all 5 players must play in *unison* or it won’t sound right’
- Mozart – Many fine discussions regarding the placement and interpretation of the semi-quaver versus triplet subdivision
- Holst – Many fine discussions, especially regarding the British versus American approaches to the work from a rhythmic perspective
- Bach – Many outstanding discussions that demonstrated considerable understanding of a range of relevant issues. More successful responses featured issues such as: ornamentation, exact lengths of notes in both the vocal parts and the accompaniment, precise imitation of rhythms and rhythm-based inflections, whether between the two singers, within the voices of the accompaniment or across the ensemble
- Westlake – Most students wrote excellent descriptions and many wrote very fine discussions. The more successful responses most commonly featured issues regarding strictness of pulse to ensure that the opposing accents are heard clearly (for example, the accents of the bongoes and horns/clarinets/violin 2/celli versus the guitar and violas as found on the second quaver beat of the first bar and the last quaver beat of the second bar of the excerpt)
- Lennon/McCartney – Few genuine ‘discussions’ were presented. Many (perhaps most) students focused upon the 3/4 verse in contrast to the 4/4 chorus, even though this is not a ‘... performance *style* consideration relating to *rhythm* ...’.

Question 8

Identify one movement or song from the prescribed ensemble work that you have studied and identified on page 14.

Choose **three** aspects of the movement, section or song and **discuss** decisions that could be made when preparing and/or interpreting this part of the work for performance.

In your answer describe what the ensemble is aiming to achieve and/or could be aiming to achieve in its interpretation.

You may wish to consider some of the following aspects in your response.

- tempo choice/s
- articulations
- balance
- relationship/s between parts
- rehearsing the performers
- solving technical challenges
- flexibility of time

Your answer may refer to, but should not focus upon, the score excerpt printed in the data book.

Average mark for all set works: **8.59/15**

Mozart:	10.26/15
Holst:	8.95/15
Bach:	10.55/15
Westlake:	8.85/15
Lennon/McCartney	6.49/15

Possible responses

Strong responses discussed a range of issues and strategies relating to what the ensemble may have been attempting to achieve with reference to three aspects of the movement to prepare for and/or interpret the work for a performance (or specific section/segment of the work). Issues to be addressed may include:

- characteristics of the three aspects with particular reference to common practice of the period/era/style
- the significance of the aspects selected
- choice of instruments, including amplification, alternative instrumentation, etc.
- issues related to accuracy (rhythmic, technical, authentic, etc.)
- musical trends of the time of the writing of the selected excerpt/work.
- rehearsing the performers'
- other responses referred to which aspect of preparation/interpretation. Responses that focused most of their attention in this area – did not address the intention of the question.

Question 8 caused confusion for students who did not read it thoroughly. Those who addressed the issues did well. Many who did not fare very well tended to present repetitions of previous answers. Many students presented a prepared response by writing a detailed description of the chosen section/song/movement (even the entire work) and its features, structural components, compositional characteristics, historical significance, etc. rather than responding to the question asked.

Students who used subheadings tended to respond more successful, as they kept to the point and made their answers relate back to the question more directly.

Although sometimes extremely well answered, an array of problems arose including the following:

- some students did not refer at all to the work that they claimed to have studied
- many students did not refer to three aspects and often none of their chosen aspects were selected from the list of suggestions provided
- many answers were very general
- many students did not refer to their chosen set works to support their answers
- many students dealt with only two aspects, often with a disproportionate amount of attention given to only one of these. When three aspects were discussed often the last was given cursory attention. Also, there was a lot of repetitive discussion from one aspect to another. Frequently, the answer to the question was short, rather than a detailed response as was indicated by the number of marks available and the space provided
- the question's preamble instructed students to '... identify **one** other movement, section or song ...'. Some students continued with the extract from the data book while others chose two or more movements, sections or songs
- it was often unclear what three aspects were being written about
- some students wrote about all seven of the aspects listed in the question. This was unnecessary as the question required a discussion of three aspects only, not *at least* three aspects
- occasionally responses alluded to a work other than one indicated on the examination paper
- some responses did not 'discuss decisions that could be made when preparing and/or interpreting this part of the work for performance' to any degree at all
- some responses stated the obvious without referring to specific examples from the work to substantiate their discussion of particular aspects. For example: 'the violinists would have to work hard' or 'the trumpets would have to listen to the other parts'
- many students presented generic descriptions of three of the listed aspects but did not relate them back to the work itself
- terminology used in the question was often misinterpreted – particularly the terms *articulation* (often confused with *enunciation* with reference to those set works with voice parts) and *balance* (used to discuss structure of movements, or the relationship between choruses and verses as in, for example 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds')
- some students misread the question and provided a description of one of the performances or recordings that they had studied, or provided a comparison of two recordings
- many responses did not refer clearly to decisions that needed to be made nor did they specify what the ensemble might be aiming to achieve (as requested within the question)
- many students described stylistic features of the music rather than focusing on performance preparation and/or interpretation
- some students included points in their response that were of questionable significance with respect to this question. For example, 'The harp in 'She's leaving home' represents the parents' view on life'.

Question 9

General observations about Question 9 Parts a and b

- some students seemed unaware of the nature and requirements of *describe* and *discuss*
- some students did not read the questions carefully and answered them in reverse
- a few students wrote almost exactly the same thing for both parts of the question
- a few students answered only one section, but their answer included the response needed for the other section

- some provided a comparison rather than description for Question 9a then seemed not to know what to do for Question 9b
- many students seemed to be unclear about the meaning of the term *interpretation*. Given that ‘interpretation in performance’ is of such fundamental significance to many of the components of this study design, it is imperative that students understand what the term means and that they practise comparing interpretations (of the same material) from a variety of perspectives and contexts
- not all the students completed the chart in the examination booklet. The chart was included as a succinct way for students to inform assessors of the two interpretations in performance they would be discussing in their response
- some students did not refer to the two interpretations they had identified at any point within the body of their writing while some mentioned one and others seemed purposely very vague about it.

a.

Describe the two interpretations in performance of the prescribed ensemble work that you identified in the chart on page 19. Your answer may refer to, but should not focus upon, the score excerpt printed in the data book.

Average mark for all set works: **3.82/6**

Mozart: 4.05/6

Holst: 3.79/6

Bach: 4.59/6

Westlake: 3.91/6

Lennon/McCartney 3.33/6

Possible responses

Aspects of the interpretations that might be described include:

- rhythmic differences/similarities
- alterations to dynamics/instrumental ‘prominence’
- tempo differences
- changes of instrumentation (e.g. ‘period’ versus ‘modern’ instruments, use of electronic rather than acoustic instrument especially Lennon/McCartney, alternative instruments, etc.)
- differences/similarities of balance of instruments and/or across sections
- interpretative differences especially by soloists
- alterations of articulations/phrasing
- differences of register of the solo performer/s (e.g. female singer versus male singer of the same song)
- rhythmic articulations by soloists (particularly with reference to performances of the works by Westlake, Lennon/McCartney and Mozart)
- live versus studio recordings
- differences/similarities in production and/or recording techniques
- issues of quality – value judgments.

Question 9a featured many outstanding descriptions that presented highly insightful research into style and performance characteristics of respective eras. Students who used a table or point form approach tended to handle this question best. Their answers were more descriptive and noticeably better focused upon the question.

However:

- some students only described one interpretation (instead of the required two)
- some responses did not exceed a length of two (often very short) sentences
- many students included value judgements and emotive terms from time to time. In general the selected items were discussed with reference to opposites, that is to say, fast/slow, loud/soft, with/without ornamentation, dreamy/funky, happy/sad, committed/uncommitted, interesting/boring. These adjectives were rarely explored fully (or at all) within the text and tended to remain as statements with a paucity of supporting evidence
- responses to Question 9a were often repeated in Question 9b almost exactly, rather than the response to 9b comparing aspects of the interpretations in performance described in 9a
- many students did not support their observations with specific references to particular interpretation/s in performance. They simply mentioned whatever they could think of and with little or no organisation
- those who clearly separated the two versions tended to avoid comparison and thus provided a more successful description of the interpretations
- the question was generally very well answered by students who had studied Mozart, Holst and Bach
- students of Mozart and Bach frequently alluded well to the use of ‘period’ versus contemporary instruments and stylistic interpretations
- Westlake – Instrumental and background scenarios were often presented appropriately and described well
- Lennon/McCartney – Most responses ranged from vague to superficial.

b. (4.71/9)

Compare the two performances you described in part a. with reference to **three** of the following.

- representativeness and/or reflection of particular music style/s
- approach/es to interpretation
- contribution/s of key performer/s
- performance convention/s (for example, historical and/or contemporary conventions in each of the interpretations)
- context (for example, venues, choice of instruments, vocal style/s, live or recorded interpretations in performance, recording techniques)

Your response may be organised using bullet points from the list above as subheadings or you may present your response in an integrated manner. Where you write in an integrated manner, make clear the three bullet points you are referring to. Your answer may refer to, but should not focus upon, the score excerpt printed in the data book.

Average mark for all set works: **4.71/9**

Mozart: 5.46/9

Holst: 4.51/9

Bach: 5.94/9

Westlake: 5.28/9

Lennon/McCartney 3.62/9

Possible responses

Responses for part **b)** of **Question 9** should have been centred on issues described in the response to Question 9, part **a)**. In their response students should have addressed three of the bullet points from the perspective of comparison, referring to both of the versions that they have identified on page 19 of the examination booklet.

Where students indicated that there are ‘not many’ features/elements of significant difference between the two versions/‘interpretations’ they also needed to refer to aspects of the interpretations in performance to justify this perspective.

Responses to Question 9b featured a range of issues.

- many students did not seem to know how to ‘compare’ two things. Many others tried to compare more than two things – a very complicated task indeed. Some students dealt with only one performance while one student tried to compare four recordings and two live performances. Although this is acceptable, it is very difficult, very time consuming and generally lacking in focus and/or sufficient levels of detail, especially when three aspects were to be addressed. One student tried to compare *all five* works prescribed for study
- many students, instead of choosing three of the aspects and writing three points on each (as the marks available for the question suggest), wrote one general item on each of the five aspects
- some students appeared to have rote-learned tables comparing interpretations in performance and simply wrote them out in the hope that they would meet the criteria
- the question required students to choose three of the bullet points – and to make clear what these were. It was often difficult to identify which points were being addressed. Often answers were just a comparison of random points and the list was ignored altogether. Some students dealt with three points of their own, that is, bullet points not on the list provided
- in their comparisons, most students focused on differences only, which of course is fine, but a comparison can also include a description of similarities
- some students seemed preoccupied with which interpretation was more authentic or more ‘correct’ The question only called for a comparison, not a judgement
- several students compared the Westlake suite to the whole of Sgt Peppers ... for Question 9b
- Mozart: student responses were generally very good indeed. Most students compared two performances with reference to three chosen aspects with a fair degree of flair, insight and demonstrated understanding. The strongest answers compared the two performances with focus on bullet points 1, 2 and 4. With respect to ‘representativeness and/or reflection of particular music style/s’, the more successful answers most commonly discussed upon the degree to which rhythms, phrases, articulations and ensemble balance heard in each of the compared performances agreed with ‘accepted’ or ‘authentic’ approaches for music of the ‘Classical’ period. With regard to ‘approaches to interpretation’, stronger answers focused upon issues of similarity or difference with reference to tempo, balance, texture and nuance. More successful answers to the ‘performance conventions ...’ bullet point frequently dealt with issues regarding ‘period’ instruments versus modern instruments, and/or the amount of vibrato used by the strings in different interpretations.
- Holst: much attention was devoted to an assumed ethos of nationalistic characteristics depending on the country of origin and location of the performers. British/American traits were a source of comment regarding the interpretations of the selected works and this point tended to be seized upon as being the most significant of all comparative considerations. This was particularly evident from comments that the American interpretation/s tended to be noisy and boisterous with full instrumentation compared to the more genteel and refined version of their

British counterparts. Less successful responses focused on the various merits of choice between the original Holst orchestration and the later (contemporary) expansion of available instrumentation

- Bach: most students wrote very fine comparisons and some were truly outstanding and most of the best responses predictably focused on bullet points 1, 2 and 4
- Westlake: many students chose to compare the *Antarctica: Suite for Guitar and Orchestra* to the score for the documentary film, which featured 'cello as the principal solo instrument. The comparisons of three given aspects/elements of two interpretations in performance, presented in these responses although often attempted admirably, were not commonly executed very successfully. Many students ended up comparing the two versions of the music rather than two interpretations of the same music. Comparison of music which is common to both is appropriate but references to the music occurring only in the film are not relevant in comparative contexts. Neither is a description of how the music matches the visual imagery in the film. Some students indicated that 'Out of the Blue' is the name of an orchestra rather than the title of a compact disc
- Lennon/McCartney: some students who had studied Sgt Peppers did not compare two performances of the songs within the prescribed collection. Some students selected one song from the album and a completely different song (not from the album or even by The Beatles). Other students made a comparison of, for example, 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' as performed by Elton John to 'With a little help from my friends' as performed by Joe Cocker. Such approaches do not allow students to respond to the question posed on the examination. Further, it seemed that many students who studied Sgt Peppers ... did not understand that The Beatles' version of a particular song is an interpretation in performance of that song. Many students compared two covers with two original Sgt Peppers ... songs (sometimes songs not prescribed for study), thus discussing four recordings/versions in their answers. These answers tended to be more general and vague, rarely achieving the necessary level of detail. The strongest answers tended to compare two performances with respect to bullet points 1, 3 and 5 ('representativeness and/or reflection of particular music style/s'; 'contribution/s of key performer/s'; 'context ...'). Regarding bullet point 1, stronger responses compared the Beatles (underscore) original to a 'cover' version in a completely different style ('new wave', 'orchestral', 'instrumental', 'heavy metal', 'a capella', etc.). Elements of the comparison included different instrumentation, a female lead singer, a different metre, different harmonisation from the chording instruments, a different feel, etc. Responses to bullet point 3 frequently featured comparisons of the vocal textures of the vocalists and featured instrumentalists/soloists. More successful answers regarding bullet point 5 most commonly compared live versus recorded performances or analogue (original) versus digital (contemporary) recordings (of the same songs!) with particular focus on issues of clarity, balance, recording and mixing principles, prominence of the rhythm section (bass and drums), dance mixes, etc.