



VCE Music Style and Composition 2011–2015

Written examination – November

Examination specifications

Overall conditions

The examination will be sat at a time and date to be set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administration Handbook*.

There will be 15 minutes reading time and two hours writing time. The examination will be marked by a panel appointed by the VCAA.

The examination will contribute 40 per cent to the Study Score.

Content

The *VCE Music Style and Composition Study Design 2011–2015* is the primary document for the development of the examination. All questions must be related directly and demonstrably to the study design.

Outcomes 1 and 2 of Units 3 and 4 of the *VCE Music Style and Composition Study Design 2011–2015* will be examined.

All key knowledge and key skills underpinning the outcomes are examinable.

Format

The examination will be presented in a question and answer book.

The examination will comprise two sections.

Section A will consist of questions based on previously unheard excerpts of music. Question formats may include short answer questions requiring paragraph responses and specific questions requiring brief answers. The excerpts will be selected from a broad range of music styles, periods, traditions and cultures, and some will contain examples of the compositional devices of contrast, variation and/or repetition. The excerpts will be presented on a CD. All questions in Section A are compulsory. The CD, including silent working time, will run for approximately 50–60 minutes. Section A will be worth approximately 45–55 per cent of the available marks.

Section B will require short, structured and/or paragraph responses. Students will be required to name the works they have studied and have selected for response in Section B. All questions in Section B are compulsory. Questions requiring structured responses may provide a series of points/prompts to focus the response. Section B will be worth approximately 45–55 per cent of the available marks.

The examination will be out of 100 marks.

Advice

The following sample material provides an indication of the type and range of questions teachers and students can expect on the Music Style and Composition examination paper. It is not intended to form the basis of a sample examination paper. Sample questions and/or question types are provided for both Sections A and B of the examination paper.

The VCAA does not publish answers for sample questions.

Sample questions

SECTION A

(Questions 1–10 use excerpts from the 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 Music Styles Aural and Written Examination CDs.)

Question 1

Excerpt: Klezmeritis ensemble *Romanian Hora* (2007 Exam – Excerpt 1)

Discuss ways in which melody and tone colour contribute to repetition and contrast in this excerpt.

8 marks

Question 2

Excerpt: David Kechley *The Funky Chicken* (2008 Exam – Excerpt 2)

This piece is written for a string quartet (two violins, a viola and a 'cello). As the music progresses the instruments are given different roles, and create different effects.

Describe how contrasting effects are created in this excerpt. In your response refer to tone colour and rhythm.

8 marks

Question 3

Excerpt: Ralph Vaughan Williams *O Taste and See* (2006 Exam – Excerpt 2)

Describe the treatment of melody in this excerpt.

6 marks

Question 4

Excerpt: Michael Tippett *Allegro Vigoroso, Symphony No. 2* (2008 Exam – Excerpt 3)

This excerpt has been described as a musical depiction of determination and purpose struggling through conflict.

Explain how the composer uses **three** of the following elements of music to achieve this effect.

- instrumentation
- tone colour
- texture
- tonality
- harmony
- melody
- rhythm/time
- dynamics/volume
- articulation

9 marks

Question 5

Excerpt: David Clayton-Thomas *Nuclear Blues* (2006 Exam – Excerpt 3)

Describe how contrast is created in this excerpt. In your response refer to rhythm, instrumentation and articulation.

8 marks

Question 6

Excerpt: Carl Vine *Rash* (2009 Exam – Excerpt 4)

This excerpt is written for a piano and a range of electronic sounds.

Discuss the different ways the piano is used in relation to these electronic sounds. In your response refer to contrast and tone colour.

8 marks

Question 7

Excerpt: Stephen Ingham from *Movement III, Second Sonata for Piano and Tape*, Opus 56
(2007 Exam – Excerpt 4)

This piece draws on a range of styles from Renaissance polyphony to jazz.

Discuss how the composer uses articulation and rhythm to achieve contrast in this excerpt.

8 marks

Question 8

Excerpt: Mychael Danna *delhi.com* (2009 Exam – Excerpt 1)

‘While the composer uses repetition as the primary compositional device in this excerpt, he also successfully retains a sense of interest and avoids monotony.’

Discuss this statement with reference to rhythm, texture and tone colour.

Note: In your response you may agree or disagree with the statement.

9 marks

Question 9

Excerpt: N Rimsky-Korsakov from *Movement III, String Quartet in F Major*, Opus 12
(2006 Exam – Excerpt 5)

a. Describe the structure of this excerpt. You may use a diagram in your response.

4 marks

b. Discuss the interaction of texture and structure in this excerpt. In your response refer to repetition.

8 marks

Question 10

Excerpt: Altan Urag (Mongolian folk-rock band) *Ijii Mongol* (Mother Mongolia)
(2008 Exam – Excerpt 5)

This song combines folk rock with traditional Mongolian styles to evoke the nomadic herding lifestyle of the mountains and plains of Mongolia.

Folk-rock characteristics include

- the use of a drum kit and electric guitar
- popular song form
- repeated rhythmic fragments (ostinato).

Traditional Mongolian characteristics include

- harmonic singing and biphonics (a single singer producing two pitches at the same time)
- Mongolian wind and string instruments
- wailing effects
- lyrical/smooth melody using irregular improvised rhythm.

a. Describe how a sense of ‘energetic power’ is created in this piece. In your response refer to rhythm and dynamics/volume.

8 marks

b. Explain how melody is used throughout this excerpt.

6 marks

SECTION B

Questions 1 to 4 can apply to **either** of the two short works/single movements and/or collection(s) of minor works selected for study in Unit 3 Outcome 2.

Question 1

- a. Describe **one** contextual issue that influenced the composition of the selected work(s). 6 marks
- b. Discuss how this contextual issue affected the composition of the work(s). 8 marks

Question 2

Describe how contrast is created in the selected work(s). 6 marks

Question 3

Describe how the selected work(s) is representative of a particular music style. In your response refer to **three** elements of music. 9 marks

Question 4

- a. Describe the structure/form of the selected work(s).* You may use a diagram in your response. 6 marks

*If you have studied a collection of minor works, you are able to respond to this question using part or all of this collection.

- b. Describe how **two** of the following elements of music operate in **one** part of the structure/form identified in **part a**. 8 marks
- melody
 - harmony
 - tonality
 - texture
 - rhythm
 - tone colour

Questions 5 to 7 can apply to **either** of the two short works/single movements and/or collection(s) of minor works selected for study in Unit 4.

Question 5

Discuss how repetition and variation contribute to the development of musical ideas within the selected work(s).

10 marks

Question 6

‘Every composition is a product of its time.’

Discuss how the work you have studied reflects the context from which it emerged. In your response you may refer to

- relevant contextual issues
- characteristics of the music style of the selected work
- the elements of music.

12 marks

Question 7

a. Discuss how the composer/creator uses variation in the selected work. In your response refer to **three** elements of music.

9 marks

b. Describe how rhythm and tone colour are used in the selected work.

6 marks

c. Discuss the development of a musical idea(s) in the selected work. In your response refer to repetition.

12 marks