Scholarship

2013 Assessment Report

Music

COMMENTARY

Overall, there was enough scope within the questions and the score extracts to offer candidates a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate their musical knowledge and originality.

Candidates are urged to read the instructions for each question carefully, and to provide detailed musical analysis rather than a creative literary response, when required.

Candidates in 2013 tended not to perform well when answering Question 2. Many candidates missed the instruction to write about 'emotion', and failed to make the connection between the title of the extract and the larger work from which it had come.

Question 3 (Score Extract G) was also poorly answered. Candidates were required to examine the meaning of the lyrics and the mood created, (including musical techniques that enhance the lyrics and create the mood). Instead, many candidates focused on the actual lyrics and gave a running commentary of what was already on the page, giving little attention to the musical qualities of the piece.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:
- displayed an outstanding level of ability across all elements of their submissions: examination, reflective essay, and portfolio
- wrote well-organised and articulate responses to the examination questions
- used pertinent music examples from the extracts to back up and support their argument
- gave insight in an original, but relevant manner
- demonstrated the ability to internalise the score at a perceptive level
- fully addressed each essay question without diverging from a central argument.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:
- showed a sense of organisation and consistency throughout their responses in the examination
- used some appropriate evidence from the score to support statements they made
- maintained a consistent level of scholarship across all three elements of their submissions: examination, reflective essay, and portfolio.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship typically:
- made poor decisions with extract choices for questions
- deviated from the main issue in the question they were addressing
- made inaccurate statements and used terminology incorrectly
- did not support statements made with evidence from the musical extracts they were discussing

- showed a poor level of self-reflection in their reflective essay
- demonstrated surface understanding and little musical depth in analysing music works
- focused on non-musical or supplementary elements, or simply described score extracts instead of offering explanations or musical analysis.

OTHER COMMENTS

Some 2013 candidates did not follow the requirements of the revised Scholarship performance standard, and some were using quite outdated formats.

2013 video evidence was submitted in a variety of file formats including .vod .mp4 .mov .avi .mpeg .wmv, a range which caused considerable additional work for markers, trying to open various different file formats. As well, many portfolio submissions were submitted in bulky and unwieldy packaging, which also caused considerable additional handling for the markers. From 2014, greater consistency in submission formats will be required.

An exemplar for the critical reflection essay is available online. However, teachers and candidates are reminded that any exemplar material is provided as a point of reference only, and not as a resource for candidates to mimic or replicate.

Recordings of Composition submissions need to be considered carefully. While it might be appropriate to use notation software to output audio recordings, this format is not really effective for works where vocals are involved. In these cases, an actual voice recording is preferred, as notation software cannot identify the nuances of vowel sounds, tessitura and breathing.

Many candidates made reference to live performances of their works, even although they submitted computer-generated recordings. Candidates are encouraged to submit evidence of live performance (even with flaws) as they gives a better sense of the composition that technically faultless, but possibly soulless, computer-generated sounds.