

Assessment Report

Scholarship, 2007

Music Studies

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Commentary

2007 was the first year of a new format for Scholarship Music, and it was pleasing to note the number of high quality portfolio submissions. Nevertheless, submissions did vary in quality and quantity, and candidates should note that a hand-written single page reflective statement with several crossings-out is unlikely to demonstrate the same level of commitment as that of a typed critically and reflective statement of several pages.

The panel was looking for evidence of personal response, self-critique, insight, and preparation. Some reflections were perceptive enough to identify the flaws in the performance(s) submitted. In composition portfolios the process was often well described and some included work-shopping of ideas, talking with performers; some candidates also tracked the evolution of their work. The musicology portfolios were wide-ranging in quality and successful candidates submitted work containing a high level of musical thought and substance. These students covered the aspects outlined in the assessment specifications. Work submitted considered personal evaluations and organised their portfolio in a way appropriate at this level. Some of these students made extensive efforts in sourcing supporting material. When students are preparing their musicology portfolios, it is important that they are given a variety of musical works rather than a single music work. Performance portfolios outnumbered those of composition and musicology.

The panel found that the three hours now allowed for responding to two questions in the written examination generally demonstrated a better quality of response. The Scholarship Music examination requires a developed or developing “inner ear” and a good analytical mind. Poorer responses tended to rely on description and identification.

The terms *fusing*, *minimalism*, and *musical atmospheres* were often poorly explained. The Jack Body work *Carol to Saint Stephen* was a popular choice, but few candidates chose to respond to Question Three, the question that directly related to the Body. Nevertheless, the Body was often well used. Questions One, Five, and Eight were the most responded to in the Answer Booklet. Score extract 12 (waiata) was the least used and extract 11 (big band) the second least used – but this may have something to do with positioning in the booklet, rather than an aversion to or lack of knowledge about the music of Māori or big band jazz.

The best performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:

- a wide range of supporting musical knowledge that was then matched to questions with some success
- composition portfolios that presented live performances of the composers' acoustic works and then supported their work with insightful comments and reflections regarding the composition process
- annotations to the scores in the Resource Booklet to highlight points discussed in the written response– as requested
- those students whose musicology portfolios sought to source conflicting opinions and analyses of the work under study, demonstrated opportunities for original thought.

Candidates who did NOT achieve scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above and in addition they:

- demonstrated a poor matching of question with music extracts. For example, selecting a question on mood and atmosphere and then using a Bach two-part invention to respond
- lacked the ability to “hear” the written score; improving this skill will allow students to explain music rather than just offering descriptions of the score they used.
- failed to fully respond to the question selected. For example, one question sought responses to the social, historical and cultural aspects of the music, but some candidates responded with theoretical description and identification
- submitted a reflective statement in their portfolio that was inadequate.