

THE EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE VCE MUSIC PERFORMANCE STUDY DESIGN 2011-2016

and

THE EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN GA3 AURAL AND WRITTEN EXAMINATION MUSIC VCE STUDY – Units 3 & 4 MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Mapping the Expressive Elements of Music in the Music VCE Study Design Music Performance and the end of year Music Performance Aural and Written Examination and providing commentary on issues.

by Roland Yeung

for the VCE Music Conference Teaching Strategy Workshop MP3.2
Trinity Grammar School
22 February 2015

MP:3.2: What are the expressive elements of music in performance interpretation, and analysis of music previously unheard?

The VCE Music study design refers to the expressive elements of music, expressive performance, expressively shaping and expression. Learning to perform expressively as a key concept will make your course interesting and personal to each student. A VCE Music Performance student needs to show their understanding in all units and all outcomes and their related SAC and assessment tasks. Students can use this concept as a tool to achieve differentiation in performance interpretations and written listening tasks, and in discussion about technical work.

THE EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE VCE MUSIC PERFORMANCE STUDY DESIGN

by Roland Yeung
for the VCE Music Conference 22 February 2015

This document identifies the locations in the VCE Music Study Design where the term “Expressive Elements of Music” and other terms that relate to this domain are used.

The document mapped is the Music Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design – Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2010. It has an accreditation period of 2011 to 2016. The Music Performance Units 1 - 4 are four in a study design of 10 units.

Following the mapping, there is a **Comments section** that discusses and evaluates a number of minor issues from Page 12.

EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE AIMS

The focus of this paper is on the expressive elements of music. The inclusion of this focus into the study assists students to fulfill the aims of the Music VCE Study Design. Knowledge and the skill of recognizing and using the expressive elements of music in practice, performing and listening relate to most aims listed in the following window, in particular the dot points 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9.

VCE Music offers students opportunities for personal development and to make an ongoing contribution to the culture of their community through participation in life-long music making.

AIMS

This study enables students to:

- perform, compose, arrange and/or improvise music from diverse styles and traditions
- **demonstrate musicianship**
- engage with diverse music genres, styles, contexts and practices
- communicate understanding of cultural, stylistic, **aesthetic and expressive qualities and characteristics of music**
- use electronic and digital technologies in making and sharing music and communicating ideas about music
- explore and expand personal music interests, knowledge and experiences
- use imagination, creativity and personal and social skills in music making
- access pathways for further education, training and employment in music
- participate in life-long learning in music and involvement in the musical life of their community.

Page 7 Music Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design – Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2011-16

EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN PERFORMANCE

The following window is an excerpt from the Music VCE Study Design, Unit 1 Area of Study 1. PLEASE 🎵 *After a particular dot point in the window below, there are comments inside brackets that link to the study of the expressive elements of music. These comments inside the brackets are not from the study design but comments by the author.*

UNIT 1 MUSIC PERFORMANCE – excerpts SD p.7

Opening Unit 1 paragraph

...They identify technical, **expressive** and stylistic challenges. ...

AREA OF STUDY 1 Performance – excerpts SD p.14

This area of study focuses on knowledge and skills that students use ... They use regular performances to explore ways of **expressively shaping** their chosen works and communicating their artistic intentions to an audience. ...

Outcome 1

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- tone qualities that are characteristic of the instrument and ways to achieve variation of tone (variation of tone is one of the ways of using the expressive elements of music)
- the structure of works being prepared for performance and **how elements of music contribute to the character of the works** (specific mention of how the elements of music are used)
- ways of **shaping music performance through interpretation of expressive elements of music such as tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, groove, feel, intonation, and balance and blend of instrumental voices and parts/lines in the texture** as appropriate to the works (this statement is central to the understanding of expressive elements of music)
- historical and contemporary conventions and contextual influences relevant to the performance of selected works (to the extent that these influences shape the elements of music)
- ways of using recordings, scores and transcriptions to make decisions when shaping performances (the understanding of expressive elements of music is a tool to differentiate different performances)
- presentation techniques, including conventions of performance that are appropriate to the instrument/s, ensemble/s, works, styles and performance space/s. (the expressive elements of music informs the performer of appropriate presentation techniques to add to the character of the music).

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- practise and perform a program of group and solo works that are representative of a range of styles and diversity of character (the expressive elements of music provide the tool to differentiate interpretations and a range of styles)
- demonstrate control of tone qualities characteristic of the instrument and variation of tone (understanding different ways tone is an expressive elements of music will enhance interpretation in music)
- demonstrate understanding of structure of works being performed (the expressive elements of music help differentiate parts of the structure of a work)

- **create shape in the performance of selected works through appropriate interpretation of expressive elements of music** (the shaping of the phrase beyond the notated music helps interpretation using the expressive elements of music)
- use knowledge of performance conventions to present historically informed and contemporary interpretations of selected works (understanding of the performance conventions can come through understanding the expressive elements of music)
- demonstrate communication, interaction, cooperation and empathy with other musicians as appropriate to the performance of selected works (the consistent and agreed understanding of the expressive elements of music in performance is required for a quality performance)
- demonstrate presentation techniques and conventions of performance that are appropriate to the instrument/s, ensemble/s, works, styles and performance space/s (the style and character of the music gained through the expressive elements of music will inform the presentation techniques and conventions).

EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUE

The expressive elements of music are applied to performance and the practice of instrumental techniques including interpretation.

The following window is an excerpt from the Music VCE Study Design, Unit 1 Area of Study 2.

PLEASE 🎵 After a particular dot point in the window below, there are comments inside brackets that link to the study of the expressive elements of music. These comments inside the brackets are not from the study design but comments by the author.

UNIT 1 MUSIC PERFORMANCE – *excerpts SD p.15*

AREA OF STUDY 2 Performance technique

They **research and trial a range of performance and interpretation strategies** used by other performers to identify approaches to developing their own skills as a solo performer and as a member of a group.

Outcome 2

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- strategies for developing **instrumental techniques** (the expressive elements of music will inform the techniques that need to be studied)
- strategies for developing instrumental techniques required to meet specific technical, **expressive** and stylistic challenges in selected group and/or solo works (the range of expressive elements of music will help in the selection of specific expressive and stylistic challenges)
- strategies for practising technical work and exercises for development of flexibility, dexterity and control across the range of styles represented in selected group and/or solo works (the expressive elements of music will inform the necessary technical work and exercises that should be studied)
- links between technical work and exercises and achieving flexibility, dexterity and control when performing selected group and/or solo works (the expressive elements of music as common techniques when achieved will enable styles and characters to be differentiated)
- strategies used by other performers to optimise performance outcomes (this can include a study of interpretation using expressive elements of music)

- ways of improving identified aspects of performance ability (this could include performance the range of expressive elements of music)
- strategies for achieving systematic development of unprepared performance skills, including, as appropriate, sight reading and/or improvisation (skills can include performing a range of expressive elements of music).

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- prepare and perform a program of technical work and exercises relevant to achieving flexibility, dexterity and control when performing selected group and/or solo works (the expressive elements of music will inform the content of the program of technical work and exercises to achieve flexibility, dexterity and control when performing)
- present an unprepared performance by either sight reading previously unseen music, spontaneously imitating within a set style, or spontaneously improvising within a set style (being aware of how to perform the expressive elements of music will inform the student how to perform the style authentically).

EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN MUSICIANSHIP

The expressive elements of music are applied to aural perception and analysis. The expressive elements of music are built on knowledge and skills in music theory.

It is in this Area of Study that the expressive elements of music are described in word and music notation in Graded Assessment Tasks that contribute to the final Study Score.

The following window is an excerpt from the Music VCE Study Design, Unit 1 Area of Study 3.

PLEASE 🎵 After a particular dot point in the window below, there are comments inside brackets that link to the study of the expressive elements of music. These comments inside the brackets are not from the study design but comments by the author.

UNIT 1 MUSIC PERFORMANCE – excerpt SD p.16

AREA OF STUDY 3 Musicianship

This area of study focuses on aural perception, music theory and analysis. Students study concepts in isolation and in the contexts of performing and listening. This approach develops students' general musicianship ability and enables them to apply their learning to rehearsal and performance. Students develop their ability to sing intervals, scales, triads and short melodic phrases from sight and memory. They are introduced to strategies for identifying, recognising, notating and transcribing short music excerpts. They also practise and refine their ability to notate music by hand. Students use knowledge developed across this area of study to **explore characteristics of works** being prepared for performance and make decisions about approaches to interpretation.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify, re-create, notate and transcribe elements of music, and describe ways in which **expressive elements of music may be interpreted**.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- ... (knowledge of traditional notation of music provides a representation of sound that allows discussion and debate)

- ... (the first two dot points here are rudimentary music theory and underpin a study of the expressive elements of music)
- music terminology and language to identify and describe the interpretation of **expressive elements of music**

Pitch (melody and harmony)

- scales/modes: (expression in regard to selection and use of scales/modes is somewhat generic and generalised. The change of scales/mode contribute to the expressive domain)
- intervals: (there are generalisations about the musical meaning of an interval that contribute to the meaning of a characteristic interval used in a melody. See Cooke.)
- chords: (there are generalisations about the musical meaning of the choice of a particular type of chord that contribute to the musical meaning.)
- diatonic harmony:
 - sound, structure and function of the primary triads – I, i, IV, iv, V – in major keys and in minor keys where the basis for chord building is the harmonic minor scale (the consistent use of chords in this homophonic context engenders strong sense of structural harmony and subtle expression)

Duration (pulse, beat, meter, rhythm)

- ... (knowledge of traditional notation of duration in music provides a representation of sound that allows discussion and debate) naming conventions used to identify rhythmic values

Interpretation

- structural aspects of works chosen for performance, including melodic, harmonic and/or rhythmic organisation, form/sections, use of patterns and textural characteristics (the structure of a work sets the context for expression)
- ways that **expressive outcomes** in the performance of music works may be developed by **exploring the idiomatic qualities and variations of instrumental tone colour, such as ways in which instrumental voices may blend to create tone colour, the relative balance of different music parts/lines or the structural and expressive roles of instrumental voices within the texture of the work**
- strategies to identify **use of articulation patterns, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrase shaping and tempo choices** (this is a definition what would be expressive elements of music).

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- identify the size and quality of intervals that are presented either aurally or in writing, in treble and/or bass clef and in isolated and melodic contexts (this skill includes identifying when pitch may have been intentionally altered for expressive reasons)
- identify ascending and descending major, natural minor, harmonic minor, melodic minor and chromatic scales that are presented either aurally or in writing, and in treble and/or bass clef (this is skill extended helps identify authentic tuning of scale forms/modes and the expression that this allows)
- recognise and identify the tonality of a melody that is based on a major or melodic minor scale and which is presented either aurally or in writing, and in treble and/or bass clef (the skill in identifying tonal centres and the weakening of it helps identify expression such as tension and resolution)
- ... (the next seven dot points establish skills in notation and transcription which underpin recognizing expression in music)

- aurally recognise, and identify from a series of written alternatives, one bar of rhythm from a four-bar phrase presented by non-pitched percussion instruments in two parts and in simple duple, simple triple, simple quadruple or compound duple meter (this skill establishes the ability to discriminate differences between performance and the notation of the work)
- identify and use conventional music notation to transcribe missing notes and/or rests in a short rhythm exercise (this skill helps the skill to imagine how sounds will look in traditional notation, and all the limitations it has in notating expression)
- listen analytically to excerpts of pre-recorded works and identify ways in which **expressive elements of music, including tone colour, blend of instrumental voices, balance of music parts/ lines, articulation, ornamentation/embellishment, tempo choices, dynamics, and phrase length and shape**, have been interpreted to achieve **expressive outcomes**
- use appropriate music terminology and language to identify ways in which **expressive elements of music** may be interpreted to achieve **expressive outcomes** in works selected for performance.

UNIT 2 MUSIC PERFORMANCE

AREA OF STUDY 2 Performance technique – *excerpts SD p.21*

Students systematically practise technical work and **exercises to enhance their ability to realise the character and style of selected group and solo works.**

Outcome 2

Key knowledge

- strategies for developing instrumental techniques relevant to specific technical, **expressive and/or stylistic challenges** in selected group and/or solo works
- strategies for **developing control of instrumental techniques**
- strategies to **research interpretations** of selected works by other performers
- strategies for **incorporating research findings** from recordings, scores and/or transcription into preparing performance of works

Key skills

- identify, describe and evaluate strategies used by other performers to optimise performance outcomes
- describe how use of selected strategies to develop technical skill has improved identified aspects of own performance ability

AREA OF STUDY 3 Musicianship – *excerpts SD p.22*

They investigate and comment on a variety of ways in which **elements of music can be interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes in the performance of music works.**

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to ... and **describe how selected elements of music have been interpreted in performance.**

Key knowledge

Interpretation (SD p.24)

This knowledge includes:

- **structural aspects of works chosen for performance, including melodic, harmonic and/or rhythmic organisation, form/sections, use of patterns and textural characteristics**

- **ways that expressive outcomes in the performance of music works may be developed by exploring**
 - **idiomatic qualities and variations of instrumental tone colour, including ways in which instrumental voices blend to create tone colour**
 - **the relative balance of different music parts/lines**
 - **the structural and expressive roles of instrumental voices within the texture of the work**
 - **use of articulation, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrase shaping and tempo choices**
- **strategies to identify and describe ways in which performers interpret expressive elements of music, including tone color, blend of instrumental voices, balance of music parts/lines, articulation patterns, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrase shaping and tempo choices in order to achieve expressive outcomes.**

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- **listen analytically to excerpts of pre-recorded works and identify ways in which expressive elements of music, including tone colour, blend of instrumental voices, balance of music parts/lines, articulation, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrase shaping and tempo choices, have been interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes**
- **use appropriate music terminology and language to describe ways in which expressive elements of music may be interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes in works selected for performance.**

AREA OF STUDY 4 Organisation of sound – excerpts SD p.25

This area of study focuses on devising original work as a composition or an improvisation, **inspired by analysis of music in selected works being prepared for performance.**

Aspects of music language used in devising original work including **range and characteristics of selected instruments; use of instruments in combination, including balance of dynamics and tones, and blend of tones;** music forms and structures, ...

UNIT 3: MUSIC PERFORMANCE – excerpts SD p.28

Opening paragraph

... They develop instrumental techniques that enable them to interpret the works and **expressively shape their performances.** ...

Area of study 1 Performance – excerpts SD p.29

Through regular performance they consolidate their ability to expressively shape their interpretation of each work, and communicate informed interpretations of the works to an audience.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to present an informed, accurate and **expressive performance** of a program of group and solo works.

Key knowledge

- **ways of achieving shape in music through control and variation of expressive elements of music**

- strategies for developing informed interpretations of works that demonstrate **appropriate balance between relevant personal, ensemble, stylistic, practical, technological, historical and cultural influences**
- **historical and contemporary conventions and contextual influences** relevant to interpretation and performance of selected works
- **stylistic characteristics, musical structures and use of other elements of music in selected works**
- **a variety of approaches to interpretation of selected works by other performers**

Key skills

- **shape the performance of selected group and solo works through control and variation of expressive elements of music**

Area of study 2 Performance technique – excerpts SD p.30

Outcome 2

Key knowledge

- performance techniques relevant to technical, **expressive and/or stylistic challenges** in selected group and/or solo works
- performance techniques associated with developing ways of achieving appropriate **blend, balance, intonation, tempo, dynamics, articulation, leading and following in performance of selected group and/or solo works**
- strategies for **reflecting on and evaluating personal development as an instrumentalist** and ability to perform technical, **expressive and/or stylistic aspects** of selected group and solo works

Key skills

- **develop and demonstrate instrumental and performance techniques relevant to technical, expressive and/or stylistic challenges in selected group and/or solo works**
- prepare and present technical work that demonstrates a variety of idiomatic instrumental techniques at appropriate tempi, with **appropriate expressive shape and characteristic tone**
- demonstrate effective ways of achieving **appropriate blend, balance, intonation, tempi, dynamics and articulation**, and of leading and following in the performance of selected group and/or solo works
- **describe** links between the selected technical work and **improved outcomes in the performance** of selected group and/or solo works
- reflect on and evaluate strategies used to build personal development as an instrumentalist, including physical and psychological wellbeing and ability to perform technical, **expressive and/or stylistic aspects of selected works**
- present a fluent and **expressive unprepared performance** by either sight reading previously unseen music or spontaneously improvising within a set style.

Area of study 3 Musicianship – excerpts SD p.32

... They develop an understanding of ways **expressive elements of music can be interpreted in the performance of music works**. They apply this knowledge to their analysis of ways in which Australian performers have interpreted a variety of works by Australian composers/songwriters that have been **created after 1910**.

Outcome 3

... and discuss the **interpretation of expressive elements of music in pre-recorded works**.

Key knowledge

- strategies to identify ways that **expressive outcomes in the performance of music works are realised** including
 - **idiomatic qualities and variations of instrumental tone colour**
 - **ways in which instrumental voices blend to create tone colour**
 - **the relative balance of different music parts/lines**
 - **the structural and expressive roles of instrumental voices within the texture of the work**
 - **use of articulation, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrasing and tempo choices**
- **strategies to identify and analyse interpretive decisions that are evident in pre-recorded performances by Australians of works created after 1910 by Australian composers/ songwriters.**

Key skills

- listen **analytically** to pre-recorded performances by Australians of works that were created after 1910 by Australian composers/songwriters, and identify and discuss ways in which **expressive elements of music, including tone colour, blend of instrumental voices, balance of music parts/lines, articulation, tempo choices, ornamentation/embellishment, dynamic range and shape and phrasing, have been interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes and create character in performance**
- use appropriate music terminology and language to discuss interpretive decisions that are evident in pre-recorded excerpts of music performances.

UNIT 4: MUSIC PERFORMANCE *SD p.37*

Opening paragraph

... They further develop and refine instrumental and performance techniques that enable them to **expressively shape their performance** and communicate their understanding of the music style of each work. ... Students continue to study ways in which Australian performers **interpret works** that have been created since 1910 by Australian composers/songwriters.

Area of study 1 Performance – excerpts *SD p.38*

... Through regular performance they consolidate their ability to **expressively shape their interpretation** of each work, and communicate informed interpretations of the works to an audience. ... They analyse the structural characteristics and **use of elements of music** in works being prepared for performance in this unit. They investigate relevant contextual issues and research **existing interpretations**. They develop awareness of the **style and characteristics of**, and contrast between, each work in their program. They consider how to demonstrate these understandings through performance.

Outcome 1

... present accurate and **expressive performances of informed interpretations**

...

Key knowledge

- **idiomatic instrumental tone qualities and ways to achieve clarity and variation of tone**
- ways of achieving **shape in music through control and variation of expressive elements of music**
- strategies for developing and refining **informed interpretations of works that demonstrate appropriate balance between relevant personal, ensemble, stylistic, practical, technological, historical and cultural influences**
- **historical and contemporary conventions and contextual influences relevant to interpretation** and performance of selected works
- **stylistic characteristics, musical structures and use of other elements of music** in selected works
- **roles of, and relationships between, instrumental voices in selected group works, or parts within the texture of solo works**
- **a variety of approaches to interpretation** of selected works by other performers

Key skills

- prepare, refine and present performances of a program of group and solo works that demonstrates a **range of music styles and diversity of character**
- demonstrate **idiomatic tone quality, clarity and variation of tone** in the performance of selected group and solo works
- **shape** the performance of selected group and solo works through **control and variation of expressive elements of music**
- **present informed interpretations** of selected group and solo works that demonstrate balance between relevant personal, stylistic, practical, technological, historical and cultural influences
- **use relevant historical and contemporary performance conventions to interpret** and perform selected group and solo works
- demonstrate **stylistic characteristics** and refine ability to communicate awareness of musical structures in the performance of selected group and solo works.

Area of study 2 Performance technique – excerpts SD p.40

Outcome 2

Key knowledge

- performance techniques relevant to technical, **expressive** and/or stylistic challenges in selected group and/or solo works

Key skills

- apply and demonstrate instrumental and performance techniques for mastering relevant technical, **expressive** and stylistic challenges in selected group and/or solo works
- reflect on and evaluate strategies used to build personal ability to **communicate musical intentions** in performance

Area of study 3 Musicianship – excerpts SD p.41

... They develop a more sophisticated understanding of ways in which **expressive elements of music can be interpreted** in music works. They apply this knowledge to their analysis of ways in which Australian performers have interpreted works by Australian composers/ songwriters created after 1910.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify, re-create, notate and transcribe short excerpts of music, and **analyse the interpretation of expressive elements of music** in pre-recorded works.

Key knowledge

performance

- **music terminology and language to identify, describe and discuss the interpretation of expressive elements of music**
- strategies to analyse ways that **expressive outcomes** in the performance of music works are realised including:
 - **idiomatic qualities and variations of instrumental tone colour**
 - **ways in which instrumental voices blend to create tone colour**
 - **the relative balance of different music parts/lines**
 - **the structural and expressive roles of instrumental voices within the texture of the work**
 - **use of articulation, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrasing and tempo choices**
- **strategies to identify and analyse interpretive decisions that are evident in pre-recorded performances by Australians of works created after 1910 by Australian composers/songwriters.**

Key skills

- listen to pre-recorded performances by Australians of works that were created after 1910 by Australian composers/songwriters and **analyse ways in which expressive elements of music, including tone colour, blend of instrumental voices, balance of music parts/lines, articulation, tempo choices, ornamentation/embellishment, dynamic range and shape and phrasing, have been interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes and create character in performance**
- use appropriate music terminology and language to **analyse interpretive decisions** that are evident in pre-recorded excerpts of music performances, and discuss ways in which these contribute to the **character** of the performance.

COMMENTS ON EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE MUSIC VCE STUDY DESIGN

By Roland Yeung

The purpose of this section is to point out key phrases in the study design that illustrate what the term 'expressive elements of music' means. From this understanding, teachers will be able to improve the selection listening excerpts, link the different components of the study through insight into the expressive elements of music and improve listening responses.

The expressive elements of music and similar terms appear throughout the study design. This domain is what positions the knowledge and skills into the senior school curriculum. A musical performance is not just doing, but also thinking, researching, describing and evaluating and applying this knowledge in performance.

Where do I find out about the expressive elements of music?

1. The key places to look for this term is in the Area of study/Outcome that relates to a particular Graded Assessment Task where the term is examinable.
2. In the Music VCE Study Design look under the headings of Area of study, Key knowledge and Key skills.
3. For example, to prepare your teaching for Section B of the End-of-year Aural and Written Examination, you would look at these sections
 - a. Unit 3 Area of Study 3 Musicianship *Study Design p.32*
 - b. Unit 3 Assessment School Assessed Coursework Outcome 3 Assessment Task worth 10% *SD p.36*
 - c. Unit 4 Area of Study 3 Musicianship *SD p.41*
 - d. Unit 4 Assessment End-of-year aural and written examination worth 20% of exam *SD p.46*
 - e. Specifications and Sample Questions *VCAA website*
 - f. Past examination papers from 2011+ *VCAA website*
 - g. Chief Assessor Reports written examination *VCAA website*
 - h. Please note that there is no Glossary.

What are the expressive elements of music?

1. In Unit 3 Outcome 3 Key knowledge and the corresponding place in Unit 4, the wording for this particular section that lists components is exactly the same.
2. Under the subheading *Interpretation* the key terms are **expressive outcomes** and **interpretive decisions**. *SD p. 33*
3. **Expressive outcomes**
 - a. In a musical performance, I would expect that all outcomes are expressive. A better word would be one word 'performances' which gives a performing arts context, not an examination (which we know it is).
 - b. 'expressive outcomes' seems to have replaced 'expressive elements of music' in this part of the study design. Compare
 - i. Unit 3 Outcome 3 statement (*SD p.32*) "interpretation of expressive elements of music in pre-recorded works." with
 - ii. Unit 3 Outcome 3 Key knowledge (*SD p.33 dot point 17*) "expressive outcomes in performance of music works are realized."
 - c. A musical performance can be expressive and impressive. Edmund Gurney wrote
"The special feeling corresponding to melancholy music is melancholy, but the feeling corresponding to capricious or humorous music is not capriciousness or humorousness, but surprise or amusement: clearly

however, this mode of feeling is sufficiently identified with the contemplation of the quality.” (see *endnote 1*)

- d. The meaning of the word ‘expressive’ should bring into the discussion emotions and feelings. Such responses are based on the listener’s responses from within. Though emotions and feelings are inseparable from any musical experience, the aural and written examination is about how any emotion is created by the performer and composer. What is wanted is a discussion of sound heard and not one’s reaction to it.
- e. Any use of emotions, mood or feelings is usually based on personal life experiences. These cannot be assessed. There are no sources available that describe performers or composers’ emotion associated with a particular musical passage in a performance or work. The type of emotion, feeling or mood cannot be assessed though a link between them to a discussion about how the expressive elements are deployed in performance provides meaning. The expressive elements are just a way of describing how sound is made by breaking the sound into small parts.
- f. These terms are used in past examination papers in a confusing way.

4. Interpretive decisions

- a. In the words ‘interpretive decisions’, I would expect that the listener would be expected to understand the thinking of the performer and the composer. Interpretation is an activity of the performer. It may be the activity of a composer if interpreting the work of another composer.
 - b. For a student listener to know about the performer’s interpretive decision write about it, at best, is guessing. There is no way to verify any assertion. Any student answer must be considered not wrong.
 - c. We understand that the creative process sometimes comes direct from the mind. The performance does not emerge out of taxonomy or from process involving analysis. The performer is immersed in sound and gives direct instructions to the body to make that sound.
 - d. For the aural and written examination, perhaps interpretive decisions should be discussed in terms of which expressive elements of music may have been utilized by the performer (or composer) interpreting a work. Interpretive decisions could be answered in terms of liberties or freedom taken by the performer.
5. The **expressive elements of music** include the following from Unit 3 & 4 Outcome 3 Key knowledge *SD p. 33 and 42*.
- a. idiomatic qualities and variations of instrumental tone colour
 - b. ways in which instrumental voices blend to create tone colour
 - c. the relative balance of different music parts/lines
 - d. the structural and expressive roles of instrumental voices within the texture of the work
 - e. use of articulation, ornamentation/embellishment (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic), dynamic range and shape, phrasing and tempo choices
6. The **expressive elements of music** could be thought as the elements of music that a performer can adjust whilst still acknowledging the way the elements of music we used by the composer or creator. Particularly in contemporary popular styles and genre including jazz, the use of these expressive elements of music provides the individuality and interest. These may include the following.
- a. Tempo and beat: recognizing the performer’s subtle tempo changes which may not be notated in the sheet music notation such as
 - i. Subtle change in tempo of a section different to that marked in the score, including setting a tempo slightly fast or slower;

- ii. Rubato or alterations of the tempo within the bar;
- iii. Adding or exaggerating changes in tempo such as ritardando, rallentando, accelerando;
- iv. Forward drive: adding or taking away the drive or forward momentum in the pulse;
- v. Placing the beat: sitting right on top or the beat, anticipating the beat or lagging behind the beat as a deliberate technique;
- b. Pitch: the performer changing the pitch deliberately rather than accidentally. These are usually not notated in sheet music.
 - i. Out of tune or singing in a different temperament to well-tempered tuning (though Auto Tune can enable this level of accuracy);
 - ii. Singing the climax note sharp to add to the dramatic effect;
 - iii. Singing a climax note flat to add to the darkness of the character;
- c. Dynamics: subtle changes or levels of dynamics
 - i. How loud is loud? How soft is soft? Fortunately there is no scientifically measured level for dynamics markings when interpreting notated sheet music. Dynamic markings should be considered relative;
 - ii. Print music usually has 5 or 7 different levels of dynamics. An artistic performer could have well over 50 different levels. For example, two fortes should not be performed the same in the performance of Romantic music;
 - iii. A brave student may change the printed dynamic level in performance. However, the original notated sheet music may be inaccurate or the modern conventions of performance may more informed in modern performance contexts including modern instruments.
 - iv. Accents: see under the subheading Articulation.
- d. Articulation: how short or long a note is actually.
 - i. Some musicians regard a staccato as being half the value of the printed note. Other musicians define staccato as being a detached note from the next.
 - ii. Often accents are included in this category, though it could be also in dynamics.
 - 1. > the arrow head accent usually means more weight, though in contemporary styles this also mean to play very detached;
 - 2. ^ the hat accent is known as the strongest accent;
 - 3. *sfz* sforzando (though you may not distinguish this one from the above);
 - 4. *fp* forte piano – loud then suddenly soft. Sometimes meaning only to play with emphasis on the note then suddenly soft;
 - iii. Tenuto – hold for full value;
 - iv. Legato – join together. On a larger scale, the pattern of joining together note is phrasing;
 - v. A number of instrumental techniques create different articulations. Consist and continuous use of these result in musical texture. For example
 - 1. Guitar techniques – for example
 - a. Strumming
 - b. Finger Style
 - c. Hammer-on
 - d. more techniques *See Guitar Performance Techniques on Wikipedia*

2. Vocal techniques – go to the Tone section Onset and Decay below. *See endnote 2*
- e. Tone: variations of tone not indicated in the sheet music notation such as
 - i. Vibrato: changing tone colour by fluctuating pitch whilst sustaining a note:
 1. Use of vibrato: gradual onset through a longer notes is the most used with an increasing width;
 2. Depth of vibrato: usually the lower and deeper the pitch; the slower the wider the vibrato pitch;
 3. Speed of vibrato: fast or slow or changing;
 4. Used as a main technique for expression by vocalists, orchestral string players and some woodwind and brass players.
 - ii. Brighter and lighter tone, darker and heavier tone: choosing a sound that is complementary to the character being evoked;
 1. Singers can use these techniques *see endnote 2*
 - a. thin-fold (head voice)
 - b. thick-fold (chest voice)
 - c. aspirant quality
 - d. elongated quality
 - e. twang quality
 - f. belt quality;
 2. Change using electronic and materials technology results in variations of tone. Musicians who play these instruments easily recognize the modifications on hearing the sound.
 - a. The choice of acoustic, semi-acoustic and solid body guitars is essential for particular contemporary popular styles and genres;
 - b. The choice of thickness of the string on an electric stringed instruments results in different tones and characters;
 - c. The choice of electronic sound modifiers and instrument profilers. For example, wah-wah pedals, ring modulators, high pass filters, fuzz boxes, distortion boxes, echo, reverberation and many more. Each can be applied at different levels and missed with other sounds.
 3. Percussionists and drumkit players have much freedom about what type, size, and colour to play each percussion instrument.
 - a. Suspended crash cymbals come in sizes from 8" to 25";
 - b. Suspended crash cymbals may be ride, crash-ride or crash – each having an increasing richness in harmonics and longer sustain/power;
 - c. Thin or medium or thick resulting a range from bright to dark.
 - iii. Change the harmonics: as the note is approached or departed, the tone changes. Following are vocal techniques. *See endnote 2*.
 1. Onset techniques use by vocalist, ways of preceding the note
 - a. Aspirate onset
 - b. Simultaneous onset
 - c. Glottal onset
 - d. Flip onset
 - e. Creak onset – a 'dangerous' quality
 - f. Rumble onset – a 'dangerous' quality

- g. Constricted onset – a ‘dangerous’ quality
- 2. Decay or release of a note
 - a. Vibrato fade
 - b. Aspirate decay
 - c. Falling off the note
 - d. ‘Pushed’ release
 - e. ‘Compressed’ released
 - f. Gospel release
 - g. Creak decay
- iv. Phrase weight and placement: applying expressive elements of music in a phrase structure to create the structure.
- v. Breath: the tone is different when produced with a stronger air column
- vi. Diction: the vowel and the language of the lyrics, including the language accent, change the tone.

Endnotes

1. Gurney, E. (1880) *The Power of Sound*, London: Smith, Elder, & Co. see bibliography 2.
2. Soto-Morettini, D. (2006) *Popular Singing: a practical guide to Pop, Jazz, Blues, Rock, Country and Gospel*, A & C Black, London. Also see the Soto-Morettini Popular Singing summary document provided by the author on the VCE Conference download section on the aMuse website.
3. Wikipedia *Guitar Performance Techniques*

Bibliography

1. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2010) *Music VCE Study Design for 2011-16*
2. Gracyk, T., Kania, A. (Ed) (2011) *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*

MAPPING THE EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC IN GA3 AURAL AND WRITTEN EXAMINATION MUSIC VCE STUDY – Units 3 & 4 MUSIC PERFORMANCE

by Roland Yeung
22 February 2015

This document identifies questions in the end-of-year aural and written examination Graded Assessment 3 GA3 for VCE Music Performance in the Music VCE Study 2011-16 that addresses expression and the expressive elements of music.

Readers should always refer to the latest version of these documents from the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Board as there may be minor changes from year to year.

The text highlighted in blue and in bold are by the author and not the VCAA.
The text that has a grey background are copied from the VCAA document listed.

MAPPING IN THE EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Excerpts in grey are from the document Examination Specifications and Sample Questions of the VCAA and first posted at the beginning of 2011 at the VCAA website.

This version is labelled VCE Music Performance (Specifications and Sample – Version 2 – January 2012.

From: musicperf-samp—w.pdf

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/music/musicperf-samp-w.pdf>

EXCERPTS

VCE Music Performance 2011–16
Written examination – November
Examination Specifications and Sample Questions

SPECIFICATIONS SECTION B

Section B will examine the key knowledge and key skills for Outcome 3 of Units 3 and 4 that focus on analysis of excerpts of pre-recorded performances by Australians of works that were created after 1910 by Australian composers/songwriters.

Excerpts of two works will be presented in the examination, each with a separate question(s) requiring student to analyse ways in which selected **expressive elements of music have been interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes and create character in performance.**

Students will not be asked to compare excerpts.

Information on sourcing appropriate music excerpts to assist students in preparation for the examination is provided in the online Advice to teachers, Resources for Area of Study 3, Musicianship at <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies>.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following sample examination questions are indicative of the types of questions that may appear in an aural and written examination (GA3) for VCE Music Performance. They do not constitute a sample examination paper and not all question types will appear in a single examination.

SAMPLE QUESTION 29

The work is written for [name instruments]. (Additional information such as a quote from the performers or composer that is relevant to the question may also be included.)

Listen to the excerpt and identify how **tone colour and blend and balance of instrumental voices have contributed expressive outcomes**. In your response refer to at least two instrumental voices. 8 marks.

SAMPLE QUESTION 30

An excerpt of [work title], composed by [name] and performed by [name(s)] will be played four times. The work is written for [name instruments]. (Additional information such as a quote from the performers or composer that is relevant to the question may also be included.)

Listen to the excerpt and discuss how **the performer's(s') approach to shaping melody and rhythm contributes to creating character in the performance**. In your response refer to at least two instrumental parts. 8 marks.

SAMPLE QUESTION 31

An excerpt of [work title], composed by [name] and performed by [name(s)] will be played four times. The work is written for [name instruments]. (Additional information such as a quote from the performers or composer that is relevant to the question may also be included.)

- a. Listen to the excerpt and explain how at least two of the following **elements of music are used to contribute to expressiveness in the work**. 4 marks.
 - dynamic range
 - shape and phrasing
 - tone colour
 - tempo choice
- b. How have the interpretive decisions made contributed to the **character of the performance**? 4 marks.

MAPPING IN THE PAST EXAMINATION PAPERS 2011-13

For the purposes of this mapping exercise, excerpts from past examination papers associated with the current study design are studied.

This is the link to the Exams and Reports section of the VCAA website where electronic copies of the past VCE Music Performance Aural and Written Examination papers with the aural audio (but not the listening audio), and assessor reports.

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/music/exams.aspx>

The text highlighted in blue and in bold are by the author and not the VCAA.

The text that has a grey background are copied from the VCAA document listed.

2011 Question 15

Excerpt: *Down Down Down* created and performed by Flap!

First playing (0'53") – 2 minutes silence, Second playing playing (0'53") – 2 minutes silence,

Third playing (0'53") – 3 minutes silence.

Describe ways the **performers have interpreted expressive elements of music to create character in this performance**. 8 marks.

In your answer you may refer to the following.

- Tone colour
- Balance of music parts/lines
- Melodic/rhythmic ornamentation.

2011 Question 16

Excerpt: *elevator Music* by Graeme Koehne recorded by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

First playing (1'23") – 3 minutes silence, Second playing (1'23") – 3 minutes, Third playing (1'23") – 4 minutes silence,

Discuss how the **performers create a sense of excitement** in this excerpt.

In your answer you may refer to the following. 12 marks.

- Tone colour
- Blend of instrumental voices
- Dynamic range and shape
- Articulation
- Phrasing.

2012 Question 16

Work: 'The Village' from *The Moonfire*, by Boy and Bear, Island Records

First playing (1'35") – 2 minutes silence

Second playing (1'35") – 2 minutes silence

Third playing (1'35") – 3 minutes silence

- Describe how the **performers create character** in the vocal parts of this work. 5 marks
- Describe how the **performers create character** in the accompaniment of this work. 5 marks

2012 Question 17

Work: 'The Brumbies' from the soundtrack for *The Man from Snowy River*, composed by Bruce Rowland,

recorded at AAV Studios, Festival Records

First playing (2'08") – 3 minutes silence, Second playing (2'08") – 3 minutes silence

Third playing (2'08") – 4 minutes silence.

How do the **performers manipulate expressive elements to communicate tension** within this work? 10 marks

In your answer, refer to at least two of the following.

- articulation
- dynamic range
- tempo choices
- tone colour.

2013 Question 16 (8 marks)

Work: 'Big Trapeze' (excerpt)

Artist: The Tiger and Me

Track from the album: *From a Liar to a Thief* (ABC Music)

First playing (1'44") – 2 minutes silence, Second playing (1'44") – 2 minutes silence, Third playing (1'44") – 3 minutes silence.

Describe the interpretative decisions the **two vocalists** have made to achieve an **expressive outcome** in the performance of this excerpt.

2013 Question 17 (12 marks)

Work: Trilogy, movement 3 (excerpt)

Composer: don Banks

Track from the album: *Toward the Shining Light: orchestral works by Conyngham, Broadstock and Banks* (ABC Classics)

First playing (2'08") – 3 minutes silence, Second playing (2'08") – 3 minutes silence, Third playing (2'08") – 4 minutes silence.

Analyse ways in which **expressive elements of music are used** in this excerpt.

In your answer you must refer to at least **two** of the following.

- tone colour
- blend of instruments
- articulation
- dynamics.

COMMENTS ON PAST EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

by Roland Yeung

The Past Examination Questions provide further clarity on the particular area of study this paper is focussed – the expressive elements of music.

Where does the Expressive Elements Exist?

1. This is a question of ontology. The expressive elements of music can be referenced to the composer and world he/she lives (or lived) in, the composition, the performer and the world he/she/they lives (or lived in) and the listener whose reference point is the world they know.
2. The listener, the student, listens to a pre-recorded work.
3. In the main, the question directs the student to comment on what the performers do, though some questions focus the attention on the work, the composition.
4. In most contemporary styles and genres, what the performer has done is where the conversation about expression resides. This is often called “performers showing their passion”. It is all about the moment and today, with less regard to authentic performance.
5. In the classical art music styles and genres, the composer or creator is the focal point with optional scores to verify what was intended. The performer has less freedom once the composer is acknowledged in performance. This is often called interpretation and has high regard for authenticity and modern day conventions. Any individual’s personal interpretation always acknowledges the other two dimensions of interpretation in a respectful way.
6. These co-exist in our world of music performance, and the VCE assessment process. I believe the VCE process endeavours to accommodate both in a fair, consistent and justifiable way. It is a clear point of tension for assessors, teachers, students and listeners.

What is the scope of the student response?

1. The student, in the end-of-year examination, is required to listen to three playings of one excerpt spanning between about 11 to 14 minutes and write a response.
2. The marks allocated range between 5 – 12 marks for each question or sub-question.
3. Some times two separate sub-questions are asked for the same three playings of the excerpt. Students should allocate their time proportionately for each excerpt.
4. Most students should use a dot point written response with the use of subheadings matching those in the question. The risk of writing in prose is that a sophisticated sentence may not provide enough detail as two crisp answers with contrasting information.

What are the Expressive Elements of Music?

1. The question may specify a range of expressive elements of music where the student has to write about all that contribute to expressive outcomes.
2. Other questions may invite the student to select one or two from the list.
3. To ensure the student is prepared for a specific element in a question, a minimum of three expressive elements of music should be well known in a variety of music styles and genres of Australian music after 2010. *See Music VCE SD page 47, Sample Questions 2011 Section B page 5*
4. The expressive elements of music used in the sample questions and past examinations 2011-2014 are as follows. The source year and question is listed alongside in italics.
 - a. Articulation, *2011Q16, 2012Q17*
 - b. Balance of music parts/lines *2011Q15*

- c. Blend and Balance *SQ29, 2011Q16, 2014Q17*
 - d. Dynamic range *SQ31, 2011Q16, 2012Q17, 2014Q17*
 - e. Melodic/rhythmic ornamentation *2011Q15*
 - f. Shape melody and rhythm *SQ30*
 - g. Shape and phrasing *SQ31, 2011Q16, 2014Q17*
 - h. Tone colour *SQ29, 2011Q15, 2011Q16, 2012Q17, 2014Q17*
 - i. Tempo choice *SQ31, 2012Q17, 2014Q17*
5. This list is not exclusive. Often the stem refers to “including”. The VCAA documents studied here do not clarify the full list of what should be studied in case it is listed for student response in an examination.

What are the questions that do not list the Expressive Elements of Music?

1. Some questions do not list any specific expressive elements of music. In this case, the choice is open to the student.
2. The student would choose to discuss any aspect of the music heard that could be defined as an expressive element of music.
3. The following questions from past examinations, I think, invites students to use any expressive elements of music they think relevant. In these questions, there is no further listing of suitable expressive elements of music, nor is the number needed to be addressed.
 - a. Describe ways the performers have interpreted expressive elements of music to create character in this performance *2011Q15*
 - b. Discuss how the performer creates a sense of excitement in this excerpt *2011Q16*
 - c. Describe how the performers create character ... *2012Q16*
 - d. Describe the interpretative decisions the two vocalists have made to achieve an expressive outcome...*2013Q16*
 - e. Explain how the vocal and instrumental line create mood and character in this excerpt *2014Q16*
4. The expressive elements of music that needs to be studied have to spring from works chosen in the school’s course. The study design and examination specifications are silent as to what choice of music could be examined, as long as it was created after 1910.

What styles and genres should be chosen to study?

1. All the VCAA documents should be studied to look for details of the range of works that should be studied. The range of works will provide students with the opportunities to develop their vocabulary to describe and discuss how the expressive elements of music are used in each work.
2. The teacher should attend any opportunity to hear the Chief Assessor and Setter of the Aural and Written Examination for Units 3 & 4 Music Performance, Music VCE study.