Music 2 and Extension Performance Transcript

(Duration:14 minutes 43 seconds]

[Didgeridoos playing in background]

We acknowledge the first Australians as the traditional custodians of the continent, whose culture is the oldest living culture in human history. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and we respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people here today. They share the memories, traditions and hopes of the traditional ancestors with the new generations, today and in the future. We would also like to thank them for looking after this land for thousands of years.

[Presenters: Emily Irvine, Sydney Girls High School and John Ockwell, Fort Street High School]

Emily: Hello and welcome to this short HSC revision film. Today, we're going to go through your performance exam, including giving you some sight singing tips. So if you're doing Music 2, you have to do at least one performance and that's your core performance. As well as that core performance is your sight singing. So those two elements go together. So we're going to talk about performance first, core and elective. So that's if you choose to do more performance in two unit.

John: So straight away in your core performance, it's five minutes in duration and it's 10 minutes for the elective that you might choose. In that five minutes, that's the maximum. If you have a piece that's a little bit shorter, that's okay, but not very, very short. The examiner still need to be able to see what you can actually do on your instrument. And of course in the elective, it has to be representative of your additional topic, whatever that might be. And certainly, the mandatory topic, music of the last 25 years with an Australian focus.

Now for 2020, no page turners are allowed. So you'll need to keep things in either in memory or do them as lots of sheets across the piano so that you don't turn the pages. The very important things that you need to do is this, also for 2020, you don't have to play with an accompanist, but always use an accompanist, the relationship is incredibly important and it does make the music sound better. You don't have to but for 2020, you can play with an accompanist if you wish.

[Slide reads:

Performance core (15 marks) and Elective (15 marks)

Assessment criteria, Candidates will be assessed on their musical effectiveness through:

* Demonstration of technical skills
* Stylistic interpretation of the chosen repertoire
* Sense of musical expression and sensitivity to the chosen repertoire
* Demonstration of solo and/or ensemble techniques ]

I would offer this word of advice for you, play in front of lots of people. So your friends, certainly your family and you may even want to do some busking and get used to the idea of listening to your own sound. Practice in your exam room as well. So the room at the school, where the HSC will take place, see if you can get in there to actually practice and get used to listening to your own sound, because if you like the sound you make, you'll want to practice a little bit more. And on the day of the exam, find a very quiet place to warm up. If you can, in the back of a classroom or something like this and one of the warm up rooms that your teacher will organize for you.

The one big thing that you've got to realize everybody, is that the examiners are there to give you the best possible mark. They're not there to make you feel nervous and so we want to make sure that you give us your best performance.

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Sight singing (5 marks)

Assessment criteria: Candidates will be assessed on how well they demonstrate aural awareness to accurately perform pitch and rhythm.]

Emily: Okay, so the other part of the core performance is your sight singing exam. So for your sight singing exam, you get two minutes to practice in the room. Interestingly, lots of students don't realize that they can choose when to do their sight singing and this is a great thing for you and your teacher to prepare ahead of time. Decide if you want to do it first up before you play your core piece and your elective pieces if you're also doing elective for two unit, or if you want to do at the end or somewhere in between. So it's up to you where you do that sight singing exam so choose with your teacher ahead of time. Have a think about where you think it's going to work for you to do that exam.

So when you start, as I said, you've got two minutes. They'll give you a piece of paper with the sight singing [image of music sheet on screen]. It's like a little folk song on a piece of paper and they actually give it to you in the treble clef and the bass clef. So you can choose if you're more comfortable reading in the bass clef. Maybe you're a trombone player, a cellist. If you're more comfortable reading in the bass clef, then you can do your sight singing exam from that piece of paper. You could be a soprano that you could sing it up in a different octave, but if you're more comfortable reading, then choose the clef that you like to read from.

[Slide shows an example tonic chord and starting note ]

So the marker will go over to the piano or a keyboard and they will play for you a tonic chord and a starting note. So the starting note might be the tonic or it might not. So I have chosen a past sight singing exam to share with you today and we can see that the tonic chord and the starting note are in E minor. Yep, so you'll hear that at the beginning and then you got two minutes to practice.

So you can choose to sing it to scale degree numbers to solfege or you can sing the lyrics or you can just sing ♪ Da da da da da ♪ You can just pick a syllable to sing it. Whatever you're comfortable with is fine. The examiners are checking your pitch and rhythm accuracy. I recommend that you choose what your preference is ahead of time and you should practice that way leading up to the exam. During your two minutes, I would start by establishing the key. So they're going to play that chord for you and you want to hear it in your head and then straightaway sing it out loud. ♪ Pa pa pa pa pa ♪ ♪ One, two, three, four, five, one, seven, one ♪ ♪ La da da da da da la la daam ♪ That's what you should do, feel it in your body, feel it in your voice so that you can spend the two minutes and you're going to hopefully stay in that key.

Once you've done that, I think it's really good to keep a beat during the two minutes. So if you are keeping a steady beat, it's really going to help avoid making some silly rhythmic errors or accidentally dropping a beat somewhere while you're practicing. This might sound obvious, but sing out loud. Don't practice in your head for those two minutes. The markers aren't marking those two minutes, they're your practice time and you're allowed to use them. So people who sing out loud tend to do better on these exams so don't be shy. Use those two minutes and sing out loud.

During your two minutes as well as singing through the tune, it's also a good idea to just repeat, hone in on practice any tricky intervals or any tricky rhythms. The markers do like to put in a couple of tricky intervals or a tricky rhythm somewhere in there. So find where those tricky bits are and just repeat them a few times.

So my main takeaways for sight singing are, decide when in your program, you're going to do your sight singing and decide ahead of time with your teacher. During the two minutes, sing out loud and keep a steady beat. And then lastly, have a plan for how you'll approach your sight singing and practice it that way. So this means you might sing the tonic. ♪ Ba ♪ And then sing up and down. ♪ Ba da da da da da da ♪ Then you might start your beading pattern or tapping on your thigh while you go through it. So whatever your routine is going to be, plan that practice that way ahead of time so that when you're in the room, you're just doing your usual sight singing routine. Good luck.

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Marking guidelines – Solo performance – Assessment Criteria

Candidates will be assessed on their musical effectiveness through:

* Musical sophistication and sensitivity
* Demonstration of technical skills
* Stylistic interpretation of chosen repertoire
* Sense of personal expression and personal interpretation of the chosen repertoire
* Understanding of solo performance techniques ]

John: So this is about the extension music elective. And if you choose to performance in your extension, for 2020, there are only two pieces. Normally there would be three and the third of them is a group piece, but that's not for 2020, thanks to COVID. Generally speaking, the marking criteria are a little different. It's a little different for the extension. We're looking for musical sophistication and great sensitivity. And as almost like a takeaway from here, you can think about this as an A box in two unit is a B box in extension. It's marked by the same markers on the same day, but hopefully you'll be able to separate the two. Your teachers will organize you to do your two unit material and then your extension material at another time during the day.

The interesting thing about that is, if you're a brass player, you'll need to warm up and warm down twice, once for your two unit material, and then your extension material later on in the day. And as I've just mentioned, there's only two pieces for 2020. When we get into 2021, we'll be back to three pieces but for 2020 only two pieces and each of those pieces has then been extended as far as the marking is concerned to cover the 50 marks for the extension component.

Now let's talk about your ensemble for next year when you get there, make sure that your ensemble arrive before time. You don't want to be panicking when the arrival of the late cellist and things like this. So make sure that you're in contact with your ensemble on the day and leading up to the day, of course. And the other thing is if you can get together with your ensemble as all as many times as you possibly can because what the markers are looking at in that ensemble performance is that they're trying to find how well you lead this ensemble. How well your influence for the rest of them is there and it needs to be somewhat organic. It's not just a question of going and leading in with your head and saying, is it. It's a question of knowing the music backwards and not just your part, everyone's part so that you can have some sort of positive effect on the rest of the group. And of course, that also carries over into the two unit component as well for your ensemble skills, even though you'll be working with just an accompanist and it was socially distanced, of course. You will still need to have this rapport that you get with working with this person.

Now in the rehearsals leading up to your exam, experiment with the positioning. Now this is very, very important because sometimes you might want to stand in the bay of the piano. You're a trombonist or a cellist, you might want to sit there. A violinist sometimes might want to sit and stand a little bit closer to the piano player. Well, of course, that can't happen in 2020. In 2021, yes, of course it can, but experiment with these positions. And that also extends over to the ensemble performance as well, try different positionings so that the examiners can see that you are taking control of this particular ensemble. So whether you want to be on the extreme outside, whether you want to be in the middle of the ensemble, et cetera, for 2021.

Now the main takeaways for this, of course, leading up to the exam, be prepared. You need to know your music very well and pay attention to the time constraints. So in the time constraints for extension, of course, under normal circumstances, it's 20 minutes for those three pieces. In 2020, there are only two pieces and it is a total time of 15 minutes that NESA has decided will be the time limit for extension this year. And I would suggest as well and I think a lot of our music teachers and your own teachers will suggest as well, that you need to perform for other people as well. See if you can do it in an assembly, see if you can do it for your class and these extension performances will need to be of the top calibre, the top calibre. And I would suggest you need to perform to the markers because even though the audience is only three people, you must still perform and we need to see the way you are transmitting the emotion of that performance. Understand well, it's not like the AMEB. The people on the other side of the desk who are marking you may not play your instrument and they want to see how well you can communicate what the composer's intentions were in this particular piece. And so it's very, very important for you to lead the ensemble and indeed, to take control of the entire thing when you are in the performance situation here, including balance. So you'll need to ask a friend out to listen to you play and then record yourselves, videotape yourselves and watch back so that you can work out the best place to stand so that the examiners can hear your sound correctly.

So all the best of luck folks and I know you'll have a marvellous time. It's the wonderful thing to be able to perform for these examinations and the best of luck and I hope things go well for you.

(dramatic music)

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