# Music 2 - Musicology and aural skills transcript

(Duration 22minutes 8 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]

John: Hello, and welcome to this short HSC revision film. Today we're going to give you some tips on the Music 2 written paper.

Emily: The Music 2 written paper goes for about an hour and a half. Not exactly though, because it depends on the length of the music excerpts. So today, we're going to take you through the four sections of that exam and give you some tips on each one.

John: We're going to be using the 2018 Music 2 paper as our guide. So it might be handy if you went and got it from the NESA website and read along with it while watching the film.

So, question one. Question one normally has some short answer, answer questions in it. However, in the 2018 paper, it also contained melodic dictation. Question one, part one or part A was, “Describe the way instruments are used in this excerpt”. Now, you need to identify the instruments correctly. So obviously, the way to prepare for that in all this is to listen very, very widely to what certain instruments will sound like in the context. Do some very wide listening leading up to your, the actual exam in term four. And you've got to refer to the roles and use the concepts of music when you're talking about those particular things, like pitch, rhythm, etcetera. What is it a rhythmic role? Is that a role that is based in melody or harmony? Is it a structural role somehow, etcetera.

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Question 1 (8 marks) 1b (5 marks)

“Notate the pitch and rhythm of the oboe melody on the staves provided”]

And also, in this particular part of the examination, there was an oral dictation. And this dictation, what you'll need to do is start to learn to remember the melody as you are going through with this particular question. It'll be played six times for you, generally speaking, you need to, I would always offer my students the tip that if they conduct themselves through it in a very simple pattern for whatever the tempo of the music is. Whether it be six sight in a two in the bar, or whether it be a slow four-four, or a slow three-four so that you can find out where the actual rhythmic elements are.

Now, similarly, you could do the same sort of thing in your citing. It's exactly the same sort of procedure except done as far as writing of the music is concerned. But remembering that phrase, remembering the phrase means that you can over the course of the time when you have some, the two minutes to actually write the piece I think or the one minute, with between each playing, you use that time to slow down in your own mind the dictation and get it down nice and accurately. [Image of staves displayed on screen] But then if you click the pulse you'll be able to get the rhythm down fairly accurately as well. Now, don't forget that generally speaking, the rhythm is half the marks, it'll only be worth five marks. And we would suggest that in all of these, the rhythm is very, very important to get down first. Get that rhythm down first and then get a rough shape of this and then pretty much home and hosed. So that will look after question 1.

And the other thing to mention as well is, and this may sound obvious but on the day, take in to the examination room, a pencil and eraser, and a black pen. I know that sounds crazy, but you'll need to take those in so that in the dictation you can correct yourself. And making sure that the finished product is as accurate as it possibly can be.

Emily: Question two, question two in the 2018 paper is worth eight marks. And those marks are, two marks, two marks and three marks. So each small part, there are three parts in this question, and only worth two or three marks each. So, when you're preparing for your exam, when you're in the room, look at how many marks each question are worth, so that you can decide how much time to spend on each question. So 2 a, the question is, “outline the structure used in this excerpt”. So we need to think they're asking us to outline something. So this is sort of a timeline isn't? Outline, give the main idea about what's happening in what order. And then structure, so we've gotta think about form. So in short excerpts. So this is an audio question. In short excerpts, we often can't hear big structural forms, like sonata form, or if it's a rondo, we might only get a small bit of audio. So it's often the right thing to do to use letters like A, B, A, C, when we're describing what we're hearing. And then you want to go into detail. So you want to say, if there's an A section, what happens in that opening section? What instruments do you hear? Is there a melody? How is it presented? By which instrument or in which voice? And then do the same for the preceding sections. It's only worth two marks. So don't spend too much time on this first section.

Then 2 b, so 2 b is worth three marks. So a little more. “Describe the composer's use of texture in this excerpt. In your answer, make specific reference to the score” So the people who made this exam are being kind to us by reminding us to make reference to the score. We always need to reference the music. Sometimes it's just audio we're given sometimes we also get a score. But you always should, even if they don't remind us to do so, we should always reference the audio or the score.

So, describe the composer's use of texture in this excerpt. So there's the word describe, and then there's texture. So in a texture question, I advise that you always try to use your phonic words. So that's monophonic, homophonic, polyphonic or heterophonic. And once you've used one of those four words, or their other variations of them as well that you and your teachers might explore. You also should then describe what's happening in the texture using adjectives like thick or thin or sparse or dense. And there might be changes in the texture. So this is a three mark question. You need to identify what phonic word or words you should use, whether the texture stays the same or changes, and then describe what's happening within those layers of sound.

Then the last bit of question two, 2 c is also worth three marks. And the question is, explain how variety is used in this excerpt. In your answer, make specific reference to the score. So again, thank you to the people making this exam for reminding us to reference the music. I'm going to take this moment to remind you that the NESA website has a glossary of these sorts of terms like explain, describe, outline, analyse, and all of your questions in your exam will have one of these words. Now we all know what describe means or explain means, but sometimes it can be good to just look at that glossary and remind yourself, what is the marker really asking me to do? So the NESA glossary says that explain means relate cause and effect, make the relationship between things evident, provide why and or how. So if we have to relate cause and effect, we're going to be looking at things that make, that end up with variety. Yeah, because this is a variety question. So we're looking for musical variety. So some things that might make musical variety could be, a change in texture, maybe there was a thin solo monophonic texture, and then a thick homophonic texture. Or variety could be achieved through soft dynamics that are then loud. So you're going to be listening for those sorts of things. Remember, it's only worth three marks. So you want to be concise, clear, and show the markers that you're hearing these things in the music, and then tell them what you heard.

Question three, question there in the 2018 paper that we're using as our guide today is worth nine marks, and it's got two sub questions in it, 3 a and 3 b. 3 a is worth three marks. So very similar to the little questions in section two of the exam. But as the paper goes on, you might notice that the questions are asking for a little more depth. So the first part of 3 a is “how is balanced created in this excerpt? In your answer, make reference to the score.” So again, thank you markers for reminding us to reference the music. Always reference what you can hear by saying, in the beginning of the excerpt, the violin does x or the score, at bar 77 cellos are x. Always tell a marker where you're referring to in the music.

So question 3 is about Carl Vine's Canzona which is a string orchestra piece. And it's asking us about balance, how is balance created? So things we might listen for balance. So this isn't texture, pitch, structure. It's not a straight music concepts question. It's asking you to refer to any concepts of music that you like, that you think create musical balance. So you need to think in the moment what is musical balance? So you're thinking about, how is equilibrium? How is symmetry? How is that sort of beauty created? That harmonious beauty created aesthetically by the composer. So some things that come to mind might be even phrase lengths. So the piece might have some eight bar phrases. Perhaps some contrary motion between voices. You might have a violin part that is rising and a cello part that is descending. And that might create a nice sense of balance. So you need to use your own insight into what you think creates balance when you're answering this question. And just make sure that you use as much music terminology as you can. Cram in those music terms. Things like contrary motion, when you're answering the question.

So 2 b, I mean, 3 b sorry, 3 b is a six mark question. So this is the most marks of a question so far in the paper. So the melodic dictation was five marks, and now this is six. So you know that you need to spend a little more time on this question and go into a little bit more depth. And that's why you might notice this question starts with the word analyse. The question is “analyse the musical features in this excerpt. In your answer make reference to the score.” So NESA's glossary definition of analyse is identify components and the relationships between them, draw out and relate implications. So, we need to think about analyse, and we need to think about musical features. That's the other part of the question. So a musical feature is just any prominent or notable musical idea that's presented in the piece. So with this question, you want to think about what are the main ideas in this excerpt? Is there a particular rhythmic motif that gets developed and explored throughout the excerpt? Is there a melody that is maybe only made of a few pitches that gets expanded and changed throughout the excerpt? You need to make a substantial contribution with this question. You need to outline as many important musical details as you can and use music terminology.

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Question 4 (10 marks)

“Explain how composers treat the concepts of music to create a particular style. In your response refer to TWO works from the mandatory topic, Music of the last 25 years (Australian focus)”]

John: Now question 4 in the paper is always worth 10 marks, and it's your chance to really show the markers what you know about music. And the question always asks you to reference pieces that you've studied with your teacher throughout the year. From the mandatory topic, Music of the last 25 years, with Australian focus or indeed, but not always, the additional topic, which could have been 1900 to 1945 or romantic music etcetera. And you will be asked to do, to write, in a fairly, I suppose, mature way about the whole of what you've studied. And we're looking, generally speaking, we're looking for about three pages of writing. Now, you've only got 20 minutes to do this. Generally speaking, you will need to allocate your time very, very well.

A small tip is that in the five minute reading time that you have at the beginning of the paper, just think about how you're going to plan that time to write the essay. The other thing is this, if you are particularly good at the oral dictation, or you've answered the other questions quickly, then whip over to question four and have a bit of a look at structuring something like this in the time waiting for the for the CD to pass through, or the recording to pass through.

Sometimes you'll always need to write, not sometimes, always you'll need to write clear and concise quotes to backup your own particular ideas and your responses to the question. This year's quote of the question, rather for 2018. “Explain how composers treat the concepts of music to create a particular style”. So when you look across the concepts of music, those six concepts starting with rhythm and going to duration, as far as the duration, and then going to pitch and then going to the various other ones. What you can do is within those, you might like to just structure your essay around that. And then think, how does the composer create a style within this? Now Em, do you think that style is very important as far as the composer is concerned, or are they writing just the way they think, and then the musicologist observes the style?

Emily: I think a lot of musicologists would say that, in your own lifetime, it's very hard to identify style. It needs a bit time.

John: It needs a bit of time, that's right, yes.

Emily: But I think this is a really interesting question, because there are so many ways you could answer this question four. Particular style, you could talk about just the composer's own personal style. Or you could talk about how their style is informed by Classical music or by Baroque. And how they combine some contemporary ideas with some of the past. So there's lots of different ways you could answer this.

John: Yes, and so in all the discussions about this, about your pieces during the year, it's quite a wise idea just to look and see, this would be a good quote from my particular, this particular piece. A good quote to talk about rhythm. This is a particularly good quote to talk about pitch, which would be very, very handy to do during the essay. You build up a little dossier of quotes, maybe five, I don't know, five quotes, so that you can cover all of those particular things. Now, in addition to this, we want to see, the markers really want to see what you understand about the concepts of music and how they're manipulated in the compositional style of things. What I would suggest you do is once the quotes have been done, and you might want to write those quotes out very quickly, straightaway. You'll always be given some manuscript paper at the end of the examination paper to actually get these quotes down. So maybe you could get those quotes down the very first thing you do, and then in all in that time, think about the structure of your essay how you're going to do this. Don't spend forever thinking about a topic sentence and things like this because you've only got 20 minutes. And that can go very, very quickly when you've organized your time and suddenly you start to write.

Now, in some papers, they will say to, you may not use any of the modern works or the works of the last 25 years that are mentioned in the paper. So for example in this paper, you couldn't refer to the Carl Vine Canzona question three to back up your statements. But read the question carefully because in some HSC papers, that's not said. You may want to use some of the musical works that are actually in the paper, if you're allowed to.

So the take home and the takeaway things from this particular part of the examination is, be precise and be concise. Try to get your points out quickly. If you run out of time, simply put dot points down at the end. Don't leave yourself short of time, because I can tell you from experience and also from teaching a lot of kids who write like at the beginning, and then they will run out of time. Get your points down towards the end of this. And the thing to do is, generally speaking, throughout the paper, organize your own time for what the question is worth. And let that help you allocate your exam time and practice past papers to give you the idea of how you do things. Now, practicing past papers is like practicing the piano, practicing the violin, cello, clarinet, saxophone, whatever. You are getting experience at doing these things. If you're watching this and you're in year 11, don't wait till the year 12 to start doing it. Jump onto it and see whether you can do. All these papers are online and you are able to see a lot of what is going on and have that examination experience so that it's not a big shock when you get to it in year 12.

Be concise and as Em said before cram your answers full of musical terms, and let the examining panel or the marker, see what about music. And always reference. We've said it time and time again, reference, reference, reference. Now, understand this, in the essay, the examiners haven't got the score as well in front of them, they've only got your essay. So you might want to reference by saying, as Em pointed out for question three, in the beginning of the piece so and so happens. In the middle of the piece, towards the end of the piece, at the coda, At all sorts of things, ways of referencing. We haven't got bar numbers, the luxury of bar numbers, you'll have to sort of say yes, at the beginning of this piece by Paul Stanhope, a certain section occurs where the clarinets are playing in inverted positions here. So and then you can refer to it. So reference, reference, reference.

Those are three take aways, be concise, cram your answers full of music, look at the structure of the paper and how much each question is worth, organize your time and reference like crazy.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best with your HSC, not just in music but in everything. And in the music paper, enjoy it and particularly the performances which will happen very, very quickly in term three of course. So on behalf of Em and I, good luck.

Emily: Best of luck with your preparation.

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