**Preparing Students for Performance**

A VCE Instrumental Teacher’s Guide

Marianne Rigby-Black & Ingrid Martin

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**Timeline & Planning**

We need to know:

* What we are required to do
* When we are requried to do it

**What *you* need from your classroom teacher**

Unit 1-4:

* Technical SAC dates
* Unit Recital dates
* Time expectations for Unit 1 & 2 recitals
* How often they perform in class - when, where, format

If using school-based accompanists:

* Official accompanist list (if applicable)
* Times/days they are available to rehearse
* How many rehearsals are included in school arrangement

Unit 4:

* Practice recital dates (sometimes in school holidays)
* Final Examination date (released in Term 3)

**What you need to create & discuss**

* Outside of school performances
* In lesson practice performances
* At home performances
* Listening/performance attendance opportunities

**Building A Program - Unit 1 & 2**

**What the student needs:**

* Set list of works (VCAA website)
* YouTube
* Sheet Music (paper or digital)

**What you need:**

* To know the set list of works - challenges, benefits
* To know the student :)

**Repertoire Choice - Units 1 to 2**

* Go outside the list while you can, be creative, individualise it
* What does the student want to play?

Make it student-led.

Get them to listen, research, look at the pieces across the list.

* Am I expanding their knowledge?

Expose them to styles/genres beyond their current knowledge

* Does this collection of pieces have variety and interest?

Cover a variety of styles, time periods, characters, techniques, un/accompanied, level of difficulty, tempi etc. Prepare the student for the Unit 3&4 requirements.

* Is it achievable?

Guide students to make assessments about level of difficulty/realistic within timeframe

80/20 rule - 80% of pieces/a piece technically achievable early on, so you can work on interpretation / 20% challenging, will take time to build skills

* How will their abilities grow over time?

Consider developmental pathway - how their skills will develop over 2 year period

* What do you want to ‘save’ for the Final Recital?
* What pieces have they already played/performed from the list?
* Do we have extra/backup repertoire to avoid boredom and plan for the unexpected?

**The Final Recital Program - Units 3 & 4**

All of the above applies, plus...

**Duration**

The performance should be a maximum of 25 minutes from start to finish. There is no minimum time, however too short and you will not meet the requirements.

~18 minutes of music allows time for:

* Transitions between pieces
* Tuning/retuning
* Sips of water
* Accompanist entries/exits
* Set up changes/adjustments
* Cleaning/emptying instruments

Prepare more pieces from the list than will eventually be performed in the final recital.

Back up plans are always good.

**Requirements**

Refer to the Prescribed list of works for your voice/instrument about:

* Accompanied vs. unaccompanied
* Number of works
* Memorisation
* Twentieth century

Eg. Horn minimum requirements:

* 1x unaccompanied work
* 2x accompanied works
* 2x 20th/21st Century works
* Memorisation not required

*Students cannot repeat works being performed for Music Investigation & vice versa.*

**Structure**

Pragmatic considerations

* Stamina - where will tiring pieces go? Do you need a lighter piece before/after tiring ones?
* Challenge - where will challenging pieces go? Easy start then challenge? Get it out of the way first?

Artistic considerations

* Vary styles, dynamics and tempos - don’t put two similar pieces together
* Where will the un/accompanied works be? (accompanists must exit the room for unaccompanied works)
* How do you want the audience to feel at the very start? ‘Wow!’, ‘oh!’, ‘ahh’, ‘oooh!’...
* How to you want the audience to feel at the end of the last piece?

Split these pieces in two for Unit 3 & Unit 4

* Unit 3 - About 15 minutes
* Unit 4 - About 10 minutes
* Don’t leave the big challenge pieces until Unit 4 - want a few reps under the belt before the final recital
* Combine them all for final recital

**VCE Music - Timeline Planner**

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year level:\_\_\_\_ Unit:\_\_\_

Term:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Pieces being prepared**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Composer | Title | Requirements: Eg. un/accompanied, 20th century etc. |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |

**Calendar**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** | **Venue** | **Notes** |
|  | Technical SAC Info Due |  |  |
|  | Technical SAC |  |  |
|  | Accompanist Rehearsal |  |  |
|  | Accompanist Rehearsal |  |  |
|  | Practice Performances (at home) |  |  |
|  | Practice Performances (external) |  |  |
|  | Practice Performances (in lesson) |  |  |
|  | Recital |  |  |
|  | Recital |  |  |

**Crafting Your Best VCE Performance - Performance Plan & Checklist**

Full info: [VCAA Exam Specifications](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/music/musicperf-perfexam-specs-w.pdf)

Before the Day Checklist

* Performance outfit clean & ready
* Performance Program Sheet for examiners
* Student Advice Slip
* Photo ID
* Directions to exam venue timed & Google mapped
* Planned departure time from home (allowing plenty of time for delays, finding the room, warm up etc)

On the Day Checklist - Before You Leave Home

* Sheet Music
* Instrument - in good working order
* Performance Program Sheet for examiners
* Student Advice Slip
* Photo ID
* Mutes, cloths for mute placement
* Instrument Stands/tables etc.
* Towel for sweat
* Glass and/or water bottle
* Accompanist :) & their sheet music
* Electronic equipment - computers, speakers, amps, leads/batteries, etc
* Spares & Extras: valve oil, spare reeds, strings, leads, screwdrivers etc.

At home Warm Up

Time:



Outside the Room

Venue Warm Up



Instrument Preparation - water, rosin etc.

Mental Preparation



**Inside the Room - Running Sheet (Put on Music Stand)**

*Instructions can also be written at top & bottom of sheet music*

Walk In - style, how I will hold equipment

Greeting - style, volume, words

Hand Form to Examiners

Set up:

* You - positioning relative to accompanist/speaker/examiners
* Music stand(s) - visibility of you
* Music - on stand, in order
* Instrument(s) - empty out water etc., set up stands, mutes etc.
* Find place for water/glass
* Amps - directionality, levels & balance
* Backing track players - directionality, levels & balance

Tune with accompanist/tuner/backing track

[Examiners announce candidate number, time begins]

Signal accompanist I’m ready

Trigger word/s or images for piece 1: *Bold and daring*

Perform Piece 1: *Strauss Horn Concerto No. 1 - Movement 1*

Holding the silence

Face audience

Smile

Bow

Back announce Piece 1: *That was the first movement of Richard Strauss’ Horn Concerto No. 1. The next piece I’m going to play is the Bouree No. 1 from Bach’s third cello suite.*

Accompanist leaves room

Drink water

Empty out instrument

Trigger word/s or images for piece 2: Eg. *A young man wooing his love*

Perform Piece 2: *Bach Cello Suite No. 3 - Bouree*

Hold the silence

Face audience

Smile

Bow

Announce Piece 3 (accompanied)

Script: Eg. *The next piece we’re going to perform is Canto Serioso by Danish composer Carl Nielsen.*

Accompanist returns to room

Drink water

Empty out instrument

[Retune]

Trigger word/s or images for piece 3: *A deserted field at sunrise*

Perform Piece 2: *Nielsen Canto Serioso*

Holding the silence

Face audience

Smile

Bow

Etc.

**Self Evaluation: Questions for Teacher & Student**

We want students to:

* Develop a growth mindset
* Realistically and kindly assess their competence
* Build their library of successes
* Create a habit of praising competence
* Plan for future growth
* Overwrite negative self-talk
* Constantly reconnect to their musical, expressive intention

**I like, I wish, I wonder**

After the performance or watching a video (theirs or others’):

*I like…(eg. I liked the dynamic contrast in the B section)*

*I wish…(eg. I wish I had had more clarity in the semiquavers at letter S)*

*I wonder… (eg. I wonder how I could make the semiquavers at letter S clearer)*

These three sentence starters focus on:

* Training positive self evaluation as their first response to their playing
* Allowing space for what didn’t go as planned
* Imagining something new and different for the performance

**What did you notice?**

If you want a non-specific question that is non-judgemental.

Answers give you insight into where the student is focussing their attention.

***What did you do well?***

Before any negative comments are given ask this question. The goal is to train students to answer with specific, realistic positive comments connected to expressive outcomes and the audience experience.

Guide them to:

* Start the sentence with “I…” - self efficacy
* Be audience centric - not what they thought or concentrated on
* Identify what actually happened
* Be specific rather than generalising
* Connect it to musical intention - this will also help their written responses for Outcome 3 tasks in the classroom.

“I….[thing they did] and it created/contributed to/made a [character/expressive outcome]”

*I played really piano at bar 37 which created a hushed atmosphere.*

*I played with great tone at bar 54, which created a moment of beauty.*

*I played crisp articulation at bar 4, which created a sense of excitement.*

*I held the silence at bar 90, which created a dramatic moment.*

**Other great questions we can ask in lessons to encourage metacognition**

[from Griffin: *Learning Strategies for Musical Success, p.96*]

* Is what you’re doing working? Why? Why not?
* Can you explain what you are doing?
* What are you thinking?
* What goals would you like to set?
* What can you do to learn this thoroughly?

**Resources on Performance Science for Teachers & Students**

[Completing the Circle: Considerations for Change in the Performance of Music](https://www.amazon.com/Completing-Circle-Considerations-Change-Performance/dp/B00ZB11S9A) (book)

[Dialogue by Music](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxB0DvAi2-g) (Video, 7:30)

Bud Beyer, Emeritus Professor of Theatre, Northwestern University

[The Transformative Power of Classical Music](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9LCwI5iErE) TED Talk (Video, 20:30)

Benjamin Zander, Conductor, Author, Speaker

[How to Prepare for Performance](https://precinct.finearts-music.unimelb.edu.au/2018/06/13/how-to-prepare-for-peak-performance-for-musicians-and-non-musicians-alike/) (Video, 2:35)

Dr. Margaret Osborne, Lecturer in Music (Performance Science) & Psychology, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music

[Fearless Performance](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ko1pS9LeTg) TEDx Talk (Video, 10:35)

Jeff Nelsen, Professor of Horn, Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University;

Professional Horn Player, Canadian Brass

[Finding Mastery](https://findingmastery.net/) (Podcast)

* Michael Gervais, Performance psychologist; Performance coach, Seattle Seahawks  
  [Ariana Kukors](https://findingmastery.net/ariana-kukors/) (Olympic swimmer, on overcoming failure)
* [Valorie Kondos-Field](https://findingmastery.net/valorie-kondos-field/) (UCLA Gymnastics Coach)
* [Paul Assaiante](https://findingmastery.net/paul-assaiante/) (Coach of longest winning college sport team)
* [Minutes on Mastery](https://findingmastery.net/tag/minutes-on-mastery/) (3-5 minute excerpts on particular topics)

[Learning Strategies for Musical Success](https://www.amazon.com/Learning-Strategies-Musical-Success-Michael/dp/1481946730) & [Developing Musical Skill for Students](https://www.amazon.com/Developing-Musical-Skill-Michael-Griffin-ebook/dp/B01MS7H4LX) (books)

Michael Griffin

[My Lessons with Kumi: How I Learned to Perform with Confidence in Life & Work](https://www.amazon.com/My-Lessons-Kumi-Learned-Confidence/dp/0911226400) ([Excerpt](http://michaelcolgrass.com/images/workshops_workshops/MichaelColgrass_EXCERPT%20FROM%20KUMI.pdf))

Michael Colgrass, Pulitzer Prize Winning Composer, NLP Coach

**Oustanding, joyful performances you might not know (videos)**

[They Don’t Let You In the Opera](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2PBOAbdIcU) Kelli O’Hara (musical theatre vocal) 7:40

[Take the A Train](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFs7cyPmzxk) Wynton Marsalis & Lincoln Center Young Jazz All Stars & Michela Lerman (jazz instrumental, tap dancer) 18:00

[Scriabin Poeme de L’Extase (excerpt)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqVz7Y2k4YU) Kirill Petrenko & Berlin Philharmonic (classical) 2:42

[Jungle LIVE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpFdHub8XpY) Tash Sultana (contemporary guitar/vocal) 8:00

[Over the Rainbow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysu-C4OQ_Xw&start_radio=1&list=RDysu-C4OQ_Xw) Mandy Patinkin (contemporary vocal) 3:27

[Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-huNrHAou-E) Lady Gaga (contemporary vocal) 4:30