

GCE



Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report
Performing Arts

Summer Series 2023



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2023 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE PERFORMING ARTS

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Developing Skills and Repertoire

Internal Assessment Overview

- There are two internally assessed and externally moderated units: AS 1 and A2 1.
- Candidates have the opportunity to develop specialist knowledge, understanding and skills in either performance or production.
- Candidates choose one discipline, within either performance or production, to develop through AS and A2.
- Through AS 1, candidates develop their skills in the chosen discipline through application in a performance context.
- Through A2 1, candidates develop their understanding of how to find work in their chosen discipline through research, preparing and participating in an audition/presentation and interview, and compiling a promotional portfolio.
- Across both units, candidates investigate working methods and employment opportunities linked to industry practice, providing a sound basis for progression to further training and/or study.

Unit Overview

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to develop one discipline within Performing Arts (from either Performance or Production) and then apply this discipline in a performance context.

Candidates develop skills and repertoire through the exploration of two extracts working individually, and then in groups of between two and nine. The candidates choose the repertoire from a range of existing material including musical scores, set works and published extracts.

Candidates are required to produce a portfolio of work consisting of a summary of research and skills audit, a record of work, risk assessments, a recording of a performance or presentation, and an evaluation.

Candidates research their chosen discipline to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of professional practice. They research the skills required in their chosen discipline and then assess their current skill level and complete a skills audit. Candidates select an existing extract of repertoire from a preferred period of time, a specific practitioner or a particular style or genre to present individually. They research the social, cultural and historical context of the extract and develop an action plan, outlining strategies to improve their skill level in their first extract of repertoire. They keep a record of their skills development for the extract as they rehearse and practice the performance or develop the production materials, setting targets for improvement.

Candidates compile a record of work that shows evidence of their development as a performer or production worker. Their record should demonstrate a clear understanding of the preparatory work required for the performance or production of the extracts of repertoire. A risk assessment detailing health and safety issues relating to their chosen discipline will also be completed.

Candidates engage in ongoing self-evaluation and record their progress throughout, setting targets for improvement. Each candidate also evaluates the final outcome of one other candidate as part of their written evaluation. Candidates evaluate their own and others' contribution to the final performance, including analysis of aesthetic and technical quality, and the impact on the audience.

Administration

Performance disciplines continue to be the most popular disciplines and this year saw an increase in music candidates. A range of production disciplines are being offered across the cohort of entries. This year centres selected their own sample which had to include the highest and lowest candidates and a range in between. Most centres followed the administrative procedures correctly, submitting the correct number and range of samples, but in some cases the top and bottom candidates were missing which slowed down the moderation process. Centres are reminded to download the sample cover sheet from the e-moderation page on CCEA's website, which should be attached to the front of the coursework.

While there was a general improvement in terms of adhering to page limits and the required Arial 12 font, it is important to note that when candidates do not adhere to the rubric this impacts the fair application of the assessment criteria and therefore needs to be reflected by the teacher in the marks awarded. If work is not submitted by a candidate, then this should be reflected in the overall assessment outcome achieved for that particular objective.

Centres are also reminded to ensure that work is presented in the order of the specification, securely stapled with each page clearly labelled with the candidate's name and number, discipline and title of the section of work. The sample should be submitted in rank order.

In most centres, the teacher's annotation, both in the main body of candidates' work and in the summative comments, justified the rationale for the marks awarded. Those teachers that recorded comments on the e-Candidate Record Sheets provided clear insights into the marks awarded. Centres are reminded that it is best practice to include the mark or mark band with a summative comment at the end of each piece of assessment evidence.

In general, recordings submitted as assessment evidence for AO3 were well-organised with clearly labelled discrete folders for each candidate on the centre's USB. There were some instances of incorrect formatting or missing recordings which delayed the moderation process. Centres are reminded to check all recordings prior to submission and ensure that each candidate clearly states their name, candidate number and the stage of the performance/presentation at the start of each recording.

Key points to remember:

- Download the Sample Cover Sheet from the CCEA e-moderation webpage, ensure it is signed by the candidates, and attach to the candidates' portfolios prior to submission.
- Organise and submit the work in rank order.
- Complete eCRS comments for the sample referencing the assessment criteria, highlighting any specific areas related to the candidate's work and the application of the assessment criteria.
- All work should be annotated with a summative comment and a mark awarded for each section.
- All candidates need to be clearly identified to camera at the start of the final stage recording.
- Check recordings prior to submission and ensure all three stages are included on the USB and clearly organised by stage and candidate, not presented as one continuous recording.

AO1 - A Summary of Research and Skills Audit

There was an improved standard across the AO1 'Summary of Research' section, with candidates focusing on professional practice to support the development of their knowledge and understanding of the performing arts industry.

In Section 1 candidates covered a range of styles and genres and linked these closely to their discipline. However, centres are reminded to ensure that there is evidence of research which is clearly referenced with footnotes throughout the body of the work.

In Section 2, those candidates at the top end of the mark bands clearly explored all skills relevant to the chosen discipline as listed on pages 8–10 of the specification. These were defined briefly, and then explored and analysed through their research into professional contexts which was clearly referenced in their work. There was a development in production candidates' ability to link the learning outcomes listed in the specification with the skills required to realise them in practice. Whilst candidates may reference examples from screen, these should not outweigh examples from the stage as this is the medium in which candidates will be working throughout the specification. In a few cases candidates referenced their own work and centres are reminded that the examples should be drawn from research into professional practice to avoid an overlap with the Skills Audit.

Section 3 was generally the weakest section in AO1, possibly due to its omission in the previous series due to COVID-19 adaption arrangements. The advised approach is to consider how new technologies support the professional performer or production worker to promote themselves and prepare and perform for their role. Whilst technologies were clearly evidenced, they sometimes were not specifically relevant to the candidate's discipline, or they were not 'new'. Given the pivotal work done throughout the pandemic, utilising technologies to ensure that the public could continue to engage and enjoy performance work through lockdown, there is a wealth of examples that candidates can draw on to inform their work on this section. When exploring how to 'promote' themselves, work tended to replicate what is expected for section 1 in A2.1 and candidates focused too heavily on researching casting websites and agents. This became very lengthy and prevented candidates exploring 'prepare' and 'perform' with equal detail.

There were a variety of approaches to the Skills Audit. Candidates across the cohort clearly focused on the skills relevant for their discipline as listed on pages 8–10 of the specification. Skills Audits included clear evidence of experience and skills levels were clearly indicated, often by colour code or a ranking system. Most candidates submitted this in a table format, although prose was also used equally successfully by those candidates who gave detailed examples of their current skill level. Despite the gap in performance opportunities due to COVID 19, it was evident that candidates were able to draw on other experiences and link these clearly to the skills required in their discipline. It is good practice for candidates to conclude their Skills Audit with a summative concluding statement on the key skills they want to focus on developing in this unit and why.

Key Points to consider:

- This section requires research into professional practice in the chosen discipline. Examples should come from a range of sources, performances, case studies, interviews, and insights from practitioners.
- Sources should be clearly referenced in the body of work with footnotes.

A02 - A Record of Work

Centres should be congratulated on the range and variety of repertoire offered to candidates which enabled them to develop their acquisition of skills in contrasting styles and genres.

Action Plans

Whilst Action Plans included all the relevant information in an appropriate format, there was often a lack of specific reference to the particular demands of the extract. Reference to working with others needed to be explicitly drawn out for Extract 2. There was often a lot of similar content between the Action Plans for Extract 1 and 2, especially for Production candidates, which was rarely reflected in the marks awarded. The focus of work on existing repertoire is on developing contrasting skills through practical work on Extract 1 and Extract 2, which should be reflected in the actions and outcomes included in the Action Plan. Action Plans that took an individual approach and linked techniques to the desired outcomes for their repertoire were able to produce 'fully developed' planning.

Social, Cultural and Historical Research

There was evidence of detailed research in this section that was linked to the chosen discipline. Candidates would benefit from linking this more closely to the chosen extract and performance conditions. In a few cases candidates tended to summarise the events of the extract rather than evidence concrete research. Several candidates did not include footnotes. In the higher mark range, there was evidence of excellent research informing candidates' practice. In general, candidates are not applying the research to the performance conditions of past productions of the chosen repertoire.

Evidence of Practice

This section has greatly improved, demonstrating the range and level of work by teacher assessors in facilitating the progression of their candidates. It was pleasing to see a greater application of the format exemplified in the agreement trial exemplars where the candidates explicitly focused on the skills to be developed, the techniques used and examples of how this applied to the extract, with analysis of how this helped them progress. This gave a focus and structure to their responses and ensures they can access all aspects of the assessment criteria.

There were a variety of approaches adopted with regards to the rehearsal and preparation process. Some centres took a staged approach in terms of outlining their preparation for baseline, mid-point and final performances, but in some cases this focused too heavily on evaluation and lacked analysis of how a range of techniques were applied to the extract or used to develop their skills. Centres that adopted a skills-based approach to the rehearsal process and employed various techniques aimed at skill development performed best in this section. Candidates should also be advised to use the full number of pages available to them in order to ensure that work is sufficiently detailed. Within the body of the Evidence of Practice, several centres continued to rely heavily on the evaluation of the baseline and mid recordings and referred to YouTube too readily. Superficial techniques such as 'rehearsing in a mirror' were too common, whilst some candidates' work was too descriptive with limited reference to focused practical application to the extract. Candidates who applied discipline-specific techniques found it easier to show progression and evidence their skills development in relation to their chosen extract.

Key points to consider:

- Action plans should differentiate between the demands of both extracts, and explicitly reference work with others.

- Social, cultural, and historical research should consider a variety of performance and production contexts of the extract.
- Research sources should be clearly footnoted.
- The Evidence of Practice carries most of the weighting for this assessment objective and should be reflected in the level of attention and detail required for this section.
- Candidates should focus on their skills development through a range of techniques applied to their work on the extract and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses during the process. They should not evaluate their final stage in this section. Structuring the Evidence of Practice with key terms from the assessment criteria helps focus the candidate's responses.

A03

(i) A Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments tended to be secure, with most candidates achieving in Mark Band 3. Candidates mostly accounted for risks to audience and performers, but there needed to be greater consideration of the venue and risks to production workers. The best work showed considered application of professional practice in terms of subject specific vocabulary and risk reduction measures reflecting professional practice. Common errors included layout, tense, limited terminology, superficial ideas for risk reduction and a lack of a revised risk rating. Risk Assessments should be closely linked to the extract and demands of the repertoire. There was some duplication across the Risk Assessments which was rarely reflected in the marks awarded. Whilst some risks will always be repeated, the most effective risk assessments were those that were highlighted using colour coding for additional risks that were relevant to the demands of each extract. The use of a more professional register would have enabled candidates into access marks in the top bands. Centres are reminded that the total page limit for both extracts is two pages.

Key points to consider:

- Utilise the wide range of resources on Health and Safety practice and guidance for the Performing Arts industry to guide and inform the candidates' responses.
- All risk assessments should account for the risk of fire and include the risk reduction measures that are in place at their venue.
- Ensure candidates differentiate the risks between Extract 1 and Extract 2.

(ii) A Performance/Presentation

Candidates evidently enjoy and engage fully with this aspect of the assessment and as always there was a varied range of repertoire. It was pleasing to see groups of musicians performing together in small ensembles in classic, pop, musical theatre and traditional Irish repertoire. Shakespeare remains a popular choice for Extract 1, with work on Extract 2 varying in genre which gave the candidates some excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the technical and aesthetic requirements by specific styles of performance and production. Centres should be congratulated on the development of the production candidates' presentations which clearly showed their skills development from initial ideas through to final outcome effectively.

Key points to consider:

- Continue to establish an appropriate assessment environment for performances and presentations with an audience of peers and teacher present for the final assessment.
- Clearly identify candidates at the start of the final stage recordings.

- Ensure that candidates have the opportunity to showcase contrasting skills in their choice of repertoire.
- Continue to use the skills list on pages 8–10 of the specification as a checklist to ensure that the final production presentations are summative, and demonstrate all skills and the associated paperwork.

A04 - An Evaluation

Evaluations were strong and reflected some comprehensive analysis of their own work and that of their peers. Candidates showed an improvement in their ability to analyse the skills evident, the impact on audience and the aesthetic features of the final outcomes. The highest achieving candidates reflected their engagement with their own and others' work by referring to specific moments in the performances. Candidates' target setting was clear and evident in most work compared to previous years, which was good to see. However, some candidates referred to the process of developing their skills which is not part of the assessment criteria. Similarly, candidates often gave targets for their peer which is not part of the assessment criteria. The best practice included a specific section in which candidates set clear and explicit targets for their own future development, often by revisiting the skills audit to show how they have progressed. In general, evaluations were managed well across most centres. However, in some centres, candidates assessed different peers across the two extracts when they should have evaluated the work of one peer across both extracts, as stated on page 13 of the specification.

Key points to consider:

- Candidates should identify **one** peer at the start of the assessment process and evaluate their **final** outcome (performance or production) for **both** pieces of repertoire.
- Candidates should be guided to explicitly evaluate the technical and aesthetics of the final product, and the impact on the audience and not the rehearsal process.
- Attention should be given to target setting for the future to enable candidates to address all aspects of the assessment criteria.
- Candidates should focus on only setting targets for themselves and not for their peer.

Overall, centres should be commended on their ability to deliver the full specification of AS Performing Arts after a challenging period for teachers and students.

Principal Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS 2 Planning and Reliving a Performing Arts Event

Unit Overview

Supporting Document (48 marks)

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to plan and realise a Performing Arts event in response to the pre-release stimulus material. The pre-release stimulus for this year was 'Luck'. Candidates agree the venue, target audience, style, form and genre. To fulfil the criteria, pupils must analyse a range of live or recorded Performing Arts events that relate to the chosen style, form and genre. Each candidate must produce a supporting document from his or her notes under controlled conditions. A maximum of two hours is set aside to complete the supporting document under controlled conditions. This document can be either handwritten or word-processed.

The supporting document should include the following sections:

Section 1 (maximum of 600 words, 8 available marks)

A response to the pre-release stimulus material:

- A summary of research into the social, cultural, and historical context of the chosen performance style, form and genre.
- A summary of practical and artistic constraints that includes information on the group's skills, venue, target audience, length of performance and production costs.

Section 2 (maximum of 1200 words, 32 available marks)

Developing the Performing Arts event:

- A summary review of two live or recorded Performing Arts events from the perspective of the candidate's chosen discipline.
- A summary of experimentation in rehearsal of two ideas drawn from the candidate's review of live or recorded Performing Arts events.
- A summary of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses through the process and how the work was shaped.

Section 3 (maximum of 600 words, 8 available marks)

Rationale, Evaluation and Summative Statement:

- Rationale for the candidate's choice of one idea that they have implemented in their realisation of the Performing Arts event.
- An evaluation of how the candidate's and other group members' ideas contributed to the Performing Arts event.
- A summative statement linking the candidate's experience of working on the Performing Arts event to employment/future opportunities in the Performing Arts industry.

General Observations

The supporting documents showed a wide range of responses, with some very strong centres addressing the document with the time and detail needed for higher band work.

There is a specified word count for all sections of the Supporting Document which should be adhered to and stated at the end of each section. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the specification where the word counts for each section are outlined.

The Pre-Release stimulus of 'Luck' was well approached by the vast majority of centres. The intention of the stimulus is to allow a broad range of material.

All centres should make themselves aware of the deadlines for the course and ensure these are met. When submitting the work it is not necessary to use folders or plastic wallets. The most effective method is one staple in the corner or a hole with a treasury tag. The Supporting Document should be submitted with a completed Candidate Assessment Form; these can be found on the CCEA website.

Section 2, where 32 marks are available, once again provided the most varied approach. Almost all candidates viewed two appropriate live or recorded events, and for the most part these helped the candidates with the review section. It should be noted that the requirement is to review "from the perspective of the student's chosen discipline", and these are clearly outlined in Section 3.1. The skills should be reviewed explicitly, to meet the requirements of the higher mark band.

It should be noted that this piece of work is to take place under controlled conditions and these are clearly outlined in Section 3.2.

Overall, there is a concern that not enough time is dedicated to the Supporting Document, bearing in mind that it is worth more marks than the production/performance element of the examination.

A01 - A Response to the Pre-Release Stimulus Material (8 marks)

- This was generally a successful section of the document, where Mark Band 3 and higher was commonly awarded.
- Most candidates referenced the pre-release material and made sufficient links to the chosen material they were focusing on to fulfil the pre-release stimulus.
- The majority of candidates focused on practical and artistic constraints, outlining group skills, venue, target audience, length of performance and production costs.

Areas for Consideration

- Some candidates simply outlined why they had chosen the repertoire and described planning for the performance, as opposed to researching contextual information.
- There is an over-reliance on plot retelling or character summary, this should be avoided.
- The specification indicates that social, contextual and historical should be researched as well as form, style and genre. Where either element is missing it is not possible to get into the highest mark band.
- Candidates should be encouraged to expand on practical and artistic constraints in detail, providing reasoning and rationale. A list approach was more limiting for candidates.
- Most candidates referenced the group skills in a general manner rather than outlining the specific skills of the group members and how that might benefit the group performance.

- Footnotes are required for this section to reference contextual research.
- A non-individualised approach to this section hindered candidates. There were centres where it appeared that a class response had been created; this is not appropriate and does not reflect the controlled conditions required for the supporting document.

A02 - Developing the Performing Arts Event (32 marks)

- A large number of candidates gave specific and detailed examples of moments in the performance and how skills had been used, and this was very effective.
- Strong reviews included several skills from the list in Section 3.1.
- Stronger responses from candidates had their experimentation after each review. This worked well and allowed the work to flow.
- The best candidates outlined how the experimentation improved their performance in rehearsals.
- Strong candidates outlined exactly how the experiments took place to the point where the examiner could imagine the moment in rehearsal.
- Having a discrete paragraph detailing strengths and weaknesses worked effectively.

Areas for Consideration

- A plot review is not necessary and should be avoided in light of the limited word count.
- Candidates should use the skills list on pages 8–10 in the specification to give a more focused response and ensure that all skills are covered.
- To show ‘a thorough appreciation’, several skills must be selected and reviewed, pertinent to the chosen discipline.
- Unfortunately, some centres took a group approach to experimentation, rather than an individual approach. This approach disadvantaged the candidates as it is not deemed ‘creative’.
- A small number of candidates undertook experiments not related to their discipline.
- Some candidates went off track explaining what they ‘would do’ rather than what they ‘did’ in rehearsal. This did not allow them to access the marks for how the work was shaped.
- Strengths and weaknesses were not always explicit; therefore, candidates could not be awarded marks for this.

A04 – A Rationale, an Evaluation and a Summative Statement (8 marks)

- This section was answered well, with most of the main points covered in detail.
- The strongest responses took one idea from Section 2 and gave a fully justified rationale of why it was relevant to the realisation of the performance.
- Really successful responses discussed the experimental ideas in an evaluative way.
- The best candidates used reflective language and referenced feedback from peers and production candidates.
- Most candidates commented on their future or made a link to how this experience prepared them to work within the Performing Arts industry.

Areas for Consideration

- Only one fully justified rationale is required.
- Both individual and group contributions should be recognised.
- Evaluations tended to be mostly descriptive, with elements of analysis.

AS 2 Planning and Realising a Performing Arts Event - Visiting Examination

Unit Overview

General Observations

The team of examiners were very pleased with the overall quality of performance and production work observed during the examination series of GCE Performing Arts. The work presented was of a good standard overall with some excellent work in evidence at some very strong centres.

The most popular discipline remained as Drama, although there was a welcome increase in the number of music and production candidates. In general, the choice of material was very suited to the candidates and was carefully selected to reflect the requirements of the pre-release stimulus material. The choice of material remains critical to the success of the examination and should be given the utmost attention to ensure each candidate has access to Mark Band 4.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for Visiting Examiners to arrange suitable times with centres to conduct the examination. As a team, we endeavour to stay as flexible as possible but must remind centres that the examination period this year was five weeks and centres must be open to the examination date being at any point during that time.

In general, the paperwork seems to be less successfully handled. Centres should be reminded that they are to meet the deadline of submitting the Examination Record Sheet. On this sheet, please identify the specific style/genre of the Performing Arts Event. It is also required that the source of any dance or music work is referenced by stating the choreographer or composer. This, along with the detailed description, enables the examiner to mark the bullet point in the assessment criteria for AO3 (Section 3.1 of the specification).

A Candidate Assessment Form should be completed for every student and handed to the Visiting Examiner. Centres are required to post a filmed version of the examination to CCEA within 5 days. This is outlined in Section 3.2 of the specification and is a requirement. An addressed, padded envelope is provided to centres for return of the work.

The examining team were warmly welcomed at all centres and the hospitality shown was very much appreciated. The majority of centres used a conducive environment, with an audience, to ensure the atmosphere of a performance event was created. Please ensure that examination conditions are adhered to and whilst an audience is encouraged, they must be aware it is an examination and act accordingly. It would be appreciated if centres remembered that examiners need to make notes, so a desk and light are necessary. The candidates were mostly well prepared, and the events were, in the main, very successful. Centres are to be reminded that the examiners are looking for professional practice, so everything that contributes towards that is welcomed.

The pre-release stimulus material will be concept, theme or issue based. Students interpret this stimulus to create a performing arts event that will draw on existing material. Students present their performing arts event to an audience and the external examiner in groups. Each group should consist of between two and nine students. Although each group prepares and presents the work, the external examiner assesses each student as an individual. There must be a minimum of one performer per group. No more than one student per group can undertake a particular production discipline (for example, one designer and/or one lighting student per group). Performances should last between 10 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Larger groups should not exceed the maximum time limit. Each production student gives a presentation, lasting between 5 and 10 minutes, to the external examiner. They also carry out their role, if appropriate, during the performance.

General Observations

Teachers continued to deal with higher-than-average levels of absenteeism and the resultant outcome. Many teachers this year seemed relatively unsure of processes, for example, what paperwork was required for examination purposes. This resulted in some Candidate Assessment Forms not being present upon arrival and sometimes presented as incomplete or incorrect. A completed Candidate Assessment Form must be available for every candidate on the day of examination. Once again, the team of examiners was generally pleased with the overall quality of performance and production observed during this series. The work presented was of a good standard overall, with examples of excellent work exhibited at some centres. A range of scripts were chosen which were appropriate to the pre-release stimulus: Blue Remembered Hills and Dancing at Lughnasa were popular choices. Drama remained the most popular discipline. Most centres presented performances which showed an appropriate response to the pre-release stimulus, however, some did not effectively address the style and genre aspect of the marking criteria.

A03 - Working independently and with others to deliver performance skills/production ideas

- The majority of work showed the candidates had worked independently and as a group to present very interesting and entertaining work.
- Some very challenging pieces were presented, allowing the full range of marks to be awarded to some performance candidates.
- The pre-release stimulus of 'Luck' was clearly considered by all centres.
- The final outcomes, at the majority of centres, had the feel of a Performing Arts Event; with examiners commending the professionalism and talent of some outstanding candidates.
- Generally, the production candidates had worked effectively with their groups to reflect the production needs of the event in their presentation and production ideas.

Areas for consideration

- The specification states performances should be between 10–40 minutes; there was a significant number of centres not adhering to this time frame. Please be aware that examiners stop marking after the time allowance has been met. Candidates cannot access the higher mark bands if they do not have enough exposure; equally, overlong performances can disadvantage performers, as there are challenges in sustaining focus over a longer period of time.
- It is challenging to integrate different disciplines into one performing arts event, therefore appropriate time and planning is needed to ensure this is done successfully.

- Drama candidates playing several different roles tended to be disadvantaged as they couldn't show full development of the role.
- Production candidates should take note of Section 3.1 of the specification, where it outlines the evidence required for the examiner. There should be a range of evidence produced which is available for the examiner to peruse during the presentation.
- It is advised that presentations take place in a separate space, this is purely as production candidates tend to achieve more in this environment. It also allows perusal of the evidence by the examiner, as mentioned in the previous point.

A03 - A performance/ presentation that conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event

- The majority of centres outlined a specific style and genre and recorded this on the examination record sheet.
- It was clear where candidates had undertaken research and practical development in a specific style or genre, and these candidates tended to gain higher marks. The work had clarity and the skills range was wider.
- Performance candidates produced good quality work, using a range of influential practitioners to shape their work.
- The vast majority of centres chose to present their work with set, costume, lighting and sound, which contributed to creating the atmosphere of a Performing Arts Event.

Areas for consideration

- Some centres did not specify the form and style/genre of the event. Candidates are greatly disadvantaged when this was the case. Mark Band 4 states "performance/ presentation that fully conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event and produces fit for purpose outcomes."
- Some material presented was overly adapted to fit the pre-release stimulus.
- Production candidates should explicitly refer to the chosen style and form/genre in their presentation to the examiner.
- The rubric was violated in some centres by presenting material that wasn't repertoire.

A03 - Communication of ideas to the audience through application of personal technique

- Well directed performances advantaged the candidates and created impact for the audience.
- The vast majority of performers were fully committed, well prepared and showed a real understanding of their chosen discipline.
- Some production candidates presented succinct, detailed, and interesting presentations to the examiner, clearly outlining their role and often using PowerPoint, well prepared notes and visual aids to communicate their ideas.

Areas for consideration

- Every performance should have a director, either a fellow candidate as their discipline or the teacher. The candidates are not expected to direct themselves.
- Candidates must present a range of skills in their chosen discipline in order to reflect skills development from Unit 1 and Unit 2. The examiner is expecting to see a wide range of these skills.

- Production candidates must rehearse their presentation and receive guidance on this process, as the performance candidates do.
- Please consider how the examiner will identify the candidates. In ensemble work especially, some thought is needed when using colours/costumes/props etc. so that each candidate is discernible from another.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit A2 1 Planning for Employment

Unit Overview

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to develop their understanding of how to find work in their chosen discipline. Candidates work individually to explore the range and scope of employment opportunities in the performing arts industry. They develop materials that will assist them in gaining employment in their chosen discipline.

In the written report candidates focused their research on skills and training, the role of outside agencies in helping them gain employment and they created an employment plan exploring three potential job opportunities in their discipline. Performance candidates are required to prepare two contrasting performance pieces (not already explored at AS) for audition. Production students are required to prepare two presentations that reflect the application of their discipline in two productions (not already explored at AS).

Through this unit candidates acquire knowledge and understanding of how to gain work in the performing arts industry by investigating and producing a written research report on:

- the training required;
- the role of unions, agents and recruitment agencies in securing work locally and nationally;
- jobs available in their discipline.

Candidates apply their understanding of industry practice by producing a CV and a promotional portfolio to market themselves. The portfolio should reflect their experience in their chosen discipline and emphasise their employability. Candidates should be:

- given opportunities to build and develop their CV by participating in a range of activities appropriate to their discipline, for example, short performances, workshops or coaching.

Performance candidates apply their skills through preparing for and participating in an audition and interview. Production candidates apply their skills through preparing for and participating in a presentation and interview. The audition and interview, or presentation and interview, should be recorded, following industry practice and last between 10–15 minutes per candidate.

Performance candidates must prepare two contrasting performance pieces (not already explored at AS) for audition. Production candidates must prepare a presentation that reflects the application of their discipline in two contrasting productions (not already explored at AS). Each candidate participates in a teacher-led interview that focuses, for example, on their choice of material, interpretation, production ideas and style of delivery. Feedback is an intrinsic part of the process and helps inform candidates of the areas they need to develop in order to gain employment in their chosen discipline.

Candidates then evaluate the process, reflecting on feedback given on their promotional portfolio, and the strengths of their audition or presentation and interview. They set targets to enhance their employability in the performing arts industry.

Administration

Drama was the most popular discipline with an increase in candidates following Dance and Music disciplines. A minority of candidates continue to follow a range of production disciplines.

Most samples were well organised, including the required range of marks within their sample selection, and were submitted in rank order. There was some inconsistency across centres in the completion of the sample cover sheet for each portfolio, and centres are reminded to download this from the CCEA e-moderation page on the website.

The submission of the recordings for the Promotional Portfolio and Audition/Presentation and Interview varied across centres. There continue to be issues with accessing some of the recordings, including missing work, sound issues, corrupt files and poorly labelled USB/DVDs which slowed down the moderation process. Centres are reminded to ensure all materials are in working order prior to submission.

The majority of centres followed the rubric of the specification, but there were some incidences where work was over the page limits, not in Arial 12, and where auditions/presentation and interviews exceeded the 15-minute allocated time. Centres are also reminded to ensure that research is clearly referenced, and a bibliography is included.

In most centres the teacher's annotation, both in the main body of candidates' work and in the summative comments, justified the rationale for the marks awarded. Those teachers that recorded comments on the e-Candidate Record Sheet provided clear insights into the marks awarded. Centres are reminded that it is best practice to include the mark or mark band with a summative comment at the end of each piece of assessment evidence. If work is not submitted by a candidate, then this should be reflected in the overall assessment outcome achieved for that particular objective and a note made of this on the eCRS.

Points to consider:

- Download, complete and attach the sample cover sheet from the CCEA e-moderation web page.
- Organise and submit the sample in rank order.
- Label and check all recordings are in working order prior to submission.
- All work submitted should be in Arial 12, adhere to the page limits as detailed in the Assessment Evidence on pages 23 -24 of the specification and be collated as a portfolio of work in the order of the specification.
- All work should be annotated, with a summative comment and a mark awarded for each section.
- All candidates need to be clearly identified to camera at the start of the audition/presentation and interview.

AO1 - A Written Report

In Section 1 candidates were able to identify three different training routes in the academic, vocational and experience-based pathways, but their research needed to be more in depth into how these courses would develop their skills. The experience route continued to be underdeveloped and centres are encouraged to focus more attention on developing this area with their candidates. Many centres are still approaching this section as two halves; outlining the skills required for their chosen discipline and then exploring three training routes. This approach is duplicating work from AS Unit 1 and prevents candidates exploring the skills each training route would develop in enough detail for the top mark bands. Candidates who took a more personal approach and considered each pathway against their current skill set, including gaps they needed to develop to make them more employable, were able to access the higher mark band.

Section 2 was more varied and weaker in standard than previous series. A good range of research, with focused examples was evident, although sometimes it was somewhat imbalanced with one organisation being researched in greater depth than others. Some candidates explored one or two areas e.g. agents and unions in detail but provided no or limited research into other areas such as casting services and social media. Candidates in the top bands were able to research agents, unions, casting services and means of self-promotion evenly and in detail. In-depth knowledge and understanding were shown well when candidates linked their research to their own careers and employment opportunities. This gave their work focus, linked closely to their chosen discipline, and thus demonstrated in-depth understanding. There is still some reference to American agencies and statistics, and candidates should be encouraged to focus on UK, Northern Ireland and Ireland based examples. Centres should discourage candidates from including agencies that are not relevant to the Performing Arts Industry or their discipline, and ensure they know the difference between a Union and a professional body.

In Section 3 candidates effectively identified three job roles, with most candidates focusing on 'live' jobs relevant to their discipline. It was pleasing to see that performance candidates had selected at least one performance role; research was more interesting, relevant, and comprehensive when more than one practical role was explored. Similarly, production candidates were able to identify jobs in their discipline as well as other avenues they could pursue with the skill set developed through their training routes in Section 1. Some centres took a rather formulaic approach with candidates simply relaying information on qualifications and experience required, the nature of the contract, and the fees and salaries. In contrast, the best candidates were able to investigate this information in detail, and connect it to their own skills and experience, analysing the opportunities the job would provide to further their career.

Centres should view the Written Report as a holistic document reflecting the candidate's overall plan for being employed within the performing arts industry. The candidates who produced the best work in this Assessment Objective were those who could see the links between the three sections, and successfully applied these to themselves.

Points to Consider:

- Encourage candidates to focus on the skills that each training route would develop by utilising the skills list on page 8-10 as well as professional case studies to focus their research into how the courses would develop their professional skills and employability.
- Develop understanding and research into the experience-based route for Section 1.
- Ensure balance of research across agents, unions, recruitment agencies, and self-promotion in Section 2.
- Guide candidates to take a holistic approach to the Written Report through connecting their learning as each section should build on the next.
- Utilising headings from the specification can help structure and focus candidates' responses, especially in Section 2 and Section 3.
- Ensure all research is footnoted within the body of the work, with a comprehensive bibliography at the end of each section.

A02 - A Promotional Portfolio

Overall, the majority of candidates created an individual promotional portfolio with all three of the required items; CV, headshot and showreel or demo CD. However, there was an inconsistent application of industry standard in the layout and content of the components both within and across centres. There were some excellent examples of professional practice, with portfolios presented with clear promotional intent. Overall, headshots were presented effectively and to industry standard, with a greater degree of success evident in the execution of the CVs and showreels. Candidates made a creative attempt at creating showreels given the limited performance and production opportunities candidates had due to the pandemic. Some candidates included self-taped short scripts and monologues in their show reel, whilst others ensured the performance experiences listed on their CV were included in their showreel, which was an effective professional approach. The top candidates included a headshot and contact details at the beginning and end of their showreel, however, others had included their candidate and centre numbers which does not reflect professional practice. When recording group or ensemble work it is important that the candidate is clearly identified. To access the top mark bands, candidates should be encouraged to consider the editing of the end of clips within their showreels, and to ensure their CVs are one page in length and that their experience is appropriately organised in reverse chronological order with most recent first.

Centres are reminded that for Design candidates, sketchbook portfolios are also accepted as evidence and can be digitised or submitted as hard copies. Please note that submitting work on DVD/CD no longer reflects professional practice, and centres should submit work in a digital format on USB. Further guidance will be available during the Agreement Trial.

Key points to consider:

- Professional practice and industry standards should be fully explored to inform the candidate's creation of their Promotional Portfolio by drawing on examples from professionals which are widely available online.
- Ensure all showreels/demo reels are fully functioning and correctly labelled prior to submission.

A03 - An Audition/Presentation and Interview

The impact of Covid 19 was perhaps most evident in the standard of attainment in A03. Whilst there was a wide range of repertoire utilised for audition/presentation, there tended to be a lack of contrasting skills demonstrated in the final outcome. Candidates spoke confidently in interview about the contrasting skills and styles presented in their audition pieces/presentations, but this was rarely apparent in the execution of their performance/presentations. Top mark band candidates were able to use research to inform the final outcome and clearly evidence this in their delivery.

Production presentations continue to effectively address all the skills required by the specification for their discipline. Most candidates embed photographs of their production materials into their PowerPoint and physically presented these to the teacher assessor and the camera during the course of the assessment, which is the desired approach. The highest achieving candidates were confident and creative in their delivery, with some excellent examples of production materials reflecting professional practice in the industry. Whilst it is acceptable for production candidates to use notes during their presentation, they should not have access to these during the interview.

It is evident that centres have a secure understanding of how to conduct the audition/presentation and interview in a formal and effective format. Questions for the interview were appropriate and allowed for candidates to display their understanding. Candidates were encouraged to explain how their research impacted their performance in the audition, and candidates who grasped this achieved highly.

Key points to consider:

- Ensure the choice of repertoire enables the candidate to showcase contrasting skills.
- Develop the range of methodology utilised by candidates to prepare their work through guided practice and explicit direction during the rehearsal and preparation period.
- Develop candidates' understanding of how to connect their research to the final outcome clearly in their execution of their performance or production materials.
- Follow the prescribed time limit of 15 minutes as directed within the specification.
- Consider the position of the camera when recording the audition/presentation and interview, and limit background noise and interference.

AO4 - An Evaluation

Centres should be reminded that the evaluation is a significant aspect of this unit of work and the level of detail produced should reflect the fact that it carries the same amount of marks as AO1 and AO2. The general approach was overly descriptive of the audition and interview process and the creation of their promotional portfolios. Several candidates did not include feedback when evaluating the quality of their promotional portfolio, but this was not always reflected in the marks awarded by the teacher assessor. Evaluations tended to be unbalanced, with candidates focusing heavily on their promotional portfolios and only referring briefly to the skills shown in their audition. Some candidates went into great detail about the process of selecting and rehearsing their pieces, which is not assessed within this assessment criteria. Teacher assessors should recap with their candidates the approach to evaluations at AS 1 where candidates securely identified the skills shown in their performances through precise examples and consideration of intended impact. Candidates in the higher mark bands gave areas for improvement throughout the evaluation and provided some post A-Level future targets.

Key points to consider:

- Relate feedback to the promotional portfolio rather than the audition/presentation.
- Utilise the skills list to focus the evaluation on the strengths of the audition/presentation.
- Provide focused examples of the strengths of their audition/production materials presented.
- Develop considered and specific examples of future targets beyond the context of the audition/presentation and interview.

Overall, centres should be commended for their efforts to try to meet pre-Covid standards and their commitment to supporting their candidates in what can be very challenging circumstances.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit A2 2

Performing to a Commission Brief

Unit Overview

Record of Work (48 marks)

This unit gives students the opportunity to form a production company to realise a performing arts event from an externally set Commission Brief. Students research, promote, plan and perform the event. Students demonstrate their skills in their chosen discipline by realising the Commission Brief practically for an audience and the external examiner. Although students prepare the work and present it as a group, the external examiner assesses them as individuals. There must be a minimum of one performer per group. No more than one student can undertake a particular production discipline or administrative role per group. Groups should be between two and six. Performances should last between 15 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Larger groups should not exceed the maximum time limit. Students focus on performing or producing original material in response to the brief. While planning the event students also consider the factors that influence their choices and how feasible their ideas are, as they realise the event.

The Commission Brief, which CCEA set and release each September, offers students a choice from:

- a cultural theme, historical topic or social issue;
- the performance style of a playwright/practitioner, composer/musician or dancer/choreographer; or
- a published poem or song, a theme, a quotation or an image.

Students work in groups to make planning decisions and agree the type of event and the performance concept for the event. They work to an agreed production schedule to meet deadlines. Students decide on a suitable venue for the performance and take account of production costs and budgetary constraints. Students also consider their target audience and how to market the event. Also, as production company members, students research the financing and marketing practices at two professional venues/contexts. They use their findings to carry out one of the following administrative roles:

- front of house;
- health and safety officer;
- budget and finance;
- education officer;
- press officer; or
- publicity officer.

No more than one student per group can undertake a particular administrative role.

Performance students learn how to perform their chosen discipline in the Commission Brief to the external examiner. **Production** students learn how to present production ideas to the external examiner.

As production company members, all students also investigate professional practice and learn how to carry out an administrative role in their group performance. They learn how to use existing professional practice to inform their personal practice by:

- analysing the financing and marketing practices of two professional venues;
- summarising their research findings; and
- using their summary of findings to inform their approach to carrying out their chosen administrative role.

They present their findings in a **Record of Work** which is examined.

2023 Pre-release stimulus material

Commission 1: An event which is based on the idea of “The Secret” aimed at an audience of adults.

Commission 2: An event which explores one of the following:

- A contemporary play;
- The work of composer, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber; or
- A “traditional dance” form.

Commission 3: An event which takes as its starting point, the words of the poet Maya Angelou.

General Observations

- Generally, the presentation and administration of the work was clear and presented to a high standard. Work should be presented in a manageable format and all materials should be clearly labeled.
- A full range of administrative tasks were provided, with many candidates enjoying the opportunity to work collaboratively again.
- Most centres included a cover page detailing the candidate’s chosen discipline and administrative role.
- Centres should be reminded to print, attach, and fill in the key details on the CAF. This should be attached to the front of pupil work.
- For a significant number of candidates, the ‘Summary of Findings’ tends to be the least successful section. Links from the findings need to be made to the carrying out of the admin role.
- There was a good variety in the choice of administrative roles with many taking on the role of Education Officer and Budget and Finance.
- Most of the sections included appropriate word counts and references for research.

A01 - Section A - Research Report (8 marks)

(i) A summary of individual research on the social, cultural, and historical context of their chosen Commission Brief.

- The Commissions based on 'The Secret' and the words of 'Maya Angelou' were the most popular and allowed for effective research.
- Most candidates outlined how this research generated ideas for their performance of the chosen Commission Brief.
- Candidates who signposted their research with headings, and then linked the research to the chosen Commission Brief and their practical ideas were awarded the highest marks.

Areas for Consideration

- Candidates should state the chosen Commission Brief at the start of the document and should consider the whole brief including statements about the target audience. This was often not the case for CB1.
- A group approach to this section is not productive.
- More direct links were needed between the contextual research and how this research informed and influenced practical ideas for intended outcomes.
- Some of the research was not referenced with footnotes or with an attached Bibliography; this is good practice and clearly exemplifies that thorough research has been completed.
- Some candidates wrote in detail about their plans for the commission but did not link this to any research.
- Some of what was presented was over evaluative for this section.

(ii) An analysis of the financing and marketing practices of two professional venues.

- Candidates who clearly divided their work into income and expenditure within the finance section were able to address the detail required.
- Some centres used screen shots effectively to exemplify marketing practices although this was not as popular an approach as in the previous series.
- The best marketing research covered a full range of marketing strategies, not just websites and social media.

Areas for Consideration

- A range of centres generally discussed income and expenditure, but no specific figures were used to support detailed research.
- Many candidates focused again on funding applications and grants but did not mention detail on income or expenditure.
- Responses were sometimes more focused on finance, with less detail provided on marketing.
- Some candidates researched the role of the marketing manager within the venue but did not focus on marketing practices.
- The contexts for research should be chosen carefully to allow for the required detail in this section.

A02 - Section B - Summary of Findings (16 marks)

- The strongest candidates provided an overview of the chosen administrative role and then focused on how this information influenced them in carrying out the roles/tasks.
- The best candidates were able to draw specific links between research and carrying out the tasks practically.
- Candidates who structured their response using the outlined tasks as headings were able to make clear links from their research as to how they would practically carry out the administrative role.
- Stronger candidates provided information about how their research of both contexts had informed their approach to the administrative role/tasks.
- The highest marks were gained where the candidate had made contact with venues and therefore had specific information and ideas they could incorporate into their own practice.
- Screenshots were well utilised to evidence the professional practice that had been discovered.

Areas for Consideration

- Some centres spoke generally about the administration role; detail must be included on how the role is carried out and how this informs their practical approach to the role and tasks.
- Some candidates did not consider all three tasks and instead focused on one task in detail. This limited their overall achievement in this section.
- More consideration should be given to research and application as this section is worth one third of the overall total marks.
- Some candidates only made fleeting comments in a summative paragraph about how this research informed their planning.
- Some candidates made no links from research as to how they would carry out the administrative role. This resulted in a MKB1 outcome.
- Some candidates used inappropriate venues where their admin role was not represented. This was self-penalising.

A03 - Section C - Evidence of Tasks (16 marks)

- Most candidates completed all three tasks to a good standard which reflected consideration of professional practice.
- Some excellent links to professional practice were demonstrated through the use of personalised logos and reference to support groups if linked to a serious topic.
- Some candidate's created live 'paddles' of the work using QR codes. This was very commendable.
- Candidates who used the full six pages for their tasks were generally able to provide greater depth of exploration.
- Mark Band 4 work mirrored what you would expect to see in a professional working venue. This included: QR codes on tickets and posters, an online ticket example, digital poster to be used on a TV screen and a staff training/briefing taking place online.

Areas for Consideration

- Some candidates handed in a range of drafts but did not clearly outline which was the final product.
- Some candidates did not provide three discrete tasks and in some cases fused all three together.
- Some tasks were heavily based on the exemplar microsite tasks; an individualised approach, based on professional research, is required.
- Programmes need to be fully realised for the Publicity Officer role.
- It is essential that 'Support Materials' are a separate task for the Education Officer, not just fused within the workshop outline.
- Risk Assessments and Fire Evacuation Plans (for the role of Health and Safety Officer) should be specific to the production and venue.
- Small errors in spelling, layout, and font size hampered some candidates and did not represent professional practice.
- Many candidates did not utilise the six pages allowed; this meant the development of ideas was not fully evidenced.
- Some work was not fully considered, and it appeared to have been rushed.

A04 - Section D - Evaluation (8 marks)

- Some candidates used the bullet points within the mark scheme to structure their response which ensured that they covered all parts of the evaluation/analysis process.
- Candidates who used reflective language which focused on strengths, weaknesses and feedback were the strongest.
- The majority of candidates explored problems and solutions in good detail including ideas on production costs and deadlines.

Areas for Consideration

- The first point of the evaluation should focus on deciding on the Commission Brief, not the content or theme.
- Many candidates were overly descriptive with only limited evaluation of group negotiation.
- Many candidates did not fully consider deadlines and production costs.
- Some candidates discussed how others contributed to the commission, as opposed to focusing on their own personal contributions.
- There was some storytelling in the evaluation of the group.
- A minority of candidates just stated the tasks they had completed for the admin role and did not offer any evaluation.

A2 2 Performing to a Commission Brief - Visiting Examination (32 marks)

Unit Overview

Students demonstrate their skills in their chosen discipline by realising the Commission Brief practically for an audience and the external examiner. Although students prepare the work and present it as a group, the external examiner assesses them as individuals. There must be a minimum of one performer per group. No more than one student can undertake a particular production discipline or administrative role per group. Groups should be between two and six. Performances should last between 15 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Larger groups should not exceed the maximum time limit. Students focus on performing or producing original material in response to the brief. While planning the event students also consider the factors that influence their choices and how feasible their ideas are, as they realise the event. Students also apply the skills of their chosen discipline in rehearsal and performance, building on those developed during the AS course. Through their work as a production company, students respond in performance or production to the Commission Brief and learn how to:

- select a suitable option from the externally set Commission Brief;
- research and explore the social, cultural and historical aspects of the chosen option from the brief;
- decide on a target audience;
- devise an agreed concept for the performance;
- create and select material appropriate to the chosen brief;
- agree a production schedule;
- work within the financial constraints of their particular circumstances to ensure the feasibility of their ideas;
- market the performance;
- apply health and safety practices;
- agree a contingency plan;
- rehearse the event; and
- perform the event for examination.

2023 Pre-release stimulus (as stated on page 21)

General Observations

CB1 was the most popular choice and this was generally interpreted effectively with a wide range of ideas presented around the theme of 'The Secret.' The target audience of adults was accounted for in some of the more complex approaches, but some performances were not focused on this and outcomes were less mature. There were, however, some very atmospheric pieces which were expressed with creativity, sensitivity, and suspense.

The only choice presented for CB2 was the work of 'Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber' and the responses, which came from music candidates, were appropriate and skillful for the most part.

CB3 on the 'Words of the poet Maya Angelou' also proved a popular choice for performers. Within the brief there was a wide range of related ideas used as starting points, however, the candidates with more concrete links fared better overall as the work was more fully connected to the brief throughout. Ideas on the role of women dominated the responses and were delivered with sensitivity and poignancy. Multimedia depictions of the words of the poet were used well at a number of centres and helped the audience to connect with the brief.

The choice of a distinct style of performance also helped to convey meaning with candidates employing a range of approaches including influences from practitioners including Frantic Assembly, Stanislavski, and Brecht. There was also evidence of physical theatre which worked well to connect scenes and convey meaning in an original way.

Centres were mostly well prepared with the correct paperwork and camera in place. Venues varied a lot and spaces were generally appropriate, however, some venues were a little cramped and performance space was limited. Centres should also ensure that the examiner is not overlooked by audience members as confidential notes may be taken during the exam. The performances should also be free from interruption.

The work presented was predominantly in the Mark Band 3 range with evidence of original work from some really impressive candidates whose attainment represented the top end of Mark Band 4.

There were some issues with performances which were under or over the time limit. Work which did not represent the required time for the group size was unable to access Mark Band 4; performances which were overlong were often self-penalising.

A03 (32 marks)

Engagement with the Commission Brief

- The options within the Pre-Release stimulus material allowed candidates to devise a variety of interpretations which gave them the opportunity to perform or produce to their particular strengths.
- Strong candidates had worked collaboratively to devise thought provoking and engaging theatre that connected fully with their chosen brief.
- Some very strong production candidates delivered engaging connections in their presentations to the Commission Brief.
- There were some strong music candidates this year who helped to convey mood and atmosphere related to the brief.
- Some effective combinations of visual elements, solo and ensemble work were also in evidence.
- For CB3 there was some good use of multimedia technology, with projected quotes from the poems which complimented the performance and infused the brief throughout.
- Strong responses were well structured and the connections to the chosen brief were secure and original in style and intention.

Areas for Consideration

- Pieces should be refined and edited to make clear links to the brief which in turn will result in more effective communication of meaning.
- With CB1, some candidates missed the opportunity to relate to an adult audience.

- In some centres the words of the poet Maya Angelou had little influence on the content of the piece for CB3.
- In a few centres some music and/or dance candidates were not fully integrated into the final piece.
- Overly long and frequent pauses between sequences broke the rhythm of pieces and weakened dramatic impact.
- At times mood and tempo lacked variation with evidence of formulaic form and structure. Greater variety would have engaged the audience and delivered the intention more strongly.
- Ensemble sequences sometimes lacked energy or spontaneity and as such were purely functionary, serving solely as link devices.
- Some production candidates could have had a more focused engagement with the CB.

Level of Skills Development

- Candidates generally rose to the challenge and demonstrated their skills and personal style to good effect.
- A few of the best pieces were very original and well thought through allowing for a display of a range of skills from all candidates.
- There was some excellent non-naturalistic theatre used to convey real-life stories around CB1.
- Some dance responses used a variety of dance genre to convey meaning and mood with maturity and individual flair.
- There were some drama performances which had clear moments of professional characterisation which secured audience involvement throughout.
- In some strong pieces there was great use of facial expressions, timing and animation that connected well with the audience.
- The production candidates showed a competent level of skill, for the most part, indicating engagement with their chosen production field.
- There were some strong performances this year from singers, musicians and dancers who developed work with an original outcome.

Areas for Consideration

- Some performance skills did not always seem natural and at times required more originality to access higher mark bands.
- A few pieces had a 'central character', requiring the remaining actors to play supportive roles, which did not afford them the opportunity for developed characterisation.
- At times, dancers and musicians were under-utilised and were presented as an 'add on', rather than fully integrated into the piece.
- Some naturalistic performances were underdeveloped and did not convey a sense of theatre.
- In a few centres, group pieces did not utilise many acting techniques or skills, resulting in a lack of depth or intrigue.
- At times musicians and dancers were delivering dialogue; this should be avoided as no credit can be given for their drama skills.

- All production candidates need to present the required materials in their presentation (refer to pages 26–29 of the Performing Arts Specification).
- Production outcomes for some candidates fell short of the ideas outlined in their presentation.

Quality of Final Performance

- Appropriate performance spaces and attending audiences at nearly all centres helped set the tone and mood of the event.
- For the most part, the themes and plots that candidates developed for performances were original, engaging, and entertaining.
- Production candidates, in the main, enhanced the work of performers.
- Multimedia was used to enhance performances in a highly creative way with set, lighting and costume used successfully to augment meaning and vary mood.
- Several performances had some very strong moments of choral and ensemble work which were carried out to a very high standard.
- A few pieces were fully immersive from the beginning via interactions with audience and performers as they entered the acting space.
- Some performances had very strong moments of storytelling with performers showing a full level of engagement with the brief.
- In some instances, musicians were blended skillfully into the action, successfully supporting, and enriching the mood and atmosphere and giving the meaning a greater resonance.
- Some groups presented themselves to the audience as professional companies, complete with programmes, biographies and seat tickets which created a real sense of a theatrical event.
- A few effective pieces were nicely stylised and comprised of a variation of form including ensemble, duologue and monologue with well chosen media footage and musical soundscape to convey a strong sense of period and time.

Areas for Consideration

- Again, examiners reported some very episodic work which lacked the required impact through a loss of momentum.
- A clearer focus on intent and communication of meaning would sharpen the work at some centres. At times, the intended meaning did not correlate with the brief and the outcomes lacked focus.
- Production candidates should ensure that their visions and concepts are realised through performance.
- Some performances lacked originality with dialogue which was sometimes fragmented, leaving characterisation underdeveloped.
- The meaning and mood of overly long pieces is generally hard to sustain. Short pieces do not allow for development of ideas and MKB4 cannot therefore be accessed.
- Structure should allow for some light and shade in the performance as tension throughout is difficult to maintain and impact may be lost.
- Musicians and dancers must be fully integrated into the performance.
- Some scene changes were unnecessary and instead of affecting a smooth transition, they broke the rhythm and were distracting for the audience.

Summary

Centres are to be congratulated on their examination outcomes; well done and thank you to all the students, teachers and examiners who contributed to this successful series.

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