

Music 2019 v1.2

Unit 1 high-level annotated sample response

August 2018

Composition

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers to match evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the assessment objectives.

Schools develop internal assessments for each senior subject, based on the learning described in Units 1 and 2 of the subject syllabus. Each unit objective must be assessed at least once.

Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

2. explain the use of music elements and concepts to communicate meaning in composition
3. use music elements and concepts specific to style and genre
5. apply compositional devices in the creation of their own work
6. apply literacy skills using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate music ideas in their own work
10. resolve music ideas to communicate meaning and intent in composition.

Note: Objectives 1, 4, 7, 8 and 9 are not assessed in this instrument.

Task

Compose an original work that features a motif. Throughout the composition, develop the motif to demonstrate your understanding of music elements and concepts.

Complete a statement of compositional intent explaining of the use of music elements and compositional devices in shaping the purpose and execution of the composition.



Sample response

Statement of compositional intent — Pandora's Box

Pandora's Box was inspired by the classical Greek myth, in which Pandora is the first woman on earth and is given gifts by the Greek gods, one of which being a box, which she was not permitted to open. After an internal battle of curiosity vs. obedience, Pandora opens the box and consequently releases evil into the world.

The piece begins with the main theme of the song in a music-box-like timbre, establishing Pandora's box as a seemingly beautiful and innocent object. This musical theme shifts between minor and major chords to simultaneously represent the fickle nature of the box and Pandora's internal conflict as she decides whether or not to open it. There is a single chromatic note subtly written into the main theme, juxtaposing the lively rhythm of the piece, and therefore alluding to the possibility of danger within the box. This main theme is repeated throughout the piece with piano, plucked strings, bowed strings and cathedral organs.

Each change in instrument timbre heightens the stakes and Pandora's growing desire to open the box.

Halfway through the piece there is a crescendo in timbre, rhythm and dynamics. Timpani are layered underneath violins, violas, piano, and cello, to create a sense of momentum and grandeur as the box is opened. Rhythmically, the piece changes from using crotchets in the piano's left hand to using quavers. This results in the illusion that the piece is speeding up, whereas the rhythm is simply doubled in notes per beat; and in addition to the layering of instruments, this generates a feeling of urgency and tension in the story. This crescendo consequently erupts into a polyphony of strings, and cathedral organs playing the main theme, symbolising the opening of the box and the release of evil into the world.

Pandora's Box finishes in the same way it started, with the main theme played in a music-box-like timbre. This brings the audience full circle in the story — Pandora has opened the box, evil now resides in the world, but now the box has returned to being a seemingly innocent object.

Sample response — annotation

This is a high-level response because:

The use of music elements such as dynamics, duration and timbre creates atmosphere and tension within the composition.

The application of motif develops throughout, contrasting in timbre, tempo and tonality. The use of motif repetition portrays different contents of the music box being released as it is opened. The contrast between major and minor tonality creates unity and cohesion.

Music ideas are resolved and are communicated with sensitivity through the concept of the music box and the creation of an eerie atmosphere. In addition, a change in instrumentation conveys the composer's intention to build tension and suspense.

The explanation of music elements and concepts in the statement of compositional intent refers to the use of chromaticism and clearly shows the composer's intent to create a sense of danger.

The explanation of the change in timbre supports the intent of heightened drama. The explanation of the use of duration and dynamics clearly supports the intent to create an atmosphere of urgency and tension.

The application of music terminology is relevant to the style, and grammar, paragraphing and sentence structure are clear. Ideas and sequences are connected.



Click the above image for audio.

This audio can also be downloaded from

www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/portal/media/snr_music_19_u1_asr_comp_pandoras_box.mp3