

Music 2019 v1.2

Unit 2 high-level annotated sample response

August 2018

Integrated project

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.

Musicology and composition 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 to reflect an identity (will be assessed if composition is selected as specialisation in project)
4. analyse music to examine and consider the constituent parts and relationship between music elements, concepts and stylistic characteristics and the ways in which they represent musical identity
5. apply compositional devices in the creation of their own work (will be assessed if composition is selected as specialisation in project)
6. apply literacy skills using music terminology relevant to genre/style, and use referencing and language conventions to communicate music ideas in a coherent work that integrates the two components
8. evaluate music to justify a viewpoint relating to cultural, political, social or personal identity in repertoire
10. resolve music ideas to communicate meaning and intent in composition (will be assessed if composition is selected as specialisation in project) .

Note: Objectives 1, 7 and 9 are not assessed in this component of this instrument.

Task

Create an integrated project that explores identity by establishing a viewpoint of the expressive powers of music. You must examine a music work that demonstrates either a cultural, political, social or personal context of identity. You must complete a musicological analysis and evaluation of the chosen work that relates to your selected context. Your musicological response will then inform and influence the development of either a composition or performance. You must complete an accompanying statement of compositional intent or performance statement.

Ensure that:

- the statement of compositional intent explains the use of music elements and compositional devices in shaping the purpose and execution of the composition
- or*
- the performance statement explains the use of music elements and concepts to communicate meaning through the performance choices made.
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Sample response

Entertainment or Commentary on Identity?



Broadway musicals are undoubtedly a popular form of entertainment, but is that all there is to them? Many of these great shows focus on serious social issues and seek to challenge the assumption of audience members through their reflection of identities – social, cultural, political or personal.

Sample response

Can musical theatre make a difference? Research now emerging shows that: 'Musical theatre may be a promising method for promoting attitudinal change', (Jacobs, 2012).

The musical *Hairspray* is one piece of musical theatre that clearly seeks to raise awareness of social issues and explore the evolution of personal identity. Through humour and music, *Hairspray* has also highlighted past injustices and brought to the forefront the continuing ostracism and prejudice prevalent in not only recent history but current society. *Hairspray* is set against the backdrop of early 1960's America during a time of great civil unrest, racism and limited acceptance of individuals considered 'abnormal'.

Beginning in the mid 1950's and continuing into the 1960's, civil rights movements fought for full legal equality for African-Americans. Integration was a major issue throughout America. African-American students

organised 'sit-ins' and other peaceful protests in an effort to demand change. Legal change eventually came, but altered little in the lives of many African-Americans.

These broad political and social issues are explored through the characters in the show and their relationships with each other. By following the characters as they explore their own identities and place in the world, the musical encourages its audience to engage with the themes and issues presented.

Sample response

Check Your Attitude

Originally written as a film released in 1988 and then opening as a musical in 2001, *Hairspray* provided a timely reminder that racism continued to oppress America even then. However, the musical does not just challenge audience perceptions of cultural diversity, but also body image. All of this is done with humour, double-entendre and tongue-in-cheek lines and lyrics, and entertaining music and moves. Many of the characters are positioned to reflect attitudes that may be held by the audience. Velma, for instance, the main racist protagonist of the show, is made to look slightly ridiculous in her song 'Miss Baltimore Crabs'. This song is written with a Latin feel and is the only song written in a minor key. This sets her apart from the other characters and gives her a sinister persona.

Sample response

Time For Change

The character of Link Larkin is also designed to resonate with the audience and to challenge their thinking. Many people unintentionally aid in the proliferation of prejudice through ignorance or inaction. Link was initially oblivious to the plight of those around him. When finally confronted with an overweight Tracy or African American students he did not know how to respond. He became fearful of associating with them because of repercussions for his career. His journey throughout the musical is one that promotes attitudinal change. Link came to care for Tracy despite her size, just as he came to befriend Seaweed, Inez and Mabel in spite of their skin colour. The audience's own journey of acceptance may parallel Link's transformation.

Sample response

It Takes Two

By analysing some of the songs in Link's repertoire, it is possible to follow his journey of change. The number 'It Takes Two' is a 1960's inspired ballad that has Link pleading for Tracy to be his girl. Lyrically it shows that Link has fallen for Tracy despite her size, however lines like 'it's a man's world' and 'I don't wanna rule alone' illustrate he is not yet ready to challenge the societal status quo. The song is written in the key signature of A major which gives it an optimistic feel. It has a slow tempo of 60 beats per minute which gives a sense of pathos as Link waits for Tracy's response. The tempo is also perfect for a slow dance.

The backing vocals often croon over the soloist as though to lend credence to his plea. At times, the backing vocalists are signing scat syllables to allow the lyrics to feature. At other times, they harmonise with Link to add weight to his plea. Vocals and strings are used to fill the song and build the emotion and pathos. At one point, the vocals ascend in an almost chromatic scale starting on the fifth. This ascension builds and rebuilds the drama and intensity of Link's teenage love for Tracy.

Sample response

It Takes Two

A Different Time

The very first bar of the piece is in a time signature of 6/8; it is a two beat pick up into the 12/8 time that dominates the song. There are four dotted crotchet beats to the bar with each beat subdivided into three quaver beats and this gives the song a swing feel. The timing gives a drive to the song that prevents it from becoming too moribund and maintains the optimistic feel. Different instruments drive the beat with the piano often playing ostinato in the foreground. There are a number of places where the beat changes from 12/8 to 6/8 for one bar. This has the effect of lengthening the chordal suspension by an extra two beats and this gives a tension to the song, a sense that Tracy's capitulation is not a foregone conclusion. The bridge is still written in 12/8 time but the drums are really the only instrument playing this beat. The vocals are only singing the first and third of each beat. This gives a more stilted feel and effectively aids in providing emotional tension to the song.

The Instruments Speak

The instrumentation is used to give the song that distinctive 1950/60's feel. It opens with a bold tenor saxophone solo through the first four bars of the introduction. The wailing tenor saxophone is featured throughout and is very distinctive to the style of the song. It also echoes the wailing or pleading nature of Link's appeal to Tracy and enhances the pathos of his plea. For much of the song, the guitar plays a very percussive back beat on beats 1 and 3 of the bar. This gives the song drive to prevent it becoming too melancholy. At other times, the guitar reverts to a very slow strumming pattern and this lessens the drive and allows the tension to build. At other times the guitar echoes the "doo wop doo wop" of the vocals. This "doo wop" sound is very distinctive to the era of the song and helps to anchor it within the setting of the musical.

Sample response

Without Love

Without Love- Link moves on

The song ends with multiple fermatas or pauses in 6/8. This has the effect of suspending the music and creating a picture of the suspense Link will be in until Tracy gives her answer. His high wailing vocals at the end of the piece echo the wailing saxophone and give a desperate, pleading tone to the final notes of the song.

It actually takes four... or more

By contrast, it is not a solo but rather two duets- between Link and Tracy and Seaweed and Penny- that merge into a quartet. The very structure of the song is illustrative of Link's journey to enlightenment and away from narrow mindedness. 'It takes two' was a solo that focused on his own emotion and position in the world. 'Without Love' shows he has moved out of the selfishness of his past thinking and is now able to connect with people, no matter what their size or skin colour.

Lyrically, Link indicates that he has a dawning self-awareness:

*Once I was a selfish fool
Who never understood
I never looked inside myself.*

Busy and delicious

'Without Love' is a much more complex song both structurally and musically, which is illustrative of the complexities of allowing different people to become part of your world. It also shows the richness that diversity brings. The food references in the lyrics (for example, chocolate and ice cream) is common through many of the "Hairspray" songs and helps disseminate the message that diversity brings richness and flavour to the world in the same way a range of flavours enhance a meal. This diversity is also seen in the music of 'Without Love'. The song is very "thin" at the start with a single vocal line and little instrumentation. It builds steadily throughout the song, getting busier by adding more rhythm and more vocals. In the first verse, the drums are just playing the high-hat cymbal. The full kit is employed when the first chorus is reached.

Sample response

Keep up the beat

The tempo of the song is set at 92 beats per minute. It is a very optimistic song as it deals with the difference that love makes to the world and this is reflected in its fast-paced funky feel. It is very reminiscent of the Motown sound, which is not historically placed until later in the 1960's than the setting of *Hairspray*. However, this enables the audience to make the connection between a future music genre and the forward-thinking of the main characters of the show, although admittedly, Link was much slower to get on board than the others.

Let's change the key..

The song starts in the key of C major. The major key helps give it an optimistic vibe. The song modulates multiple times. In fact, it changes key after each verse and chorus, moving from F major, to D major, to Gb major to Eb major and in the Broadway musical back to the original key of C. This inordinate use of modulation has several effects. Each modulation moves the pitch of the song to increase emotional intensity. It also aids in giving the song that rich complex feel that supports the ethos of diversity.

Additionally, it also makes change a positive

experience and stylistically encourages people to 'take a risk' and make a change.

Duets in Life

To prevent the song becoming too big and over the top, each verse reverts to a solo feel. This gives emphasis to the fact that life is less fulfilling and exciting when we operate as single units. The dynamics also drop for the verse to further emphasise that detrimental effect of aloneness. The strings play a very smooth line that is underscored by some low stated backing vocals. The chorus brings in extra vocals. These are not, however, in the form of backing vocals as in 'It takes Two'. Rather they are close knit harmonies in a duet style. The singers also rhythmically duplicate one another. This instantly illustrates the benefit of human connection and relationship. The richness created by the harmonies is echoed in the richness that different people working together bring to the world.

Now make it really fat

As the song progresses, this richness is enhanced by the introduction of more and more instrumentation, particularly horns and strings. This not only builds emotion but further enhances the concept of differences working together to build strength.

Sample response

These two very contrasting instrument groups of brass and strings are still very complementary, each taking their own role that enhances the whole.

Keep the beat

There is a driving drum beat throughout the song. The bass and chords stay and move slowly through the bar and there is a constant rhythmic effect pulsing through the song in semiquavers that give the song cohesion despite the changes to the feel in the verses and choruses. This cohesion also fits lyrically with the song's primary thought of the overall binding effect of love on the world.

Unlike the ending to 'It Takes Two', the ending here stays in tempo and ends very abruptly. It is very percussive and syncopated to the very last note. There is no slowing down and the full orchestral accompaniment stays until the end. It is a confident declarative positive ending to the song. It makes no apologies or pleas but rather shows the definitive position that these main characters, including Link, have taken to break down prejudicial barriers and allow love to bring people together.

Sample response

Take The Journey

Throughout the journey of *Hairspray* and illustrated by the changes made between 'It Takes Two' and 'Without Love' it is possible to see the character of Link develop from a self-absorbed teen oblivious of the injustice surrounding him, to one who is able to accept, embrace and in fact celebrate difference and diversity. It is to be hoped that audience members will take this journey with him and examine their own identity and attitude and allow the musical theatre of *Hairspray* challenge and change their outlook.

Sample response

Statement of compositional intent

My composition 'Baby, I've got a Fat Heart' seeks to build on the emotional journey that Link is taking in the musical *Hairspray*. Its tongue-in-cheek title is reminiscent of the humour used throughout the show to "sugar-coat" some hard-hitting truths. This song reveals a very self-aware Link admitting the narrowness of his previous world and the shallowness of previous relationships. In a light-hearted way, it seeks to show how Tracy has helped change and expand his world view to be all-encompassing of diverse people.

Musically, it has a 1960's ballad feel complete with iconic backing vocals. The structure allows for building of emotion through the pre-chorus and chorus. Stylistically, it marries components of both Link's other songs as a way of creating cohesion in the story. It has the 6/8 time that appears throughout 'It Takes Two', as well as the swing, shuffle feel that is also reminiscent of that song.

It has a faster tempo however, being 115 beats per minute which allows it to have the more upbeat feel of 'Without Love'. It also has individual features, such as its key signature of F# major that express its extension past the sentiments already expressed by Link in the musical.

The descending chord progression that repeats in the first verse underneath a static melodic contour represents how Link was down on himself for his narrow thinking, expressed in the lyrics. The change in this progression in the pre-chorus highlights the positive change in Link's thinking. This is complemented by the rise in pitch and volume along with the shorter crotchet rhythms in the bass line and the addition of the drum part.

The climax note is sustained over a turnaround on the bass. The chorus features a thicker texture with the addition of backing vocals and a fuller rock drum beat to reinforce his confident exclamation of love. This accompaniment pattern continues in Verse 2, which notably features rising pitch at the end of each phrase to create contrast and paint how Link is reaching new heights. The pre-chorus ends in the falsetto range of the singer as a stylistic characteristic of Crooner ballads of the 50s and 60s. The return of the chorus sees some repetition of the main theme to reinforce the song's key message.



Baby, I've got a Fat Heart

Click the above image for audio.

This audio can also be downloaded from

www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/portal/media/snr_music_19_u2_asr_int_project_comp_fat_heart.mp3

Sample response annotation

This is a high-level response because:

The analysis of music shows an accurate understanding of the treatment of harmony, timbre and texture. The response includes logical statements about the back beat, the purpose of the fermata and verses reverting to a solo.

Statements made — about the purpose of close-knit harmonies illustrating human connection — are logical and the evidence justifies the viewpoint.

The application of music terminology is relevant to the style. Grammar, paragraphing and sentence structure are clear and ideas are sequenced and connected.

The use of tempo, meter, backing vocals and harmonic choices in the chord progression make the style and genre explicit.

The application of motif develops throughout the composition, the melodic and rhythmic repetition throughout the verses creates cohesion, and the application of contrast throughout the pre-chorus and chorus sections provides variety and interest. Contrasting harmonic choices create interest and create a unified work.

Music ideas are resolved and communicated with sensitivity through the use of chord progression, texture, harmonies and melodic contour to convey the composer's intent.

The explanation of the use of metre, tempo and tonality captures the ballad style of the 1960s and clearly conveys Link's positive change of attitude. Ideas throughout are well articulated.