

Q&A

with Yu-Chieh (Jennifer) Lin, student and Paul-Antoni Bonetti, teacher
Mansfield State High School
Music Extension — Performance, Internal assessment 3: Performance
project

Jennifer Lin, student

Q: What did you enjoy most about Music Extension?

A: *I could experiment with my instrument in the studio to create music however I wanted — there were no boundaries to what I could do. The process of experimenting, creating and practising my skill was necessary to complete my journals and eventually, my complete assessment.*

Q: How did you prepare for this assessment task?

A: *The purpose of choosing Music Extension for me was to extend myself and to make myself a better musician. This meant that I didn't treat each assessment piece as just 'another piece to perform' — I really did think hard as to what I wanted to do for each assessment piece. Maybe I wanted to try something I'd never tried before or maybe I wanted to build and develop one of my weaknesses. Maybe it was time to step out of my comfort zone entirely and pull off a contrastingly diverse program (which I did end up doing for IA3). I didn't go through your usual 'preparation' process for my assessment tasks; all I did was to always be open-minded and strive to better myself as a musician.*

Q: What is most important to you when you are preparing a response to an assessment task?

A: *My journal. While it was very tedious to continually update my practice journal, reflecting back to what I documented in this journal was pivotal in helping me write my performance and reflective statements. I also find sitting in the studio with my instrument and music set-up nearby sometimes helps. I also like to refer back to my practice recordings to watch and observe myself playing. These observations are sometimes included in my statements.*

Q: What are your thoughts about this assessment and the approach you took when responding to the task?

A: *I was going to change my idea/topic last minute because not only did I have trouble finding suitable pieces under the assessment restrictions, I didn't believe I was getting anywhere with what I was doing. More specifically, I underestimated the difficulty of choosing this topic/these pieces and ended up suffering along. Although I was not 100% satisfied with the resulting product at first, I soon realised that the process I underwent was the most rewarding aspect of my assessment task. This assessment piece helped me see beyond always having the most 'perfect' performance, to acknowledge the process to reach my end product and to appreciate any performance opportunities given to me.*

Q: How will you use what you have learnt in this subject?

A: *I don't see Music Extension as a subject I took in high school; it was my free time to do what I liked. In that sense, the mindset of always trying to improve myself and seeing past immediate complications will be quite an important aspect for me as I move past my secondary education. I think it will help improve my mentality and reduce the stress and pressure I constantly exert on myself for not doing everything perfectly.*

Paul-Antoni Bonetti, teacher

Q: What was the purpose of this assessment and what key decisions were made in the design of the task?

A: The Music Extension — Performance IA3 assesses the presentation of a performance, as well as a performance statement and reflective statement that require the student to identify and resolve specific challenges.

Unit 4: Emerge provides scope for students to showcase performance skills that they have developed and honed over the entire course of their work in the Music Extension subject. Having worked closely with their mentor and/or teacher for the first two performance assessment items, students were encouraged to take an autonomous approach to their final performance assessment to harness their strengths and strive for a sense of boldness, inspiration and finesse.

Q: How did your teaching and the student learning experiences prepare the students to complete this assessment?

A: Students were challenged to reflect on their own performance abilities and the performance practice of other performers in shaping their approach towards refinement and success. Through analysis of their own technique and expression, as well as the performances of other performers, students developed a strengths-based approach to selecting, preparing and presenting repertoire that allows them to showcase the best of their own abilities.

Development and writing of performance statements were workshopped in class, with both teacher and peer feedback given, and through a variety of teaching and learning experiences. These focused on the vital process of reflection, refinement and realisation of performance skills and process. This allowed students to clearly plan and articulate what they were seeking to achieve as a dynamic, musical, expressive performer.

Q: How does this assessment reflect the unique characteristics of your school and your students?

A: Mansfield State High School students experience a wide range of music performance opportunities that assist them in creating and developing their own musical style and practice. These performance experiences then transfer into the Music classroom. The school fosters a culture of interaction with, and inspiration from, alumni, parents and teachers who are locally and internationally respected musicians. Within this school culture, students are encouraged to explore and develop their own personal best in music making.

Q: Can you explain the exemplary aspects of Jennifer's response?

A: Jennifer has demonstrated an excellent command of a wide range of high-calibre performing skills, which in turn has facilitated a highly expressive and musical outcome. In particular, dynamic gradation and contrast has been exploited as a key feature contributing to the overall expressive qualities of this performance.

In the performance statement it is clear that Jennifer has resourcefully considered the structure of her writing and has clearly explained the various factors and influences that have refined the outcome of the performance.