

Q&A

with Nicholas Jordinson, student and Michael Purtle, teacher
Park Ridge State High School
Music, Internal assessment 1: Performance

Nicholas Jordinson, student

Q: What did you enjoy most about Music?

A: *I enjoyed the creativity and freedom of the subject. I was able to apply my own voice to my work.*

Q: How did you prepare for this assessment task?

A: *To prepare for this assignment, I had a think about what my stimulus was. With the idea of creating the feeling of the ocean, I sat down at the piano and improvised for an hour or so every day until a mould of what I wanted began to form. I toyed with different tone qualities, key signatures and rhythms to get a feel for what I felt the ocean feels like through the piano.*

Q: How did your teacher prepare you for this assessment?

A: *We did a lot of collaborative work in class, which helped me gain perspective on how different people perceive music. Additionally, we analysed a lot of relevant compositions to see how great composers of the past imagine different stimuli.*

Q: What made you choose the topic or method of presentation?

A: *As a pianist, I love playing pieces by Debussy and I love how he manipulated harmony within his pieces to create a feeling. I've also loved the ocean ever since I was a child, and the idea of creating the ocean through music really resonated with me.*

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

A: *It was important that I enjoy what I created. Especially with compositions, I would toil over the finished composition for days before I would accept it because if I wasn't excited by what I created, I didn't see any reason for anybody else to enjoy it.*

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

A: *In the beginning, the notes are actually notated below what a standard piano can play. The idea behind this was more conceptual because I needed that octave to truly represent the depths of the ocean. Through the use of electronics, it is possible, but changes would have to be made for it to be played at a normal piano without aid. In the B major section of the piece, I crafted a series of lines that were each their own individual melodic lines, but then formed together to create a rich polyphonic texture that I really loved.*

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

A: *The analysis of great compositions of the past allowed me to reflect on how I interpret my own music and has made me a better musician as a result.*

Michael Purtle, teacher

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

A: The purpose of the assessment is to display musical prowess on the student's chosen instrument, demonstrating technical proficiency and stylistic fluency in a piece of music of the student's choice. This piece of music is to display innovative techniques throughout.

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

A: Students investigated numerous innovative techniques throughout their time in IA1. Some of these included Minimalism, Serialism, Impressionism, chance music, graphic notation and many more. The students gained an appreciation of these techniques through investigating a variety of repertoire and examples. Once the students were introduced to these techniques, they then coveted the chance to demonstrate these skills themselves through performance. Nicholas was a wonderful and very musical example of this.

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

A: At Park Ridge State High School there are a wide variety of abilities throughout the school. This assessment managed to draw upon the individual creativity of each student and enabled them the opportunity to broaden their musical horizons.

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

A: Nicholas's performance of La Cathédrale engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral) by Claude Debussy demonstrated exceptional insight into the impressionistic style of composition. Throughout his performance, he embodied the nature of The Sunken Cathedral by his use of innovative pedalling, rhythmic displacement and rubato, and beautiful expression. Nicholas's supporting written statement demonstrated a very high level of understanding of the nature of impressionistic music, supporting his musical decisions within his performance.