The Australian Society for Music Education (South Australian Chapter)

ASME SA - SACE Consultation Response

Friday 28 April 2017

Dear ASME member,

We write to you encouraging your participation in the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Music Subject Consultation process. We ask that you consider some of the issues that are raised later in this letter as you formulate your response.

All documents relating to the Music Subject Consultation process are available from the following link. Closing date for responses is **Friday 5th May 2017**.


We acknowledge and thank the SACE Board, their team of writers and the reference group members for their work preparing this Music Subject Outline consultation document.

ASME SA recently held the first of two forums to discuss the SACE Music Subject Consultation Paper. During this forum, participants presented a broad range of views that identified areas of praise and concern.

Praise included:

1. Assessment Frameworks allowed for a broad range of music learning experiences including catering for students with differing stages of musical development.
2. The existing 8 SACE Stage 2 Music subjects can be accommodated with reduced detail (especially Composition, Music Technology and Musical Styles)
3. Presenting Music is inclusive definition of Music Performance or Composition
4. New possibilities with technology performance and composition are well supported
5. Multi Modal approach to reflective and creator’s statement ‘writing’ is good.
6. Contemporary Musicianship framework in Music Explorations allowed for new learning possibilities
7. SACE Stage 1 looked very familiar with Advanced and Experienced remaining

Concern included:

1. There was a strong concern that the proposed Stage 2 Music Performance subject outline will reduce student participation in music. This is firstly because the performance course will become a 10 unit ‘stand-alone’ subject and secondly due to the anticipated challenge of convincing students that writing a ‘Critical Response’ is a beneficial learning activity for what is fundamentally a music performing subject (Music Performance, Assessment Type 2). ASME forum participants offered the following suggestions:
   a. Increasing the work requirement for the “Music Performance” subject to enable it to become a 20 Unit subject.
   b. Including aspects of the current ‘Musicianship’ course that were designed to enhance music performance, such as aural training perception.
   c. Decreasing the emphasis on the ‘critical response’
2. Reduction in student numbers results in reduced staffing and subsequent ‘status’ of music.
3. The subject names “Music Expressions” and “Music Explorations” are unclear that one is intended for students with less experience in music. It was suggested that the similarity of the two titles would cause confusion amongst the whole school community. Even when students knew which type of music course they wanted to undertake, the similarity in names could result in students enrolling in the wrong subject.

4. Suggestion of redirecting students to Creative Arts subjects (because of limitations in the “Music Performance” subject) diminishes musical learning for students as well as contributes to reduced music specialist staffing.

5. Lack of specific content detail within Music Expressions that assist the teacher in designing and delivering a course of studies.
   a. There have been a range of detailed specific assessment rubrics developed by the SACE board for various aspects of each music subject. It would be helpful for them to be continued in some official capacity such as recommended assessment rubrics for specific student activities rather than the very general (and therefore less helpful) suggested overarching rubric. For example: the current ensemble performance rubric includes ‘leadership’ whereas this assessment criterion is inappropriate for either solo performance or performance using technology.
   b. Assessment Type 2 Explorations and Experimentation is clearly a self-directed student exploration but one that requires detailed framing and guidance from knowledgeable ‘experts’. Concerns were raised that the breadth of learning options will create pressure on teachers (from parents and schools) to offer students ‘any and every’ exploration study option to support a ‘student-centred’ model but with limited detailed guidance as to the possible skill development processes and learning steps for each. For example: there are very few similarities in detailed content (i.e. how to achieve a desired effect) between a music technology student (using DAWs, recording techniques and loops and waves) and acoustic performance student (using Sibelius, considering acoustic instrument limitations and transposition etc.).

6. Proposed Stage 2 Subject Options do not support a ‘Performance’ only subject pathway

7. Specialist Music not having a formal external musicianship examination diminishes the status of Music as a subject, reduces guidance on core musicianship curriculum for students and teachers, does not adequately prepare students with a detailed body of knowledge, skills and techniques required for sophisticated and specialised demonstrations of musical understanding. Examinations are one of the accepted ways of assessing student knowledge and understanding.

8. No on-site live external performance assessments impact not only the status of the subject within the school but also the perception of inequity through access to better recording facilities and venues at ‘other’ schools.

9. Diminishing of cross jurisdiction professional interaction between teachers due to moves away from central marking and moderation as well as online clarifying compounds the assessment ‘mystery’.

10. SACE Board is not really consulting, they are merely presenting what is going to happen regardless of feedback. It would be helpful to know what is available for change and what is not. For example:
   a. It was the general feeling that the SACE board had decided that on-site external marking for performance assessments was not going to continue.
   b. There was a concern that the musicianship exam would be discontinued.

11. SACE Board should conduct an open forum with educators rather than an online hidden approach.

A request was made by the forum attendees to be issued with summary of what was discussed as well as an ASME SA statement regarding the SACE Music Subject Outline Consultancy Draft document. The following points have been made following consultation amongst ASME SA Council Members. They are provided as possible solutions to the concerns expressed at the forum. They do not directly address the SACE Online Survey questions but they do provide material that could be used in a range of question contexts depending upon your viewpoint.
ASME SA statement regarding the SACE Music Subject Outline Consultancy Draft document.

ASME SA believe that the SACE Board is conducting this consultation process with transparency and in good faith, seeking ways to improve the learning opportunities and learning outcomes for students studying SACE Music subjects.

ASME SA encourages our members and other community stake holders to formulate their own views, consider our suggestions, but most importantly, participate in the consultation process through detailed feedback to the SACE Board. We are encouraged to know that public institutions respond favourably to detailed and overwhelming quantities of feedback.

In summary, we believe that:

1/ Stage 2 Subject title names should be meaningful rather than ‘creative’.
   **Music Expression**: should become **Music Specialist** (similar to the existing subject name Specialist Mathematics)
   **Music Explorations**: should be divided into two 10 credit subjects;
   - **Music Essentials** (similar in title to the existing subject name, Essential Mathematics)
   - **Music Studies** (similar to the existing titles, Legal Studies, Media Studies, Women’s Studies)
   **Music Performance** (sensible title – provided it is not about analysis)

2/ Stage 2 **Music Performance** subject removes Assessment Type 2 ‘Critical Response’ deconstruction and analysis section – Assessment Type 1 (30%) and Type 2 (40%) become Portfolios with performers statement but using different repertoire, possibly different ensemble/instrument.

3/ Two discrete 10 credit subjects (**Music Essentials/Musical Studies** or retain title **Music Explorations**) are created from the proposed **Music Explorations** 20 credit subject.
   - **Music Essentials** – retains the contemporary musicianship focus of the **Musical Explorations** Assessment Type 1, without the lead sheet: AT1 (20%) Music Literacy; AT2 (50%) Performance Portfolio; AT3 (Original Melody Lead Sheet and Chords) with composer statement
   - **Musical Studies** or **Music Explorations** – Retains the Exploration and Experimentation and Creative Connections focus of proposed **Musical Explorations** of Assessment Type 2. Could also follow the style of existing Individual Study subject with industry and sound reinforcement PA options for but with modifications: AT1 (30%) Folio; AT2 (40%) Product Portfolio; AT3 Report

4/ Students should retain the ability to choose a combination of 10 credit Music subjects that they may complete in separate years as well as the option of a Specialist 20 credit subject. This would go a significant way to addresses equity and access issues that was a concern for many teachers.
An external musicianship examination should replace the Assessment Type 3, Part B Musicianship Study within the proposed Stage 2 Music Expressions subject. The proposed Musicianship Study repeats learning approaches indicated by the ‘creative statement’ Assessment Type 1 only addresses a limited range of music and is dependent upon the repertoire of choice by student or teacher. For a ‘Specialist’ high-level subject one would expect some rigour. Musicianship examination should be a 60 minute formal examination, including a range of questions that provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through questions that require aural decoding (rhythm and melodic transcription), visual decoding (score analysis), demonstration of musical grammar (language of music theory), responsive style analysis (aural or notated examples).

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