



Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson BTEC Nationals
In Performing Arts (31555H)
Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners' Work

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January 2021

Publications Code 31555H _2101_ER

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Introduction

Unit 1: *Investigating Practitioners' Work* is a mandatory externally assessed unit on the following qualification sizes of the BTEC Nationals in Performing Arts: Certificate, Extended Certificate, Foundation Diploma, Diploma and Extended Diploma.

This Level 3 unit has 90 guided learning hours, ensuring learners have plenty of opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the performance and production repertoire of two practitioners; one chosen from a set list in the unit specification and a second practitioner that can either be chosen from the same list or be one of the learner's own choice.

During the teaching and learning phase for this unit learners should also develop their knowledge and understanding of the contextual factors that have influenced their practitioners' practical work and develop their ability to critically analyse this performance and production work.

The focus of the task paper is to assess learners' investigation into the performance and production repertoire of two practitioners, along with the contextual influences that have influenced the practitioners and the performance and production repertoire of those practitioners.

Under normal circumstances the paper is set twice every year with a Part A pre-release paper containing the theme released in December for January assessment, and in March for assessment in May. As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, the task paper was released early, in mid-November, in order to support learners preparation for the external assessment this series.

Learners normally have four weeks, and this series had eight weeks, to refine their research into their chosen practitioners' performance and production repertoire in response to the set theme for the series, which this series was *Harmony*. At the end of this independent research period, learners spend three hours in one or more supervised sessions writing up their independent notes and preparing their bibliography. These notes, and the bibliography, are the only notes learners can use in the formal assessment period for Part B.

The Part B task paper requires learners to respond to three activities. The task paper and the specific focus of the three activities changes

every series and it is essential that learners respond to the specific activities on the task paper in the year and series of their assessment.

Discussion and analysis of practitioners' performance and production repertoire can be in response to live or recorded performance work seen during the delivery of the unit. The response can be to professional, semi-professional or amateur work, as long as the performance and production style **accurately** reflects that of the chosen practitioner's own work and is not the learners' own work.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

The knowledge and understanding learners must demonstrate in their response to each of the activities in the Part B task paper remains very similar to that required by task papers in previous series. Much of the information in the Lead Examiner report from previous series is relevant and thus is repeated for this series.

Learners need to refer to their practitioners' performance and production repertoire in order to demonstrate an effective application of an investigation process. In successful responses it was clear that learners had watched and studied live performances, or recordings, of **live performances**.

Examiners reported seeing a very wide range of work covering the full range of marks available. Most learners responded well to the activities and produced work that fulfilled the requirements of this set task with many very effective responses. The clear focus of the three activities in part B of the task paper supports many learners to respond to the specific requirements of each activity and therefore achieve high marks. However, there were also a few less effective and/or brief responses to each activity from some learners.

Some very good responses were seen in all performing arts disciplines, especially in relation to Lin-Manuel Miranda, Matthew Bourne, Frantic Assembly, Steven Berkoff, Stephen Sondheim, Alvin Ailey and Christopher Bruce. In all of this work there was a clear sense that the practitioners' performance and production work had been watched, studied and analysed thoroughly in relation to the theme of *Harmony*.

It is important to note that the careful selection of practitioners is

paramount to success in this unit. There were, unfortunately, a minority of learners who had chosen practitioners that were not ideal and/or were inappropriate for the completion of the activities in the Part B set task paper. Examples of such practitioners are individuals or companies that do not have international recognition and an established reputation and presence; practitioners where learners were not able to, or did not see live or recorded work which had been created by their practitioner or which accurately replicated the practitioners' work; and those where there was very little contextual information available on the practitioners' work. This had an impact on learners' achievement as it meant they had not addressed an important demand of the unit specification and were often unable to respond successfully to the specific requirements of the assessment activities.

It is important to select appropriate practitioners who have live or recordings of live performances available which are relevant to the selected theme, which this series was *Harmony*. Learners **must** be able to see repertoire which accurately replicates the intentions of their chosen practitioner. There were, for example, instances, in this series, of learners who were referring to the animated film *Moana* in relation to Lin-Manuel Miranda and discussing performance and production elements as if it was a live performance which, in this case, it is not.

Whilst a number of practitioners or companies may fit the description of being internationally recognised, with their performance work being readily available, there may be little evidence or research to support the learner in exploring contextual factors that have influenced the practitioner or company. This may disadvantage learners, especially for Activity 1.

It is important to note that playwrights such as Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Miller, Shakespeare, Willy Russell etc., are not ideally suited for study in this unit. The work of playwrights is interpreted by theatre practitioners and it is this element of **live performance**, not the text itself, that is the focus for this unit. Learners who analysed playwrights' texts and who did not discuss live/recorded performance and production repertoire were disadvantaged as they struggled to reference 'at least one specific scene or moment from each practitioner's performance and production repertoire', required by each activity on the task paper. They also struggled when discussing the performance and production elements in Activity 2.

Although examples of learners using theatre companies was not seen this series, it is worth a reminder that companies such as the Royal Shakespeare

Company, Ballet Rambert and the National Theatre do not have a house style – they employ individual directors/choreographers who have their own individual directorial approach to the work. It is this individual directorial/choreographic approach of the practitioner of putting the work on stage that is relevant to this unit.

If learners are looking at, for example, Stanislavski as their practitioner; viewing a naturalistic production using elements of his style is crucial research for learners. Ideally if it is a play which has connections with Stanislavski, such as a performance of a play by Chekhov or Ibsen which fully reflects Stanislavski's approach, this is most beneficial to learners as it has a clear connection to Stanislavski's ideas. Similarly with Brecht, the performance analysed by learners must accurately replicate Brecht's stylistic features and not be another company or director's own interpretation / selection / adaptation of Brecht's style.

As noted in previous Lead Examiner reports, one practitioner who can be a little problematic is Bob Fosse as the direction and choreography of his films such as *Sweet Charity* and *Cabaret* are integral to the overall effect he wished to create. What learners need to avoid is discussing the filmic devices such as the use of camera angles etc, as this is not relevant to the focus and discussion of the choreographic performance elements of Fosse's work. Also, it may disadvantage learners to discuss the filmic production elements such as lighting, set and staging as these are not filmed as live theatre productions. This may limit the choices learners can successfully respond to in Activity 2. These points also apply to the discussion of the film *Chicago*.

Examiners commented that learners tended to provide effective responses when they felt a connection to the work of the practitioners and had actually seen live or recorded work so that they could vividly describe moments of repertoire relevant to the three activities. Effective examples of this were seen in repertoire such as *Hamilton*, *Things I Know to be True*, *Swan Lake*, *The Cost of Living*, *The Trial*, *Ghost Dances* and *Revelations*.

In the most effective responses, examiners were impressed with the depth of learners' knowledge and understanding of the repertoire of their chosen practitioners and with their ability to write persuasively in response to the specific focus of each activity. There were many instances of clear thought, detailed knowledge and insightful critical analysis of the practitioners' performance and production repertoire.

High quality work was seen where learners responded to the specific demands of each activity, particularly the reference to and/or analysis of practical performance and production repertoire. This work was well written and the application of research and a thorough investigation process was clearly evident.

In the most effective responses, learners focused on the specific demands of each activity and did not offer detailed definitions of the theme or biographical or contextual factors in Activities 2 and 3.

The use of citations within the learner's response to each task is good practice, however it is not essential if learners are not including direct quotations. If learners are using direct quotations in their response to any of the three activities then they should obviously reference and cite the source of the quotation. Whilst there is no set style of referencing prescribed, Harvard appears to be the most popular format used in this and in previous series.

It is important to note that learners are still able to demonstrate a very sophisticated application of an investigation process, with perceptive use of a range of meaningful sources to fully support their conclusions, without including references and citations in the body of their response to an activity. It is the quality of the learner's response and their specific reference to relevant performance and production repertoire that evidences the quality of their investigation process.

In some cases, it appeared that learners had not seen any of their chosen practitioners' performance and production repertoire. In these cases the learner's response was often limited to a narrative discussion of the plot, which tended to mean that they were not applying critical analysis skills or demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of performance and production repertoire, thereby making it difficult for them to achieve highly for any activity. This is often particularly noticeable in relation to Brecht where the majority of learners only referenced the texts of the plays and not the performance of the play. Such responses were often quite literary and plot driven. As with all practitioners, it is essential that learners watch live or recorded productions which allow them to discuss performance and production repertoire.

Learners do not need to discuss or analyse the whole piece of repertoire but it is strongly advised that they have watched the entire piece of work

so that they can choose their own moments to discuss. They should include carefully chosen moments of repertoire in response to the specific focus of the activity. If the analysis of the repertoire is pertinent and contains some detail, then it should take the examiner on 'a journey', and when reading the response they should be able to visualise what was happening on the stage. In these cases, it was always clear that the learner had undertaken a sophisticated investigation process and could be justly rewarded for doing so.

Overall the responses to each activity were generally well-written and structured, with a clear use of language.

Most learners had provided a bibliography. These ranged from a comprehensive list of sources, with clear reference to live and/or recorded performance and production repertoire, reviews, books and education packs; to others who only used references to Wikipedia and/or very short YouTube clips of work.

As in previous series there was some evidence of learner responses which were unbalanced. For example, some learners spent too long on Activity 1, which is worth 12 marks, and then didn't leave themselves enough time to respond in full to Activity 3 which is worth 24 marks. There was also evidence of learner responses to Activity 1 that were unbalanced in terms of the focus on each practitioner. Learners should be advised when preparing for this external assessment that they need to consider both practitioners equally in Activity 1 and fairly equally in Activity 3. Plus, that they should follow the timing recommendations in the Part B task paper for each activity.

Individual Questions

Activity 1

This activity requires learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how *cultural* contextual factors have influenced the performance and production repertoire of their two chosen performing arts practitioners. Whilst doing this, learners also need to discuss at least one specific scene or moment from each practitioner's performance and production repertoire, connected to the theme, *Harmony*.

Nearly all learners were able to make reference to some *cultural* contextual

factors that have influenced their chosen practitioners' work, with the word *cultural* being interpreted in the broadest sense.

In the most successful responses, learners explained how relevant *cultural* factors were evident in the practical performance repertoire being discussed. In the most cohesive and insightful responses the *cultural* influences on the practitioner and the theme of *Harmony* were evident in the performance and production repertoire being discussed.

In less successful responses, learners outlined broadly relevant *cultural* factors that had influenced their chosen practitioners' work, and then discussed an example from the practitioners' performance and production repertoire that reflected the theme of *Harmony* without connecting the two different requirements of this activity.

Other less successful responses changed the theme of *Harmony* to one of disharmony and unfortunately by doing so responded to a question of their own design rather than one in the task paper.

Other learners discussed moments of disharmony in the performance and production repertoire and then analysed how the practitioner moved from these moments to ones of *Harmony* and/or used these moments in order to emphasise the moments of *Harmony* which they also clearly analysed within the pieces of performance work in question.

In a few less successful responses, there were, unfortunately, still some instances of learners tending to give general biographical details on their practitioners or, as often seen for Brecht, Stanislavski and Berkoff, a discussion of the practitioners' theories on theatre with little reference to the specific requirements of the activity.

Some learners unfortunately made limited reference to the practitioners' performance and production work. Learners who had not seen or, were not able to make any reference to their practitioners' performance or production repertoire, tended to be at a severe disadvantage when responding to this activity. Learners who included specific detail of moments from the repertoire were more successful than those who provided a plot or general outline of the work with relation to *cultural* contextual factors and the theme of *Harmony*.

The choice of practitioners and the availability of research and live performances connected to the full range of contextual factors is of utmost

importance for this task. Some learners found it harder to discuss the *cultural* factors influencing their practitioners as they had chosen less well-known practitioners for which they were only able to include the most general biographical details.

In contrast, many very successful learners had focused on one main *cultural* contextual factor for each of their chosen practitioners and provided a good level of detail on how this *cultural* factor had influenced their practitioners' performance and production repertoire, providing detail about the repertoire in relation to the *cultural* context being discussed and the theme of *Harmony*:

'In Bruce's performance of Rooster first performed in 1994, Bruce directly addresses the cultural factors of the emergence of female power in the 1960s, through the scene 'Paint it Black' where the theme of harmony is communicated through the girls' unity and the male soloist's vulnerability. The dance begins with four dancers, three female and one male, illustrating Bruce's use of the choreographic device of dancers to communicate female dominance and control of the scene and the male soloist. The trio of female dancers appeared to control the scene and the male dancer as they restrain and contain him between them. The male soloist in turn appears helpless and dazed, as he is flung between the girls, his movements becoming more and more limp and less graceful. Contrasting this the female dancers performed strong and forceful movements, as they spin and push the male dancer. The theme of harmony is evident through the girls' unity of movement and space demonstrating a shared goal and mindset and offering an insight into their relationship with each other and the male dancer. It could be argued that the violent and controlling movement the girls perform is a metaphor and expression of how women felt during sexual war of the 1960s, the movement could symbolise the women being tired of the control and objectification by men and society and wish to take vengeance.'

And

When Ailey was a child he suffered discrimination, racism and segregation. Growing up he felt very alienated never really having a father as his father left when he was a baby. This consequently meant that growing up he only had his mother. He was very close to her and later made a dance for her as her birthday present. They would always go to a black church and through this Ailey found harmony despite the segregation he faced. This religious harmony is shown throughout Revelations especially in the section called 'Preaching Spiritual' which depicts a serious ritual of the church. We are shown the female dancers all sat on stools in lines facing up stage, this allows the audience to feel part of the

church community, again showing the idea that Ailey wanted everyone to feel the religious harmony he felt growing up. The women are dressed in long yellow dresses and have fans we see them wave their fans continuously as if showing they are gossiping which shows the loving friendly community Ailey was part of. The costumes also show that they are all in Sunday best and draws from Ailey's memories of his childhood which he calls his 'blood memories'. The cultural factors of community and religion are evident here through the harmony of the black church community.

Learners who included specific detail of moments from the repertoire were more successful than those who provided a plot or general outline of the work with relation to *cultural* contextual factors and the theme of *Harmony*. Examiners reported that the level of detail when discussing repertoire was often impressive and gave a clear sense of understanding of the work, which is evident in the examples already discussed and in those below:

'Ghost Dances by Christopher Bruce was created in 1981 but was influenced by political event from 1973. This political event sparked Christopher Bruce to research into the cultural rituals and beliefs of South America. Ghost dances pays tribute to the lack of humanity seen during the Spanish conquests when General Pinochet overthrew the democratically elected communist government of President Allende. In the period of intense and brutal repression following the coup, an estimated 35,000 civilians were put to death and thousands more imprisoned and tortured. What initiated Bruce to research this event was after he was given music by a group called Inti-Illiamni, a South American folk group. The music became the driving force behind the work and influenced not only the style of movements used but the costume and set. The cultural reference to folk style music was tributed in the style of folk dance movements which are used such as repetitive hopping steps as a travelling factor. Folk dance has a particular set of steps or figures that repeat in time to music creating a sense of harmony as these elements go together. This can be seen throughout the second half of Ghost Dances, especially in the last section, where the dancers come together to fight against the ghost dancers, which hints to a sense of community as they come together in harmony with the repetitive hopping steps and the use of accumulative canon.

And

'In To Be Straight With You the cultural influence is the belief of some religions. The play explores the idea of gay people in a religious society and how it is not accepted within the beliefs of the Islamic or Christian faith, an example within

this piece is the section Christian Protesters. The cultural influence to this section is the belief from the Christian Church that homosexuals shouldn't be allowed to adopt children after the law stating that 'nothing in these regulations shall make it unlawful for such a voluntary adoption agency or fostering agency to restrict the provision of its services or facilities to a person on the grounds of sexual orientation,' which was passed in 2007. This caused an outrage within some members of the Christian Church, which led to protests outside parliament expressing their views. These people believed that they should take a stand against LGBT rights . When watching this section we see eight empty brown chairs on an empty stage dressed to look like a community hall ... with a dark green flat placed upstage and a dark grey carpeted floor, complementing the brown plastic chairs, fitting the idea of a community Hall. The chairs and the eight male, slightly rugged looking performers, are staggered with one placed more downstage than the others. This is the performer who speaks and who the audience is most attracted to look at. The other seven male performers behind him, grab the front of their chairs and drag their chairs to meet each other in a horizontal line behind the front the former, immediately the idea of unison is portrayed. The peaceful protestors keeping with the idea of harmony and collaboration all eight performers swing their legs, keeping them bent, back and forth with the right leg swinging first. While doing this the front performer describes how he doesn't teach his children about gay people, as schools were beginning to introduce this, and the unison and pride within each performer's straight back and strong core showed the audience that their ideas are the same and harmonious with every word that the main performer says. The idea of protest, no matter what the topic, gives a sense of harmony through that coming together to fight for a cause. While the synchronised movement occurs fun fair music chimes underneath the strong and enforcing tones of the speaker. This contradicting sound puts the audience at ease ensuring that they listen to the words of the performer working together harmoniously to convey the message to the audience.'

Some learners referenced multiple *cultural* contextual factors, often in less detail, and made limited reference to the practitioners' work.

Unfortunately, in many cases, learners did not make reference to any practical and performance repertoire work at all. As already mentioned, learners who had not seen any of their practitioners' performance or production repertoire tended to be at a severe disadvantage when responding to this activity.

There appeared to be an increase in the number of learners who responded to this activity by discussing, sometimes at length, the cultural influences on only one of their chosen practitioners' or had an unequal

balance between the two, with, on occasion, only a very brief paragraph on their second practitioner. This, unfortunately, was self-limiting.

Again, it was evident that some learners wrote a lot in response to this activity and seemed to have spent longer than the suggested 40 minutes in completing their response. This was usually at the expense of the other activities, which attract higher marks: 24 marks each for Activity 2 and Activity 3 in comparison to the 12 marks for Activity 1.

Activity 2

This activity requires learners to analyse three specific elements of one of their chosen practitioners' work, thereby demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of moments of the practitioner's performance and production repertoire which communicate the theme of *Harmony*.

Activity 2 was usually responded to most effectively and this tended to be the activity in which learners who had seen performance and production work achieved their highest marks as they focused on specific moments of repertoire in relation to the theme.

Some learners analysed one piece of repertoire in their response to this activity and considered how each of their chosen elements was evident in this one piece of performance and production work. This was an effective approach to take. Other learners discussed a different piece of performance and production repertoire for each of their chosen elements, which was an equally effective approach when responding to this activity.

Some learners helpfully listed the three chosen elements at the top of their response to this activity and then analysed the performance and production repertoire holistically with a focus on the three chosen elements. Other learners analysed the repertoire under subheadings from their three chosen elements. Either approach was equally effective, as long as there was a detailed consideration of each chosen element; the analysis of which demonstrated the learner's understanding of the performance and production repertoire and how it reflected the theme of *Harmony*. It is good practice for learners to clearly list the chosen three elements they are discussing in this activity, preferably as an introductory heading to the activity.

In the most effective responses, learners were able to demonstrate accomplished analytical skills by providing a detailed analysis of the chosen elements in their practitioner's performance and production repertoire. In these instances, the moments being discussed were always very closely related to the theme of *Harmony*:

Choreography / lighting / contact work

Bruce / Shadows *'We are witness to the powerful relationship between the son and daughter within their duet. A specific part of the choreography showcased in response to contact work would be the lift between the two performers onstage...The son facing upstage, lifts his sister by the waist while the female performer's hands remained situated around her brother's neck. This is a relaxed hold on her behalf as though one might give a hug. The soles of her feet are gently balanced on his thighs, therefore his hands are ensuring she is able to keep her balance as well as evoking themes of reassurance in relation to how he feels about his sister. The girl is then lightly thrust into the air, the brother's hands refraining from leaving her waist at any given point. Not only does his hands fail to leave her waist represent their strong and harmonious relationship, it references his desire to keep her in his arms, somewhere he perceives as the safest place, but the extended lift allows the audience to clearly see the sister's facial expressions. As she is lifted we see how frantically she extends her chin to create the impression of searching for something. The way her hands are pressed gently upon her brother's shoulders only exploring further the idea of the siblings having a strong and powerful connection, her response to the lift simply being to look out over his shoulder reiterating how she desperately wants to protect her brother and is trying to detect danger. This reflects the strong passionate harmonious relationship between the two characters. Later the performer works in direct correlation with the music which consists of an erratic violin positioning herself at a fast pace in a balanced extended plank position over her, and her brothers simple wooden stools placed mid stage left at what resembles a dining table. Her hands are positioned safely palm down on his stool as she positions her feet on her brothers. This demonstrates the harmony her character feels in response to her brother and how she constantly seeks comfort from him, this occurs over only a few seconds due to the fast paced nature of the music underscoring the performance and is only able to be explored through the use of lighting design ... the warm off white floodlights which are of a low intensity evokes a soft and dreamy atmosphere. As well as this, the soft warm lighting is used from the overhead bar with the main light being positioned centre stage creating a circular light ... the warm lighting choices only further emphasised this concept of the daughter feeling safe and secure within her home ...'*

And

Contact work

Frantic / Lovesong: 'The mixed timeline couple begin a physical theatre sequence focusing on contact work almost as if Maggie cannot get enough of the love and affection she feels with her younger husband... William cradles her face tenderly showing the harmony in their past love. Overwhelmed by this she leans into him and sobs and he holds her to him showing the love between them. It also shows that she is emotionally supported by her past showing a harmony between the past and present ...'

As noted in the comments for Activity 1 there was a minority of learners who changed the theme of *Harmony* to one of disharmony and unfortunately by doing so responded to a question of their own design rather than one in the task paper. Although some learners were successful when they discussed moments of disharmony in the performance and production repertoire and analysed how the practitioner moved from these moments to ones of *Harmony* and/or used these moments in order to emphasise the moments of *Harmony* which they also clearly analysed within the pieces of performance work in question.

The most popular elements discussed were character; costume and/or hair and/or makeup; choreography and/or direction and contact work.

Costume, whilst being a popular choice of production elements, often resulted in very generic description with little sense of the actual costume worn. These responses tended to be self-limiting as they were not responding to the specific requirements of the activity/question:

Costume

Sondheim: 'The harmony each character has between themselves and their costumes is also showcased in this song. Each character's costume is indicative of the era and the time they were alive. Not only does this help the audience identify each character and help with the chronology of the play, it also gives each character something that only they are in harmony with. The costumes also helped the actors develop a bond with the character. If the actors are not in harmony with their characters they will not be able to accurately portray the thoughts and feelings of the character onstage. It is imperative that the actors stay in harmony with their characters throughout the entire play, which is why the costumes, makeup and hairstyles are a great aid when developing relationships with the characters.'

Matthew Bourne, Christopher Bruce, Frantic Assembly and Alvin Ailey were, again, very popular practitioners for Activity 2. Many learners had clearly engaged with their performances often evidencing perceptive understanding of performance and production elements seen in their pieces of repertoire:

Choreography

Ailey: 'As we follow through to the final section, the choreography in the final part 'Rocka my Soul' draws on classical jazz steps. The choreography includes shoulder and torso shaking, arms raised and pointed upwards with stabbing motions to the sky, the dancers' heads thrown back and rhythmic floor patting with their bare feet. These movements are all seen to suggest the harmony African-American people feel when they are drawn together and have overcome trials and hardship and are letting out who they really are. I interpret the choreography at the end to suggest gossiping conversations of the hope they have and their worth in God and overall their hope for salvation. The movements are a raw performance of America's richest treasures, 'sometimes sorrowful, sometimes jubilant, but always hopeful.' This communicates the harmony they have now found within themselves to be proud of their African American heritage.'

As with Activity 1, learners who had not seen any of their practitioners' performance or production repertoire were at a severe disadvantage when responding to this activity. There were, again, disappointingly several instances where learners did not appear to have seen a performance influenced by their chosen practitioner and they were therefore not able to analyse the performance and production repertoire itself. These learners tended to write about the practitioner's work a literary way, often with quite a narrative approach, it was often very difficult for them to analyse the application of performance or production elements effectively:

Character

Sondheim / Sweeney Todd: 'Stephen Sondheim's use of character as a performance element plays a massive role in the communication of harmony. Starting off with Sweeney Todd whilst most characters in that production are murderers, criminals or bad people by the end two specific characters stand out to combat the lack of harmony, these are the lovers in the performance Anthony and Johanna whose subplot takes up a fair percentage of the production's runtime. As seen by Anthony's harmonic last name 'Hope' which relates well to his character and Johanna's pure innocence, these characters exist to be a light in the dark. In a certain way Sondheim has to make the rest of the production a dark and bloody tale to emphasise how pure these characters are in 19th

century London, a very grim time period. The purity and good conscience and motive of these characters who combat the darkness of Sweeney Todd is a very effective way to show harmony. Despite what they've been through, with Anthony as a sailor and Joanna being under the hospitality of the evil judge Turpin, almost against her will, as represented by the songbirds in cages in her room, this is one way Sondheim uses character to convey the theme of harmony.'

Other less effective responses tended to occur when learners did not define which three elements they were analysing. In these instances, learners often wrote about a piece of repertoire incorporating many performance and production elements, often not listed on the task paper, and discussing each of them very generally. In these cases, even if learners analysed the performance and production work effectively, they rarely demonstrated thorough understanding of the prescribed elements and thus tended to provide a more generalised response to the specific focus of the activity.

Some less effective responses provided very little specific detail on their chosen element with tenuous or no links to the theme:

Lighting

Bruce / Ghost Dances: 'Christopher Bruce uses the element of lighting in his piece to portray harmony, in Ghost Dances Bruce uses red light to signal death, this is seen in every death in the piece, yet it is very subtle. During the duets and other dances in this piece the red light appears, and someone has left limbo and crossed over to the next stage of the afterlife, this means that the people don't fear the ghosts and don't have a feeling of constant confusion and insecurity when in limbo. Once they leave limbo they're at peace, they have stopped suffering. This shows that Bruce's use of red light not only shows death but shows pain and suffering ending confusion with insecurity lifted.'

Other less effective responses, again provided very little specific detail on their chosen element with tenuous or no links to the theme and, tended to revert to narrative:

Character

Miranda / Hamilton: 'She also spoke out against slavery creating freedom and harmony for thousands and thousands of people who had been forced to work against their will. She interviewed every single soldier that she could on the battlefield, and shared their stories; therefore telling the stories of Lafayette, Mulligan and Laurens to the rest of the world. She constantly asks 'When my

time is up have I done enough' as she is trying to finish as many people stories as she possibly can in the time that she has been given to make a change. But most importantly of all she tells the audience 'Can I tell you what I'm proudest of ... I founded the first orphanage in NYC.' She created a new life for thousands of children in NYC, giving them a new chance to start afresh and create a more harmonious life out of it. Overall Eliza Schuyler brought peace and tranquilly to thousands of stories that she had lived through, bringing harmony not only to them but also to Alexander Hamilton, who she was determined to finish the story for, as his time was cut short to finish making an impact on the country and the rest of the world.'

The best responses in relation to all the elements had, at the heart of them, a clear sense of performance, not just a textual analysis:

Character

Robbins / Fancy Free: 'Robbins uses strong characterisation in his ballet Fancy Free to show harmony between friends. In Fancy Free three sailors come to New York for their break from duty and they are very excited and in awe of the scenery and buildings. They all stand close together as shown by a lot of unison material such as when they perform quick toe taps at the same time. They also know what each other will do as seen when one will suddenly jump up as though trying to view something form high up and the other two will catch him immediate not letting him fall . . . the first sailor is very grandiose. He performs many difficult moves such as large kicks, a big split off the bar, many pirouettes into the splits and a long turning jump section to end perfectly on balance on one leg. He is trying to impress the girls and is quite arrogant and proud . . . The third sailor is more sensual ... smoothy sways his hips ... he lunges deeply hitting the floor before very slowly coming up with a shaking hand at his side as though it were a jazz hand ... All three are very different in character and despite their differences get along very well showing their harmony...'

Effective responses provided more specific detail on the chosen elements with often insightful connections to the theme supported by perceptive examples from the chosen repertoire:

Choreography / Choreography

Frantic Assembly / Love Song: 'Bold choreography is particularly significant at the end of the play when Maggie is dying. She is writhing with agony on the bed. She slowly extends her hand as if begging for help. She rubs her hands in jerky motion along her thighs conveying pain through the choreography. This sequence continues until she pulls her younger self out of the bed. Margaret rolls over Maggie and replaces her. This full body contact shows harmony between

the characters. Maggie then disappears into the bed. Margaret performs a physical theatre sequence in a similar way to Maggie but does it in a far more sensual and relaxed manner, pushing her hands down her body to connote sexual passion and lust. Billy, shortly followed by William then appear out of the bed. The three of them perform a frenzied sequence. They all seem to act of their own accord and do not interact with each other in the first section, but soon tender moments of interaction begin to occur between the performers. For example Margaret leans on the headboard as William leans on her torso. This moment of tenderness relates to their harmony as a couple. The movement between them get increasingly frenzied until Margaret leans backwards and the men gently support her until she is lying on the bed. This is representative of the support in marriage and the harmony they have together. Maggie reappears but has no influence of her own on the sequence, almost as if she is already dead. She is held by William then by Billy, showing that the tender love in their relationship is still present. The younger couple disappear back into the bed and Billy is left looking helplessly at Maggie as she is left writhing in pain on the bed again. This abstract section of choreography shows harmony between the couple and harmony in the past and the future as they interact and support each other.'

And

Choreography

Bourne / Sleeping Beauty: 'In Bourne's performance of Sleeping Beauty, first performed in 2012, Bourne communicates the theme of harmony between two opposites and their forbidden love in the Rosa Adagio duet. This dance begins with two dancers, Aurora and Leo the gardener. The dance itself combines traditional ballet and gestural dance to exaggerate the characters' childish first love and their desire to be together. When Leo and Aurora are sat on the bench, she kicks him in the back in a sharp yet playful way to get his attention. He responds by sitting on the bench and pulling Aurora across the bench into a tight embrace. Bourne demonstrates their love and affection for each other in this scene through their childish and playful contact movement which in turn communicates harmony through the correlation of the movement and the original Tchaikovsky score of the piece. Bourne's use of the choreographic device of movement and music correlation further communicates the theme of connection as the sudden surges in the string section of the score are connected by the contact and physical connection of Aurora and Leo as they move around the stage. Leo leading and lifting Aurora trying to impress her with a rose, which in turn further strengthens their bond and relationship, the movements of the two dancers themselves are controlled and precise, reminiscent of traditional ballet training. However this is combined with a more grounded and weighty

gestural style, highlighting the emergence of contemporary dance being channelled through the younger generation. Bourne's correlation here of old and new dance styles also links to communicate the theme of harmony through the balance and beauty of old and new as he also demonstrates through the correlation of music and movement.'

Activity 3

This activity requires learners to recommend one of their chosen practitioners' work to headline a performing arts festival in response to the motto, '*We don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note. Only notes that are different can harmonize.*' In order to do this, they have to compare and analyse both practitioners' performance and production repertoire.

There was a wide range of responses to this activity. Most learners discussed both practitioners and offered a suggestion as to who should headline the festival, with some sense of investigation and comparison of the practitioners' work.

The response to the motto '*We don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note. Only notes that are different can harmonize,*' was generally effective with most learners engaging with the motto and some offering their own interpretation of the motto.

Unfortunately, a minority of learners ignored the motto completely or continued to discuss their practitioners' work very generally in relation to the theme of *Harmony*.

The most effective responses often gave, at the start of the response, their own definition of the motto and justified their ideas relating to the work of the practitioners from this starting point providing a balanced response on how the practitioners' repertoire related to the motto. They went on to justify their ideas relating to the work of the practitioners from this starting point, providing a balanced response on how the practitioners' repertoire related to the motto:

'I believe that this quote summarises how, in order to achieve harmony, everybody must put in their own separate effort to help achieve a common goal so that harmony does not mean everybody needs to be the same. I believe the idea of everyone having their own identity while still working together as one is very prominent for the interpretation of this quote in relation to the

practitioners Lin-Manuel Miranda and Andrew Lloyd Webber as have both written pieces that demonstrate this idea very effectively and could be used for performing arts festival with this motto.'

And

'The motto 'We don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note. Only the notes that are different can harmonize,' is relevant to both my practitioners Alvin Ailey and Christopher Bruce. To me, the motto suggests that in order to have complete harmony in both yourself and society, you have to be diverse different and open minded. We see this through Ailey and his own experiences with segregation and how this has influenced the making on both his pieces Cry and Revelations, and for Bruce through the difference in characters in Ghost Dances and despite their differences still being in harmony with each other.'

In some instances, learners developed a strong interpretation and argument in relation to the motto and their practitioners' work but failed to relate it to specific moments of repertoire, instead only discussing narrative which was not helpful:

'In The Caucasian Chalk Circle the prologue contains the view of the Singer. Brecht's Singer is a well-known asset to the Caucasian Chalk Circle and in the prologue they apply social comment which links to harmony and also to the given quote in that different people should have more understanding of how other people think, otherwise there is no hope at all for mankind. 'It may be a mistake to mix wines but old and new wisdom mix admirably.' This is said by the Singer to break up the argument unfolding between the different farmers fighting over a piece of land. Brecht is stating that more people should be like the Singer and then there will be less arguments and more understanding of other viewpoints. 'Only notes that are different can harmonise' refers to a company of people who decide laws must be made up from all different kinds of people from different backgrounds so that there can be a common cause and harmony and that is the only way to get things done.'

There was an increase this series where learners appeared to produce work that had been pre - prepared for this task. In these instances, there was little or only cursory reference to the motto while repeated contextual information which may have been researched for Activity 1 were discussed in detail. This disadvantaged learners and was self-limiting. It is also worth noting that this activity compares the performance and production repertoire of the two chosen practitioners not their biographical or cultural influences:

'Bourne supports the quote by bringing together different sexualities. A couple of years before Swan Lake first premiered Britain introduced its first female prime minister. Everyone thought she was going to make many positive changes but that dies down when she introduced the law Section 28 in 1988. This banned the 'promotion' of homosexuality and same sex marriage, people were deeply upset ...'

And,

'The rock opera musical Rent is built on a foundation of harmony. This can be exemplified through Jonathan's personal life. For instance his best friend was diagnosed with AIDS. Having someone close to you suffering from this disease will give you a different outlook on life which is why Jonathan had to include something that was meaningful to him. This is reflected in support groups as Matt had to go to these and where he invited Jonathan to go with him... his regular attendance of a non profit group called Friends in Deed, which was created in 1991 as a support group for New Yorkers with AIDS, influence Jonathan to write about support groups in the musical.'

Some learners wrote a fairly brief response to this activity, possibly because of too long spent on the other two activities leaving less time to respond to Activity 3. This was self-limiting.

However, the majority of learners gave clear, coherent and independent judgements in response to the motto and it was clear that these learners had completed a thorough investigation process, which supported them when answering this activity.

'I would suggest putting on 'Things I Know to be True' for the festival as I believe it shows the quote very well through the family in the play. When Rosie imagines her wedding her family interact with her in a series of contact work. Her dad holds her behind her neck and lowers her so he can see her as Rosie says 'I am so embarrassed' which shows how her father is always watching over her but also how she feels pressured under his watchful eye. Later she is lifted so that her sister Pip can walk under her showing how she feels calmer and more controlled than she is as she walk 'below the radar'They all have very different relationships with Rosie yet they all come together to support her. This shows how they can work as one unit even with their difference, much like a musical harmony in the quote where their differences allow them to support and care for Rosie in different ways which achieve harmony forming a strong family unit.'

And

'Company is essentially about the contradictions love can create, it suggests that everybody's perceptions and views on love are different but we create harmony in society from this. This concept of contrasting ideas is clear in the ballad 'Sorry – Grateful' .. the stings and flute in the score almost make it sound like a love song ... later in 'Have I Got a Girl for You', which is sung to Bobby by the male chorus it begins with 4 plucks on the bass of the same pitched note. This understated beginning to a song that has no harmony or added timbre of other instruments could be representative of Bobby's isolation as he never sings in harmony with anyone else. After this tonal instrumentation the Bobby motif begins ...'

And

'Alvin Ailey demonstrates the quote through 'I've been Buked.' In this performance Ailey and the dancers start centre stage, in a tight formation with a golden pool of light shining down on them. They stand in unison, whilst doing a deep plie and stretch their right arm diagonally downwards with their fingers spread and raise their left arm to their aching rib cage showing their pain. They then rolled their heads backwards and repeating this movement stretched their right arm diagonally downward. They then reached up towards the golden pool of light with their right arm and looked directly upwards. Their dynamics are slow and sustained showing their suffering and pain. This section shows the togetherness that black people felt as a community as they fought in the Civil Rights Movement. Their focus is up most of the time which signifies God as they are asking for help. This shows that allowing difference can bring greater things to life and even after 50 years 'Revelation' is a brave and successful protest for equality.'

And

'In 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat', Joseph not only goes on a physical journey but a mental one too, and returns from it far more mature and stronger. Pimlott describes Osmond's performance as being able to convey "both ends of the spectrum from the naive boy to the man he becomes" and this is evident when comparing the beginning and end of the production. The naive boy during 'Jacob and Sons' appears youthful and innocent, hugging, fist bumping and high fiving his brothers. He makes intense eye contact with his father showing respect and admiration, that of a young boy. However comparing that to 'Grovel, Grovel' in which Joseph is pharaoh and the audience view his confident nature with a wide gait stood over his brothers as they kneel in respect

and never making eye contact but rather looking above and over their heads. By this point Joseph has reached his successful position in government, as he predicted, which already conveys the importance of, and harmony resulting from, having faith in one's own goals. But now he has achieved this, the audience can see his mental growth, he now appears more self assured and is able to make his own judgments leading him to make the confident decision to forgive his brothers and find domestic harmony with them again. This teaches the audience that facing change and barriers that may cause one to doubt their own potential, will build their strength and mental maturity significantly, provided they stay true to their goals, which eventually result in harmony both in oneself and those around them.'

And

'The children all needed to escape from home, like Mia does, to find harmony within themselves and differentiate themselves from being just a member of the Price family to becoming their own person. This relates to the quote ... as the change from apparent harmony to true harmony in this play clearly shows the difference between unity and thinking the 'same' and thinking 'different' but being able to achieve true harmony despite this. I think the clearest moment when you can see this, controversially, is when Fran dies. Fran's death is what calls all the children back home, after they have moved away, physically or emotionally to find harmony in their own lives. However when they come together again, through a great tragedy, it is the first time in my opinion that we see the family in this purest state of harmony. They are all angry with their mother at the point of her death, but she cared deeply for them, even though she felt betrayed by their actions. With the loss of their mother the children all realise that they must return home to the location where harmony can occur, because they realise their mother was trying to work in harmony with them all along she was just on a different note to them. The children all returned dressed in black ... this stark image of tragedy puts them in harmony for the first time as previously their costumes were made up of colours that clashed with each other. The children all work together to dress their father in unison with no discussion ... The final image we are left with is the family having a naturalistic discussion in an unnatural position, they are spread diagonally covering the whole performance space holding hands with each other... the only moment of disharmony is Bob left reaching out for his wife's hand suggesting that his harmony is incomplete.'

And

'Initially the closeted Prince hides his homosexuality so that everybody 'sings the

same note' and ignores how his actions disturb the inner harmony he feels when he is embracing his sexuality. However as the performance progresses he begins to understand that embracing his sexuality and welcoming the 'notes that are different' - notes being the different sides of his personality - so that he can harmonise with them and live happily. One can argue that this production wouldn't be suitable due to the fact that the Prince eventually succumbs to the societal pressures and commits suicide instead of displaying his homosexuality, therefore disrupting the message the festival stands for, however I argue that the Prince's untimely death reiterates the importance of the motto and how it is reflected in modern life. The development of the Prince's character is witnessed within the park bench scene...'

The majority of learners gave a clear and well supported recommendation for the festival summing up their conclusions in relation to the motto:

'In conclusion I believe that Ailey and his works are more relevant and suitable for the festival as they link to the motto clearer. Although both Ailey and Bruce show the effect of inequalities and how that can destroy your person's harmony, in my opinion Ailey does this more explicitly and draws from his own experiences, this makes the dance rich and shows the in depth understanding of how a black dancer goes from being oppressed and struggling to cope to be in free, triumphant and in harmony. In both his works Revelations and Cry he shows the journey black people have to endure to find just a glimpse of harmony and freedom and the motto clearly links to the idea he is trying to communicate but if everyone accepted one another and stopped the segregation everyone could be in harmony and there would be no superiority and battle between races, clearly linking to the idea that only the notes that are different can harmonise.'

And

'In conclusion I believe both practitioners could be good however I believe that Ailey would be best suited to headline the performing arts festival because Ailey's works take you on an emotional journey, especially Revelations and you start feeling the loss, hope and then gradually throughout creates a happier, more positive atmosphere. I believe Ailey links to the quote better because he shows the journey it takes for someone to find harmony through discord and also their personal experience with harmony. Ailey also sheds light on why it happened and the consequences of this is educational ... therefore I believe Ailey would be best suited for the festival.'

Summary

Based on the performance seen during this series the following should be considered:

In preparation for the assessment

- Learners should be supported to achieve in this external assessment by developing their ability to critically analyse the performance and production repertoire of at least two chosen practitioners. Learners should be encouraged to watch, discuss and analyse the practitioners' performance and production work.
- Centres should guide learners to discuss the contextual factors, listed in the unit specification, which have influenced the performance and production repertoire being analysed by learners.
- If this work is completed during the 'teaching and learning' period before the Part A pre-release task is available, then once the Part A task is published, learners should have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of practitioners' performance and production repertoire and the cultural influences on this work.
- In preparation for this assessment learners should be encouraged to formulate their own opinions and make their own judgments on the performance and production repertoire work of their chosen practitioners. Developing this approach in preparation for the assessment will support learners to communicate independent judgments in response to each activity on the Part B task paper.
- The bibliography should be completed during the teaching and learning period and refined during the research period. This will allow learners to be selective in the use of relevant sources if they choose to reference or cite a source in their response.
- A wide variety of resources should be used when conducting research.

Learner responses

- Learners should provide an individual response to each activity headed with the relevant activity number.
- Learners need to respond to the specific focus of each activity.

- All activities require discussion and/or analysis of practitioners' performance and production repertoire in relation to the theme.
- The discussion and analysis of the performance and production repertoire should be practical in detail and relevant to the theme. Simple plot narratives are highly unlikely to support learners to achieve very highly.
- As in previous years, learners should be careful to ensure that if they are using practitioners with specific acting or rehearsal techniques, for example in the case of Stanislavski or Brecht, that the response does not focus on this aspect of the practitioner's work. No activity requires learners to analyse the theories or techniques of practitioners; rather they should analyse their practitioners' own performance and production repertoire, or work which accurately reflects the practitioner's own work.
- In their response to Activities 1 and 3, learners should be encouraged to give equal consideration to two appropriately chosen practitioners.
- Learners need to see live production and/or recordings of live productions that fully reflect the working practices of their chosen practitioners.

Administration

- Ensure learners are responding to the correct task paper for the series. There are two opportunities for learners to be externally assessed in this unit each year and each series will have a different theme and a different specific focus for each activity. Learners **must** respond to the set task for the relevant series in which they are being assessed.
- Ensure learners respond to each activity separately and if they are not using the published Part B response template for Unit 1, which has clear headings for each of the three activities, then ensure learners write Activity 1, Activity 2 and Activity 3 at the start of their response to each activity.
- Learners should list the performance and production elements they are responding to within Activity 2.
- Centres are reminded that they must complete the essential documents relating to each learner and the centre itself (the Learner Record and Authentication Sheet and the Centre Register). The examiner requires these for marking. It is essential that this paperwork is printed out and provided as a hard copy which the examiner can write on, and not sent digitally.
- Each learner's work needs to be clearly identifiable and each page of their

response should have the centre name and number and the learner's name and registration number on it.

- Each learner's response to each activity, their bibliography and accompanying mark sheet should be kept together, ideally by stapling it together.
- If a learner is absent or does not complete all the tasks this should be noted on the centre register so it is clear that the work was not completed as opposed to missing.



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom

