



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Dance

42303

(Specification 4230)

Unit 3: Performance in a duo/group

Report on Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2011 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

General Comments

Comments from moderators were almost all extremely positive about the range and quality of the work offered for assessment in this unit. Many centres commented that they had enjoyed being able to link this unit to the professional works, because it gave a focus to the creation of the piece, and the majority had obviously given careful consideration to the different ways in which they could use the three links. The range of responses was hugely varied, with some keeping quite close to the original and others producing work which was completely different. Many of the dances were really exciting to watch and moderators commented on the high standard of achievement generally. *Swansong*, *Nutcracker*, *Perfect*, *Rosas Danst Rosas* and *Ghost Dances* were popular choices for centres.

Almost all centres had given due consideration to differentiation and there were only a few reports of pieces not providing sufficient challenge for the most able performers, although it was noted that some pieces which used a mainly gestural, pedestrian or heavily characterised style did not always allow candidates to demonstrate the full range of their dance ability. It was pleasing to see some centres being really creative with items of set, costume, etc, but it is important to remember that it is the performance of the dancer that is being marked. Sometimes where dancers disappeared partially behind items of set for long periods of time and just hands or legs were used, assessment became really difficult. It should also be noted that where candidates had been allowed to choreograph their own work, the vocabulary chosen and the resulting pieces lacked challenge and did not usually give candidates sufficient opportunity to achieve well.

Centres valued the fact that the permitted 3 to 3½ minutes' duration gave opportunities for choreographing use of number, entrances and exits, etc, into the piece. Some centres had included a highlighted solo for each dancer within the group so that they could showcase their skill, but care should be taken to ensure that the other dancers do not remain off-stage for too long so that they are unable to fulfil the two minute minimum requirement.

Specific observations related to the criteria for assessment

This unit was generally marked very accurately in centres, and teachers valued the fact that they could break down the performances and acknowledge different successes for each of the criteria.

Technical Ability

This criterion references evidence of underlying technical ability to support the performance. Clearly there was a range of achievement in this criterion; but in order to achieve the highest marks, the candidate must demonstrate their ability within the actual piece. It is therefore very important to give the more able students plenty of opportunities to show what they can do. The most able candidates should be demonstrating: good alignment, posture, co-ordination, balance, strength, flexibility and control at some point within the choreography.

Accuracy of action, dynamic, timing and spatial content

Candidates generally knew what they were trying to achieve in this criterion, but sometimes they didn't fully appreciate the need for accuracy of action content, with the result that performances lacked cleanliness. Candidates need to understand that if they have not rehearsed to the point where they know the dance without having to think what comes next, they are going to lose marks because they will inevitably be slightly behind on timing and potentially in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Communication of choreographic intent

It was important for centres to identify the choreographic intent as distinct from the three links to the professional work. Some centres were not clear enough about this, with the result that the candidates' performances were impaired because they had no idea what they were trying to communicate through their performance. This is clearly much easier to identify where characterisation or style is involved, but teaching analysis of choreographic intent in the professional works can really help students to understand how this knowledge can inform a dancer's performance.

Sensitivity to other dancers in a range of dance relationships

Most centres had picked up on the importance of presenting work that allowed candidates to demonstrate a range of group relationships; and there were consequently no reports of candidates performing in unison throughout. However, some performances lacked sufficient opportunities for demonstrating “sensitivity” to other dancers, and many candidates clearly did not understand how they could evidence skill in working “with” other dancers.

Safe practice as a performer

The five marks available are awarded in the following way: three marks for what the candidate wears; and two marks for the demonstration of safe practice in action during the performance. The allocation of marks for safe practice has really helped centres in developing candidates’ attitudes towards presentation skills, with most clearly understanding the importance of appropriate clothing and hair so that their performances were not impaired.

Some candidates were unable to access the full five marks for safe practice because there were insufficient opportunities for candidates to demonstrate understanding of safe practice in action. The kind of typical content that might allow a candidate to evidence this would include: showing ability to control from the core in a particular movement or sequence; moving into and out of the floor; supporting weight, contact, elevations etc; but it would also depend on the way in which the movement was executed as to whether the action did in fact evidence safe practice. For example, a jump is an action where a candidate might evidence safe practice, but if the candidate did not elevate and leave the floor, even though it was not performed unsafely, it would not qualify for a safe practice evidence mark because it did not actually evidence anything. Additionally, we would expect to see evidence of more than two safe practice “moments” in order to achieve both marks. It is important therefore to ensure that there is plenty of technical challenge within the choreography of the piece to give candidates sufficient opportunity to evidence their ability to perform safely.

Overall Performance

Where centres had worked on overall performance skills, candidates achieved well, but moderators reported that this was clearly an area for improvement. Many candidates do not understand how to commit fully to a performance and consequently they lack performance energy, focus and most importantly, the ability to “communicate with an audience”. The study and comparison of individual dancers in the professional works, and an analysis of what they do to achieve that vital communication, could help candidates begin to evaluate these skills in their own work.