



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**Performing Arts**

**48804**

**(Specification 4880)**

**Unit 4: Final performance/designs for the  
chosen commission**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **Unit 4 – 48804: Final performance/designs for the chosen commission**

### **General**

There has been an excellent response to the Commission. The work produced in schools this year was entertaining and imaginative and fully embraced the theme of ‘Grim Tales’.

The theme has been imaginatively explored, and the constraints of performing as part an international arts festival acknowledged. Most schools considered the more macabre aspect of grim tales with the use of physical theatre as part of the storytelling. Others had a more literal interpretation, and used the stories of the Brothers Grimm as the basis of their piece.

### **Administration**

There were few real problems as all schools entering for the Double Award were familiar with the examination, and had already prepared students for the Showcase, Unit 2 of the Single Award. Schools need to be reminded that performances are to be marked on the day alongside the moderator. It is not appropriate for the teacher to act as lighting technician or to play accompaniments as the teacher needs to see the performance with the moderator.

Students had obviously gained experience through following the processes required to develop the Showcase for the Brief in Unit 2. Students continuing the course for the Double Award showed confidence and a clear improvement in terms of skills development and performance. There was also clear evidence of improved knowledge and understanding of how a commission is developed. This developmental nature of the course was demonstrated by the successful responses to the commission.

**Please remember that all the work for the Unit 4 Commission must be added to the work already completed for simulations and practice commissions in the Unit 3 portfolio.**

### **Skills development and professional conduct**

The mark for this unit must be considered as separate from that of Unit 3. There should be a sense of progression and development from the skills development and professional conduct demonstrated in performance of the Brief for the Single Award. The demands for the Double Award are different in that there should be clear evidence of the influence of other professional performers and/or other workers, technicians and designers in the industry. The teacher should have observed and assessed the students carrying out suitable research and work on the influences for their own work, and used the Skills Development Record Form to record their marks. This mark is a very important source of discussion with the teacher, and should accurately reflect the achievements of the candidate during the period of working on the Commission.

As for Unit 2, the teacher is in role as the commissioner and so takes responsibility for assessing the working processes of the candidate. These processes should provide plenty of opportunities for the vocational context of the work to be established and teachers should ensure they are carrying out the tasks effectively and are facilitating the process of student development. Emphasis should be on methods of working, on-going evaluation and the preparation of students’ skills for the performance.

Students will already have experience of working to practice commissions, which have been provided by the teacher during the year. The activities required for fulfilling the Commission should offer students the opportunity to demonstrate their professional conduct and develop their skills towards a professional standard. There will be students who do not take these

opportunities and are not committed to the process and marks given must reflect this. If they perform effectively during the moderation then this will be shown by the performance mark given.

As for Unit 2, the skills development and professional conduct mark must take into consideration attendance, attitude to the working processes, co-operation with the rest of the group and sticking to deadlines; as well as the development of performance skills. There should be a willingness to take on responsibilities and a sense of application to the tasks demanded for the completion of the project.

### **Final performance/designs**

Please remember that the performance must be recorded on DVD and only forwarded to the moderator with copies of the evaluations if requested.

The theme of 'Grim Tales' was very popular. The responses to the Commission were varied, with some original and unusual performances. Melodramatic stories from Victorian England featured strongly, with *Jack the Ripper* and *Sherlock Holmes* providing suitably dark tales. Excellent uses of script were in evidence, and gothic stories such as *Corpse Bride* and the darker folk tales inspired some excellent and moving performances. Some of the most original responses included work with song and dance. Two schools had carried out workshops using traditional storytelling techniques and decided to use these as the vehicle for the performance. The school with the more experienced students carried this out effectively by using their physical and vocal skills, making sure the audience was fully engaged. The less experienced students failed to address the skills needed and consequently were less effective. When the response included a range of performance skills it produced some stunning work. The most imaginative responses were where the teacher had asked for pupils' proposals for the Commission.

Please remember that there is no requirement to devise work. If a script or score exists then it is a valid vehicle for Performing Arts.

Much of the work showed an improvement since the Showcase and students were able to demonstrate increased self-confidence and skills. Only a very few students appeared to be under-rehearsed or ill-prepared.

### **Evaluation of own work**

Students evaluations should be presented according to the criteria stated on page 34 of the specification and should be written on one side of A2 or two sides of A3 or four sides of A4. The three observations of students working practice should also be attached.

As in Unit 2, the 'evaluation' is intended to give the moderator an indication of the contribution made by the student during the process of planning, preparation and skills development to Final Performance/Designs in response to the Commission. This evaluation is not of the final performance because it has to be completed before the day of the moderation, but of the planning, preparation and skills development during the process of developing the work for the commission. There must be a clear indication of the vocational influence on the student with correct technical language used in the evaluation. There must be reference to two proposals and reasons for the final choice.

There are three areas to be considered; a critical evaluation of a student's contribution to planning and research; an evaluation of their skills development using work-related language suitable for their chosen skill, and an evaluation of the process of development of the Commission. Students are required to show a thorough 'critical' evaluation of their skills

development to access marks in the top mark band, and although students could say what they had done, it was more of a challenge for them to offer a 'critical' evaluation of their skills and the process development.

Effective documents included well-annotated photographs, which showed clearly the student working on their skills, visiting venues, using different rehearsal techniques or setting up equipment if technical students. As in Unit 2, those offering design included colour swatches, preliminary sketches and showed how their ideas were refined for the final designs.

The 'international arts festival' aspect of the commission was clearly indicated with reference to why it was suitable for the chosen audience, though in some cases the demand to perform on two occasions was forgotten.

Least effective were un-annotated sheets from performer's web-sites, which gave no indication of the influences used. Reviews of a performance before the moderation, which gave no indication of the student's contribution, were of little use.

The three observations should also be attached, clearly focused on what the students have achieved and so support the mark awarded. These observations must be completed by people with whom the students have worked.

### **Post examination administration**

As for Unit 2, most schools referred to the sheet sent by the moderator, which details the paperwork to be sent to them after the moderation and by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

- Candidate Record forms for **all** students (for Units 2 and/or 4) signed by students
- Pink copies of the Centre Mark Forms or EDI printouts showing the total component marks as submitted to the AQA office
- Summary Record Sheets
- Centre Declaration Sheet: confirmation that where there is more than one teacher assessing, internal standardisation has taken place, or that the work has been assessed by one teacher only.

Most schools were very helpful and efficient, making sure all documents were completed correctly and sent promptly. Where moderations take place at the beginning of the period, February 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>, paperwork can be sent as soon as it is ready, without waiting for the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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