CA- Music 2 and music extension Musicology transcript  
   
(Duration 37 minutes 19 seconds)

Presenters:   
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(upbeat music) Narrator: We would like to pay our respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this film was made and also pay respects to Elders past and present.

John: Hello everybody. We're here to give you some tips for the elective essay and the extension essay in the HSC at Music two and Extension courses.

Emily : First, we thought we'd take you through some of the requirements from the NESA website. We're going to show you and talk you through the bits from the assessment and reporting in Music two Stage six part of the NESA website. So for Musicology, for the elective, Musicology elective candidates will submit one essay of 1500 words. So this is for your two unit. If you choose Musicology as your elective for Music two. On an aspect of the additional topic that you've chosen in the HSC course, or on a comparison of styles between your mandatory topic, which is music of the last 25 years with an Australian focus and your additional topic choice in the HSC.

John: As part of this elective process, a Musicology portfolio is to be developed as a record of the musicological process Much in the same way as you do a process diary for your composition, your portfolio will tell your teacher exactly the way you are developing your essay and developing the topic therein and proving to her or him that you understand the topic that is there and that you are actually writing something that is cogent and succinct.

Emily: So this portfolio isn't actually submitted to NESA for external marking, but it will be part of your assessment in the school, your internal assessment. So you should talk to your teacher about what that should include, and we will give you some tips for what your portfolio should include later on in this video. But it really is important that it evidences that it's your work throughout the year and how you have used certain pieces, research, what listening you've done. It's evidence of your process throughout the year on how you've written the essay.

John: It's also very important to realise as well that when your essay is marked by the HSC markers, they may well call for your portfolio to be submitted to them, not for marking, but just to prove certain points. So if you've got some very interesting and somewhat contentious points, your diary will be called for, and it will go in to the markers and they'll be able to read that. And if you, within your portfolio, are able to prove all of the points, then the markers can see that, and then they will mark accordingly.

Emily: Next the NESA website goes on to say that in your Music two Musicology essay, the essay should demonstrate use of primary sources. For example, scores, recordings, interviews, concerts in a detailed investigation of music studied. John, can you go into the importance of primary sources?

John: Yes, I can and thanks. A couple of things to realise here, if you are doing an essay about art music, the line of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven through the Tchaikovsky now, and into the 20th century, your primary source will be the score because this is what the composer's wrote, and that's the testament to A, their journeys, and B, their creativity. But if you're doing your essay about a jazz topic or a rock and roll topic, your primary source will be the recording. And so you need to access these recordings and these things as a primary source. But understand well that for art music, it will be largely the score, not the recording for those because Mozart is recorded every day by different people. And so you can't draw comparisons and conclusions successfully about a recording of classical music or romantic music, or indeed 20th century music, 21st century music. But you can actually look at the score and then make a very judicious statements in your essay about this. But if you're doing a jazz topic or a rock and roll topic, you will have, it's not the score that is the lead sheet for jazz, and rock and roll doesn't exist. It's the recordings that will be very important for those particular things.

Emily: It goes on to say, students should demonstrate an understanding of the use of musical concepts and their cultural contexts in the music studied. Relevant music examples chosen to illustrate important points and quotations should convincingly support statements made in the essay. These may be presented in the body of the essay as short score extracts and/or short recorded excerpts. So NESA is telling us that in the requirements we should be including, for all of our main points in our Musicology essay, little score extracts, and/or audio to accompany them, depending on what your point is. Or as John said, whether your piece is improvised jazz, where you might have much more audio, or a piece like Beethoven, a piece by a composer like Beethoven, where you might have lots of score extracts and slightly less audio, perhaps. Then the requirements go on to give students some advice on how they should tackle approaching their Musicology component. So it says, students are advised to choose an area of study for which they have access to primary sources, and to begin their study with an overview of the topic based on their sources. John, can you speak to that a little?

John: Yes, indeed. It's very important when you're writing an essay like this is to have sources that you can actually make some sort of decisions and some sort of judgements about the music and get evidence from these primary sources. If you choose a very, very broad topic, like all of the symphonies of Beethoven, you're going to paint yourself into a corner. You're not going to be... You need to be specific about this. So you need to find a topic and work out a topic over the course of a few weeks, et cetera, maybe even early in term for when you're starting your HSC course, that is going to not be self-limiting. It's going to give you a chance to show the markers that you do understand about the music. And that will entail you having to access these primary sources. So that's really where you can find your topic. Will start to flesh itself out for you once you've done some a bit of research and some analysis and things you think, oh, yes, I've got these resources, and I've got these primary sources, I can write an essay on this particular topic.

Emily: On that, the NESA requirements actually continue on and sort of refer to that by saying students should then narrow the scope of the topic, focus on specific works. So, as you said, rather than all of the works of a composer, you really want to hone in, or an aspect of the music or style. The essay should focus on specific musical concepts. So that's interesting, isn't it? Specific musical concepts. So you might start analysing your pieces very broadly to start with, but once you figure out what you think is interesting about the music and what you want to say, you might start to weed out certain concepts that you don't want to talk about. So you might end up just focusing on texture, or just focusing on melodic thematic development, which might be mostly pitch. And then it just finishes by saying, the essay should focus on specific musical concepts in the music studied in their cultural contexts and present an in depth analysis of the music. So their use of the word in depth there is very important to remember. They do not want you to give a surface analysis of this music. They really want to see that you've been thinking deeply about the topic.

John: Em just mentioned that you can't be too historical about this. It's a Musicology essay so get to the music straight away, rather than saying, oh, this person lives from so and so to so and so and had so and so for breakfast, and then... That's not important. We need to find out the music, whether it be Beethoven, whether it be Tchaikovsky, whether it be Duke Ellington or whether it be Kurt Cobain. So you've got to get to the actual music of these people.

Emily: Then lastly, the requirements from NESA, some sort of technical things and good to remember, and to remind yourself throughout the year, especially when you're finishing your essay. So it says, essays should be typed. Each typed A4 page equals approximately 200 words of 12 point double spaced type. So you need to make sure that your essay is in a 12 size font and that you double space your words. Each essay must include page numbers and a progressive word count every 100 words. So when you've finished your essay, you need to go back through and you need to put in your introduction, 100 words, then 200 words, 300, 400. So your whole essay has to have a progressive word count, cumulative as it goes through. So you can talk to your teacher about how to add that in at the end. It then says, scores or manuscript must be submitted to NESA via Schools online. That information is for your teacher. So that's how your teacher and the head teacher CAPA or head teacher performing arts will upload your PDF and your audio extracts to the NESA website. And then it says, if you need help with that, for instructions on creating PDFs, you can refer to the memos and documents sections of Schools online. Again, that's really for your teacher. That information is really for your teacher.

John: Yes, indeed. And throughout this entire process, my advice and Em's advice as well is to finish the essay early so that you can edit, go back, go back, go back and look through, because every time that you go back and reread it, you might find something that you need to change, something that you need to adjust. So the writing of the essay, even though you have basically a year to write it, that year will go very, very quickly. Once you've determined your topic, worked through your essay with a nice and succinct introduction and opening, and then the body of the essay and the conclusion, et cetera, and then back through it, back through it, what excerpts you're going to put in, what little audio clips, et cetera, this will take time for you to do. So you can't just sit on the fence and do this. It's not going to happen. You can't leave this till the last minute. It's got to happen from when you start your HSC course. I think you'd agree with that?

Emily: Absolutely. Look, would you ever hear a teacher say leave it to the last minute? Obviously our advice is to do as much of the writing as you can as early as possible because the refining, as John said, does take a long time. And you can make your essay, if you're saying fabulous things, you can make your essay so much better by giving yourself that extra time to finesse and refine, show it to certain people for proofreading and get some feedback from teachers or your classmates on how to put those finishing touches on. So definitely if you can be as organized as you can and get some words on the page early.

John: Absolutely.

Emily: The bibliography and/or discography, so that's your audio, footnotes and/or end notes, depending on what citation style you choose must be included, but will not be counted in your word count. And then it says, essays must adhere to the word length, which for two unit Musicology elective is 1500 words. Now, John about the footnotes and that they won't be counted in the word count.

John: Yes, this is a strong point. I've read some essays over the years where the student has created an extensive footnote somewhere around 200, 300 words. And that's not really part of the essay count, but you are getting your points across and it's not really a practical thing to do. Keep your footnotes short, keep your footnotes succinct so that the word count really does mean that you are writing 1500 words for your essay. Now, just on that point, if you write 1,520 words, that's fine. If you write 1,450 words, that's fine. We understand that. It's about what's in the essay. Now, clearly you've got to approach the 1500 words and be around about that level. But I think you'd agree with that. It's the content of the essay that is more important than the actual right down to the last word count.

Emily: Yes. So we're going to move on to Music extension Musicology now. So if you choose to do Music extension and you'd like to do Musicology for your extension project, the requirements are quite similar to those of the 2 unit Musicology elective, but there are some differences. So we're just going to take you through those now and speak to those NESA requirements. So you can go onto the NESA website and have a look at these yourself, and we'll be quoting a bit from that NESA website. So first of all, candidates will prepare and submit an essay of approximately 3000 words. So it's twice the length of the two unit option of the Music two option. So if you're doing it for extension, it has to be 3000 words. So it's a bit more substantial. Students will submit one essay of approximately 3000 words on one or more aspects of music that they have studied in depth. And unlike the two unit option, the Music two option, you can choose any topic you like. It doesn't have to be your additional topic or a comparison between your mandatory topic and your additional topics. So anything you like for extension. John do you want to speak to that at all?

John: Yes, I do. We'll talk more about this in just a minute, but you've got to choose the topic and develop a hypothesis and prove that hypothesis within the 3000 words. Once again, we say hone in on the essence of what is being said and try and prove this particular point. The extension essay is marked in a much more sophisticated way in that it needs to be of a fairly rigorous nature. And certainly you need to develop your hypothesis, not just overnight. It's going to take you some time to develop a hypothesis some weeks to do, and that will come as a result of the analysis. Now, generally speaking, if you do choose a topic, find something that is not self-limiting. That can give you the scope to show the markers what you actually know about this topic and an in depth essay, even more in depth than the Music two essay. I mean, I've seen so many wonderful extension essays on all topics from dissonance in horror movies, to the music of strong rock and roll to some Beatles songs, to Schoenberg and Debussy and Ravel and art music composers, as well as jazz, as well as rock and roll. But you must choose a topic that you can actually prove a little hypothesis in.

Emily: The NESA website then goes on to say their Musicology portfolio is to be developed as a record of the musicological process. This is just like the Music two Musicology portfolio. Again, it doesn't get marked by NESA, but it goes on to say here that this portfolio may be requested by NESA to validate authorship of the essay. So you need to make sure that that portfolio really shows that it's your work and all of the research, listening and analysis that you've done through the year. Similar to the Music two requirements, it then goes on to say, extension Musicology essay should demonstrate use of primary sources so that's scores recording interviews concerts in a detailed investigation of the music studied, students should demonstrate an understanding of the use of musical concepts and their cultural contexts in the music studied and be able to state a hypothesis. So this is where it is different from the Music two requirements, this sentence here. To be able to state a hypothesis and draw valid conclusions to their research. So John just spoke on that. That's really an important difference between the Music 2 essay and the Music extension essay that you need to state a hypothesis. And as John said, you really need to choose examples and an argument that you can prove. It says draw valid conclusions to their research.

John : I'll just speak on the starting of this essay. It is, as I mentioned, you'll develop your hypothesis over some weeks, maybe even months. And once you've done that, the very first thing you should do, and I think Em will bear me out on this, is some analysis, some deep analysis over there. And what may even happen is your hypothesis may be finessed somewhat around that analysis. If you start with analysis, you may have no idea what your hypothesis might be. And if you start your analysis of the piece that you choose, a piece that you love and you're passionate about, or a composer and a section of a work, et cetera, or a Beatles tune or something in the jazz world et cetera, something that you're passionate about, your deep analysis may point you towards a hypothesis and you and your teacher can develop this together. And that's what it is. It's not just you developing this, it's you and your teacher developing this together. I think you can bear me out on this, wouldn't you?

Emily: Absolutely. And your teacher will be such an important resource. So you need to make sure that you are doing your best to work consistently throughout the year and keep coming back to your teacher with new ideas, new analysis, and new things for your teacher to help you develop into your 3000 word essay. The rest of the requirements are the same as the elective Music two requirements. So it goes on to say that essays should be typed. That each typed A4 page equals approximately 200 words of 12 point double spaced type. So this is all the same as the Music 2 elective Musicology. Each essay must include page numbers and a progressive word count every hundred words. So that's just some reminders when you're finishing your essay of how it needs to be presented when you submit it to NESA. And again, same as Music two, it finishes up by reminding you that a bibliography and/or a discography, footnotes and/or end notes must be included, but will not be counted in the word count and essays must adhere to word lengths. So that's all the same reminders as the Music two Musicology. Now, we're going to take you through the examination criteria for the Music two essay and then for the Music extension essay.

John: So in the Music two essay the criteria, candidates will be assessed on how well they demonstrate musicological understanding through application of the skills of in depth analysis, understanding of musical concepts and the relationships between them within the relevant context, supported by relevant musical examples and quotations drawn from primary sources. Third dot point is organisation, development and expression of ideas. Now let's have a look at the criteria, the marking guidelines, the marking criteria. In the top box, what we're looking for in Music two presents a perceptive analysis and discussion supported by comprehensive musical observations based on primary sources. So your two big words here are perceptive and comprehensive. Second dot point is demonstrates comprehensive understanding of the concepts of music and the relationships between them within the relevant context. And the third dot point demonstrates a high level of organisation and structuring of material, with a comprehensive development of ideas in a coherent and sustained response.

Emily: And we might just compare those now to the Music extension criteria. So for Music extension, the Musicology examination criteria, we're reading from the NESA website here, candidates will be assessed on how well they demonstrate the establishment of a hypothesis. So this is a bit different, hypothesis and application of the skills of critical analysis and evaluation. Second dot point, organisation development and expression of ideas in a sustained argument with support by relevant musical examples and quotations, then, an understanding of the concepts of music and the relationship between them within the relevant context and research and data collection skills from primary and secondary sources. So, John, in the Music two criteria, it just says primary sources, but I feel like this fourth dot point is encouraging extension musicologists to consider including some secondary sources. What might they be?

John : Absolutely agree. These could be an interview with the composer. It could be something that you've heard on a podcast, it could be a whole range of different sources that aren't the score or the recording. And within those, and that shows your creativity and gives you an opportunity as an extension musicologist to sustain your argument. Now your essay could become very dry if you just use the primary sources all the way. If you're able to involve some of those secondary sources, which do go to backing up your points, then the essay becomes far more readable and gets us into that top box for extension, which of course is very, very interesting says it presents a well-defined hypothesis, demonstrating independence of thought. There's a big one, independence of thought supported by excellent organisation, clear sustained, there's that word again, a perceptive argument and an outstanding level of critical analysis and evaluation to draw valid conclusions from. What's your second point?

Emily: So in the criteria top box for extension, demonstrates a sophisticated and perceptive understanding. So they've added the word sophisticated in there, of the concepts of music and the relationships between them within the chosen musical works or examples. And then lastly, presents evidence of outstanding research and data collection from primary and secondary sources, which are integrated into the discussion or argument.

John: Very important to take away some of these big buzz words from these. sophisticated, perceptive. And I think, and I'll mention this as well in performances and indeed composition. The idea of sustained argument. Now I've read a lot of essays that start very, very well, brilliantly, but then fall away. So you've got to sustain that argument. Now you know about a performance that starts very well and then falls away. You've got to sustain that performance, and once again, a composition that can start well, but you need to sustain your argument all the way through via the concepts of music and perhaps bringing in some points to prove your hypothesis with the secondary sources.

Emily: Now that we've had a look through the requirements and the examination criteria, we're going to just pick out a few important things that we think that you should try to remember as you are going on your journey with your Musicology essay. So firstly is how to choose your essay focus because a lot of the requirements really talk about the fact that you should limit your focus. And so we might just give you some hints or tips on how to do that. John.

John: It'll come from your analysis. When you first start your analysis of the piece that you're passionate about and something that you're interested in, and aspect of the music, this will certainly be able to point you in the correct direction. But as Em has mentioned, you've really got to be very careful that you don't choose too much. Not every work of Beethoven, not every work of Mozart, or every recording that was made by the Beatles.

Emily: And not every concept of music either.

John : No, not every concept. So you might just hone in, we've mentioned this earlier as well, you might hone in on maybe just pitch, maybe just rhythm so that the markers can really see where you're actually heading as far as this is concerned. So choose a topic that is not self-limiting, but is not too broad.

Emily : When you're doing your initial research and analysis, we suggest that you really focus on the music. Analyse the music, and that's going to be how you figure out what you want your essay to be about. So do lots of analysis at the beginning of your process.

John: I would a hundred percent agree.

Emily: In terms of what your portfolio should look like, this is actually quite open. So don't feel too limited or worried about exactly how your portfolio should look. Your teacher will help you through the year, remind you about what you should include. And of course, you should feel free to speak to your teacher as often as you like about whether your portfolio is showing what it needs to. Every teacher is going to ask their students to include different things. John, what are some of the things that you encourage your students to put in their portfolio?

John: I encourage my students to certainly put in every single draft of what they do. Even if you write a few hundred or even a hundred words overnight, put that in the portfolio. The other thing to put into the portfolio is really anything that helps you. Now, you go to a wonderful concert and you think, ah, that was fantastic. Put the ticket in. Put the ticket into the portfolio. Any ideas that come about from other people. You might have some wonderful friends who are fantastic musicians, and they might give you a clue. You might well be able to put a transcript of the little interview that you do with one of your classmates, because he or she happens to playing the piece that you're interested in and put that inside your portfolio. Anything that's going to help you and help the teacher, your teacher show that you are developing your idea into a sustained argument.

Emily: So you might include annotations of your score as you're analysing your piece, and you might have the score in there four times. One time might be an analysis of some pitch, some chords, the harmony, looking at certain things like that. And then a month or two later, you might have the score printed and pasted in there again, and this time you might have annotations about texture or melodic development. So all of those primary sources should also be in your portfolio. So, as John said, every little thing that you've used to help you build your ideas in your essay, chuck them in.

John: Now we'd like to give you some tips about your actual presentation of the essay. Now we've mentioned this already a couple of times, but we'll mention it again. You need to type your essay, double-spaced, 12 point size font and a cumulative word count. Every a hundred words, put a word count in. The other thing to consider is when you're writing an introduction for your essay, be succinct and tell the reader what you are actually doing. Now, I've included an extension essay for which this occurs. The young person who wrote this is very, very good at saying this essay will show, this essay does the following.

Emily: So this essay is called 'Shostakovich's response 'to Socialist Realism in the Allegro non Troppo 'of his Symphony No. 5.' So it's a very clear title. And whilst the picture that you can see on the screen now is too little for you to make out the words, hopefully you can see that for this 3000 word Music extension essay, the introduction is about 16 lines and less than an eighth of a page. So as John said, we really recommend that you keep that introduction succinct, nice and clear, and that you really explain what your hypothesis and argument is going to be in that essay. You might also note the little footnotes down the bottom of that first page. They're brief, the student isn't trying to sneak in more words in those footnotes, and they've chosen, do you think that's Harvard style citation that they've chosen there John?

John: I think it is Harvard, yes.

Emily-: So you and your teacher need to decide what style of citation you're going to use and you do need to use it consistently and correctly throughout your essay.

John: This is a good one to look at as well. Here are some quotes. And they're brief, they're certainly annotated as far as things are concerned, you can see the colours they're in and the actual bar numbers and what have you. So keep your quotes annotated, brief and relevant to the point that you're making.

Emily: And this student has not only included an annotated score example, but they've also attached some accompanying audio. So where applicable, you can do this too. You should always have some score or audio for all of your main points throughout your essay, and you might want to combine all three. Annotations score and audio sometimes. And also, interestingly, you might notice that cumulative word count. So it needs to be a progressive or cumulative word count all the way through your essay, every hundred words. So you could choose to do it like this student on the right.

John: Last thing we'd like to say is this. Write a concise conclusion. Now you've written a succinct and pointed introduction, nice body of the essay, keep your conclusion concise so that the essay can end well and you will have shown that you are sustaining the argument all the way through.

Emily: I think it's really great. If you can put some extra effort into making sure that introduction and that conclusion is serving your essay well, and your argument well. So spend some proper time with your music teacher and maybe even your classmates to proofread that introduction and that conclusion so that really supports your hard work through the year. Okay, here are our main takeaways for success in a Musicology elective for Music two, or a Musicology elective for extension.

John: The first one is hone in on the focus and scope of your essay. Now, I don't need say too much more about that, but you really got to get to the essence of things straight away.

Emily: So you don't want to focus on a whole composer's work or every concept of music. Hone in. Secondly, be succinct. Try and be as concise as you can in your language, and to the point,

John: Indeed, 1500 words for the Music two is not that much. 3000 words for the Music Extension, obviously a little bit more, but still within that, don't waffle. Get to the point and use your word count successfully for all the way through.

Emily: Remember to keep that musicological focus. While the markers want to see that you understand some cultural context, that is not what most of your essay should be on. You really need to focus on the music and all of your points should come from your analysis, from your listening, from the music.

John: And that absolutely, as Em said, that musicological focus will keep the essay on track and it will sustain it.

Emily: Yes.

John: It will sustain it.

Emily: So refer to those concepts of music, use as much music terminology as you can, and include lots of score and audio extracts throughout.

John-: Here's another one. Choose an essay focused that interests you. If you choose something that doesn't interest you, you're not going to write a good essay. Choose something that interests you and then judge whether it is self-limiting or whether you can really go to town and write a fantastically sustained essay about a particular musical concept or a particular aspect of the music that you can sustain all the way through.

Emily: You're going to be spending the whole year listening and analysing this music. So you really need to pick something that you're interested in so that you can let your passion for music and your curiosity about learning more about music really shine. Congratulations on choosing Musicology elective. It's a fabulous option, and we wish you all the best as you prepare for your music exams.

John: I'd like to back that up as well. All the very best for, not only your elective or your extension, but also in your performances and your compositions as well.

(upbeat music)

End of transcript