Creative Arts- Music 1 practical examination transcript   
(Duration 39 minutes 34 seconds)

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(upbeat music) -:

Emily: Hello and welcome to this short HSC Music 1 revision film. Today, we're going to take you through some tips for your practical examination, so for your performance and your viva voce if you've chosen viva for any of your electives. And we're also going to give you some idea of what to expect on that exam day.

Emlyn: Music 1 performance, you'll be required to do a compulsory core performance, and then three electives. Now you might choose three performances, but you can choose any combination of performance composition and viva. But today we're just focusing on performance. So a lot of you will be doing four performances for your HSC. Each of those performances is worth 20 marks, and they're marked obviously out of 20.

[Slide reads:  
Performance Core and Elective (20 marks)

Assessment criteria: Candidates will be assessed on their musical effectiveness through:

* demonstration of technical skills
* stylistic interpretation of the chosen repertoire
* sense of musical expression and sensitivity to the chosen repertoire
* demonstration of solo and/or ensemble techniques.

Outcomes assessed: H1, H2, H7]

You should see the slide that's identifying the performance criteria that you're actually going to work towards. There's four main areas. Demonstration of technical skills. Stylistic interpretation of the chosen repertoire. A sense of musical expression and sensitivity to the chosen repertoire. And a demonstration of solo and/or ensemble techniques. Throughout this video, we're going to try to direct our comments to those outcomes. And if you take some of the advice we give you in terms of your preparation, you should be really set to maximize your results.

* [Slide reads: Marking Guidelines  
  Criteria 17-20 marks  
  Demonstrates highly-developed technical skills incorporating technical fluency, technical facility, intonation and articulation appropriate to the chosen repertoire
* Demonstrates perceptive stylistic understanding through performing repertoire using articulation, dynamics and expressive techniques
* Performs with a well-developed sense of personal expression, demonstrated by the use of appropriate expressive techniques and a sensitivity to the chosen style
* Demonstrates a highly-developed understanding of solo/ensemble techniques including understanding of the role of soloist/ensemble member, communication with accompanist/ensemble and issues of balance.

The next slide that you should see is the marketing guidelines. We're just including the band six guidelines, because that's what you're actually trying to attain. Everybody wants band six. All the other bands have got almost the same statements except slightly different superlatives. I'll give you an example. Demonstrates a highly developed technical skill, incorporating technical fluency technical facility, intonation, articulation appropriate to the chosen repertoire. So the lower bands have got virtually the same sentence but instead of saying highly developed techniques, it might be satisfactory techniques or basic techniques or limited techniques. But the principles are the same and you're trying to achieve the best possible outcome.

The second one here is “demonstrating perceptive stylistic understanding through performing repertoire using articulation dynamics and expressive techniques”. “Performs with a well-developed sense of personal expression, demonstrated by the use of appropriate expressive techniques and a sensitivity to the chosen style”. “Demonstrates a highly developed understanding of solo ensemble techniques, including an understanding of the role of the soloist and the ensemble member communicating with your accompanists and addressing issues of balance”. They're quite detailed and it gives you a lot that you can balance your performance against.

Preparing for your performance exam. This should start very early in your journey, your HSC journey. Choosing repertoire is very important for you. You need to choose repertoire, which has music that you like, that you enjoy performing, but at the same time, it needs to fit the bill. It needs to fit the requirement and those requirements are quite clear. It must come from the topics that you're studying. Now you need to study three topics and you need to perform, if you are choosing all performance, one piece from each of those three topics and your core piece is going to double up one of the topics. So choosing your topics is pretty important. Now, a lot of schools, your teachers will often help you choose the topic, and you may even do class topics. And those class topics are very broad. Music of the 20th and 21st century covers any piece of music from 1900 to 2020 or '21 or '22. Those pieces cover any style, so you can find the style that you enjoy, whether it's jazz, popular music, rock music, or even modern classical music. So be careful.

The other one that's very good is instruments and its repertoire. Which is anything written for your instrument or voice. Anything, from early medieval music, right the way through to hot off the press music today. So, choose your topics which give you the flexibility to select the works which you want to perform.

The other thing that you need to consider is if you want and are aiming for band six, you need to pick a piece of music which is going to give you the facility to demonstrate sophisticated technique, sophisticated musicianship, sophisticated ensemble and solo work. If your piece is too simple, it's very hard to get yourself into band six because you can't demonstrate that level of musicianship. It's very good idea to have a tutor with which you can bounce these ideas off, and you really must talk to your class teacher as well, and get all the advices to choosing your repertoire.

One of the other requirements is a time limit. You are restricted to five minutes per performance. That's a maximum. I always advise students to aim for three and a half minutes to four minutes. Give yourself some extra breathing space between your performances. And the longer the piece, the greater your level of focus and concentration, to maintain the energy for that length of time. I don't know how many of you have performed for 20 minutes straight, but four, five-minute performances can be quite taxing. So aim for a shorter performance. And there's many ways to take a long work and make it short. Liaise with your tutors and your music teachers to find good points of cutting or remove a verse, or don't do as many choruses. There's plenty of opportunity to bring it down to four minutes.

The other advantage of having it slightly shorter, three and a half minutes to four minutes, is you have less opportunity to have dips in your performance quality. A lot of performances have a journey and they often have high points and low points. The more high points you have, the better. So the shorter, the work, the less low points. You don't want to be too short. One and a half minutes is a bit too short. It needs to still be substantial. So we're aiming between three and a half and four minutes is a perfect length of time.

Perhaps the most important point in considering when you're selecting repertoire is the technical level of that work. It should not be beyond you, but it should not be beneath you. What you should be doing is thinking, I've got three terms to develop my performance repertoire or four terms to develop. I need to pick something which is going to push me and drive me to become a better musician, but it must be within my reach. Trying to do a very complex Kate Bush piece when my voice won’t support it would be a bad choice. But then doing a very simple piece which doesn't give me the opportunity to demonstrate my skill, so choose your repertoire wisely.

So the slide you should see at the moment identifies three main areas, practice, rehearsal and performance. And we're going to go through those three stages of preparing for your HSC. And we're going to start with practice. How do you approach practice? Now with course one students, often your work develops organically. You might be given a task by your teacher, they might be three or four of you in a practice room trying to develop a performance for classwork. And from that, you create this work which you're going to use as a performance. It could be a jazz piece or a pop piece, depending on the topic of studying. So often the development of your performance starts in an ensemble as a group, right from the beginning. But on many occasions, it doesn't. Your tutor and yourself might be picking a piece, you might be picking "Summertime" by Gershwin. And how do you approach your practice for this? You listen, and you imitate, and you take your teacher's advice. You pick your favourite performance of "Summertime." You listen to the nuances and you practice and copy. Imitate, copy, that's a very, very good standpoint.

I would like to jump to rehearsal, because that is where all the real nuts and bolts happen, I think. When we're talking about rehearsal, you the student preparing your piece, you need to be in charge. A lot of rehearsals are collaborative affairs. You may have a piano player, you may have a group of backing singers, you may have a band that you're working with, and the collaboration is important. But ultimately, it's your performance. It's not the piano player's performance unless you're the piano player. It's not the drummer's performance, it's yours. If you're the person that's standing at the front, you're in charge. And so you should get used to being in charge during your rehearsal. You should know where you want it to be loud, where you want it to be soft. You need to take control. Now, if you're working with professionals, this might be a daunting task to ask a student to dictate to a professional musician. In which case, remember it's also a collaborative affair, and take advice from that professional musician, because it's probably going to be good advice. But you need to be in practice of starting the performance. You need to practice this during the rehearsal. Don't leave it up to the drummer to go one, two, one, two, three, four. You do that, you lead the piano player and get used to it because it doesn't come naturally to a lot of people and you need to practice it.

The other thing during the rehearsal process is can I suggest you just record your rehearsal processes and listen back. Something about recording on a phone or an iPad or some other device, is it does show spotlights onto the errors and mistakes. And it reminds you that you have to exaggerate everything when you are performing. So listen back, make critical analysis of your rehearsal and decide what you're going to do differently next rehearsal.

The other aspect of rehearsal is choosing an accompanist and co-performers. Now, if you're doing your HSC in 2020, you're only allowed one co-performer or one accompanist. Be that a piano, a guitar, whatever it might be, but only one. But normally, you can be choosing bands, small ensembles, acapella vocal groups, backing singers, a whole range. Choosing these people is really important. I've always assumed, and I believe that the people you work with, if they are better than you, if are more advanced musically, your game gets lifted. You perform better. You also suffer less stress and less anxiety because they are confident, they are professionals, they will perform perfectly for you. If you were working with students or other musicians who are less than you, they will often bring your performance down, and that's not what you're looking for. Professional musicians often come at a price, so you do need some sort of financial support for that. Start saving, get your job in a cafe, start working to how you can afford your musicians. Either way, pick them carefully.

Now we come to the performance itself, preparing particularly for this performance. One of the dichotomies in music is performance is not practice, and practice is not performance. How do we practice our performance? That's a tricky question, but there's a number of solutions we can do, and one of the big ones is workshops. You need to workshop your performance with your teacher and with your classmates. Workshops take a whole range of various disguises. The idea of a workshop is to take a section of your performance and do it multiple times under critical review and evaluation. This is essential, as far as I can see, it must happen. You need to sing or play your work, your song, your piece, and you need a teacher and colleagues whom you trust to give you feedback. Then do it again, receive feedback and do it again all within the same timeframe, not from week to week. It needs to be a very potent moment of time.

The other thing that we have in this world when we're considering practice and performance is where do we practice? We tend to practice in comfortable environments. It could be bedroom at home, it could be in our ugg boots, our tracky-dacks, we are comfortable. We are warm, we are in a friendly environment, we have no critical review. Then we moved to the performance space or the assessment space or the concert stage. And suddenly it's an uncomfortable environment. There is people looking at us. It's not a comfortable environment. We may even be wearing clothes which we don't normally wear. How do we bridge that gap? Well, we can't take the practice room onto the concert stage but we can take the concert stage into the practice room, or into the workshop space, and this is what's crucial, I think. Is taking that which is uncomfortable at an assessment or a moment of testing, and bring it in to our practice space or the workshop space. Those things that make us uncomfortable, that create distractions for us, we need to replicate those during our workshop time.

So great things to do is to have a friend whisper things in your ear whilst you're madly trying to sing a song. Have people distracting you by getting a friend to gently poke you in the back. Things which are going to physically take your mind away from your performance, and force you to focus even harder. I like putting gravel in students' shoes, so it's a really uncomfortable to stand in. And what that does is, whilst they're feeling that uncomfortableness of their feet, they practice focusing just on the music they're making. And then this can be transferred into the emotional distractions. What if I make a mistake? What if I get a bad mark? What if I fail? What if they hate me? What if my friends don't like me? And you can follow that pathway through to logical ends. We can subjugate that and stop that by practicing it in a physical environment, and then we can transfer the same focus onto our emotional distractions. Can I suggest you and your teachers explore ways of the distraction during workshop so you can practice focus. And then when you move to that former performance environment, you've had a fair amount of experience of being distracted, and you've practiced ways with which to bypass that distraction. Your performances will start to sky rocket on the stage. We all do 100% in the practice room and we dropped down to 50% on the stage. You can lift that back up to 100%. Explore, you'll be surprised what you can achieve.

Emily: The last thing about preparing for your performance that we'd like to talk about today is your program order. So you might be performing one piece in which case you should perform that first and last, but you could be performing up to four pieces for your music exam, and it's really crucial that you and your teacher decide the best order for you. So if you're a brass player, this might be different than if you're a pianist. If you're a brass player, your lips might get tired after a particular piece. So that might be something you want to talk with your tutor or your classroom teacher about where that particular piece goes. Or if you're a piano player, there might be a certain section that requires lots of agility, really fast passages, and you might know that you're going do a better job if you play something else before you play that particular piece. So those are some perhaps technical considerations. But there are also considerations of the shape of your program.

So if you have up to four pieces, they could be four bebop pieces that are all really fast and exciting. But you might know that you perform one better than another. Now, I'm interested to know what Emlyn thinks about which order that might go in. So if you know that you perform one piece the best, would you put that first, last, in the middle?

Emlyn: That's a really good question. Do you want to start with a bang or finish with a bang? Do you want to impress the examiners right from the word go, or do you want to leave them thinking good thoughts? My impression has always impressed them from the very beginning. That way, they're in a good frame of mind, they are human after all, and they've just listened to your best work. You feel good about yourself. It's just going to make the rest of your program sing. And the examiners will have this wonderful expectation of good music. So I would always start with my best piece, if that's appropriate for you. In a four-piece package, often one of those pieces might be a bit weaker than the other three. I would squirrel that away in the middle somewhere, start with something that grips, that excites, even if it's a slow ballad, it doesn't have to be fast and loud, but something which is full of your passion and full of your emotion and your commitment, and then drive towards number four, which is another good performance, and leave anything that's weaker perhaps in the middle.

[Slide reads: Music 1 viva voce  
Task: Musicology Elective Viva Voce (20 marks)

* Assessment criteria: Candidates will be assessed on how well it demonstrates:
* A musicological focus
* An understanding of the chosen subject
* An understanding of musical concepts and the relationship between them
* Relevant musical examples that support the discussion  
  Outcomes assessed: H2, H4,H5,H6,H7]

Emily: And now for some tips for your viva voce, if you've chosen to do a viva or two or three in your HSC assessment. So on the screen is the assessment criteria, and it says, “candidates will be assessed on how well they demonstrate, a musicological focus, an understanding of the chosen topic, an understanding of musical concepts and the relationship between them, and their use of relevant musical examples that support the discussion”. So there are four main things that we need to do to show the markers our skill in musicology in this viva voce.

[Slide reads: Music 1 viva voce  
Marking guidelines

* Discussion has a clear and consistent musicological focus
* Demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the chosen topic
* Demonstrates high level aural awareness and understanding of musical concepts and their relationship to the chosen topic
* Supports the discussion with relevant musical examples]

In this next slide, you can see the criteria, and we've put the band six criteria up there for the marking guidelines, because that's what we should all be aiming towards, a band six. So in a band six viva, the “discussion has a clear and consistent musicological focus. The viva demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the chosen topic, demonstrates high level oral awareness and understanding of musical concepts, and their relationship to the chosen topic, and supports the discussion with relevant musical examples”. So the viva voce isn't a speech, it's a 10-minute musicological discussion between you and the markers. So they will actually start. They will ask you questions and you will answer them. So you will have a summary sheet that will help guide them know what you want to talk about, but it is really important that throughout your preparation, you build the capacity to be a bit flexible about how you talk about your topic and what you want to say in your viva. And you only have 10 minutes. You only have 10 minutes to say all of those things that you're passionate about.

The first thing I would like to talk to you about is the musicological focus, and that is in the criteria and the guidelines, that it really has to be about the music. So you might be super passionate about a particular artist, a singer, a band or a musical style, and you might want to tell the markers all about why you love it, or the historical or cultural context of that passion of yours. However, that might be relevant to mention very, very briefly, but you've only got 10 minutes and you must talk about the music. So that's my first big tip, get straight to the music and using the concepts of music. So a great way to start analysing some of the pieces you want to talk about might be to analyse the pitch ideas, the rhythm, duration ideas, the tone colour ideas, et cetera. And then from there, figure out which points are interesting and that you'd love to discuss in your viva. Emlyn, anything that you'd like to add to that?

Emlyn: Yes, I think developing your thesis, developing your focus, is very important too. And it's very good and it makes your job easier if you've got a comparison style thesis. So you might want to study or have a statement that says, cool jazz is a reaction to bebop. Now whether that's right or wrong doesn't really matter. What it means is you've got two very contrasting styles of music which are related to each other. So you can use examples from bebop and examples from cool, and it gives you some interesting analysis with which to compare and contrast. If you are using music which is all the same, the comments you make are all the same. So if you are focusing on one style or one particular performer, it could be the music of Tori Amos, pick two pieces of her works which are very different or as different as you can find. Again, it gives you that opportunity to compare and contrast. And you are making different comments rather than the same ideas.

Another thing to consider when choosing your focus for your viva, is not to make it broad. If it is too broad and covers too much time, or too many styles, or too many works, you haven't got the time in 10 minutes to cover them effectively. The more narrow your focus, the better use you will have of your 10 minutes. And when you were considering that you are having a discussion, you're not giving a lecture, you're not just giving answers to questions. Like Emily said, it will begin with some question and answer, but then it's going to evolve into a discussion. And the best vivas that I've heard have been intense discussions between the examination panel and the student. So pinpoint your focus, get it as tight and narrow as you can, best use of your 10 minutes.

Emily: Your summary sheet. So for every viva, you need a summary sheet. This is an outline of what you're going to focus on in your discussion. There are so many ways that you can organise your summary sheet. So through the year, as you develop your discussion, you need to be willing to rewrite, redesign, re-organise that summary sheet over and over again, until it is organised in a way that is going to give you the best chance to talk about those things that you really want to talk about in that discussion. There are some examples on the NESA Website, if you and your teachers want to have a look at some samples of all the different ways that you could possibly organise your summary sheet. Your teacher might even have some more examples for you to look at as well. I highly recommend trying a different format, trying some different things out and seeing what works best for you.

Emlyn: Audio or audio-visual excerpts. They're going to be crucial to your viva, along with any other item, it could be some sheet music or some score, or some imagery or some pictures, or if you're talking about particular instruments, it may even be the instrument itself. So these resources are very important. And because it's about music, it's about sound, so you must really have sound excerpts. The sound excerpt needs to be short, very short. If I'm the examiner and within four seconds or five seconds of music, I'm not hearing what you're trying to tell me, the excerpt has been wrongly cut. So get onto GarageBand or some other audio application, download the track, chop the little bit of music. Now I'm thinking here between five and 10 seconds per example. So there's a little bit a few seconds to give it context, hear what you're actually identifying, and then maybe a second or so to finish the context. 30 seconds is way out, it's too long, you've only got 10 minutes. And if you've got two minutes’ worth of audio excerpts, you've only got eight minutes worth of talking. Listening to the music doesn't tell the examiner what you know. You speaking tells the examiner what you know. So don't waste your time with long elongated excerpts. Have them ready. Have them on a file which you can instantly get from your computer or from your device. Have them plugged into a nice sound system, if you've got one, so that it fills the space with the music, rather than coming from just the teeny little iPhone. That's always a good thing.

Practice jumping through your excerpts, give your excerpts a title, so you know exactly what the excerpt is supposed to identify. This is an excerpt showing change of texture. This is an excerpt identifying the different dynamic framework. This is an excerpt showing the syncopation in the funk bass-line. Have those titles so you don't miss them, you don't get them wrong, you click on the right excerpt and it makes you look as if you really know what you're talking about and that you've practiced and practiced and practiced. I think the viva is as much a performance, as doing the performances. Just you're performing in a different medium. You're using your language skills. With your excerpts, make sure you understand everything within those from all six concepts of music. Because the examiner might settle on the rhythm and ask you a question about the rhythm. Make sure you know it so you don't have to think on your feet and perhaps give a bodgie answer. So get your teachers, get your friends, to ask you these questions as if you weren't expecting them, so that you can prepare for all the eventualities.

Emily: Viva voce takeaways. These are our main takeaways for you to do the best you can at your viva voce. So, our first is make sure you have that musicological focus. Talk about the concepts of music, cram your 10 minutes with as much music terminology as you can, and try to avoid too much time on things like historical or social context. Refining your audio excerpts and your summary sheet. So, you need to practice with those things and refine them as you get closer to your exam day. And remember, your summary sheet shouldn't have any answers or musical definitions on it. Just an outline of what you'd like to talk about. And the last one is practice, practice, practice. Just like a performance, the viva voce can be refined and you can make sure that on the day, you're really well-prepared, and that you can let your passion for your topic shine

Emyln: Exam day. What to expect on exam day. What's going to go through your mind and how you should prepare for that moment?. Number one, make sure your paperwork is all completed accurately. You need to make sure that you've got your performance titles, that you've got your topic representation accurate. And that should be done on the form, your teacher will liaise with you, she will have the appropriate form, or he will have the appropriate form. Make sure it's filled out accurately. I prefer, as a teacher with my students, I collect them. I don't let the students hand them to the examiners, and I give the session of marking, I give the whole bundle to the examiner straight away. That way I've got them, the student hasn't left them at home, or they hand a crumpled piece of paper in. So make sure your paperwork is done for exam day.

When you arrive into the exam room, of course, there's human beings there. The examiners are human beings. They're going to be friendly, they're going to be nice. They might not be, effusive and over the top, but they will be friendly, so smile at them. You might be anxious, you might be nervous, you might be a little bit frightened, try to put that aside and start the exam with a healthy smile. And speak to them, say good morning, say good afternoon. Ask them how their day is going. And that way, you get off onto a right foot and everyone feels relaxed straightaway. You might have two examiners, you might have three examiners, depending on your circumstance. Some examiners will have a senior marker joining the panel. Don't be put off that you've got two or three, it doesn't matter. They're all in there being human, probably enjoying your music.

The other thing to expect is you see a lot of the top of their heads. They might not be looking at you all the time, their heads might be down typing on an iPad or writing. That doesn't mean they're writing bad things. 90% of the time, they are writing a justification as to why they're giving you 20 out of 20. They can't just give you 20 out of 20. They have to justify it, and that involves quite a lot of sentences and comments as to what is strong about your performance. So just because they suddenly start writing doesn't mean they've heard something wrong and they're writing about it. Try to believe that because it's true. 90% of what they write is going to be good and strong.

The other thing to expect on the day, for you is, your accompanists or your ensemble members, if it's 2020, of course you only have one, but for future years, your group of people need to be there on time. They cannot be late. The examiners really won't wait for you. They're on a very tight schedule. So you must be in communication with your accompanists, have their mobile number, text them regularly. Don't worry if you think you're being a pest, it's good. Make sure that you give them a time to meet, at least half an hour before the scheduled exam. I would think perhaps longer if you're going to warm up. To allow for traffic incidents, for public transport to be delayed, you don't want anything to make your life more stressful. If they are there, you're feeling happy together, when you walk into that room on time, you'll be so much, you'll be better for it and your performance will be better for it.

What's important too, if you have an ensemble, or even if a piano player and you've got a microphone, you want to do a sound check. You want to make sure the balance is right for that performance in that space. You are allowed to do that, so make sure you have prepared your soundcheck. Don't randomly pick something. Pick something where you are singing the loudest, or something where you are singing the softest, or a really quick bit of both, so that the microphone volume and the drum kit volume and the bass guitar volume can be adjusted so that you are shining and are clearly audible in the mix. If they can't hear you, they can't mark you effectively. Practice that soundcheck too, so you know exactly, the ensemble knows what you're going to do. Don't make it up on the spot.

Some environments, your teacher can come in and do a mix for you very quickly, and then run back out of the room. Use that opportunity if you can, you sometimes don't have to do it yourself. Your teacher can't stay in the room with you, you can't have anyone in the room except for the performers and the examiners. If you were using a backing track, and in 2020, a lot of people will be using backing tracks, the soundcheck becomes really crucial. Your accompaniment, your soundtrack, your backing track must be loud enough to fill the space but not overshadow you. If you're very loud singing in microphone and your backing track is coming from your iPhone on top of a table, it's not going to mix very well, and it won't do yourself justice, so it makes sure the mix is really good.

The timing of your performances, the examiners will tell you when to start. Don't start unless you've been asked to start. Make sure that when you've finished your performance, you hold that magic second, and then relax, the examiners will finish their paperwork for that performance. And then they'll communicate effectively with you when it's appropriate for you to begin your next performance. So don't just start immediately into your performance.

The last thing about preparing for exam day is before you walk into that exam room, you are absolutely warmed up to the max. You have to be ready to play. You can't use your first number to warm up with, you can't use the first minute to warm up with. You start as if you're in the middle of your performance. Give yourself time. If you're a vocalist and you're singing in the morning, a lot of singers don't like working in the morning, unfortunately we don't have a choice. We can't dictate to NESA when they're going to send out their examiners. Sometimes singers have to be singing at nine o'clock in the morning. So you need to be warming up well in advance so it doesn't feel like nine o'clock in the morning. Instruments must be tuned. Do not play and out-of-tuned instrument. Guitarists, use an electronic tuner. If you're using a capo on the guitar, tune with the capo on as well. So many guitars, the open strings are in tune, you put the capo on and play a chord and it's out of tune. Do not play an out-of-tune guitar. It will not do you service, it will also make your job more difficult, singing in tune to something that's out of tune. Can you encourage your school teacher, if the school piano you're using is not quite in tune, maybe to get a tuner in to tune up that piano so it's at its absolute maximum performance for you.

Instrumental warming up. You need to warm up your body, but you also need to warm up the instrument. If you're a brass player, if you're a wind player or a string player, those instruments need to be warm as well as our fingers, as well as our arms, as well as our whole mind. That brings us to looking after yourself. You really have to prepare for that exam day by getting good sleep, by eating good food. Fruit, vegetables, I'm not going to go into a whole diet, but keep yourself healthy. And can I suggest on the exam day particular, to avoid any stimulants such as coffee. Don't get a coffee or a V drink, or one of those sugar-caffeine-infused pick-me-ups. They won't do you a service. They'll actually make you more nervous and they'll raise your blood pressure and raise your heart speed. And what you're really wanting to do is be calm. You will have enough energy at your performance. You won't need artificial stimulants for that to happen, so avoid them at all costs. Quite possibly a couple of days before to allow your body to clear the system of any of those sorts of things. Lots of water. Take water into the exam room with you. Have a bottle of water, hopefully a reusable bottle of water, and drink regularly in between your performances.

The main takeaways for your exam. Be prepared, practice in front of an audience regularly

Emily: Lead your ensemble or lead your discussion, and bring your passion. You want to make sure that you are able to shine and show your love of music on the day.

(upbeat music)

Best of luck for your exam preparation

Emlyn: Good luck.

End of Transcript