



Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum
Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The *Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum: Musical and Stage Performance* will guide the writing of the *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course*.
- 1.2 This paper has been prepared following deliberations of the Musical and Stage Performance writing team and also in consultation with Dr Rohan Nethsinghe, Senior Lecturer - Creative Arts, Faculty of Education, University of Canberra

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) curriculum comprises of frameworks and courses. Frameworks state the rationale, goals, assessment, and Achievement Standards for a learning area.
- 2.2 Shape Papers provide broad direction on the purpose, structure, and organisation of courses. Courses comprise of four units and a negotiated study unit with content descriptions that state the learning entitlement for students.
- 2.3 The *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course* will be developed under the Arts Framework.
- 2.4 It is recommended that this shape paper is read in conjunction with the *Arts Framework*.
- 2.5 The Shape Papers recognise that each subject features discrete knowledge, symbols, language, processes, and skills.
- 2.6 The Shape Paper will guide the courses development process. These courses will be the basis of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in ACT senior secondary schools.
- 2.7 The course makes provision for qualifications or a Statement of Attainment from the Creative Arts and Culture training package (CUA). Refer to training.gov.au for details of the Training Package.
- 2.8 The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies is developing the *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course* as part of the Final Recommendations of the *Review of C and E Course Classifications Final Report*.
- 2.9 All courses are subject to a five-year course development cycle of improvement and renewal and are required to meet Board design specifications for senior secondary curriculum (Board Endorsed 2018). This paper should be read in conjunction with *The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum* located at:
http://www.bsbs.act.edu.au/curriculum/bsbs_course_development_consultation

3. THE ARTS LEARNING AREA

- 3.1 The Arts have the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential. Arts subjects are in the curriculum because they are judged as making a significant educational contribution to a child's personal development and future role in society. Furthermore, the arts represent an increasingly important area of learning for success and fulfilment in the 21st century.
- 3.2 Through studying and engaging in the Arts, students will develop knowledge and skills by creating art works. Through learning to understand self, society and world through art works, artists, and artistic practices, they will learn to value the uniqueness of each art form, and to understand that all art forms and knowledge are interconnected. Students will come to understand the social, historical, and cultural contexts of art forms. Students will learn that the Arts are central to communities and cultures. The Arts provide evidence of the creative and cultural life of a community.

- 3.3** As emerging critical and creative thinkers, students will gain the confidence and the tools to understand and critique the Arts in everyday life. As artists, students will learn that the Arts exist in process as much as in finished artistic products. Process does not have to result in a successful product or performance, but certainly do generate knowledge. Through their Arts studies, students will discover the skills to work both individually and in groups. Through those collaborative and individual processes, creative industries contribute to the development of a vibrant, prosperous, and inclusive Australian society.
- 3.4** Courses written under the BSSS Arts Framework are unified under a conceptual framework. In broad terms, learning in the Arts involves making and responding. Students learn as artists, by *making* art works that communicate to audiences. They learn as audiences, by *responding* critically to the Arts. These actions are taught together, as each depends on the other.
- 3.5** Making and responding will provide overarching organisers for BSSS Arts courses. Within these broad organisers, each subject in the Arts will have specific terminology, concepts and processes that serve as subject organisers.
- 3.6** Subject organisers are informed by key concepts that intersect across Dance, Drama, Media, Music, Photography and Visual arts. These subject organisers include creativity, communication, context, collaboration and entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership, composition and performance and interdisciplinary inquiry.
- 3.7** The subject organisers form the core concepts for the units in standard and extension arts courses. These subject organisers can be used to explore themes, ideas and experiences that are accessible, relevant, challenging, and interesting to students. VET training packages will be integrated into the courses allowing students to have their industry skills certified for future work and training.
- 3.8** These subject organisers encourage the development of ideas, the making and presenting of artworks, and reflection and connection to the wider world of cultural expression. In addition, they enable a learning environment for authentic arts education which is distinguished by a student centred and hands on approach to learning; continuous work with arts media, forms, and processes; and a positive learning environment, where trust and respect characterise student centred relationships and students' artistic interpretation and expression of their world are valued.
- 3.9** The backwards design approach was selected as a clear and cogent model for organising BSSS arts courses. The backward design builds on existing excellence in Arts pedagogy in the ACT. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, writing in their seminal text, *Understanding by Design* (ASCD, 2005), explain that enduring understandings refer to getting at the big ideas, or important understandings "that we want students to 'get inside of' and retain after they've forgotten many of the details. Put differently... [the big ideas and understandings] implicitly answer the question, why is this topic worth studying?".
- 3.10** In addition, the conceptual framework underpinning BSSS arts courses is informed by interdisciplinary inquiry. The integrated curriculum promotes making connections between arts practices and disciplines outside of the Arts. Integrated learning is intended to provide students with opportunities to see relationships, transfer and apply learning and make connections.
- 3.11** All courses of study will enable students to develop essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners. The Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and Cross Curriculum Priorities comprise an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum.

4. THE CONTEXT OF THE ACT

4.1 Courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate:

- provide a variety of pathways, to meet different learning needs and encourage students to complete their secondary education
- enable students to develop the essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners
- empower students as active participants in their own learning
- engage students in contemporary issues relevant to their lives
- foster students' intellectual, social, and ethical development
- nurture students' wellbeing, and physical and spiritual development
- enable effective and respectful participation in a diverse society.

4.2 Each course of study:

- comprises an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum
- is based on a model of learning that integrates intended student outcomes, pedagogy, and assessment
- outlines teaching strategies which are grounded in learning principles and encompass quality teaching
- promotes intellectual quality, establishes a rich learning environment, and generates relevant connections between learning and life experiences
- provides formal assessment and certification of students' achievements.

4.3 In consideration of the ACT context, and in response to contemporary research and literature, Musical and Stage Performance curricula should include:

- a student-centred pedagogical approach
- an interdisciplinary approach
- the educational needs of young people with respect to Musical and Stage Performances
- the Arts Framework and Achievement Standards
- the needs of different schools and sectors (government and non-government)
- cultural diversity and the multiple practices and traditions of Musical and Stage Performances
- the opportunities and practices of the Musical and Stage Performances industry and professions
- the right to freedom of expression
- the exploration of personal, local, and global issues.

5. AIMS OF THE MUSICAL AND STAGE PERFORMANCE CURRICULUM

Musical and Stage Performance provides a pathway to a growing economic sector and to a growing number of post-school study options. Tertiary institutions have long offered quality degree options to develop students acting, performance and production skills, including the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) and Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Before 2010 there was only one degree in musical theatre on offer in Australia, and this was at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) at Edith Cowan University in Perth followed by the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University in 2010. In the years since,

however, five more tertiary institutions around Australia have joined suit, the latest being the University of Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium of Music. (Strahle, 2019).

Musical and Stage Performance encompasses integrated disciplines including singing, dancing, and acting, and production, bringing these together in a performer to create not only what is commonly termed a 'Triple Threat', but also the contemporary requirement to be an agent who sources, and creates opportunities for their own work, such as performers, writers, and producers. As such, the *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course* is interdisciplinary within The Arts and incorporates opportunities for the development of knowledge, understanding and skills across these disciplines. Further through engagement with conceiving, producing, implementing, and reflecting on real theatre productions, students develop and realise their own artistic skills, but also entrepreneurial skills such as collaboration, project management, communication, and personal resilience.

With a broad range of skills and knowledge to be covered it is pertinent to consider fundamental and deep questions in on the nature and purpose of Musical and Stage Performances. Zazzali and Klein (2015) offer reflections as to 'why does studying theatre matter? How can the experiential skills and knowledge we provide our students not only give them the tools for launching a self-fulfilling career, but also for shaping the world in which we live? ...And if we intend to serve students, then how do we reconcile the stark differences between what stage-struck 18–23-year-olds want (to be an actor) and what they need as emerging adults and socially responsible citizens?

In the paper *Designing a Musical Theatre Curriculum for the Modern University* (Amellio, 2011), five student learning outcomes are proposed from the engagement in a musical theatre and stage performance curricula are to be considered in *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V*. Those proposed include that a 'student will gain professional-level proficiency in skills pertinent to a career in the musical and/or theatre professions. Students will gain well-rounded and in-depth exposure to the past, present and proposed future of the musical theatre and theatre genres. Students have opportunities to gain awareness or skills technical or administrative roles related to theatre or theatre performance. Student will gain abilities in creative entrepreneurship to help them start and sustain a performance or performance-related career. And, that students will gain actual experience engaging in theatrical performance and production.

These learning areas are investigated in the *Musical and Stage Performance* curriculum through a platform of historical and contemporary contexts whereby students can create innovative work through research and analysis, understanding the *how, when, and why* of performances, applying these to their own productions.

The role of theatre technology in musical and stage productions are explored in *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V*. Whilst core elements of these productions, singing, dancing, music, and theatre have evolved, there has been significant impact and influence from the integration of technology. Here, according to the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance "the audience needs to see, hear, and feel a performance as fully as possible so that it is a rich, emotional, and unforgettable event. Modern technologies have given us the tools to enrich the whole of this experience, and students today are mastering the use of these tools."

Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V incorporates extensive technical skill development across performance disciplines, including acting, dancing, singing, and production, and identifies their connections. Here the curriculum focuses on the interdisciplinary nature of skill in stage performances. As Finney (2020) observes, 'it is not enough to understand how a musical is written if one does not understand how the music works in tandem with script, nor is it enough to know how to sing the material if one does not know how to act the intention of the song'. Through participating in and reflecting on performance, leadership, and production roles, students will develop the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding in musical and stage performance.

Furthermore, in *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V* students make connections between their performances and the world, reflecting and analysing the impact art and performance can have on society, and in considering the issues raised by great works of theatre. Musical and stage performances 'have the power to shift the perspectives of other people ... and be an inspiration or offer a prospect of an attainable future'. (Morgan, 2021)

Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V can be viewed as an interdisciplinary inquiry course that exposes and develops student’s ability in a variety of performance components within The Arts, providing students with opportunities for further study and work in performance fields. Cross disciplinary collaboration within the Arts and access to a variety of professional expertise could be explored for the implementation of this innovative and dynamic course.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE MUSICAL AND STAGE PERFORMANCE CURRICULUM

Rationale
<p>In <i>Musical and Stage Performance</i>, students learn as performance artists, by making and interpreting multi-modal performances that communicate to audiences. They learn as audiences, by responding critically to musical and stage performances. Students develop skills in appreciating, creating, performing, and producing musical and stage performances independently and collaboratively for a range of contexts. Students learn as they engage with history of the musical and stage performance genres, technical skills across disciplines, theories, and concepts, and become literate in the vocabularies and ideas of a range of styles and forms.</p> <p>Students experiment and engage in calculated risks and accept setbacks when realising their artistic vision. Further they use the theories, concepts, vocabulary and learning to develop their own creative practice that explores self, life, and the world. Students learn to use their body and voice as an instrument to skilfully express knowledge and understanding. They develop proficiency, artistry, and use their physical literacy and performance literacy to solve problems, embody knowledge and express their understanding of issues of concern. They develop their voices as informed artists and engage with the world aesthetically and intellectually to become clear sighted about problems and empowered to propose solutions.</p> <p>Students acquire ICT knowledge and skills for the development of modern, engaging, and impactful productions. They develop transferable and applied skills useful in any academic, professional, and vocational context, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, leadership intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Musical and stage performers become highly skilled at working with others and communicating clearly to achieve joint outcomes.</p> <p>They develop skills in research and self-reflection to engage with theories and ideas critically and creatively, in accordance with ethical practices. Students engage with contemporary spaces and resources to help them achieve their goals. They develop production skills and hone practices that present ideas and projects in ways that engage target audiences. Students develop empathetic awareness and skills in the practice of collaborating with others respectfully and apply Work Health and Safety standards.</p>

UNITS

The units have been drafted for discussion as follows and can be implemented in the order deemed suitable by the college:

<p>Creativity in Stage Performance</p> <p>Students investigate creativity and examine a range of approaches to the creative process, including taking and giving direction. They think imaginatively and flexibly and develop skills to express their understanding of self, others, and the world in stage performances. Students examine stage practice of artists and performers and experiment during the development of their own creative piece in a stage performance. They creatively inquire into techniques and strategies to achieve their purpose and apply the creative process to create a performance. Students work collectively, collaboratively, and independently to examine the human experience and create new insights through performance.</p>
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Narratives in Stage Performance

Students investigate narrative forms and structures for musical and stage performances. Through analysis of narrative in performances, students gain insights into how people connect and tell stories to, and about the world. They explore various presentations of narratives in stage performances and how performance artists communicate stories to inform, entertain and persuade. Students use their storytelling, theoretical, technical and stage craft skills to construct and present narratives in a stage performance.

Communicating in Stage Performance

Students examine how meaning is communicated in stage performances, utilising performance skills, elements of production, forms, and styles. By conducting research and analysing historic and contemporary stage works that have communicated a powerful message, students critically analyse how meaning is communicated to the intended audiences. In learning to collaborate for productions, they develop skills in empathy, interaction, responsiveness, reflection, and communication. Through the creation of their own performances, students communicate their understanding of issues and relationships that underpin stage performances. They apply performance techniques to shape audience response, by provoking, informing, or entertaining.

Production and Entrepreneurship

Students engage in production projects, investigate opportunities for creativity and explore the various avenues for participating in performances. They examine the stage performance landscape and different pathways for participation, including both performance and support roles. Students learn from examples of historical and contemporary theatre and ways that performers or production companies have overcome obstacles and worked creatively within constraints. They develop an entrepreneurial mindset and consider the possibilities for authentic experiences for a range of audiences. Students appraise the role of technology in performance ventures, now and in the future, implementing these to support their own performances and engage in career planning.

Independent Study

An Independent Study unit has an important place in senior secondary courses. It is a valuable pedagogical approach that empowers students to make decisions about their own learning. An Independent Study unit can be proposed by an individual student for their own independent study and negotiated with their teacher. The program of learning for an Independent Study unit must meet the unit goals and content descriptions as they appear in the course. Independent Study units are only available to individual students in Year 12. A student can only study a maximum of one Independent Study unit in each course. Students must have studied at least three standard 1.0 units from this course. An Independent Study unit requires the principal's written approval. Principal approval can also be sought by a student in Year 12 to enrol concurrently in an Independent Study unit and their third 1.0 unit in this course of study.

7. CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Incorporating a futures orientation

To equip students to engage in the world in which they live, they creatively and critically examine the world in which they live. They reflect on, embody, and challenge the forces, processes and concepts through creative representation and critical research tasks. They will participate as artists in the social, economic, and political debates that are shaping our future.

The *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course* has a broad and comprehensive foundation from which the implications for Australia can be grasped. In studying works of Art, the longevity and richness of Indigenous history will be appreciated; the dimensions of our migrant experience and cultural diversity will be intelligible; that our relations with the Asian region will be comprehended; and the distinctive as well as the shared and derivative character of our personal and communal experiences as humans.

7.2 Musical and Stage Performances curriculum

The *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V* curriculum retains an important place in the ACT senior secondary curriculum. The curriculum fosters higher order thinking, creativity, intercultural understanding, and communication skills that equip students to take an active part in democratic discussion of contemporary debates over personal, local, national, and global issues.

7.3 Equity and opportunity

The *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course* provides flexibility and choice for teachers and students. The factors that influence this choice include school and community contexts, local community learning opportunities, contemporary and local issues, and available learning resources.

The *Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V course* provides opportunities for students to develop an understanding of aspects of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They include opportunities to creatively and critically explore indigenous experiences, and examine practices developed by Indigenous peoples to explain the world around them and analyse reasons why Indigenous peoples may have different views and perspectives.

7.4 Connections to other learning areas

Musical and Stage Performance is inherently an interdisciplinary course. There is a feedback loop between the learning other subjects and the perspective and understanding that students bring to their work as performers and producers. Students will draw the many strands of their learning into creative explorations of their world. The curriculum for courses will identify where there are links or opportunities to build cross curriculum learning.

7.5 Role of digital technologies

Students and teachers integrate a growing range of online information, tools, and applications. These include digitised online materials such as historical documents, books, newspapers, images, and items from museum collections, as well as other online resources including databases, reference works and indexes to library holdings.

Further, *Musical and Stage Performance* students will develop production, recording and promotional skills utilizing digital platforms. They will become familiar with the myriad of ways stage professionals engage with technology creatively and in terms of entrepreneurial endeavour.

7.6 Clarity of curriculum

The curriculum is substantial and flexible. It is sufficiently rich and descriptive to guide teachers with limited experience but avoids excessive prescription that would hamper experienced teachers from exercising their skills. The curriculum document is expressed clearly in terms that are accessible to a new teacher, while allowing all teachers to enhance it with their interests and expertise.

7.7 Breadth and depth of study

Content descriptions specify the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach. Teachers are required to develop a program of learning that allows students to demonstrate all the content descriptions.

A program of learning is what a college provides to implement the course for a subject meeting students' needs and interests. It is at the discretion of the teacher to emphasis some content descriptions over others. The teacher may teach additional (not listed) content if it meets the specific unit goals providing that it does not duplicate content in other units.

7.8 The nature of the learner

The courses address the needs of diverse learners and caters for Tertiary (T), Accredited (A) and Modified (M) levels of study.

7.9 General capabilities

Skills and understanding related to thinking skills and creativity, self-management, teamwork, intercultural understandings, social competence, and literacy are further developed and used in the Musical and Stage Performance. In addition, capabilities such as numeracy, ICT and ethical awareness are represented in the courses in ways appropriate to that area.

7.10 Cross curriculum perspectives

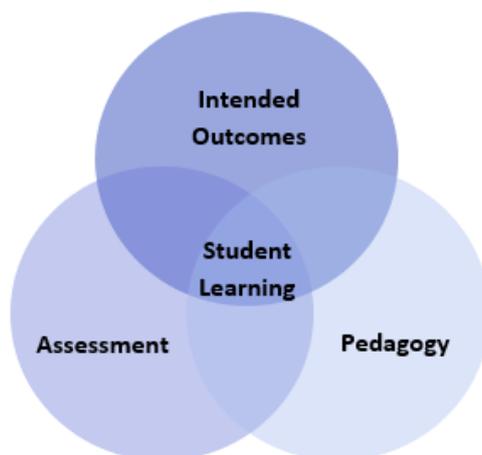
Each of these perspectives, Indigenous education, sustainability, and Australia's links with Asia, are represented in the courses in ways appropriate to that area. Curriculum documents are explicit as to how the perspectives are dealt with in each course and how links can be made between learning areas.

8. PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT

The underpinning beliefs and learning principles for the development of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary School curriculum as are follows:

8.1 Underpinning beliefs

- All students are able to learn
- Learning is a partnership between students and teachers
- Teachers are responsible for advancing student learning.



8.2 Learning Principles

1. Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings, and skills.
(Prior knowledge)
2. When learning is organised around major concepts, principles, and significant real-world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures.
(Deep knowledge and connectedness)
3. Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts.
(Metacognition)
4. Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn affects learning.
(Self-concept)
5. Learning needs to take place in a context of high expectations.
(High expectations)
6. Learners learn in different ways and at different rates.
(Individual differences)
7. Different cultural environments, including the use of language, shape learners' understandings and the way they learn.
(Socio-cultural effects)
8. Learning is a social and collaborative function as well as an individual one.
(Collaborative learning)
9. Learning is strengthened when learning outcomes and criteria for judging learning are made explicit and when students receive frequent feedback on their progress.
(Explicit expectations and feedback).

9. CONCLUSION

Musical and Stage Performance A/T/M/V is to be developed under the Arts framework. The study of The Arts promotes critical and creative thinking and intercultural understanding, equipping young citizens for the demands and challenges of the 21st century globalised world.

10. REFERENCES

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11. READINGS

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