

MUSIC AUDITION GUIDELINES & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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KEY DATES 2017

TICKETED MUSIC PERFORMANCES

All concerts are at 57 Miles Street unless otherwise noted. It is strongly recommended that prospective students and their parents attend public performances, which clearly demonstrate the focus of this school. Bookings online at www.trybooking.com (unless otherwise noted)

- Vocal Concert, 26 April, 6:00pm
- Yr 10 Solos Concerts, 17 & 18 May, 6:00pm
- Yr 7-9 Solos Concerts, 23, 24, & 25 May, 6:00pm
- Winter Concert, 21 June, 6:00pm
- Chamber Ensemble Finals Concert, 3 August, 6:00pm
- Outstanding Soloist Concert, 10 August, 6:00pm
- Year 11 Solos Concerts, 16 & 17 August, 6:00pm
- **Gala Concert "Pulcinella"**, Friday 15 Sept, 7:30pm @ Melb Recital Centre (bookings via venue)
- Spring Jazz Concert, 25 October @ venue TBA
- Year 7-9 Compositions Concert, 5 December, 6:00pm

FREE MUSIC PERFORMANCES

- **Lunchtime Concert Series @ VCASS Recital Room**, 57 Miles Street, Southbank, Thursdays 2017: 30 March, 1 June, 22 June, 27 July, 24 Aug, 21 Sept, 26 Oct, 30 November 11:45am-12:15pm, Free. If bringing a group of 8 or more, email music@vcass.vic.edu.au

SCHOOL TOURS

- Free, but booking is essential. Go to www.trybooking.com/Event/EventSearch.aspx?keyword=vcass
- Wednesday morning tours at 9am from April-July
- School Open Morning: Wednesday 24 May 2017

MUSIC APPLICATIONS

- Applications available online from Monday 24th April, 2017 at www.vcass.vic.edu.au/entry
- Applications CLOSE on Monday 24th July, 2017

AUDITION DATES

- Mon 14 August 2017 - Voice Auditions (some will receive call-backs)
- Thur 17 August 2017 - Written Musicianship Test (for voice call-backs & for all instrumentalists)
- 21-25 August 2017 - Instrumental Auditions & Voice Audition call-backs (specific dates TBA)
- Fri 22 September 2017 - Official email notification to applicants of audition results

AUDITION GUIDELINES & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **How do I apply to study at the VCA Secondary School?**

At VCASS the focus is on **classical and/or jazz** repertoire. Entry to the school is by audition only. The online Application form and other information will be available during **Term 2** (a date in April) from our website at www.vcass.vic.edu.au/entry. We strongly recommend that applicants read through the application form and audition criteria with their parents and music teachers. Your music teacher can help you prepare for your audition. Interstate and International applicants must submit a Video Audition (via DVD or USB memory stick) by the deadline, if they will not be in Melbourne for the specific live audition dates in August. Requirements for a Video audition are at the end of this document as *“Music Application Video Audition Guidelines”*.

- **What documents do I need for the Online Application Form?**

To complete the Online Application Form you need to type in family details of names, addresses, phone numbers, school subjects, various music studies, experiences, and other data. For music applications you also need to scan and upload a copy of the following documents:

(1) Birth Certificate, (2) Passport (and Visa, if applicable), (3) a photo, (4) School Report from the second half of the previous year, (5) School Report from the first half of the current year, (6) the “Student Statement” (see below), (7) the Parent Declaration. At the end of the application process you will need a credit card to pay the application fee. In 2017 the application fee is AUD \$80.00

If you have difficulty with the upload please try after 5:30pm weekdays, or on the weekend, when there is less traffic on our bandwidth. If you are still having difficulty with the upload please contact our Registrar.

- **What is the “Student Statement”?**

To complete the online application form you will need to upload a number of scanned documents; one is the “Student Statement”. This is to be written by the student; be between 100-500 words in length; and answer the question “Why do you want to study at VCASS?”

- **What are you looking for in the music audition?**

Our panel are assessing each applicant on current skill levels, and their potential at this school. We listen to their playing, and talk to them about their interests. We look at musicality, aural abilities, technical standards, music theory, creativity, motivation, and school reports. We also look at their maturity, openness, and experience, and where best to place them within our school. No single aspect means an automatic YES or NO in the audition.

- **What music exam standard do I have to be?**

Piano - Classical:

Applicants are not required to have taken any prior music exams. As a guide, all “principal study” Classical pianists entering VCASS are expected to have the **equivalent piano skills** at the following AMEB grade levels, or higher: Entering Years 7-8 - grade 6 piano; Years 9-10 - grade 7 piano; Year 11 - grade 8 piano; Year 12 - AMusA piano.

We recommend that you receive instruction from a qualified music teacher, who utilises notation and music theory (see also *“Where can I find a new music teacher?”* in this document).

Voice, Piano - Improvisational, and all other Instruments:

Applicants are not required to have taken any prior music exams. However, the ability to read and understand **music notation is essential**. We do support the music exam system, as it has many benefits for students. We recommend that you receive instruction from a qualified music teacher, who utilises notation and music theory (see also *“Where can I find a new music teacher?”* in this document). It is usual that young singers may have received their training in a choir, rather than through individual instruction, and that is fine with us.

- **What music exam standard do I have to be?**

Music Theory:

Applicants are not required to have taken any prior music exams. As a guide, students entering VCASS are expected to have the **equivalent musical knowledge of theory/ musicianship** at the following AMEB grade levels: entering Year 7-8 - grade 2 theory; Years 9-10 - grade 3 theory; Years 11-12 - grade 4 theory or higher. These free sites may be of assistance for home study: www.good-ear.com, www.teoria.com, www.musictheory.net, www.dsmusic.com.au, and the iTunes app *Aural Book*.

What if I have done music exams other than AMEB?

Applicants are not required to have taken any prior music exams. Perhaps you have done music exams run by ANZCA, ABRSM, or Trinity, rather than AMEB. The “Practical Performance” grades are *approximately* equivalent with the AMEB grades. For Music Theory, however, the grades are not equivalent. ABRSM and Trinity are roughly two theory grades lower than AMEB. An example is that the AMEB additional requirement for AMusA performance is 5th grade theory, but they will accept 7th grade theory from ABRSM or Trinity.

- **What music should I play in my audition?**

At VCASS the focus is on **classical and/or jazz** repertoire. Applicants are not required to have taken any prior music exams. However, the ability to **read and understand music notation is essential**. You need to **prepare two contrasting works** to perform on your “principal instrument” (Classical pianists prepare three works), *plus* technical work consisting of the scales and arpeggios relevant to the keys of the works you have prepared (drummers: see the different technical work criteria, listed below). Contrasting works may be from differing musical genres, styles or periods. Your music teacher can help you select works suitable to your current level. **Recorded accompaniment is not permitted**. You will also be asked to do some **singing, sight-reading, and aural tests of pitch and rhythm**.

- **THE FOLLOWING INSTRUMENTS HAVE SPECIFIC AUDITION REQUIREMENTS:**

Voice

- At VCASS the focus is on **classical and/or jazz** repertoire.
- Singers must sing without a microphone. Recorded accompaniment is not permitted.
- Non-Improvising Singers entering Year 7-9: **at least one song** should be selected from any book from AMEB Grade 1-4 “Singing Series 2”, or ABRSM Songbook, books 3-5.
- Non-Improvising Singers entering Year 10-12: at least one song should be selected from “26 Italian Songs and Arias: Authoritative Edition by Paton”, or a comparable song in Italian, French or German.
- Improvising Singers should include one of the following **jazz standards** as one of your two contrasting works: *All the Things You Are*, *Autumn Leaves*, or *One Note Samba*.
- Improvising Singers should be prepared to improvise over a blues progression, or a simple **ii-V-I** chord progression.
- Technical work is the scales and arpeggios, in the keys relevant to the songs you have prepared.
- All singers should select a work that displays your middle and upper register. It is important to **sing without force**. Consult your singing teacher. For further information contact music@vcass.vic.edu.au
- See also “*Advice for young singers*” below.

Piano - Classical

- Non-Improvising Pianists must **prepare three works**: one work of your choice; one Study (from any period) or Baroque work (c.1600-1760); and one Classical work (c.1730-1820). Consult your piano teacher.
- Technical work is the scales and arpeggios, in the keys relevant to the works you have prepared.
- As a guide, all “principal study” Classical pianists entering VCASS are expected to have the **equivalent piano skills** at the following AMEB grade levels, or higher: entering Years 7-8 - grade 6 piano; Years 9-10 - grade 7 piano; Year 11 - grade 8 piano, Year 12 - AMusA piano.

Piano - Improvisational

- Improvising Pianists should include one of the following **jazz standards** as one of your two contrasting works: *All the Things You Are*, *Billie's Bounce*, *Blue Bossa*, or *Solar*. Consult your piano teacher.
- Be prepared to improvise over a blues progression, or a simple **ii-V-I** chord progression.
- Technical work is the scales and arpeggios, in the keys relevant to the works you have prepared.

Electric Guitar and Electric Bass

- Electric Guitar and Electric Bass players should include one of the following **jazz standards** as one of your two contrasting works: *All the Things You Are*, *Billie's Bounce*, *Blue Bossa*, or *Solar*. Consult your teacher.
- Be prepared to improvise over a blues progression, or a simple **ii-V-I** chord progression.
- Technical work is the scales and arpeggios, in the keys relevant to the works you have prepared.
- Amplifiers will be supplied; effects pedals are not permitted.

Drum kit

- Drummers should include one of the following **jazz standards** as one of your two contrasting works: *All the Things You Are*, *Billie's Bounce*, *Blue Bossa*, or *Solar*. Consult your teacher.
- Technical work must include basic drum rudiments, *plus* one solo from the book "The All-American Drummer" by Charley Wilcoxon.
- Drummers must play with **sticks and brushes**, and demonstrate a variety of feels and grooves including Latin, Swing and Jazz Waltz.
- A Drum kit with cymbals will be supplied; double kick pedals are not permitted. Recorded accompaniment is not permitted.

Percussion

- Once you receive your confirmation of the date and time of your audition, Percussion applicants must email music@vcass.vic.edu.au to confirm which instruments, if any, you require us to provide at your audition (i.e. classical snare, marimba, vibraphone). You need to bring your own sticks and/or mallets.

- **If I apply, will I be granted an audition?**

Yes. If you apply by the July deadline, **we audition all music applicants**. If you will not be in Melbourne for a live audition, you must submit a Video audition (via DVD or USB memory stick), before the application deadline. Requirements for a Video audition are listed below under "*Music Video Audition*". In 2016 the cost of an application was AUD \$80.00.

- **When are auditions held?**

Applications close in July each year (see application form for exact dates). After you have applied you will be notified by email of the specific dates and times of your written test and your live audition. Auditions are held in August each year. Interstate and international applicants who will not be in Melbourne must submit a Video Audition (via DVD or USB memory stick), and may be required to give a follow-up live audition and interview over the internet via Skype. Final notifications are made by email in late September, on the last day of Term 3. The new school year commences in late January.

- **When will I find out my result?**

After the voice audition, voice applicants will receive an email informing them whether they have a "call back" or not. Voice applicants who receive a "call back" come in to sit the written test and a second audition (these are on separate dates). Official notification will be sent via email on the last day of Term 3 (late September). Successful applicants will also receive enrolment forms from the school via mail during the September break.

Please note that it is not the policy of the school to give feedback on auditions, however we encourage unsuccessful applicants to continue with their music studies, and are most welcome to re-audition the following year. Think about what worked well in the audition, and what challenged you. The things which challenged you will give you a sense of the work you can do, if you wish to audition at VCASS or somewhere else in the future.

- **What happens in the written musicianship test?**

A written test of musicianship skills is held on a particular date each year. This is a large group activity which takes 45 minutes (see application form for exact dates in August). The test has a range of questions from simple to complex, selected for students entering Year 7-9 or Year 10-12. Components of the written test are described below under “*Musicianship Test Criteria*” please read it with your music teacher. This test is used as a guide to the applicant’s current skill levels. The outcome of this test is not an automatic YES or NO to entry into the school. This test is one component of the audition process. Applicants do not need to bring their instruments to the written test.

- **Advice for young singers**

We have received many enquiries from young singers regarding aspects of vocal training and preparation for auditions. It is important to acknowledge that growing bodies are still developing; Doctors advise that the vocal cords are not fully formed until the age of 25. It is vitally important for young singers to **sing without force**, in a relaxed, energised manner, with upright posture. This does not mean that singing will be uncommunicative, or blank. It is important that singers perform material that is **appropriate for their age**, and not attempt to mimic adult singers. We have heard many young singers straining themselves by attempting to mimic the power or vocal gymnastics of well-known adults. This is ill-advised. Healthy vocal production involves singing without force; which is essential in order to avoid long-term physical damage (such as nodules).

- **Choral singing for all VCASS music students**

We encourage all music applicants to consider joining their school or community choir. Choral singing helps to develop aural and reading skills in a fun, social environment; it also provides performance opportunities, develops stagecraft and ensemble skills; all essential in the **development of the whole musician**, and vital aspects of the VCASS music program.

- **What happens in the live music audition?**

After you have applied, you will be notified by email of the time and date of your live audition. On a separate date before or after the written test, applicants perform a live audition for a panel of 3-5 teachers and experts specific to your instrument group (i.e. brass, voice, etc.).

A warm-up room will be available, and you should fully unpack your instrument and be ready to perform at the designated time. You need to prepare two **contrasting works** to perform on your “principal instrument” (Classical pianists prepare three works), plus **technical work**. Contrasting works may be from differing musical genres, styles or periods. Your music teacher can help you select pieces and exercises suitable to your current level. Recorded accompaniment is not permitted. Additional guidelines for the selection of repertoire and technical work are listed in this FAQ document under “*What music should I play in my audition?*”

If you have a “second instrument” you can choose to perform one piece on that instrument (your “instrument” may be “voice” if you are a singer). Singers must sing without a microphone.

Prior to the audition you should write a list (program) on a single sheet of paper of the works and exercises you have prepared. Hand this to the panel at the start of your audition. In the audition room the panel will listen to you perform, they will also ask you to do some **singing, sight-reading, aural tests of pitch and rhythm**, and then talk to you about your interests. The panel may stop you at any time, or give you additional instructions; this is a normal part of the process. During the audition a student’s potential is taken into account as well as their talent.

At the end of your audition you should pack up fully, and then the panel will see the next applicant. There is a written hand-out available on the day, describing the next part of the audition process.

- **Do I need an accompanist for the audition?**

If the music you are performing is written with accompaniment in mind, we recommend the use of an accompanist, though this is not compulsory. Typically, applicants auditioning on piano, guitar, percussion, or electric bass, may not need an accompanist. If applicants require an accompanist they need to provide their

own. A piano will be supplied. Only one accompanist is permitted. **Recorded accompaniment is NOT permitted.** For a list of freelance piano accompanists available for hire, please email your enquiry to music@vcass.vic.edu.au

- **How long is the live music audition?**

Instrumental auditions are 15 minutes in duration, including your prepared works, sight-reading, aural tests, and talking to the panel. The panel may stop you at any time, or give you additional instructions; this is a normal part of the process.

Voice (singing) auditions are 10 minutes in duration. Some Voice applicants will receive a “call back” to sit the written test on a following date, and return for a 15 minute audition on another date (usually the following week). Voice applicants would present the same repertoire at their “call back”, unless specifically requested to prepare additional material.

- **Can I send in a VIDEO audition?**

Yes. While we prefer a live audition, it is usual for interstate and international applicants to submit videos on **DVD or USB memory stick**. Complete the online application process, and send us your video by the application deadline (late July). We have successful video applicants each year. After we have assessed a video application, we may require a follow-up live audition and interview over the internet via Skype. Requirements for a video audition are listed below under “*Video Audition Guidelines*”.

- **Can I send in a CD or Score, in addition to my live audition?**

Please write a summary of your music experiences in the space provided on the online application form. While we are interested in all of your music endeavours, we don’t have time to listen to a CD recording. If you have a written score of one of your own compositions you may bring in one copy for the audition panel to view, on the day of your audition.

- **Is it hard to get into the VCA Secondary School?**

We always have more applicants than we have places, so the audition process is very competitive. Numbers vary, but in 2014 we auditioned 150 music applicants and took in 38 new students (10 in Year 7, and 28 across Years 8-12). We endeavour to conduct the audition process in a friendly and supportive atmosphere, and encourage all applicants to continue with their music studies.

- **At what age can I apply for a place?**

Students in Years 6-11 are welcome to audition for entry into Years 7-12. Students entering Year 7 should turn 12 years of age by April 30th. In auditions we assess each applicant as an individual. Many elements of the audition process involve our assessment of the applicant’s maturity, openness, and experience, and where best to place the applicant within our school. We are preparing them for long-term musical success, and their **development as a musician** is not separate from their social, physical, mental, academic and personal development.

- **Can I audition on more than one instrument? Voice and an instrument?**

Yes. When completing the application form you must indicate a “principal” instrument (we regard the voice as an instrument), and prepare works on this instrument for your audition. If you play another instrument please list this as your “second” instrument, and indicate whether you wish to present one work on your “second” instrument. The audition panels include experts on your “principal” instrument group, plus teachers with expertise across all areas of our program. The panel may stop you at any time, or give you additional instructions; this is a normal part of the process. Singers must sing without a microphone.

- **I play more than one instrument, which one should I pick?**

We don’t have a quota for the type of instrument we are seeking. We are looking for the best musicians who apply, regardless of which instrument they play (we regard the voice as an instrument). If we hear six

trombonists we like, we will make offers to six trombonists! If you find it hard to choose your “principal instrument”, then **reflect on which instrument you enjoy the most**. If you imagine your future, which instrument would you most wish to play? If you accept an offer to our school you will be playing your “principal instrument” a lot!

- **Do I need to play a second instrument at my audition?**

You are not required to play a second instrument. If you would like to do so, please indicate this on the application form, and prepare one work for your second instrument. We are interested in all you can do.

- **Is VCASS the right school for my child?**

There are many factors to consider when looking for a new school. We strongly recommend you read all of this FAQ document, and that you come to a school tour, open day, or concert to see our school for yourself. Free school tours run on some Wednesday mornings from April-July and must be booked via www.trybooking.com. Our training program is very busy, with high expectations. Some students travel long distances to come to VCASS. Sometimes families will wait until a child is older before they accept a place at VCASS. You may wish to audition “for the experience”, that is fine with us. Each year we take in music students at every year level from 7-12. 95% of our music graduates go on to study a music degree at university.

- **Where can I find a new music teacher?**

To help you prepare for VCASS music auditions we recommend that you receive instruction from a **qualified music teacher, who utilises notation and music theory**. If you need assistance in finding a qualified teacher or ensemble program in the Melbourne area we recommend these websites:

- Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing (ANATS) www.anats.org.au
- Victorian Music Teachers Association www.victorianmusicteachersassociation.org.au
- Melbourne Youth Music (MYM) www.mym.org.au
- State Music Camp, Victoria www.statemusiccamp.com.au

Other Ensembles programs, music camps and workshops are listed on a separate document “*Music Resources for Families*” from our website. It is usual that young singers may receive their training in a choir, rather than through individual instruction, and that is fine with us.

- **Who are the music teachers at VCASS?**

VCASS employs experienced professional musicians and educators drawn from many areas including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, University of Melbourne, Monash University, leading Chamber ensembles, and the freelance Jazz community.

- **After the Audition, what happens next?**

At the end of the audition or interview students are ranked in ability/potential and year level. “Call Backs” are a normal part of the selection process and some students are called back to provide the panel with further information to assist them in decision making. **Music Voice Auditionees** will receive a “Call Back” or “No” as soon as possible after their audition.

The Principal and the Heads of Department will meet to determine which students can be placed in the school. This process may take many days and is complex and time consuming. Students are then ranked “Yes”, “No” or “Wait list”. The Wait List is not a bad list to be on...and each year students receive offers from the wait list (where current families move or take up offer opportunities later in the year).

Please note:

- Not all suitable students are able to be offered places
- The school is committed to enrolling each student it can
- On **Friday 22 September 2017** an email will be sent advising if you are a Yes, No or Wait list – this will be your official notification. Please do not call the school office.

- Students who receive a Yes email will be posted their enrolment package on **Friday 22 September 2017** and this should arrive the following week. Please attend to the contents directly and by the due dates - the enrolment application will confirm your place in the school.

We welcome you to reaudition the following year if you are not successful. We are sorry we are not able to provide feedback on auditions/interviews. You should however think about what worked in the audition/interview and what challenged you. The things that challenged you will give you a sense of the work you can do if you wish to audition here or somewhere else in the future.

MUSIC CURRICULUM INFORMATION

- **VCASS Music introduction**

We provide a nationally and internationally recognised specialist program for the training of talented young dancers, musicians, visual artists, and theatre artists. The mission of our school is to help identify and assist children with exceptional potential, regardless of their personal circumstances, to benefit from world-class specialist training as part of a broad and balanced education, which will enable them, if they choose, to proceed towards self-sustaining careers. Positions in music or dance are open to Years 7 to 12 students throughout Victoria, Australia and the International community. Positions in visual arts or theatre arts are open to Years 11 to 12. During the audition a student's potential is taken into account as well as their talent.

All successful music applicants will fully participate in a range of studies we consider essential for musical training; including solo and ensemble performance, choir, aural training, music theory, composition, and analysis of music styles. It is valuable for applicants to have **prior experience in any of these areas**. It is strongly recommended that applicants and parents read through the information and application forms with their music teacher.

- **Do you teach singers?**

Yes. We have students whose principal study is voice (singing), with a focus on classical and/or jazz repertoire. We regard the voice as another instrument. All music students study solo repertoire and perform in small and large ensembles (i.e. vocal trio, chamber choir). Additionally, ALL music students sing in a large choir as part of their regular music training. The choral program includes global repertoire, from ancient to contemporary, including Australian works.

In the voice auditions, singers must sing without a microphone, and recorded accompaniment is NOT permitted. Applicants are not required to have taken any prior music exams. However, the ability to read and understand **music notation is essential**. (See also “*Advice for young singers*” and “*What music should I play in my audition?*” in this document).

- **Which instruments do you teach?**

At VCASS the focus is on classical and/or jazz repertoire. We teach all Orchestral Strings, violin, viola, cello, double bass, electric bass, Brass, trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba, Woodwinds, flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, Percussion, drum kit, tympani, marimba, vibraphone, congas, harp, Voice (singing), Keyboards, piano, organ, accordion, Guitars (classical and electric), and other instruments subject to approval.

- **Which ensembles can I join?**

In addition to your solo training, and choral singing, music students play in one or more small ensembles, and one or more large ensembles (some ensembles are auditioned); here is a partial list: Big Band, Brass Ensemble, Chamber Choir, Jazz Ensemble, Latin Music Ensemble, Orchestra, Percussion Ensemble, String Ensemble, Symphonic Band, World Music Ensemble, various classical or jazz duos / trios / quartets.

- **Can I study both music and dance at VCASS?**

Students attend VCASS as specialists in either music, dance, visual arts, or theatre arts. Our music subjects run at the same time as the **specialist** dance, visual arts and theatre arts subjects (half of each day), so it is not

possible to train in more than one specialist area. If you wish to audition to enter more than one specialisation, you may, as long as you submit and pay for more than one application. If you are successful you may be offered a place at the school in the specialisation of your choice. **Students in any specialist area have access to some other VCE subjects as part of their Year 11-12 academic subject choice.** Music specialists may study such VCE subjects such as Drama/Theatre Studies, Art/Studio Arts, and Media Studies.

- **Do I have to change my music teacher?**

Students who take part in our training program are taught by specialists who are familiar with the whole program. Most new students would receive a new instrumental teacher, allocated by the Head of Music. Our instrumental teachers are experienced professional musicians and educators drawn from many areas including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, University of Melbourne, Monash University, leading Chamber ensembles, and the freelance Jazz community. For a list of our specialist teachers please see our website at <http://vcass.vic.edu.au/programs/music>

- **Do I have to sing?**

Yes. Once students have a place at the school they all sing in at least one choir. The VCASS music program is designed to develop the whole musician, and **singing is a vital part of the program.** The choral program includes global repertoire, from ancient to contemporary, including Australian works.

- **What does your music curriculum include?**

Training in the music program is structured to encourage the systematic development of each student's individual music skills. The curriculum is based on the **Kodály method** of musicianship training, with an emphasis on music performance. The VCASS music program is designed to **develop the whole musician**; as well as developing the students' individual playing skills; it incorporates on-going and sequential studies in the following areas:

- Choral Program
- Musicianship
- Performance Seminar / Stagecraft
- Ensemble Skills
- Appreciation of Western and Non-Western Music Styles
- Composition / Arranging
- Basic knowledge of the Music Industry
- Body Mechanics

You will find that the above areas all **inter-relate and overlap** within the various music subjects i.e. in Performance Seminars you will discuss the style and period of works being performed, and how they should be best interpreted. The VCASS Music Program is an integrated and holistic approach to equipping our students with skills for successful careers in the Music Industry with as many options available to them as possible (performer, conductor, arranger, publisher, teacher, promoter, music therapist, musicologist, or combined or multiple careers). In addition to our own training materials, we use the following software: *Sibelius* (notation, composition, arranging), *Auralia* (ear training), and *Musition* (music theory).

- **Do you offer acceleration or extension music subjects?**

As a specialist school the music training program extends beyond the VCE curriculum, and is "accelerated" in many areas. All students participate in a wide ranging and demanding program which compliments and incorporates VCE music subjects, plus our own sequential studies as described above. Some music subjects are streamed by ability. We are preparing students for long-term musical success, and their **development as a musician** is not separate from their social, physical, mental, academic and personal development.

- **Do you teach Music Theatre?**

The music focus at VCASS is on classical and/or jazz repertoire. VCASS students who are specialising in music, dance or visual arts can take VCE Drama/Theatre Studies as a Year 11-12 subject. VCASS students specialising in Theatre Arts follow a curriculum devised by our Theatre Arts faculty. Many of our music or dance

graduates have gone on to study Music Theatre at a tertiary level, and work in that field, but it is not a core focus in the VCASS music or dance curriculum.

- **Do you teach Song Writing?**

The music focus at VCASS is on classical and/or jazz repertoire, and our composition/arranging studies reflect this. Some students with an interest in song writing pursue this in their own time, but it is not part of our training.

- **Can I attend your concerts?**

Yes. It is strongly recommended that prospective students and their parents attend public performances, which clearly demonstrate the focus of the school. We perform approximately 20 evening concerts each year, plus many additional daytime performances (see our newsletter, or go to www.trybooking.com and search "VCASS" for upcoming performances). Most concerts are held in our own Recital Room. Our largest annual events are held in August and September: the Theatre Season; the Year 12 Visual Arts Exhibition; the Dance Season; and our Gala Concert at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

- **Where do VCASS music graduates go?**

The majority of our graduates apply for, and gain entry to, tertiary music courses in Australia; including courses at the University of Melbourne, Monash University, Australian National University (ANU), University of Sydney, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), University of Queensland, and others. Some students gain entry to music courses outside of Australia, or the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), or choose to pursue non-music tertiary studies.

The VCASS Music Program is an integrated and holistic approach to equipping our students with skills for successful careers in the Music Industry with as many options available to them as possible (performer, conductor, arranger, publisher, teacher, promoter, music therapist, musicologist, or combined or multiple careers).

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

- **Where is the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School located?**

We are in the “Arts Precinct” of Melbourne near the corner of Miles Street and Sturt Street. Our address is **57 Miles Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006, Australia**. We are an “urban” school with no exterior space or grounds of our own. Years 7-10 Physical Education classes use nearby parks, and students have some access during lunchtime to a nearby park. Excursions and some performances are held off-campus.

- **Are you a government school?**

Yes. We are funded by the Victorian State Government through the Department of Education and Training (DET). Our school year runs from late January to December.

- **Do you take International Students?**

Yes. International and interstate music applicants must submit a Video audition (via DVD or USB memory stick) by the application deadline, and may be required to audition live over the internet via Skype. Further information regarding fees and other matters is available at www.vcass.vic.edu.au/entry/international/

- **What fees and costs are involved?**

In 2017 the audition application fee is AUD \$80.00

Gaining entry to the school is equivalent of winning a **music scholarship**. For Australian and New Zealand citizens all academic and music training is provided at minimal cost, in the form of a music program fee. Basic annual charges range from AUD \$2,000-\$3000 for Australian and New Zealand citizens, and from AUD \$19,000-\$22,000 for **International Students**.

Additionally, all students are required to purchase books, study materials, sheet music, performance wear, and maintain their instrument in good condition. There will be additional costs for some excursions, workshops, master-classes and tours.

- **What are the normal hours for a music student?**

Our regular school day runs from 8:30am - 3:45pm, Monday to Thursday, with 3:00pm finish on Friday, but music students can expect to be in ensemble rehearsals until 4:30 or 5:30pm for one or two days most weeks. Additionally, students are required to attend and/or perform at approximately 10 evening concerts per year. We may require students to attend 2-3 Saturdays in Term 3 for rehearsals or concerts. The regular school timetable is structured around a two-part day (one part specialisation and one part academic study).

- **What are the dress requirements?**

There is no daily school uniform, but “performance wear” is required. All music students must wear “concert blacks” (semi-formal black clothes and black shoes) for designated dress rehearsals and concerts. Appropriate clothing is required for classes in Physical Education and Body Mechanics. All dance students wear dance clothing for their dance classes and performances. In terms of hair styles, the school is comfortable with hair choices that are not extreme; however, advice from the Head of Music for hair styles in performance must be strictly followed. Generally the school requires all piercings on the face that are not ear or nose be covered during the school day.

- **Do you have school camps?**

Yes. All Year 7-9 students have a three day school camp each year in term 1. Year 10-12 music students undertake a concert tour every two years (Canberra 2007, Adelaide 2009, Sydney 2011, Regional Victoria 2013, Central Australia 2015, Regional Victoria 2017).

MUSIC APPLICATION - VIDEO AUDITION GUIDELINES

(For use by overseas and interstate applicants)

While we prefer a live audition, it is usual for interstate and international applicants to submit videos on **DVD or USB memory stick**. Your DVD or USB must reach the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School by the closing date and **must include the audition application receipt number**. This receipt number is available when you have **completed the online audition application**.

We have successful video applicants each year. After we have assessed a video application, we may require a follow-up live audition and interview over the internet via Skype. You will be asked to do some singing, and aural tests of pitch and rhythm.

Please forward your DVD or USB to:

Principal
Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School
57 Miles Street
Southbank 3006
Victoria
Australia

On your DVD or USB video you should

- **Play three contrasting works** on your principal instrument - at least one must be accompanied (except pianists). Recorded accompaniment is not permitted.
- Play one work on your other instruments, if applicable.

The following instruments have specific Video Audition requirements, listed above in the FAQ section of this document

- Voice
- Piano - Classical
- Piano - Improvisational
- Electric Guitar and Electric Bass
- Drum kit

Any specific music enquires should be directed to our Music Administrator at music@vcass.vic.edu.au

Musicianship Test Criteria for Music Auditionees

A written test of musicianship skills is held on a particular date each year. This is a large group activity which takes 45 minutes. This test is used as a guide to the applicant's current skill levels. The outcome of this test is not an automatic YES or NO to entry into the school. This test is one component of the audition process. Applicants do not need to bring their instruments to the written test.

Applicants please note that each section of the test will be graded, with questions ranging from less challenging to more challenging. This will allow students to attempt as many questions as possible, based on their musicianship studies so far.

Students auditioning for Years 7-9:

- 1. Intervals:** Aural recognition of intervals ascending and descending.
- 2. Chords:** Aural recognition of chord types including major and minor triads in root position, and inversions, and the dominant 7 chord in root position.
- 3. Cadences:** Aurally recognise perfect, plagal, interrupted, and imperfect cadences.
- 4. Scales:** Aural recognition of major, harmonic and melodic minors, whole tone and pentatonic scales.
- 5. Rhythmic Dictation:** 8 beat rhythmic dictation in 4/4 time using beat values up to 16th notes.
- 6. Melodic Dictation:** 8 beat melodic transcription in 4/4 time using notes from the pentatonic and diatonic major scale. Rhythmic values used: crotchets, quavers and minims.
- 7. Scale/triad writing:** Write scales and their tonic triads in major and minor keys up to and including 3 sharps and 3 flats.
- 8. Key signature writing/identification:** Major and minor keys up to 3 sharps and 3 flats, in treble and bass clef.
- 9. Interval writing/identification:** Ability to write major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals within an octave.
- 10. Transposition of a melody:** From a key to an alternate key in major or minor, up to 3 sharps and 3 flats.

Students auditioning for Years 10-12:

- 1. Intervals:** Aural recognition of intervals ascending and descending.
- 2. Chords:** Aural recognition of chord types including major, major 7, dominant 7, minor, minor 7, diminished triad, half and full diminished 7 and augmented triad in root position and inversions.
- 3. Scales:** Aural recognition of major, harmonic, natural and melodic minor scales, whole tone scale and major and minor pentatonic scales.
- 4. Chord Progressions:** Aural recognition of a chord progression in major or minor tonality, using chords I, IV, V, V7, vi and ii in root position.
- 5. Rhythmic Dictation:** 16 beat rhythmic dictation in 4/4 time using beat values up to 16th notes.
- 6. Melodic Dictation:** 16 beat melodic transcription in 4/4 time using notes from the major scale.
- 7. Scale writing:** Write scales in Major, Minor, Major and Minor pentatonic - in treble and bass clef up to and including 5 sharps and 5 flats.
- 8. Chord writing:** Write major 7, minor 7, dominant 7, half and full diminished 7 chords, in treble and bass clef, up to and including 5 sharps and 5 flats.
- 9. Key signature writing/identification:** major and minor keys up to 5 sharps and 5 flats, in treble and bass clef.
- 10. Interval writing/identification:** Ability to write major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals within an octave.
- 11. Transposition of a melody:** From a key to an alternate key in major or minor, up to 3 sharps and 3 flats.