Important updates at a glance

Federal News

New Flute Syllabus
This syllabus includes a new Flute Technical Workbook (2012), new Grade Books that now begin at Preliminary and extend up to Sixth Grade, a new Manual List that draws on some of the most attractive recent publications for the flute, and two new examinations: Preliminary at the beginning of the syllabus and the Certificate of Performance to cap Level 2 examinations.

For two years this new 2013 syllabus will be examined concurrently with the Flute syllabus that last appeared in the 2012 Manual of syllabuses. During these two years the new syllabus will be evaluated and, from the start of 2015, the 2012 Flute syllabus will no longer be available for examination.

Five Syllabuses now withdrawn
From the beginning of 2013, the following syllabuses are no longer available for examination:
- Cello (last printed in 2009 Manual of syllabuses)
- Clarinet (last printed in 2008 Manual of syllabuses)
- Piano for Leisure (last printed in 2010 Manual of syllabuses)
- Saxophone (last printed in 2008 Manual of syllabuses)
- Singing (last printed in 2010 Manual of syllabuses)

Only the form of these syllabuses printed in the most current Manual of syllabuses may be presented for examination in 2013.

Piano for Leisure Series 1 Grade Books
Piano for Leisure Series 1 Grade Books are not being withdrawn and can still be used with 2013 Piano for Leisure syllabus.

Additional Requirements – Certificate of Performance
From 2013 candidates presenting for the Certificate of Performance examination are required to achieve a Pass in Fourth Grade Theory of Music, Musicianship or Music Craft in order to complete the requirements for the principal examination.

Additional requirements do not apply to the Certificate of Performance examinations in Piano for Leisure, Saxophone for Leisure or Singing for Leisure.

State News

Changes for Metropolitan Exam Sessions
Examination sessions and postcode periods have been reviewed for 2013 so please take special care to check when and where your candidates will be examined.

Most notable is that all piano examinations in the metropolitan and surrounding areas (up to 125 kms from the Sydney CBD) will be examined in Sydney city, unless a private studio is offered for use (subject to it meeting the criteria for use of private studios). This has resulted in the absorption of all piano examinations from the Wollongong Country Additional Session into the new Metro Plus Music – Second Session.

Changes to Postcode Periods in the Metro Plus – Second Session
Postcode periods in the Metro Plus Music – Second Session (formerly Music – Second Metropolitan) have been changed slightly. You will note that some postcodes have been moved to earlier dates. The postcode of the enrolling teacher (or private studio) will be used to determine when examinations are held.

Music Craft
From 2013 Music Craft examinations from Preliminary to Grade 4 will be available online. As a consequence, the AMEB (NSW) will no longer offer these grades in this syllabus as a face-to-face examination. Register for online written examinations at www.amebexams.edu.au

Examination reports
From 2013 neither the candidate nor the teacher will receive a hardcopy of the examination report. All examination reports will be uploaded on to AMEB Connect to be downloaded by either the enrolling teacher or the candidate (if given access by their enrolling teacher).
Important updates at a glance  
continued

Credit Card surcharge
All NSW Government agencies are required to impose surcharges to recoup their merchant interchange fees. Effective from 1 January 2013, all transactions (including all 2013 enrolments) paid by credit card will incur a 0.4% surcharge.

AMEB (NSW) will continue to accept surcharge-free payments by cheque or money order.

For greater detail about any of the above news items, or for additional Federal or State news, see pages 4–7 of the 2013 Enrolment Handbook.

Vale
Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the following gifted musicians, educators and AMEB examiners who passed during 2012.

Keith Baxter 1932–2012
Dr Marilyn Meyer-Kapavale 1964–2012
Clara Skripchenko 1923–2012

Improving your music exam grades

Sometimes it may be frustrating if you and your students are working hard, but high grades still seem elusive. You may even think in exasperation ‘I just wish I knew what the examiners are looking for!’ We have listed some key points below, summarised from the collective wisdom of eight of our examiners.

Know the grade descriptors and syllabus objectives
In any edition of the Manual of Syllabuses, performance objectives are listed at the beginning of each level for each instrument. Grade descriptors are also listed in the front of the Manual under Regulation 29. Examiners refer closely to these in their assessment of candidates. An A+ is only awarded if the candidate shows outstanding achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives in all sections of the examination.

First and last impressions
These are crucial elements in determining a candidate’s mark, yet the technical work and aural tests are two components that often let a student down on exam day. Technical work essentially sets the stage for the whole performance. It provides examiners with a great deal of information about the discipline demonstrated by the candidate to their craft and whether the crucial foundations of technique (eg posture, tone, correct arm/hand shapes) are developing.

Also, many examiners commented that candidates often give a blank stare when questioned in Section III of the examination (General knowledge, aural tests and sight reading). This indicates that teachers are simply not devoting the required time to these skills – crucial aspects of a musician’s training. Confident and informed responses as opposed to vague or rote-learned responses in the general knowledge section of the exam can move one mark to a slightly higher or lower one.

An integrated approach to exam preparation
In addition to the technical work set for the candidate’s grade, teachers should ensure their students also learn the scales of their pieces as this will greatly aid the performance of each work. Knowledge of the content of the pieces also influences interpretation, so it is important that students truly ‘know’ about each main piece played. Yet students often learn facts ‘parrot-style’ and are unable to link these up with the pieces played. This is evident when candidates confuse memorised facts with the wrong pieces.

Tick Tock...
Students should be encouraged to work with a metronome to develop reliable rhythm.

Then candidates can work to give meaning and shape to the rhythm. Throughout the preparation process, continue to practice at three speeds: slow, medium and also up to tempo. Even in the latter stages, this is extremely helpful. Remind your students and their parents that it is a misconception that faster is better! This is often not the case and racing through pieces often dilutes or destroys the character of the piece or, worse still, if errors are made, highlights a flaw in the candidate’s technique which in turn affects their grade.

Bringing ‘the dots’ to life
Teachers and parents should capture the imagination of the student and encourage a broad and sincere appreciation of music. Young musicians should genuinely like the pieces being played. Listening to good recordings of your works, or works by the same composer, can be beneficial.

Some candidates are so focused on note accuracy that they are distracted from making varied and quality sounds. A performance may not be note-perfect, yet spirit and character can compensate, and keep a grade trending higher.

Don’t underestimate the importance of music theory
The study of all practical subjects is greatly enhanced when candidates are also encouraged to study a written music syllabus (Theory, Musicianship or Music Craft). Ensure from the very early stages of learning a piece that the correct rhythm and note patterns are being followed. Sound theoretical knowledge can help a music student move with greater success from grade to grade, or from instrument to instrument.

Customise your students’ programs
Explore the pieces in the syllabuses you teach and, when selecting a student’s programme, select material that is well-suited to each candidate, considering their age, gender, personality, interests, etc. If a student connects with the music they are playing, they will be motivated to practise more often and play more musically.

A love of music makes a performance shine
Music is quite different from other subjects studied at school. Music cannot simply be learned objectively and memorised as notes and facts. It is a language, whose purpose is to express emotions that are not easily expressed as words. Candidates who do not enjoy communicating in this language will rarely achieve high marks in their music exams. Enjoyment of the music at some level is therefore essential, not an optional extra.

We thank the following examiners for their generous assistance: Dennis Brain, Evan Elsley, Elizabeth Green, Robert Harris, Denise Lawrence, Scott Marshall, Lyn Morgan and John Terry.
Staff News

Nina Nikolic has been appointed as the AMEB (NSW) Accounts Clerk for three days per week. She will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of financial aspects of the AMEB (NSW). Nina has an Advanced Diploma in Accounting and more than eight years of experience in different finance positions. Some of the companies she worked for include Aeropack Australia, Amalgamated Holdings, Curwoods Lawyers, Guess Australia, Louis Vuitton Australia and Swire Shipping.
Ten iTunes apps for Teachers and Students

With most teachers and students now carrying a smartphone, don’t underestimate the value of music apps as handy teaching tools. The samples in this list are a fraction of the wonderful applications you can download that will soon become must-have teaching and learning tools.

**My First Classical Music App** (Naxos Digital Services Ltd)
$5.49 and

**Little Classical Music App** (Naxos Digital Services Ltd)
$4.49  *Two wonderful apps to introduce young musicians to the classics*
The best known and loved classical music tracks, complete with text, narration and animation, to help your young students fall in love with classical music.

**Classical Music I** (MagicAnywhere)
*Free   Learning to love the classics at any age*
This app is designed to help you experience 120 of the best pieces of classical music ever written. Become familiar with a range of composers and classical styles.

**Metronome** (Frozen Ape)
$1.99  *A metronome app by Frozen Ape*
Metronome works in landscape or portrait orientation and has a ‘tap tempo’ function, along with 17 different time signatures, including compound and complex meters.

**Cleartune** (Bitcount)
$4.49  *A chromatic Tuner*
Cleartune is great for tuning your stringed instruments along with brass, woodwinds, tympani and other instrument that can sustain a tone. A wheel interface helps you to find your chosen pitch.

**Ringtone Maker** (Zentertain Ltd)
*Free   The power of subliminal learning*
Program your student’s ringtone for the week by selecting a sound byte from a scale, exercise or list piece your student may be struggling with. You can record any sound and make it a ringtone.

**Setlist Monkey** (Craft AG)
$2.99  *A set list manager*
Program your students’ weekly practice sessions or develop your own set lists for concerts or gigs. You can enter a repertoire of scales, exercises and songs with a programmed metronome for each entry and combine them into arbitrary set lists for rehearsals.

**GigBaby** (iOMetics, LLC)
$0.99 – 2.99  *A songwriting aid*
Use this app to record and play multiple audio tracks and much more. The basic version allows you up to 4 set lists while the deluxe version allows up to 42.

**OperaBook** (Pasquale Matrisiciano)
$5.49  *The libretto of the future!*
Singers and opera lovers will appreciate this app which holds information about fifty different operas, including the composers, duration, setting, character descriptions and the synopsis broken into acts.

**Muscality** (iDocodi)
$0.99  *A music glossary learning app*
Learn your musical terms and study for major tests involving those terms. Bookmark key terms, then use the quiz feature to test your musical knowledge. You can also share terms and quizzes on Facebook.

**Selected AMEB recordings are now available from digital music outlets**
- Piano for Leisure Series 1 and 3
- Violin Series 7 and 9
- Flute Series 2
- Piano Series 14
- Clarinet Series 2
- Past Musicalship and Music Craft Aural exams

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**The Music Teachers’ Association of NSW**

*How can Membership of our Association benefit you?*
As a Member, you have access to:
- Building your studio by our successful referral service
- Accreditation for instrumental and voice
- *The Studio* magazine published quarterly keeping you informed about your profession
- Recommended teaching fees
- Professional development workshops & conferences
- Junior Music Festivals

**2013 Highlights Include:**
- Scholarships for students to the value of $10,000
- An elegant fundraiser – *High Tea* in May
- The Miriam Hyde Centenary Festival

For further details please contact the MTA on 02 9570 1436
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Website: www.musicnsw.com.au