

Unit 22: Music Performance Session Styles

Unit code:	L/600/6980
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit encourages learners to increase their opportunities for employment as performers by developing the ability to reproduce the authentic sounds and performance characteristics of historically and culturally important genres and artists.

● Unit introduction

The ability to fulfil the role of session musician in recording and live situations requires the performer to have a wide palette of skills that can be applied in variety of situations, often with little or no rehearsal. In order to do this successfully they must first gain an understanding of the stylistic elements that comprise a wide range of genres.

Learners will be expected to develop their own style or voice by preparing musical material in chosen genres. This will be achieved through personal practice and rehearsing with others. Their contributions to these rehearsals should be both stylistically accurate and sonically authentic.

Learners should be encouraged to develop the skills in musical performance, improvisation, sight reading and jamming that will allow them to contribute appropriate stylistic elements to a range of musical contexts with little or rehearsal time, to reflect the typical experience of a session musician.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand the stylistic elements across a wide range of musical genres
- 2 Be able to develop stylistically accurate musical material for contrasting genres
- 3 Be able to apply stylistically accurate elements to a range of musical genres in different performance situations.

Unit content

1 Understand the stylistic elements across a wide range of musical genres

Stylistic elements: rhythmic; melodic; harmonic; tonal; lyrical; sonic trademarks eg distortion of guitar amps, effects, synthesiser sounds

Stylistic interpretation: artistic phrasing and detail; an understanding of appropriate stylistic requirements of the music eg note choice, groove, instrumentation, choice of musical equipment, use of effects; arrangement detail; performance attitude

Genres: different musical genres that have specific recognisable sounds eg barbershop, blues, jazz, R and B, country and western, rock, metal, reggae, funk, soul, punk

2 Be able to develop stylistically accurate musical material for contrasting genres

Developing: types of rehearsal eg group rehearsal, personal practice, jamming sessions, workshops, master-classes; performance techniques eg improvising, part building, harmonies, vocal arrangements, working from lead sheets

Stylistically accurate: appropriate use of stylistic elements eg authentic use of phrasing, note choice, groove, instrumentation, choice of equipment

3 Be able to apply stylistically accurate elements to a range of musical genres in different performance situations

Stylistic elements: rhythmic; melodic; harmonic; tonal; lyrical; sonic trademarks

Genres: different musical genres that have specific recognisable sounds eg barbershop, blues, jazz, country and western, rock, metal, reggae, funk, soul, R and B, punk

Performance situations: joining an established group as a session musician; live work; theatre work; working as a studio musician; types of venue eg stage, theatre pit, recording studio, workshop, product demonstration

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 explain the fundamental stylistic elements of a wide range of musical genres [IE, RL, SM]	M1 illustrate the fundamental stylistic elements of a wide range of musical genres	D1 analyse the fundamental stylistic elements of a wide range of musical genres
P2 develop stylistically accurate musical material for contrasting genres [IE, CT, RL, TW, SM, EP]	M2 develop stylistically accurate musical material for contrasting genres competently	D2 develop stylistically accurate musical material for contrasting genres with confidence and flair
P3 apply stylistically accurate elements to a range of musical genres in different performance situations. [CT, RL, TW, SM, EP]	M3 apply stylistically accurate elements to a range of musical genres in different performance situations competently.	D3 apply stylistically accurate elements to a range of musical genres in different performance situations with confidence and flair.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The majority of this unit should be delivered through practical opportunities. Learners will need to attend regular rehearsals, jamming sessions and workshops as well as final performances, where appropriate. Tutors will need to guide learners in the formation of ensembles and the selection of appropriate material to ensure the continuous development of technique and musicality. To ensure learners perform material in a range of contexts, tutors must ensure that they are guided as to the opportunities available. For example, a series of weekly lunchtime performances working through the decades, or a series of performances themed around different genres, preceded by structured rehearsals/workshops and supported by personal practice

When delivering this unit, tutors will be faced with the task of ensuring that a range of instrumentalists and vocalists can work alongside each other. Tutors are encouraged to research a wide range repertoire and provide their learners with a mixture of historically and culturally important material.

Course leaders should balance the interests of the musicians with the expectations of industry. One way to do this is to canvass the opinions of working session musicians from a wide variety of backgrounds for their views on the most essential and widely requested styles in both studio and live situations. This information can then be used as the basis for material selection.

It is important that the tutor directs learners and focuses their development and performances on key detail. It would be beneficial to concentrate on authenticity in every aspect of performance before experimenting with variations. The subject area is potentially so vast that the tutor will need to set parameters and guide learners towards a selection of musical genres. Each learning outcome reflects the importance of this 'range'. This must be carefully controlled with reference to the assessment guidance.

Learners are required to recognise, and therefore gain an understanding of, the key stylistic elements of each genre they study. One way of doing this is to listen to examples so learners understand the 'sound' of the genre. They can then separate each element of the piece, eg separating rhythmic devices from melodic devices, from instrumentation and effects, which will allow them to see how the elements combine to make the recognisable sound of the genre.

Learners are not obliged to treat the first learning outcome as an entirely theoretical exercise, preceding any practical work. The analysis that learners perform as a natural part of the work they carry out for the second learning outcome could form the basis for the written work required for the first learning outcome.

Tutors may wish to provide learners with a selection of specific pieces to recreate. This would provide opportunities for learners to work on their performance skills as they adapt their own techniques in order to recreate what they hear. This knowledge can then be built on in practical workshop or jamming sessions. Workshops or master classes by visiting session musicians would also enable learners to engage with a range of musical styles in a practical way. For example, tutors may wish to set up a whole group jamming session led by a session musician, perhaps working through a number of styles.

Learners are required to develop stylistically accurate material. This may be achieved by working with either existing or original material. There are several ways in which learners may develop material. For example, they may aurally analyse a piece and then develop a stylistically accurate arrangement within a group. Alternatively, learners may develop original material but in the style of the chosen genre. Peer identification and feedback of the material produced would be one way of identifying whether learners have developed something that is stylistically accurate. This process should be supplemented by structured personal practice.

Learners will be required to demonstrate that they have reached a standard where they can contribute to live and studio-based performances in a range of musical genres without the need for lengthy rehearsals. It is likely that this takes place towards the end of the course, where learners have developed appropriate skills through personal practice and rehearsals/workshops.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to the programme and structure of the programme of learning
Understanding the components of musical genres – P1, M1, D1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying genres ● Analysing recordings ● Analysing performances from video ● Identifying stylistic elements ● Analysing stylistic interpretation.
Assignment 1: The Elements of Musical Genres – P1, M1, D1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learners to prepare written work/presentations with tutor facilitation. ● Learners to give presentations, if appropriate. ● Peer and tutor feedback to be reviewed and actions noted.
Developing musical material – P2, M2, D2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal practice (unguided) – 20 hours ● Rehearsals (unguided) – 20 hours ● Rehearsals/workshops (guided) – 10 hours.
Assignment 2: Preparing for Performance in Contrasting Styles – P2, M2, D2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observed rehearsal/workshops.
Preparing for work as a session musician – P3, M3, D3 <p>Practice events to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recording sessions ● workshops ● live events.
Assignment 3: Session Musician – P3, M3, D3 <p>Observed events to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recording sessions ● workshops ● live events.

Assessment

This unit requires the musician to actually play/sing and create music in the chosen styles; the use of written work should be minimised. Performance situations can be many and varied but it should be remembered that it is the practical understanding of repertoire and stylistic detail that is being assessed rather than performance skills, which are examined in other units. Therefore, a technically successful performance that bears little relation to the genre of the chosen piece will not achieve the higher grades.

The practical evidence required for this unit will be generated by performances and demonstrations of material from different genres. The assessment could take place continually during classroom activity, workshops, rehearsals, and personal practice, as well as during a public performances or studio-based recording sessions. The practical assignments should be recorded or captured on video to provide both the required evidence and a basis for feedback and discussion with learners.

Learning outcome 1 could be evidenced through a written report, but the nature of evidence required for higher grades suggest that giving a recorded oral presentation using suitable software might be a more appropriate method of assessment. For P1, learners will provide simple unelaborated explanations of each element comprising a wide range of appropriate musical genres. NB: To satisfy the requirement for a 'wide range', learners should be asked to provide evidence for **four** musical genres. To achieve M1, they will elaborate their explanations with reference to suitable examples. For D1, learners will discuss the relative importance of each example component, and the contribution it makes to the genre from which it is taken. Cross-referencing to other genres could be also used to support their arguments.

Learning outcomes 2 and 3 require learners to illustrate that they know and can perform the fundamental elements of the genres studied, and can reproduce the essence of this in a practical context.

Learning outcome 2 requires learners to take part in a workshop or jamming session. If a workshop approach is used, this may be led by a visiting musician or the tutor. Whether a workshop or jamming session is used, the following key points must be addressed for assessment purposes:

- the session must be captured on video
- each learner must have the opportunity to include a brief solo section.

This should be supported by formalised personal practice, for which a practice diary should be kept. This can be a traditional written diary, or could be a log of dated audio recordings.

To achieve P2 the evidence will show that learners have developed stylistically appropriate material over the course of time through personal practice and participation on workshops/rehearsals. The use of the word 'contrasting' in the learning outcome/grading criteria implies that a minimum of **two** contrasting styles should be developed. Merit level learners will be tracking and discussing their progress, and reviewing targets as part of this process. Their contributions to rehearsals/workshops will be clearly recognisable as examples of the chosen genres. Distinction level learners will contribute to the workshop or jamming session in a way that is not only stylistically accurate but also shows musical flair. Their contribution will show that learners have understood the finer performance details of the chosen genre.

To meet learning outcome 3, learners will demonstrate that they are able to adjust their playing to meet the requirements of different contexts, by playing the role of session musician in more than one performance situation. Examples of contexts are given in the content of the unit. Capturing on video is the most effective way of evidencing this criterion.

These situations could include studio-based recording sessions and live performances. Where the learning outcome refers to a 'range of musical genres' this should be taken as minimum of **three**. One example might include live performances in two genres combined with one recording session in a third; a second example might include one live performance, one theatre-based performance and one recording session, each in a different genre. To achieve P3 the evidence will show that learners have contributed to each performance situation in a way that did not detract from the overall effect. Evidence for M3 will show that their contributions are clearly recognisable as examples of the chosen genre. To achieve D3, learners will have a mastery of appropriate musical skills to a degree where they can contribute to each performance with creativity and flair.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	The Elements of Musical Genres	Analyse music from a wide range of genres (4) identifying musical elements and interpretive devices that define each style.	Written piece or – Individual presentation to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audio examples.
P2, M2, D2	Preparing for Performance in Contrasting Styles	Personal practice and group rehearsals are required to prepare for a performance showcasing a range of musical genres.	Evidence to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice diary (could be written/audio) • video evidence of rehearsal • tutor observation reports.
P3, M3, D3	Session Musician	Participate in different musical situations without rehearsing, in a range of genres (3); these situations could include studio recording and live performance.	Evidence to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • video evidence of performance • tutor observation reports.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Music and Music Technology sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Music and Music Technology suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		Music Performance Techniques
		Pop Music in Practice
		Working and Developing as a Musical Ensemble
		Live Music Workshop
		Improvising Music
		Improvising Music in a Jazz Style

Essential resources

Learners will need access to adequate practice and rehearsal facilities, with instruments and equipment of suitable quality, where the learners themselves do not supply these. Opportunities for workshops and/or master classes will need to be provided with a reasonable timescale that fits the delivery of the unit. An appropriate range of workshops/master classes and jamming/rehearsal opportunities will need to be provided to cater for the needs and interests of the whole group. Where facilities do not exist within the institution to offer a range of performance situations, arrangements will need to be made with external organisations such as theatres and recording studios in order to provide a suitable range of performance situations.

Classroom resources that allow the viewing of video material, and monitoring of audio examples, together with suitable word-processing or presentation software will also be needed. Access to a wide range of historically and culturally important music (as audio and video resources) will be needed to support this part of the unit.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit is potentially of high vocational relevance to learners whose intention is to seek employment as a working musician. To this end, it is highly desirable that the unit tutor has some experience of the 'session world', and can provide opportunities for learners to study with working musicians, in order to develop skills appropriate to current industry practice.

Performance opportunities should be as 'real as possible'. Local theatres and/or recording studios could provide engagement for learners where appropriate, and it is incumbent on the unit tutor to seek these opportunities in order to ensure validity of this unit.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Sher C – *The New Real Book* (Sher Music Co, 2005) ISBN 978-1883217259

Various – *50 Pop and Rock Hits for Buskers: The Black Book* (Wise Publications, 2006) ISBN 978-1846096235

Various – *50 Pop and Rock Hits for Buskers: The White Book* (Wise Publications, 2006) ISBN 978-1846094576

Various – *The Real Book* (Hal Leonard, 2007) ISBN 978-1423424512

Various – *The Ultimate Fake Book* (Hal Leonard, 1994) ISBN 978-0793529391

Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/management/sessionp01.shtml BBC One Music – Work as a session musician

www.expertvillage.com/video/159552_becoming-session-musician.htm Expert Village – Becoming a session musician [online]

www.recordingreview.com/articles/articles/186/1/Can-You-Be-A-Session-Musician/Page1.html Recording Review – Can you be a session musician? [online]

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The following table identifies the PLTS opportunities that have been included within the assessment criteria of this unit:

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	analysing historically and culturally important music
Creative thinkers	contributing to a rehearsal or performance
Reflective learners	developing their playing style in practice or rehearsal
Team workers	rehearsing with others
Self-managers	organising a personal practice routine
Effective participators	rehearsing with others.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching the elements of historically and culturally important music
Creative thinkers	taking a solo break while performing with others
Reflective learners	responding to feedback from instrumental tutors
Team workers	suggesting parts for other musicians
Self-managers	organising rehearsals
Effective participators	playing in a recording session.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	preparing written piece/presentation
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	preparing written piece/presentation
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	preparing written piece/presentation
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	preparing written piece/presentation
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	preparing written piece/presentation
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	preparing written piece/presentation
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	preparing written piece/presentation
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking and active role in discussions at rehearsals
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	preparing written piece.