



BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

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**1997** HSC

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**EXAMINATION  
REPORT**

**Classical  
Ballet**

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**1997 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATION REPORT  
CLASSICAL BALLET**

In 1997 39 candidates entered for the 2/3 Unit examination in Classical Ballet. Of these, 6 of the 2 Unit candidates chose the Related Studies Major Elective Option, 12 chose the Performance Option, 9 chose the Composition Option, and 12 presented for the 3 Unit course.

**2/3 UNIT (COMMON)**

There were seven options available to candidates in Classical Ballet in 1997.

Options	Number of Candidates
1 2 Unit — Performance Major	12
2 2 Unit — Composition Major	9
3 2 Unit — Related Studies Major	6
4 3 Unit — Performance (first completing 2 Unit Practical on the same day)	7
5 3 Unit — Choreography (first completing 2 Unit Practical on the same day)	0
6 3 Unit — Performance only (having completed 2 Unit before)	3
7 3 Unit — Choreography only (having completed 2 Unit before)	2

This report deals with the written component of all these options.

## WRITTEN PAPER

### Related Studies — CORE

#### Section 1

#### Repertory Studies and Ballet Appreciation

##### Question 1 (Compulsory)

As stated in the Syllabus, this question required students to have a sound background knowledge of the set ballets. The question allowed them to choose one of those set.

Ballet	Number Attempting
Sleeping Beauty	16
Spartacus	19
Daphnis & Chloë	0

##### **Sleeping Beauty**

It was felt that the answers dealing with this ballet were below standard. Candidates did not have information about its historical context and did not see it as a ballet related to a specific era. They did not seem to understand the term *context*.

##### **Spartacus**

Those who chose this ballet answered the question more efficiently. They were clear about the distinguishing features of the ballet and there was evidence of careful study and preparation.

##### **Daphnis and Chloë**

No candidates chose this ballet.

## Question 2 (Compulsory)

Candidates either did not understand this question or could not do what was asked. Whilst this topic is clearly stated in the Syllabus, it appeared that the conceptual framework of the question was too complex for the candidates to manage well; as a result the responses were average to poor. Factual information was negligible and there was little reference, for example, to dates, choreography or designers. Many candidates did not appear to see Ballet as part of the Creative and Performing Arts.

Ballets Selected	Number of Candidates
The Upper Room	10
Berlin	2
The Deep End	1
Cinderella	4
Swan Lake	1
Play Dead	2
Free Radicals	2
Sinfonietta	1
Apollo	4
Coppelia	1
Red Earth	2
La Sylphide	2
Line Drawing	1
Into the Darkness	1
Theme and Variations	1
Non - attempts	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

## Section II

### Anatomy for Ballet

#### Part A

#### Question 3 (Compulsory)

This question was divided into two sections:-

- (a) Many candidates could not name or explain an anatomical problem experienced or observed in a classical ballet class, but those who did so had obviously studied some anatomy and received high marks.
- (b) The problem-solving ability of candidates here was average to poor. Many could see neither the reasons for the problem they chose nor how to resolve it. Correct ballet terminology was not used in formulating a solution to the chosen problem, but those who recognised the relationship to specific classical ballet steps gained highest marks.

#### Question 4 (Compulsory)

Answers to this question were better, since most candidates knew two different types of joints in the body. There was, however, little connection between those selected and ballet and few gave specific examples using ballet terminology. It is considered important for students learning ballet to see the relationship between anatomy and ballet.

#### Part B

#### Question 5

Most candidates were able to give examples of *Safe Dance Practices* but were generally not able to discuss the *relationship* between these and injury prevention. Few gave specific examples.

#### Question 6

The answers to this question were average to good. While candidates were able to give a breakdown of the food groups that comprise a balanced diet, none mentioned the importance of fluids/water and only one attempted to draw up a menu.

## **Section III — Ballet in Australia**

Six Related Studies papers were marked.

### **Question 7**

This was answered well. The historical background to the contributions of Maina Gielgud as artistic director of the Australian Ballet was well covered.

### **Question 8**

This appeared to be a good question in answering which candidates showed understanding of this period in the history of classical ballet in Australia. The majority chose Fokine and Pavlova; however, one chose Graeme Murphy who did not belong to the period stipulated in the question. Nevertheless some enthusiasm was apparent in the way in which the other candidates approached this topic.

### **Question 9**

Answers to this question were above average. All the answers showed knowledge of the period during which Graeme Murphy was Artistic Director of the Sydney Dance Company. To answer this question well, students needed to carry out more research into the early period of that dance company.

## **Section IV — Further Anatomy and Physics of Ballet**

Students were required to attempt two out of three questions in this section.

### **Question 10**

Most candidates answered the first part of this question well, although answers to the second part were poor. Candidates were not clear about the relationship between the anatomical knowledge that they had acquired and classical ballet technique.

### **Question 11**

Again, although the first part of the question was answered quite well, the second part was answered poorly. Study programmes do not appear to be integrating classical ballet and information about fitness and health.

## **Question 12**

Answers to this section were well below average. Candidates did not give a correct description of the performance of a grand jeté en avant nor did they relate their knowledge of physics to ballet.

## **3 UNIT (ADDITIONAL)**

12 candidates presented for the 3 Unit Written Paper.

### **Question 1 Renaissance**

The one answer to this question was well done and showed some research into the topic. Key figures were named and the main historical features were well known.

### **Question 2 Pre-Romantic**

This question was not attempted.

### **Question 3 Romantic**

The answers to this question were good. The two ballets, La Sylphide and Giselle, are still accessible to students; their availability may have contributed to the quality of these answers.

### **Question 4 British Ballet**

This question was not attempted.

### **Question 5 Russian Ballet**

No candidate attempted this question.

### **Question 6 Diaghilev**

Although the question itself was not answered well, students did know the basic facts. They were able to refer to some of the people who worked with Diaghilev, but were not clear about the collaboration process or about his entrepreneurial skills.



## Question 7 American Ballet

This was answered quite well. Balanchine was a popular choice; candidates understood his origins in Russia, his effect on the American style of ballet and the fact that he was able to give American ballet its distinctive identity. They also indicated his influence on the evolution of contemporary ballet.

## General Comments and Recommendations

Students should practise reading the questions and analysing them before starting to write. They need to plan an answer - not just write whatever they know related to any terms used in the question. Key terms must be identified and the point of the question evaluated before they start to write their answers.

- Students must know the set ballets thoroughly.
- Students must learn to evaluate the information they acquire and relate it to classical ballet itself. Examples can help to make this connection.
- Information on anatomy, physics, nutrition and safe dance needs to be integrated into the classical ballet field and not just learned as unrelated fields of study.
- Students need to be able to solve simple problems. Knowing how to formulate a solution to a problem, as in the question on injury prevention, is an important skill to acquire.
- The use of classical ballet terminology should be encouraged. The majority of students were unable to write the names of steps in French and few could give any examples. This may be caused by failure to read classical ballet terms and inability to spell the words or write them. It could also be due to the fact that the Syllabus does not require students to learn the French terminology that is standard in classical ballet. Many also appeared to find it difficult to describe the steps, even in English.
- Students also need to be able to visualise the context of a ballet to which they refer. The social and/or historical setting of any ballet is fundamental to an educated appreciation of it.

It is important to do more than simply show an accumulation of information. There must be an attempt to analyse the question and to come to terms with it in order to ascertain the purpose behind it and to show that a real attempt is being made to answer what it specifically asks for.