

Whose performance is it anyway? Reflections on examining music, meanings, standards, and reliability in an international context.

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Forms of graded examinations in music developed in England over at least 150 years are being used internationally as qualifications that recognise achievement and standards of performance. An overview of the history of these examinations and their use internationally is provided. The role of the teacher in preparing candidates for these examinations is described. Matters of interpretation, phrasing, and musical understanding by candidates in the context of assessment are discussed. Consideration is given to the influence of the teacher on the examination result for a candidate, together with that of the external examiner as well as the meaning of standards and reliability in international settings. Applications of traditional graded examinations and alternative forms of assessment in different cultures and musical forms are discussed. The development and use of graded examinations for the assessment of Performance Awards in Chinese Music in the ASEAN region is described and the assessment of these awards and the maintenance of standards by assessors from Singapore and Malaysia reported on.