

ESSAY #1

DUE at your second recitation of Week III.

LENGTH: 4 double spaced, single-sided pages (see “Formatting your papers.”)

TOPIC: compare and contrast (both pieces are in Kerman): (1) Perotin, “Alleluia. Diffusa est gratia” with (2) Josquin, “Kyrie,” from the *Missa Pange Lingua* considering the text setting, pre-existent material (chant) and the resultant sound

PREPARATION

1) Listen to the two compositions and write down your general impressions of each piece, focusing on what aspects held your attention. What do you think is the musical (or symbolic) purpose of the chant in each? To what extent can the words be understood—and why is this an important part of the “resultant sound”?

2) Carefully read Kerman’s descriptions of the following musical elements: **melody, rhythm/meter, texture and form.**

3) Listen to the two compositions again (and again) and think about how each composer used the musical elements listed above in terms of the questions in (1). Does one element seem to take precedence over the others?

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY STRUCTURE IS EXPECTED (see also “Formatting your papers.”)

1) Title. State or suggest the essay’s overall theme in a concise manner. **DO NOT** merely title your work “Essay 1.” Usually one devises a title **AFTER** an essay has been written, although you may have an idea about it well before you finish.

2) An introduction of one or at most two paragraphs. This gives the reader an overview of the essay to come. The goal of the introduction as a whole is to identify the subject and topic of your paper and to explain briefly the method and purpose of your exploration. The introduction of your essay should include the names and composers of the pieces and your general impressions of each composition.

3) Body. Develop your points of comparison and/or contrast describing, in as much detail as possible, the melody, rhythm/meter, texture and form of each piece in a series of (about four to six) paragraphs. You may want to organize these by discussing one element at a time. Refer to the text of the compositions, to their original context (sacred, secular), and the performing forces as necessary; these might provide additional paragraphs in support of your comparison or contrast. Try to make the essay increasingly strong as it builds to the conclusion.

4) A conclusion of one or at most two paragraphs. Unite your ideas in summary fashion, and carry the summary into a strong conclusion (that is, strive to make a final point that extends or enriches previous ones). As part of your conclusion, consider the following questions: how are the musical elements used to convey a general mood or meaning and how did your understanding or impression of each piece change after listening analytically?

The assignment has a threefold purpose: (1) to introduce you to the task of writing about music clearly; (2) to get you thinking actively about the compositional elements of melody, rhythm/meter, texture and form that are introduced early in the semester; (3) to provide a writing diagnostic.

This essay **must** be revised and the revision handed in within ten days of the return of the original essay from your instructor. **The original graded paper must be handed in with the revision.**