

MUCB 201: Music History I—Early Music

Take-Home, Open-Book Written Response, Exam #2 (Renaissance)

Please write a short response to the question prompt below. The writing should be about 700 words (try not to go over 1000 words). Organize your written response carefully. You should have some kind of topic sentence/sentences and concluding sentence/sentences. You should split this up into multiple paragraphs (use paragraphs to demonstrate change of topic, change of time period, etc). Your essay should have a clear visual format (indent new paragraphs). You may use your book, notes, course slides, etc as you write. Please cite direct quotes, but your essay should not consist of long stretches of direct quotes.

This assignment will be graded on accuracy, amount of detail, organization, and clarity of writing. These should be thoughtful responses written in complete sentences with proper grammar. Points will be deducted for spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors—please proofread. This will not be graded on formatting—you can use any font or margins (but don't make it illegible!).

This should be typed and submitted to this **Moodle assignment box by midnight on Sunday, November 6**. It is probably easiest for you to attach a word processing file or PDF, but you may also cut and paste your response directly into this box.

Question Prompt:

Humanism—the study of the humanities, of human knowledge—was the strongest intellectual movement of the Renaissance. Humanism had a number of direct and indirect influences on music, but one of the most important was the focus on rhetoric—the art of oratory, the ability to persuade listeners, the skill of organizing speech in a coherent manner. For music scholars, humanist emphasis in the Renaissance might be observed in new manners of text-setting—how the words of a text are set to music.

Pick **two** of the assigned pieces from our Renaissance unit (these should be pieces from your anthology or pieces I assigned as PDFs).

Analyze the text-setting in each piece. How are the words set to the music? How are the words emphasized, described, or expressed? How does the music reflect the form, meaning, or sound of the words?

You may compare and contrast your two examples, but make sure to pick two examples about which you can write detailed commentary. A good answer will likely include brief quotes from the text and refer to specific measure numbers in the music, all tied together by carefully written commentary on the text-setting.

The printed descriptions in the anthology following each piece, the textbook, class notes, and your own observations will likely be your best resources for this project.

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As you write, consider how these pieces may represent new developments in text setting—how are they different from medieval approaches? Why is the way the text is set in your two examples significant? Does the text or textual approach relate to extramusical concepts or events?

Guidelines:

- Only one of your pieces can be a madrigal.
- In general, do not pick two pieces of the same genre.
- If you want to use two different Mass movements, I might be open to that, provided they are by different composers.

All best and let me know if you have questions—
Dr. Erin Brooks

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