

Short Writing Assignment #1:
Music, Movement, and Technology in the Interwar Period (1918-1939)

Due Date: Email to me by Sunday, October 21, 11:59 p.m

The interwar period—the years between the end of World War I in 1918 and the beginning of World War II in 1939—was characterized by many **migrations**, by **movement** from place to place, and by **encounters between different cultures**. We might think of these “movements/encounters/migrations” very broadly, remembering this period began as incredible numbers of soldiers and military personnel moved around the globe during World War I—and the migrations, movements, and encounters between people from all parts of the world continued through the following two decades.

All of these cultural encounters had massive impacts on **music**, as people heard new sounds for the first time (and then often imitated or mixed such styles into their own pieces). To give a couple of examples: we have already talked about numerous European composers and musicians inspired by American popular musics during this period, we have discussed other migrations in the context of the blues, we will cover many musicians who move to the United States in the 1930s, we know of composers who moved from one part of Europe to another, etc. For a reminder of movements and encounters (particularly blendings of multiple stylistic influences), you might revisit parts of Chapters 33, 34, and 35 in your textbook.

Many of these encounters were shaped by the development (or increasingly widespread nature) of **technologies** from 1918-1939. New products and increasing ubiquity of old technologies allowed people to **travel** more easily, for people to **hear** musics from far-off places, for people to **listen** to broadcasts for the first time. This was an era of rapid and radical technological developments—for a reminder of technological developments in the period, you might revisit portions of Chapters 34 and 35 in your textbook, particularly pages 855, 857-858, 872, 874 (about technology).

Following the guidelines and questions below, **you should complete a typed response of around 2 pages (roughly 600 words)**. Automatic deductions will be in place for any response under 500 words; please do not exceed 1000 words. This should be a **thoughtful, well-written response in complete sentences with proper grammar**. You will not need any extra research (besides the *Norton Anthology*, the course textbook, and the online streaming audio) to complete this assignment.

- Writing **will** count towards to your grade—be concise and watch out for unnecessary filler!
- This should be an **essay**—any use of numbering, bullet points, or other list-making elements (instead of prose) will result in an automatic deduction of a letter-grade.

Questions? Bring them to office hours next week, or send me an email.

Guidelines:

Please complete the **four** parts below. You should write **at least** one paragraph for each. Do **NOT** number your paragraphs or use bullet points—write a short ESSAY with these four elements.

1) Please briefly introduce the historical period (from post-World War I in 1918 through 1939) to your reader. You do not have to cover the entire era, but mention at least the years leading up to your chosen piece. Provide a little **context** about major historical events and developments (you will likely want to focus on ones **specific** to the geographic context of your chosen piece). You should largely use your textbook and *NAWM* as sources, but please rephrase carefully in your own words—no direct copying from the book OR any Internet sources. You can briefly survey Internet sources for research on this piece, but it is not required to do so.

This first section should absolutely take up no more than 1/4 of your overall assignment.

Now, please choose **one** musical example from the *Norton Anthology of Western Music* dating from the period **1918-1939**. Possible eligible choices are: **#173-175, #177-179, #181-196**.

Some of these will be easier to discuss than others, but choose something you like.

If you pick an ineligible piece (something from before 1918 or something after 1939, you will **not** pass the assignment).

Now that you've chosen a piece, I ask you to write two paragraphs about it:

2) First, discuss the musical style of this work. In well-written prose, explain some of the major structural features of the piece: things such as form, word painting, specific aspects of the instrumental parts or vocal part, key and harmony, scoring, dynamics, etc. How is the piece put together? It may help you to think about if you were going to **teach** this piece, what you would try to convey to your readers as important information about the work? To complete this section will require reading the accompanying pages in the anthology and textbook, multiple listenings, and some careful thinking on your part. Please make specific references to measure numbers when discussing particular music features.

3) Second, what about your selected piece seems **impacted** by migration/movement of people, migration, **or** technologies of the 1910s-1930s? Some things you might consider (not all will be applicable): composer biography, the context the piece was composed, the commissioning of the work, **stylistic mixing** within the piece, the performance of the piece, how audiences received it, etc. Be aware: some pieces in the anthology will be easier to use for this assignment than others. Pick what you like, but if it's not working—you might not have picked the most clear-cut example.

4) Finally, write a brief concluding paragraph for your essay. Here's where you can be creative or interesting if you like, and connect your piece to other works you may know of, or other examples later in history of the same kinds of issues. This paragraph should be short, though!