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Score Study Assignment: Analysis of a Renaissance Motet

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Score Study Assignment - Gary Seighman
Analysis of a Renaissance Motet (MUSC Advanced Choral Conducting - Junior majors)

Text analysis

- a. Translation and pronunciation
- b. Liturgical context and historical significance of the sacred text
- c. Poetic structure/form

Stylistic Analysis

- a. Historical background of the composer, survey of output (music written before/after the specific composition at hand), circumstances of the specific composition, any stylistic “fingerprints”
- b. Determine key stylistic traits of other motets during this decade and geographical location
- c. Performance Practice (primary and secondary sources)
- d. Reception of the work (as evidenced in reviews, letters, etc...).

Musical Analysis

- e. Harmonic analysis
- f. Phraseology (bar groupings, determining cadence strength)
- g. How does the formal scheme of the music fit the text?
- h. Instances of word painting
- i. Choosing appropriate performing edition (urtext, consulting manuscripts if available, understanding editorial markings)

Supplementary materials

- a. Recordings (at least 2 recordings of the work along with descriptions and reviews)
- b. Concert reviews (1-2)

Gestural Commentary

- a. In prose format, provide a description of how you would conduct this piece, providing a description of kinesthetic gestures while conducting specific measures and musical events.
[The analysis up to this point provides the material that informs of your musical decision)

Rehearsal Objectives/Preparation

- a. Identify specific spots that will present difficulties for the ensemble (range, meter and tempo changes, intervals, harmonic progressions, language difficulties, rhythmic challenges)
 - b. Describe the overall tonal qualities stylistically appropriate for the piece during performance
 - c. Devise warm-up exercised to address the aforementioned difficulties and tonal qualities
 - d. Create an overall strategy for rehearsing the music (minute-by-minute)
 - e. Any special seating arrangement to facilitate learning key musical concepts?
- Evaluation (only in a rehearsal lab setting)
 - a. Did the students meet the objectives set within the rehearsal? If not, how would you change the approach?
 - b. Did the warm-ups address the issues to be encountered in the rehearsal?

Student uses a variety of historical and analytical resources (3-5 books; online resources - JSTOR, digital dissertations, Grove and Oxford Music; Strunk source readings; sift through non-peer reviewed materials online)

EVALUATE

Student will be able to determine which information is relevant to performance understandings (how can

biographical information lead to relevant stylistic practices?)

Sources relevant to the topic and recognize biases (treatises that often contradict each other)

Discerning editorial markings - using critical commentary

CREATE

Develop key stylistic attributes based upon learned information and identify them in the musical

score

Assessment: Does the student's understanding of the score follow conventional knowledge of musical

style?

Has the student been able to adapt information from scholarly analyses to the current score project?

Are the insights meaningful to performance and provide some level of expression and subjectivity?

Is the student developing appropriate musical intuition (interpretation that is historically informed?)