

IS Music Composition Assignment

Task: To compose/arrange a 1-3 minute piece of music that you could teach to your students and that they might perform...and/or, will serve as an exemplar for a composition assignment that you might design for your students.

Parameters:

- The piece should be 1-3 minutes in duration. (Longer is OK).
- Ideally 4 parts/staves (e.g. SA and piano, SATB, sax or violin quartet). You may use more if you really wish (e.g. concert band, string ensemble, jazz band).
- It should be designed and ready for performance (with a beginning and an end, intro if necessary, etc.).
- You must target a specific age group (e.g. middle school, gr. 9-10, senior) and the composition should be something students are capable of learning without unnecessary frustration (e.g. appropriate ranges for insts/voices, appropriate level of complexity, etc.)
- Your score must look as professional as possible (use a model piece of music to make sure your piece matches up)

Communication/Representation: Please notate with notation software e.g. Finale, Sibelius, Musescore (free from musescore.org) if possible. If you must do it by hand, make sure the score is extremely tidy. Alternatively, if it suits your piece, it may be appropriate to use a graphic notation system that you devise (think about what will work best for your students).

Please submit a recording along with your notation, e.g. email me an mp3 of a MIDI realization. It might even make more sense to avoid notation altogether, and simply produce a recording of your piece (either acoustically or electronically realized—check out audacity.com for great free multi-track recording software for both Mac and Windows, and/or, if you have a Mac, garage band). If you go this route, consider producing a leadsheet also.

Accompanying Paragraph:

When you hand in the piece, please provide a text describing...

- a) intended age group
- b) how you foresee using the piece with your students
- c) info about the piece e.g. is it an entirely original composition or an arrangement? What were you trying to achieve with the piece? Does it represent anything? Feel free to add whatever else you'd like to share with me about the piece and/or your composing process.

Happy Composing!

Assessment criteria on reverse...

Composition Assessment

Scope

- Does the piece meet or exceed assignment expectations (duration, # of voices)?
- Is the piece performance ready?
- Is the work thoughtfully thorough? (e.g. dynamics, slurring/tonguing/bowing, expressive indications, etc.)
- Have you included a thorough and thoughtful accompanying paragraph?

A B C D

Performability

- Is a specific student age group targeted?
- Are the demands made on the performers reasonable and appropriate?
- Is there a good understanding of the idiomatic limitations and possibilities of the specific voice types and/or instruments?

A B C D

Communication/Representation/Recording/Notation

- Does the piece look professional – is the score neat and tidy?
- Is it well laid out and easy to read, understand, and follow?
- Does it respect the conventions of music notation?
- Recording*: Does the recording clearly communicate how the piece of music is intended to sound?

A B C D

Aesthetic Success

- Does the piece have a satisfying shape/structure?
- Is there innovation and/or originality?
- Is there an effective balance between the expected and unexpected, and between repetition and variety?
- Will the piece engage listeners and continue to engage on repeated listening?

A B C D

Composing Technique

- Is the work careful and thoughtful?
- Is the piece true to itself – do the ideas fit together coherently?
- Are there enough ideas to keep the piece interesting?
- Are the ideas used/explored thoroughly?
- Is technical skill evident in the employment of harmony, counterpoint, and part-writing?

A B C D