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| Degree pathway: | BA Music | Student number: | 521302 |
| Course unit: | From the Present to the Past | Assignment No.: | 5 |
| Tutor name: | Desmond Clarke | Date: | 30.7.2020 |

From the Present to the Past

This course unit provides a general survey of western Art music from c1450 to the present day, its key composers and repertoire. Throughout the unit you are encouraged to appreciate the ways in which later and contemporary music forms may develop, expand and consciously refer to earlier styles or seek to deconstruct or break away from previous conventions. You are required to listen to a range of music from each era, including that which challenges you, and to develop your own opinions, preferences and responses to the music, supported by your academic knowledge and research.

Overall

These two essays show a good grasp of the relationships between different periods and styles of music, and you make good use of technical and analytical terminology. Unfortunately, they're both quite a bit longer than the suggested lengths, so would need to be edited down if you wanted to submit them for assessment. Your writing shows good understanding of the pieces in question, but in both essays could feature your own interpretation of the music more prominently. With some revision, this could be a really strong assignment – it's up to you whether or not to do this when you come to select which assignments to submit for assessment. Whichever you choose, you should be pleased with your work. Well done for completing the unit!

Subject Based Knowledge and Understanding

Broad and comparative understanding of subject content, knowledge of the appropriate historical, intellectual, cultural or institutional contexts.

Mass Essay:

The introduction to this essay is clear and thorough. You introduce the two composers, then begin to look at their masses. If you decide to cut anything from this essay, however, this opening would be a good choice, as the biographies of the composers doesn't necessarily add anything to the discussion of the pieces. In a longer essay this would be entirely appropriate, but cutting them here would give you more space to discuss the music.

You give the styles of both masses an effective summary, which allows you to make more detailed comparisons. This is a strong part of the essay, and the musical examples are helpful in illustrating your points. There are a couple of small changes you could make to the comparison to make it even clearer, however. Your terminology around tintinnabulation is slightly unclear – you (correctly) write that it uses two types of voice, but later describe one of the voices as "tintinnabulating" in contrast to the other. It's pretty obvious what you mean here, but you can be more explicit, for example you could describe the two voices as "scalic" and "arpeggiated".

Finally, you could give more space to discussion of your own opinions. It's very hard in a short essay like this to do justice to a subject, and the temptation is almost always to include more factual information than interpretation. However, a large part of the brief here is about the discussion of your own views; consider giving them more prominence, even a few sentences could make a big difference.

Vaughan Williams Essay:

As with the previous essay, the opening sections, while interesting, are possible candidates for removal when revising this work to fit the suggested lengths as they're not explicitly relevant to the brief.

You've included some impressive detail in your analysis of the Vaughan William piece. This is really good content, but to make it even better you could link it more explicitly to the Tallis source material.

The use of score extracts supports your points, but you've used so many that they become a little confusing. You could consider either condensing some of these points, omitting some of the examples, or including only sections of the full score. For example, if you're discussing only one part of a texture, it may not be necessary to include a full score. Consider also whether including an example adds to your argument – you include two pages of full score showing the end of the piece, but it's not totally clear what point you're illustrating with this or how it relates to the assignment brief.

Basically, this central section has some really strong points, but could be improved by tightening it up and consolidating some of the examples. A more explicit statement of how Vaughan Williams' material links to Tallis' would be beneficial here.

As with the mass essay, you can give more space to your own interpretation, which at the moment is limited to a short concluding paragraph. If you re-write this work, try to give equal weight to interpretation as well as analysis.

Research and Critical Evaluation Skills

The ability to design and carry out a research project, locate and evaluate evidence from a wide range of primary and secondary sources (aural or textual).

The research and referencing practices you've used in the assignment are very good. You're accessing appropriate academic sources and documenting them well. Your research practice has developed substantially over the course of the unit. Well done.

As you move into other units, see if you can diversify your sources even more. Considering referring more to books and journal articles, and consult a wider range of encyclopedias. For example, you've used JSTOR to access an ebook – JSTOR also has hundreds of journals you can access, have a look at some of these. Also check out Grove Music Online, which you can access as an OCA student here: <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>

Stylistic Awareness

Evidence of listening and reading, research, critical thinking and reflection; perceptiveness of personal response to music (evidenced in listening logs).

The listening logs are a bit more developed than in the last submission, but there could still be more self-directed entries. There are some good observations in the logs, but, as in the assignment, not much focus on your own responses to the music. There are also a couple of strange statements, for example, is Copland's Passacaglia really eight bars long?

You could take the opportunity to write up a few more entries before submitting this unit for assessment. Try to include a balance of personal and technical observations. If you're in doubt about this, get in touch with me.

Communication

The ability to communicate ideas and knowledge in written and spoken form, including presentation skills.

The main problem with the assignment essays is that they're both significantly longer than the suggested lengths. This surprised me as it's something which we communicated about explicitly prior to submission, and it wasn't a problem in your previous work.

The mass essay, which has a suggested length of 500 words, is 838 words long, and the Vaughan Williams essay, which has a suggested length of 1000 words, is 1619. The general rule for word counts – as I wrote in my email – is that a 10% deviation from the suggested length is fine, but anything more than that will count against you.

Because of this, if you choose to submit this assignment for assessment, you'll need to do some word to edit down the length. Aim for no more than 550 words for the short essay, and 1100 for the longer one (500 and 1000 + 10%). This will be a challenge, as you'll need to reduce both word counts by about a third. I've included some suggestions above for which sections you could cut to achieve this, but it's important you don't garble the flow of your argument in doing so.

Your written communication is generally good, and the essays are both written in quite a clear style. There are, however, occasional slips of grammar and missed out words, for example "Both pieces (**are**) scored differently", or "Palestrina's work (**is**) written for...". A careful proof-read should spot these and allow you to correct them. If you're not confident here you can ask someone else to look over your work to see if they can spot any mistakes – it's much harder to proof-read your own work than someone else's!

A quick note about the titles of pieces: generic titles, such as Sonata no. 2, should be written in plain text, but individually titled works, for example *Berlin Mass*, should be written in italics.

To improve your work

The biggest thing you can do to improve this submission is to re-edit the essays to conform to the word count. Even if you decide not to do this, it may also be worth writing up a couple of listening log entries.

Action Points

- Write up some listening log entries.
- In further units, make use of a wider range of academic sources.
- Stick to suggested lengths.

Reflecting on your feedback

It would be useful for you to reflect on this feedback in your learning log, identifying what you feel are the key themes and areas for development. This will help provide a better understanding of what you are taking from your formative feedback, and help you develop a reflective approach to your practice. If you are using a public facing blog, and want to quote from the feedback, please refer to your 'tutor' rather than by name.

Additional support

Additional support is available from Course Support [coursesupport@oca.ac.uk] for course content or subject related questions. Student Services [studentadvice@oca.ac.uk] if you have queries around study resources, time frames, finance and funding, or any general enquiries. Or contact Learner Support [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk] if any personal circumstances or disabilities begin to impact on your ability to study.

Assignment Schedule

Working within the timeframe of your overall course end date, the following dates sets out a timetable of study at a pace that suits you. These deadline dates can be negotiated, so contact your tutor to re-schedule, or Student Support if there are wider issues affecting your ability to study.

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| Assignment One | n/a |
| Assignment Two | n/a |
| Assignment Three | n/a |
| Assignment Four | n/a |
| Assignment Five | n/a |
| Course end date | 17.4.21 |
| Summative Assessment | November 2020 |