



Open  
College  
of the Arts

## Formative feedback

Student name	<b>Anett McCaul</b>	Student number	<b>521302</b>
Course/Unit	<b>From Present to Past</b>	Assignment number	<b>2</b>
Type of tutorial	<b>Written</b>		

### Overall Comments

This submission shows improvement in many areas, but also suffers from some problems, specifically concerning the use of un-attributed text. While I don't think you've intentionally passed others' work off as your own, this would be considered plagiarism if you submitted it for assessment. Don't worry though – some modest changes in how you attribute your research will fix it. If you would like to discuss this further or get some advice on good practice we can talk on the phone or over video chat.

### Assessment potential

*I understand your aim is to go for the Music/Creative Arts\* Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to pass at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.*

### Feedback on assignment

#### **Subject based knowledge and understanding, context, communication**

This essay brings together a lot of relevant information about Neoclassicism, and gives practical examples of some of the diversity of music covered by the term. However, it sometimes lacks focus, is substantially over the suggested word length and some of the text has been taken from other sources without reference (plagiarism). With some editing, however, all of these issues could be resolved.

You begin the essay with a definition of Neoclassicism, however your references to classical antiquity and different aspects of Neoclassicism here are a little confusing, and they don't clearly relate to Neoclassicism in music. For example, Johann Joachim Winckelmann lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but you then say the first appearance of Neoclassicism was in Matisse and Picasso. This contextual information is interesting but it is currently rather muddled. It's fine to include this more general description, but it could do with some clearer contextualisation.

You follow this by focussing on individual pieces. This works well in the structure of the essay, but the focus isn't always clear here, as you don't always link these pieces specifically to Neoclassicism. For example you don't tell the reader why you consider *The Miraculous Mandarin* a Neoclassical piece (you also link this piece to the *Rite of Spring*, which is most definitely not Neoclassical). Make sure that in this section all of the points you make link directly back to the essay topic – be explicit about what the relationships are.

Quite a lot of the text in this essay is taken directly from Wikipedia or other online sources, primarily most of the sections on individual Neoclassical pieces but also some of the more general sections on the movement and its composers. Unfortunately this is plagiarism and not acceptable. In academic writing it's essential that when you research your topic and present your findings you acknowledge where your information has come from. Including someone else's text as your own is a very serious violation of academic practice and can have far-reaching implications. It's essential that you don't submit any plagiarised work for assessment – there is more information about plagiarism and its possible consequences on the OCA student site.

It is totally acceptable to quote material from other sources, but it is absolutely essential that you acknowledge that it is a quote. For example, take the paragraph:

Hindemith developed a leaner, contrapuntally complex style. It is also a neo-classical style, but it is different from the works of Igor Stravinsky. It is more of Johann Sebastian Bach than the classical clarity of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In fact, Hindemith's music represents the neo-baroque.

This is taken directly from the "New World Encyclopedia", and should be acknowledged as such. This could be reformulated as:

According to the New World Encyclopedia, Hindemith's style was also Neoclassical but in a different way to Stravinsky's. It describes it as "neo-Baroque", drawing more on "the contrapuntal style of Johann Sebastian Bach than the classical clarity of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart".

This is not a massive change, but it is an essential one. It shows where the information has come from and doesn't imply that you've come up with it yourself. If you were to submit this essay for assessment, it's essential that you re-write it to show clearly what your sources are and where you've used them. You've done this for some direct quotes in the text, but not others. Make sure you're consistent about this process and you'll be fine.

I think part of the reason for the muddled structure of the opening is that you're drawing information from a lot of different sources but not processing it thoroughly enough. You must take time to carefully analyse what you read, and form it into a coherent argument, you can't just pack it all in and hope it'll make sense as an essay.

The bibliography (while not including all sources) is otherwise wide-ranging and you've used websites, books and articles in assembling your research. The formatting of the bibliography is a little odd, however. I'm not sure why each entry starts with "Your Bibliography", and some of the titles of sources seem to be incorrect, for example, are you really referencing the "OpenAthens Sign in" page? If you're using a tool to format your bibliography for you, check it carefully to make sure there are no errors.

While you've not included it in the bibliography, you have used content from Wikipedia. As I mentioned in the last piece of feedback Wikipedia is not usually considered a reliable academic source, as it's freely editable and anonymous. While it can be a good place to start your research, as it often points to other more reliable sources, it should generally be avoided as a reference. I've included a much better alternative in the further reading section below.

The essay, at 1500 words, is substantially over the suggested length of 1000 words. While some deviation from word counts is allowable, you should try to stay within 10% of the suggested length. Balancing concision with breadth is one of the most important skills in academic writing, and often one of the most challenging. If you choose to revise this essay for assessment, I suggest editing it to match the suggested length by trimming out everything which isn't directly related to your topic. This has two advantages: you'll get credit for an appropriate length and for a more focussed investigation of the subject.

In conclusion, this essay has a lot of the characteristics of good academic writing, such as the inclusion of contextual information, looking at general and specific aspects of a topic, and the comparison of different examples, but the way you use sources needs to be improved to avoid plagiarism, and the way you present the information you find could be clearer. Don't be disheartened, these issues can be fixed with a little work.

## Research

**Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis , stylistic awareness**

As in the assignment you've drawn together some great information, but there are some problems with attribution. For example, in the research on *Kurzwellen* you again assemble the text from whole paragraphs taken from your sources. While the sources are included in your bibliography, you can't just take text directly: you must quote it or re-write it, attributing the information to the relevant source.

There are some similar issues in the research exercise bibliographies to those in the assignment – more references to the "OpenAthens Sign in" page.

## Listening & Learning Logs or Blogs

**Stylistic awareness, context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis**

The listening logs demonstrate an ability to explore your own listening experience which is developing well. For example, the entry on *Clapping Music* is detailed, analytical and articulate. This shows that you have the ability to formulate and present your own musical opinions, and explore your own ideas in academic writing – take these skills and apply them in the assignment and research exercises.

## Suggested reading/listening

### Context

Have a look at Grove Online – it’s a music encyclopaedia which is much better to use than Wikipedia and the like. Not only is it full of useful information, but it references lots of other resources which may also be of interest.

You can log in with your OCA account through: <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>  
Click on “sign in via your institution” and select “University for the Creative Arts”.

## Pointers for the next assignment

- Clarify the use of sources, quotes and attribution to avoid plagiarism in assignments and research exercises.
- Carefully check the formatting of your bibliographies.
- Bring more of your own analysis and criticism into the assignment work.

Strengths	Areas for development
Improving ability to talk about own musical experiences.	Use of sources is problematic.
Research draws on a wide range of sources.	Sometimes uses poor sources, i.e. Wikipedia.

Tutor	Desmond Clarke
Date	10.09.19
Next assignment due	10.11.19