

## Notes for Music Essays

Among the problems of writing about music is the insufficient information in most style manuals about documentation issues regarding musical works, recordings, and editions, in addition to use of a specialized vocabulary. The following pages reproduce a handout used by Dr. Bert Polman in his classes; this illustrates a way of teaching students how to use a documentation style. Other methods (and styles) are used by other professors.

Writing on musical topics is usually done either from a Humanities or Social Science orientation, and thus standard style manuals are acceptable [i.e., MLA, Turabian, APA, etc.], but check with your professor.

### Word-Processing

Give the proper spelling of a composer's name, the proper title of the musical work, and the opus number or other composer's catalogue number by checking these details in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Italicize foreign words such as *forte*, *allegro*, *da capo*, *flauto*, etc., even though these words may not be foreign to musicians.

Titles of musical works are either italicized or put in quotation marks:

    Italicize titles of large compositions, or titles of recordings:

        Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*, or the CD Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*

    Use quote marks for titles of individual songs:

        "Una Voce Poco Fa" or "Lost Is My Quiet"

Titles of hymn texts are put inside quotation marks; titles of hymn tunes are put in upper-case type: NICA EA is the tune usually sung to the hymn text "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Though italics are preferred as the alternate font type in the above examples, some scholars still prefer underlining in those cases where the italics' slant is barely sufficient to distinguish it from the regular fonts.

### Musical Examples

Small musical examples should be inserted into the body of the essay; longer musical examples belong in an appendix (which comes after the essay and before the concluding Bibliography).

Musical examples may be written out in legible script, may be photocopied from a source, or may be notated with computer software.

Identify each musical example with a number, e.g., Example 1, Example 2, for ease in referring to such examples in the body of your essay. With each musical example, provide the title of the composition from which that example is excerpted, with relevant measure numbers, as appropriate, with examples from large works.

Identify the source of each musical example in an internal note or a footnote; i.e., treat each musical example like a direct quotation for documentation purposes.

### **Documentation**

Reference notes may be done as internal notes [APA style] or as footnotes [MLA style, etc.]; check with your professor about which style is acceptable to him or her. Some professors may also accept endnotes.

Documentation should include a **Bibliography** (for print and electronic sources, in one integrated alphabetical order) and a separate **Discography** (for recordings). As your Bibliography will likely include some sources that you consulted but from which you do not quote directly, do not call it **Works Cited**.

There is a fair degree of consensus these days about acceptable documentation styles for Internet sources; check in any of the recent editions of style manuals. It is clear that simply giving an Internet URL is not sufficient at all.

Each entry in a **Discography** must include the proper title of the recording, the name(s) of the significant performer(s), the recording label name and its catalogue number [which is not our Library's catalogue number!], and the copyright date. E.g.:

*Bach: The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*, by Anthony Newman  
Columbia M2-32500 (1980)

*Celtic Woman*, by Chloë, Lisa, Méav, Orla, & Máiréad  
Manhattan 7243 8 60233 2 2 (2004)

A **Filmography** or **Videography** may be needed for some music essays, with documentation details similar to that given above for **Discography**.

Most music essays will refer to articles in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians or similar music encyclopaedia. As these articles are often identified with authors' names, the proper documentation for such signed articles should begin with the author's last name, e.g.:

Kerman, Joseph. "Mozart, Wolfgang." *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie, editor (New York: Macmillan, 1980), Volume 12, 256-340.

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If you have questions about any of these or similar technical items relevant to the production of music essays, please don't hesitate to speak to one of Calvin's reference librarians, to your professor, or to Prof. Polman; we'll gladly offer advice or explain what is acceptable or required.