

MUS 2500 Music in World Cultures

Instructor: Peter Johnston

Listening Journal Assignment

Due: Week 4, Week 9, Week 13

Length: 300-400 words

Evaluation: 15% (3 submissions, 5% each)

Submission: Online through Blackboard, upload PDF or MS Word files only

Late penalty: 10% per day late, counted from 11:59 pm each day

Overview

This assignment has three due dates - for each due date, **select one (1)** of the examples below (which will be posted on Blackboard in the **Listening Journal** folder) and write a 2-4 paragraph (roughly 300-400 words) journal entry. Your journal should touch upon the following key points:

- Using terms learned in the class, identify the instruments and typical musical features you can perceive in the song (Examples: rhythmic ostinato; clave; call and response; homophony; heterophony; improvisation)
- Be as detailed as possible as to what instruments are involved in particular musical relationships (example: the vocals were in a call and response relationship)
- Describe the timbres of the sounds (Examples: harsh string sound, deep drums, high-pitched vocals, etc)
- Based on what you hear and applying references from the course content, describe the likely social context of this music, and support your argument (Examples: this sounds like it may be used in religious ritual because it is slow and quiet, and thus might encourage contemplation).
- How does this music compare to music the music that you listen to? Are there similarities? What are the differences?

Grading

Each entry is worth 5% of the final mark. Your journals will be graded based on the detail of your musical description and the thought you put into your description. Particular emphasis will be placed on your use of specific concepts and terminology that we use in class.

Expectations

You are strongly encouraged to write your journal entries during the week or so after we have discussed the region/music in class. Your analysis will doubtless be the most thoughtful and insightful when the relevant concepts and terms are the most fresh. As this is a journal, you are expected to include your own thoughts and opinions about the music, specifically around how the music relates to your own musical tastes and experiences. Rather than direct statements about whether you like or dislike the music, try to contextualize it within your own frame of musical reference and provide supporting evidence for why the examples appeal to you or not.

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See the example journal entry below for help with formatting and basic structure, and the grading rubric for the criteria by which your work will be evaluated.

Listening Examples

Week 3 - West Africa

- Seckou Keita (voice and kora) - "Dounuya"
©2002 Courtesy of ARC Music Productions, licensed from Jalikunda, Bristol, UK.

Week 4 - Caribbean Music

- 21st Century Steel Orchestra - "What Is A Pan?"
1999 Historical Association of Southern Florida. Courtesy of Michael Kernahan

Week 5 - First Nations Music

- Los Angeles Northern Singers - "Eagle Dance"
©1976 Recorded Anthology of Amercian Music Inc, courtesy of New World Records

Week 7 - Music in Brazil

- Jacare Brazil - "Evolução De Samba (Samba De Batucada)"
© University of Florida

Week 8 - Music in Cuba

- Grupo Afrocuba de Matanzas - "Las Leyendas de Grécia"
© 1997 Courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

Week 9 - Indonesian Music

- Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia Gamelan - "Jaya Semara".
Recorded by and licensed from Michael Tenzer

Week 10 - Hindustani Music

- Shaft Ali Khan - "Ishq"
© 2003 Courtesy of ARC Music Productions International

Week 11 - Bollywood Music and Fusion

- Bombay Dub Orchestra - "Monsoon Malabar"
© Six Degrees Records, courtesy of Six Degrees Records

Week 12 - Music in the Middle East

- Ahmed Mukhtar and ensemble - "Iraqi Cafe"
© 2001 Courtesy of ARC Music Productions International Ltd.

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Week 13 - Music in China

- Deng Haiqiong - “Moon over the Han Palace”
 © 2002 Celebrity Music. Courtesy of Deng Haiqiong

Listening Journal Grading Rubric

Name _____ Journal Rubric _____

Description _____

Rubric Detail

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	Highly Proficient	Proficient	Limited Proficient	Needs Work
Content and Organization	4 Points Content is accurate, focused, and consistent; exhibits control in development of ideas; unified with a fresh insight	3 Points Content is somewhat accurate and fairly clear; offers solid but less accurate reasoning; contains some appropriate details and/or examples	2 Points Content is somewhat vague OR only loosely related to the writing task; at times may be off topic OR too broad with limited support	1 Points Content unclear; lapses in coherence OR no relation to writing task; offers simplistic, undeveloped support for ideas
Style/Creative Thinking	4 Points Skillfully evaluates information gathered from observation, experience, reflection, or reasoning	3 Points Adequately demonstrates reasonable relationships among ideas	2 Points Simplistic analysis of complex issue; limited clarity and complexion of thought	1 Points Insufficient reasoning and lacks complexity of thought
Use of Language	4 Points Essentially error free	3 Points Has some mechanical errors	2 Points Repeated weaknesses in mechanics; pattern of flaws	1 Points Mechanical errors so severe that writer's ideas are hidden
Use of Terminology	4 Points Demonstrates a clear grasp of the terminology used in this course	3 Points Demonstrates an adequate level of understanding of the terminology	2 Points Demonstrates an awareness of the words, but minimal understanding of the meanings of the terminology used in course	1 Points Lacks sufficient understanding of the terminology learned in the course

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Upload a document in this format to Blackboard, either as MS Word or PDF

Example Submission

Student Name:

Student Number:

Course:

Date:

Listening Journal Submission #X

Song: Seckou Keita Quartet - "N'fa"

Region: West Africa

The "N'fa" by Seckou Keita Quartet features a polyphonic texture, as it contains multiple lines of melody between the instruments and the vocal. The main melodic lines of the piece are generated by traditional West African chordophones including the kora, riti, and ngoni. The instrumental melodies compliment and support the vocal melodies, with the voices and instruments exchanging foreground roles. I can also hear syncopation occasionally, as there is significant rhythmic interplay between the instruments that frequently obscures the meter of the performance. The rhythmic frame

The vocals feature a pattern of descending melodies; each new verse starts with very high-pitch singing, which lowers with each phrase until a final concluding phrase at the lowest point of the melody. This has the effect of signifying a conclusion to the story that is perhaps being told in each verse, as each time it happens it feels like a new chapter of the bigger story is being revealed. This effect is likely the result of the kind of song this is, which I believe to be a "story song" that tells the oral history of the people who make this kind of music. It might be a tale about ancestors, about their traditions and culture. As we learned in class, the Griots of Western Africa were the record-keepers, story tellers, and entertainers of the culture, and the kora was the most

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common instrument on which they performed. This recording sounds like a modern version of the Griot tradition. As this song sounds like a story, I imagine it was intended primarily for listening and contemplation of the subject matter, as opposed to dancing and partying.

This song contains features that are both familiar and unfamiliar to me, based on my listening preferences. The presence of repeated lyrical verses is familiar, as the pop music I listen to also has sections of melodies that repeat with different lyrics each time. Many pop songs I like tell stories of some kind (usually about break-ups), so the idea that a song would tell a story is familiar to me. But the rhythmic feeling is quite different, as I am used to music that you can dance to, where the beat is clear. Maybe the polyrhythms represented in this example are just too unfamiliar, and I had trouble tapping my foot to it. As I like music that inspires me to dance, I had trouble getting into this example. But I liked the passion I could hear in the singer's voice; the energy he brought to the performance was infectious, and although I wasn't able to sing along or understand the words, I felt a kind of joy that I often experience in hearing Western singers I really like.