

Email interview project: Musical careers and musical identity

Due: December 13, 2017

For this project, you will be assigned a music professional to correspond with and interview via email. You will ask them about their career, their musical identity, their inspiration, their cultural background, and their experiences. The final component of this long-term project will be an essay in which you compare and contrast yourself and this professional.

Step 1: Research your professional – November 13-19

Read their website(s). Google them. Listen to their recordings, read articles they've written, and read reviews of their work. Check out their social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

Katie Dukes, katedukesmusic.com, studioforza.org, chambermusiccampania.org
Soprano, opera coach, educator, non-profit executive director

Whitney George: whitneygeorge.com, the-curiosity-cabinet.com, freshsqueezedopera.com
Composer, conductor, multimedia arts, college professor

Anneke Schaul-Yoder: annekeschaulyoder.com, sirenbaroque.com
Cellist, chamber musician

Sugar Vendil: sugarvendil.com, nouveauclassical.org
Pianist, fashionista, arts administrator

Step 2: Come up with questions to ask your professional – due November 20

Come up with 10 open-ended questions (questions that begin with “How” or “Why”) that you want to ask your professional. Your goal with these questions is to learn about their career, their musical identity, their inspiration, their cultural background, and their experiences AND you want to get enough information from them to compare their careers and experiences with your own.

In class, we'll read your questions, refine them as necessary, and begin drafting the email you'll send.

Step 3: Email! – November 20-December 6

Introduce yourself to your professional and tell them where you're from, what you do, what your goals are, and what you're interested in. Tell them you're working on a school assignment in which you're learning about music careers and thinking about your own career.

Ask your professional your top 5 or 6 questions. After they respond, you may ask another 1 or 2 questions to follow-up, clarify, or get more information.

In your final email, thank them for sharing their time and knowledge with you. Offer to send them a copy of your essay once it's completed.

Step 4: Essay – due December 13

Write a 2-3 page essay in which you compare and contrast your career, musical identity, inspiration, cultural background, and experiences with that of the music professional you've been corresponding with.

Compare and contrast: facts

- Write one (or two!) paragraphs about things you have in common with your professional.
- Write one (or two!) paragraphs about things that are different between you and your professional.
- Be sure to include the following background information about your professional (and about you): Where do they live? Where did they grow up? Where did they go to school? What did they study? What instrument(s) do they play? Where do they work?
- Based on the content of your interview, your compare/contrast might also go beyond resumé facts and dig into who they are as a person: What do they think about music? How do they approach music making? What matters to them?

Critical thinking and reflection

Facts are only part of this assignment—the really interesting stuff happens when you think about *why* corresponding with your professional matters. In your essay, you should also answer the following questions in any order you choose—you can do so with your compare and contrast paragraphs or answer them elsewhere in the essay:

- 1) What was something your professional said that surprised you? Why did it surprise you?
- 2) What was something your professional said that that intrigued you? Why did it intrigue you?
- 3) What was something your professional said that that disturbed or challenged you? Why did it disturb or challenge you?
- 4) What did you learn about yourself as a musician, a listener, or a person from this interview process? Why was it valuable to learn this?

Your essay may be of any length or format that you choose—you can be creative with how you share your observations! The most important thing is that your essay is interesting, shows your observations AND your insights, and captures the significance of your correspondence with your professional.

Finally, give your essay a title that shows what you're going to talk about in an exciting way.

Email interview essay – Rubric (staple to the front of your draft)

Due: December 13

Student: _____

Title	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good title is engaging, accurate, avoids clichés, and is not too long.					
Structure	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay presents a logical flow of ideas and avoids straying or meandering; a strong/good paragraph remains focused on a single main idea, and all sentences within a paragraph support its main idea.					
Use of technical vocabulary	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay uses discipline-specific vocabulary appropriately and accurately.					
Written skill	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay is well-organized and generally contains correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling; a strong/good essay demonstrates appropriate and effective word choice and style; in a strong/good essay, the prose is easy to follow, precise, and clear; a strong/good essay avoids both vagueness and redundancy; a good/strong essay avoids inaccuracies; a strong/good essay analyzes rather than summarizes.					
Background information	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay includes background information that illuminates or brings the interviewee to life and shows how knowing this information is a critical part of the author's interviewing experience. A strong/good essay only includes relevant or provocative information that is directly tied to the author's interviewing experience.					
Compare	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A good essay uses at least three specific points of comparison between the author and the professional that are interesting, relevant, and specific. A strong essay goes beyond resumé items to explore how the professional and the author think about music, culture, or identity.					
Contrast	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A good essay uses at least three specific points of contrast between the author and the professional that are interesting, relevant, and specific. A strong essay goes beyond resumé items to explore how the professional and the author think about music, culture, or identity.					
Prompt question #1: Critical Thinking	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay addresses this question in a way that is insightful rather than vague or superficial; a strong/good essay goes beyond the superficial by thoughtfully incorporating comparison, contrast, and/or synthesis; a strong/good essay addresses the implication of the ideas under consideration.					
Prompt question #1: Support	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay uses a specific example to support this prompt question that are interesting, relevant, specific, sufficient, and directly connected to the main idea; strong/good examples support your argument explicitly; any musical examples are accurately described.					

Prompt question #2: Critical Thinking **Strong** **Good** **O.K.** **Weak** Points: ___/10

A strong/good essay addresses this question in a way that is insightful rather than vague or superficial; a strong/good essay goes beyond the superficial by thoughtfully incorporating comparison, contrast, and/or synthesis; a strong/good essay addresses the implication of the ideas under consideration.

Prompt question #2: Support **Strong** **Good** **O.K.** **Weak** Points: ___/10

A strong/good essay uses a specific example to support this prompt question that are interesting, relevant, specific, sufficient, and directly connected to the main idea; strong/good examples support your argument explicitly; any musical examples are accurately described.

Prompt question #3: Critical Thinking **Strong** **Good** **O.K.** **Weak** Points: ___/10

A strong/good essay addresses this question in a way that is insightful rather than vague or superficial; a strong/good essay goes beyond the superficial by thoughtfully incorporating comparison, contrast, and/or synthesis; a strong/good essay addresses the implication of the ideas under consideration.

Prompt question #3: Support **Strong** **Good** **O.K.** **Weak** Points: ___/10

A strong/good essay uses a specific example to support this prompt question that are interesting, relevant, specific, sufficient, and directly connected to the main idea; strong/good examples support your argument explicitly; any musical examples are accurately described.

Prompt question #4: Critical Thinking **Strong** **Good** **O.K.** **Weak** Points: ___/10

A strong/good essay addresses this question in a way that is insightful rather than vague or superficial; a strong/good essay goes beyond the superficial by thoughtfully incorporating comparison, contrast, and/or synthesis; a strong/good essay addresses the implication of the ideas under consideration.

Prompt question #4: Support **Strong** **Good** **O.K.** **Weak** Points: ___/10

A strong/good essay uses a specific example to support this prompt question that are interesting, relevant, specific, sufficient, and directly connected to the main idea; strong/good examples support your argument explicitly; any musical examples are accurately described.

Total points _____/150

Letter grade: _____