Writing About Music: Style Guide

Be Consistent!

Humanistic writing on music usually follows the Chicago style (based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*) as well as its own stylistic conventions. No matter what style is followed, the most important thing is that you be consistent and clear so that the reader can understand your references and easily track down your sources.

Chicago Notes-Bibliography Citation Style

Citation conventions vary according to the type of source and whether the citation appears in footnotes/endnotes or in a bibliography. An abbreviated online guide can be found here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. See the following sources for complete citation guides:

The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Laurie J. Sampsel, *Music Research: A Handbook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 262-271 (Appendix E).

Spell Out Notes, Keys, and Chords

Avoid using abbreviations and symbols for music elements: middle C, E, G-natural, A-flat, F-sharp the keys of F-sharp minor and E-flat major the triad D-F-sharp-A

Italics for Foreign Languages

Italicize all foreign words unless they are particularly familiar in English usage:

tempo, cello, symphony *tempi, celli, opéra comique* tempo, tempos, but *tempi* libretto, librettos, but *libretti* crescendo, crescendos, but *crescendi*

Use of Hyphen in Adjectival Forms

| noun: | adjective: |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| twentieth century | twentieth-century music |
| quarter note | quarter-note movement |
| eighth note | eighth-note triplet |
| thirty-second note | thirty-second-note passage |

Naming a Musical Example

It is important to clearly identify the musical examples you select. Provide all the necessary details: composer, title, movement (if present), and measure numbers:

Ex. 1. Mozart, Symphony no. 41 in C Major ("Jupiter") K. 551: I, mm. 17-23 In the text of the essay, refer to this example as Ex. 1

Capitalization

Named periods of music history are capitalized as proper names and adjectives:

the Middle Ages, Medieval chant

the Renaissance, the Renaissance madrigal

the Romantic period, Romantic composers

The word 'classical' carries different meanings depending on whether or not it is capitalized. 'Classical' denotes the Classical era, while 'classical music' is as synonym for 'art music' as opposed to popular or folk music:

> Mozart and Haydn were Classical composers She was trained as a classical violinist

Titles of Musical Compositions

a) Titles of operas, oratorios, motets, tone poems, and other long musical compositions are italicized:

| Orfeo | The Magic Flute |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Die Zauherflöte | Messiah |

b) Titles of songs and other short compositions are given in quotation marks:

"Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" "Sweet Surrender"

c) Titles consisting of generic terms are capitalized but not italicized or put in quotation marks:

Brahms's Ballade op. 118 no. 3 Schubert's Piano Sonata in B-flat Major Chopin's Waltz in C-sharp Minor

- d) Movement titles are generally capitalized; individual movements from larger works take quotation marks: Andante from Mozart's Symphony in G Minor Kyrie from Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* "On a Rainy Night" from Beckwith's *Lyrics of the T'ang Dynasty*
- e) Titled assigned by composers should be italicized, nicknames or common names appear in quotation marks: Schumann's Scenes from Childhood Berlioz, Symphonie fantastique Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto Mozart, Symphony no. 41 in C Major ("Jupiter")
- f) Names of individual movements from larger compositions (including choral works), when such movements are referred to by title, are given quotation marks:

"And He Shall Purify..." from Handel's *Messiah* "Wohin" from *Die Schöne Müllerin* "Air with Variations" (*The Harmonious Blacksmith*) from Handel's Suite no. 5 in E Major

Based on "Citing Music Sources in Your Essay and Bibliography" from the Music Library of the University of Western Ontario (http://www.lib.uwo.ca/music/citing.html)

Sienna M. Wood, 2017