Music Department Comps Proposal Form

Name ___________________________________________ Class YR ________

Comps Type: Research Paper ____ Performance ____ Composition ____

Comps Title __________________________________________________________

Primary Advisor: (print) __________________________ Signature _________________

Secondary Reader: (print) __________________________ Signature _________________

Project Abstract—write in the space below or attach to this form (150 words maximum)

Qualifications for your proposed project (see Music Major Handbook for guidelines)

Relevant Coursework

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Relevant Applied Study

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Other Preparation

_________________________________________________________________

Preferred Timetable: Fall of Senior Year ____ Winter of senior year ____

Student Signature __________________________ Signature _________________ Date __________

Departmental Approval

Dept. Chair __________________________ Signature _________________ Date __________

Proposals are due spring term, Tuesday of Week 6 (the day after midterm break); students will be advised of their status soon thereafter, and proposal revisions (if needed) are due Monday of Week 8.
Title of Comps Project
The title of your comps project should be simple and descriptive. For example:

- A Performance of the First Movement of Beethoven's "Waldstein" Piano Sonata
- Studies of Vocal Intonation: a Metadata Survey and Analysis
- Composition of a Two-Movement Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Balalaika

Comps Abstract (150 Words)
For a research paper, state your hypothesis or research goal, plans and method for your investigation, and what resources you will need. For a performance, list the pieces you will play and resources you will need (editions, recordings, secondary literature, accompanists, etc.). For a composition, you can discuss compositional models, resources (e.g., electronic instruments needed; preparation of a piano, etc.). The abstract should convey that you have a clear plan for your project, and that you will be able to complete it in a single term:

Performance Comps
To prepare my performance of Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata, I will examine the urtext score (Beethoven: neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke), as well as several published editions (Wallner/UE; Gordon/Alfred; Taub/Schirmer; Perahia & Gertsch/Henle; Schenker/Dover). I will listen to performances by Schnabel, Ashkenazy, Goode, Brendel, Pollini, and Arrau, as well as Binns on a period instrument, taking special note of their use of dynamics and pedaling. I will also read various secondary sources on the piece and its historical background and context (e.g., Rosen's guide to the sonatas and Gosman's article on Beethoven's sketches for the movement) Study of these editions, performances, and scholarship will allow me to make informed decisions as I prepare the piece for performance. I plan on playing the piece for my comps jury at the end of term, at the comps fest in spring term, and on my senior recital. (142 words)

Research Paper Comps
How does context (solo versus ensemble) affect vocal intonation? To address this question I will conduct a metadata analysis of studies of vocal intonation. Starting with the foundational work of Johann Sundberg, I will first discuss basic aspects of vocal tone production and the vocal acoustics, with attention to factors that affect pitch production and perception (e.g., formant spectra). I will then consider techniques for pitch analysis of the voice (Terhardt; Boersma & Weenink (Praat); Childers & Lee; Zatorre), and then compile a set of data from studies which have used these techniques to analyze vocal intonation in real musical contexts (Prame; Devaney & Ellis; Schubert; Geringer & Madsen). By looking at the precision of vocal intonation in various contexts, and by taking measurement methods into account, I hope show that intonation involves navigating between fidelity to an absolute pitch standard versus maintaining welltuned intervals with one's fellow musicians. (149 words)

Composition Comps
Messiaen's Quatour pour la fin du temps for piano, violin, cello, and clarinet serves as an obvious model for my comps project, a trio for clarinet, cello, and piano. Like Messiaen, I am writing this piece for specific musical collaborators (name #1, name #2, name #3), and I will be working with them as I compose. As compositional models I will study precursors and analogs, from Beethoven's trio Op. 11, to quartets and trios by Milhaud, Shostakovich, Bolcom, Feldman, Harbison, and of course, Messiaen. For my tonal materials, I will be exploring the use of spectral harmonies, and so I will consult various sources on compositional technique (Chowning, Fineberg, Rose) as well as model repertoire (Johnston, Murail, Grisey). The piece will be in two movements: a slow movement (approx. 10 minutes) and a fast movement (approx. 5 minutes). (141 words)