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2nd Place Contest Entry: From a Chat in the Parlor to Viral Music Videos: An Analysis of Music as a Social Occasion

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Essay:

To envision eighteenth century Viennese salons and nineteenth century Parisian salons in their sociological contexts, I turned to databases, including *JSTOR*, *ProQuest*, and *Academic Search Premier* to unearth books, dissertations, and journal articles from such sources as the *Journal of Musicological Research*. These sources not only provided me with information on the revolutionary and compositional values of the eras researched, but also gave me an insight into the narrative styles put forth by music historians to be modeled in my own paper. I utilized the “Advanced Search” option to confine results to salons belonging to the aforementioned eras. Because I attended three library information literacy sessions prior to completing this project, I knew to highlight key words and names, such as “salon” and “Chopin” to increase the quantity of sources available for my research, as long and specific searches, such as “Parisian salons in the nineteenth century” would yield little to no results.

Next, I set up an appointment with performing arts librarian, Taylor Greene. Taylor instructed me on how to employ Boolean operators and field limits in my searches. I found that restricting source material to “books” was beneficial when I intended to look up how the musical pieces performed in salons paralleled conversation flow, rather than listen to the pieces themselves. Generalized searches recommended recordings as well as books; however, I knew that if I had relied solely on recordings, I would have been unable to check what I heard against expert opinions. I applied field limits to the English language, as several music criticism journals have been published in German. Another tool I gleaned from attending a library information session through the SURF program with Douglas Dechow was how to access *Google Scholar*. This search engine was advantageous when it came to the interdisciplinary blog discussion topics I researched, such as the intersection of music and science, as it gave me citations of articles to look for in the basic *Google* search engine.

Because salon discussion revolved around multiple art forms and movements such as *Sturm und Drang*, I gathered information on how the visual techniques implemented during each era coincided with the musical techniques championed by salon composers. I then aimed to trace any similarities I found between disciplines to the disparate social trends I saw from one era to the next and to subsequent discrepancies in salon culture. My search results drove me to the "Fine Arts Collection" of the Attallah Library of Arts and Humanities. Ultimately, I realized that many pertinent paintings were part of the Oversized Books Collection, prompting me to sift through composer and artist biographies to find pictures of court salons instead. I used the library scanner to shrink the images within these biographies, and cited them as figures to supplement my salon research.

The blog portion of my project relied heavily on internet media sources, such as *Business Insider*, *YouTube*, and *VEVO* to encourage people without musical backgrounds to engage in discourse by analyzing content that was familiar to them. Yet, I still applied library research skills to select credible sources and to market my blog. For example, I accessed *Lexis Nexis* to research intellectual property law to figure out whether it was permissible to incorporate videos from third parties into my blog for educational purposes. Textbooks and pedagogy books, such as *The Norton Anthology of Western Music* helped me establish a tone of voice comprehensible to readers, as the language in the dissertations I used for my paper might have been too formal to incite a conversation. Lastly, I utilized the "Music Research and Subject Guide" to find comparable music blogs indirectly, as the *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature* Index pointed me to the *Bibliore* music blog created by *RILM*.

My research undertaken at the Leatherby Libraries has equipped me with skills which have been applicable to other projects and to the workplace. I learned about the significance of taking risks, as I did not know which databases to dig through first or whether I should initiate my project with my blog or my paper. Once I made a decision and stuck with it, I started organizing

my research through an annotated bibliography—a technique that I was able to transfer to my senior thesis course. The precision with which I learned to carry out field limit searches has cultivated within me a stronger attention to detail. This emphasis on accuracy has aided me in my marketing research internship at Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens. Finally, the breadth of sources I acquired introduced me to a plethora of argumentative strategies, which have guided me in the creation of my own brand for my blog and research moving forward: a brand that intends to spark a classical music revival and unite academia and popular culture through simple conversation.

3. Summary and Bibliography Instructions

Please provide a 250-500 word abstract of your paper/project along with a complete works cited list, reference list, or bibliography in APA, MLA, Chicago, or other recognized style. Do not submit your entire paper!

Summary and Bibliography:

Abstract:

Imagine an intimate room filled with people playing cards and casually chatting, while one of Chopin's piano sonatas plays elegantly in the background. This scenario is characteristic of the atmosphere surrounding Classical and Romantic European salons. Salons served as havens of musical discourse from the Baroque era to the early twentieth century. However, with the advancement of technology from the mid-twentieth century to the present, there has been a decline, or, arguably, even a cessation of salon life.

The aim of this project, made possible through Chapman's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program, was to recreate the salon environment through the generation of the online discussion forum, *Music Soirée*. To compare the successes and failures of this salon with those of earlier salons, statistics were gathered on the quantity of site views over the course of ten weeks. Historical research was also completed on Viennese salons of the late eighteenth century and on Parisian salons of the nineteenth century. Factors which have contributed to differences in salon gatherings include: the political climates surrounding particular salons, musical conventions, the changing role of the artist, and the geographic locations of salons themselves. The technological aspect of the twenty-first century salon represented in this project is incoherent with the geographic locations portion of the argument, as not everyone logged into the site to comment at one moment.

During the course of the experiment, it was concluded that the implementation of technology in salon formation has resulted in musical discussions becoming more passive than active, as people were more engaged in reading the blog than on commenting. Yet, research beyond the

ten-week period has indicated a subtle increase in salon viewership. Moving forward, I intend to target more social media platforms to promote *Music Soirée* and to implement more advanced statistical models, such as *Google Analytics* to track the forum's progress. I seek to facilitate an in-person salon in the long-term, and research the juxtaposition between this modern model of an old-time tradition and its cyber counterpart.

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