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Songwriting

Dr. Johnson

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My Final Reflection

Throughout this course I have utilized many skills that I have developed throughout my time as a music major here at Tarleton. In my private voice lessons have gained knowledge and developed skills that allow me to perform at a high level. The development of my knowledge and skills pertaining to the quality of my vocal performance allows me to perform the songs I have written for this course through the application of my experiences from previous performances. Past experiences include performance edicate, stage presence, intonation, and breath support, among other things. I have also used knowledge and skills that I gained through all four of my theory courses. Although the skills I drew upon from my theory classes were basic skills, they provided me with the knowledge I needed to succeed in this class. For the three songs that I completely finished throughout the course of the semester, I used the skills I have developed in rhythmic dictation and melodic dictation. I also have continued to develop my skills in the identification of meter. These three skills are important aspects of being a musician and are very beneficial if you are able to utilize them. The experiences I gained from this course have provided me with insight and knowledge of music composition of modern music, and provided a stepping stone for the composition of future songs both solo and choral.

My AP English course and my English 250 course also played a large role in the utilization of skills acquired before this songwriting course. In both of these classes we studied epic poems, which gave me previous knowledge of poems and the different aspects of iambic pentameter and rhyming that we used when writing our song lyrics. I also noticed that some of the students in the class did not want to perform in front of the class because they felt like they would be judged harshly. My honors Communications class prepared me to get in front of a group of people and present a speech (in this case a song) in a clear and concise manner that is easy to understand. In my honors English 112 class, we spent a large amount of time on revision and editing of our research papers. This skill was used when I gave feedback to others after we listened to their song. Although the form and context in which the feedback is given is different, the ability to look at a work from a new perspective and provide positive feedback for the author was a skill developed in that particular English class. All of the skills that I incorporated into my songwriting course from courses unrelated to music, will guide me in real-world application by providing me with analytical skills I can use to comprehend new information given to me, the confidence to present information in front of a group of people, and the ability to put together information in a cohesive manner.

Separate from my classwork, I have had the opportunity to gain experience working with others in multiple capacities. One of these experiences pertains to my experiences as a youth and adult leader at St. Joseph Catholic Church’s youth group in Waxahachie, Texas. As a leader within this group you are expected to work with one another as well as the youth in order to provide a beneficial and positive experience for everyone. In order to do this, often times we bounce ideas off of one another and brainstorm new ideas or ways in which to improve upon old ideas. This course requires a lot of cooperation with one another and the ability and willingness to brainstorm and improve upon your songs. The ability to work together and brainstorm with others in a positive manner is a skill that I will continue to use in my music as well as my future career and personal endeavors. In 2012 I was given the opportunity to work as a counselor at Camp Hoblitzelle in Midlothian, Texas. Through this experience I was able to work with people from all over the country and the world. It is interesting to work with people from all walks of life. The different dynamics presented allows you to be open to the idea that aesthetic preferences will vary. I think this experience allowed me to view my classmates in a way that acknowledged the differences in our personal backgrounds. The ability to recognize that not everybody’s experiences will be the same as yours is an important skill to acquire and utilize in our day to day lives.

The development and acquisition of skills over a period of time can occur in many different capacities. They may develop through general academics, the disciplined study of a specific subject, and extracurricular activities. In some cases your skills may be developed in more than one capacity, effectively expanding its importance. This course has shown me just how much overlap our skills can have within these three areas. The ability to compose, edit, and analyze written text allows me to write cohesive and comprehensive works whether they are meant for musical entertainment, personal reflection, or literary use. The skills I developed through my private vocal lessons and through my honors communication course allows me to see how confidence and stage presence can affect a casual or a professional setting in which you are presenting material to a group of people. The opportunities I received to work with others in situations that relied on co-dependence allowed me to see that co-dependence and cooperation expands outside of the work wetting and into more casual situations such as editing a colleagues or a classmate’s paper, or in this case offering feedback on a new song. All three areas of study and experiences overlap in many ways and it is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness of these skill sets.

This course is based upon personal preferences and experiences. Each person brings to the table their own unique view on life and music. That being said, one person’s musical preference and style will not be exactly like anyone else’s. I have never been a fan of rap music and a lot of pop music because I was raised listening to country and bluegrass music. In this course I found that I enjoyed experiencing the different styles of music. In the past I have found that I did not like rap music because of the use of foul language and harsh beats. However, the rap music we experienced in class this semester had a much calmer beat and not even a hint of foul language. This is just one example of how stereotypes can be broken and looked upon more lightly by outsiders. I also found that even though the styles of music varied greatly person to person, the genre did not play a factor on whether or not I liked a song. The use of strong lyrics that told a story or gave a message were the determining factors as to whether or not I enjoyed a song. Since music genres are often times a strong indicator of a person’s background and culture, I think it was important that this course made me become more aware of what can be found outside of my own personal awareness in the world around me.