

Harkness End of Summer Report:

The original intent of this project had been initially much larger than what I ended up doing. Originally, I had intended to perform research on the relationship between three fields of study: music, theology and architecture. In studying the connections between these three, I was to shed some light on how they interact to create an experience which is greater than what each would be when approached individually. Further, the plan had been to research a larger time period of about 1550 to 1750, and cover composers such as Bach and Handel in addition to earlier composers such as Palestrina. Architectural examples would also have been more spread out over this time period. With each of my examples, I had planned a general type of analysis, the idea that I would bring it all together in search of this final goal of demonstrating how it all worked together.

However, this initial goal was, to put it simply, impractical for a man of my nature. First, I had no real education in either architecture or theology, making it so that my ability to approach research in either was severely limited and, if I were to continue, I would have to pick one or the other. Having recently converted to the Catholic faith and finishing RCIA, I was in a much better place to approach a deeper dive of theology than architecture, which I was forced to let go. Second, had I decided to continue with all three, despite the aforementioned lack of knowledge in two of the three fields, attempting to demonstrate how they all worked in tandem would likely have proven to be quite difficult. That could very well serve as a wonderful research paper, but for forty or fifty year old me and not undergrad me. Simply put, having never approached a topic so large before, it would've been impossible to demonstrate what I would have wanted to and, I would contend, impossible even if I did have the requisite amount of knowledge/studies to attempt it.

The result of this realization led me to completely restructure my approach. First, as I mentioned, I narrowed it to two topics: music and theology. Then, I started shortening the timeframe: instead of 1550–1750, I narrowed in on the Reformation and Counter-Reformation (about 1520–1580, also with a prologue that covered the Ancient and Medieval Churches) with specific attention put on the theology and music of Martin Luther and the Catholic Council of Trent and Palestrina's work which ran parallel to it. I also began to focus in on more specific theological concepts, some of which I went back and forth between whether I approach them or not. For example, Martin Luther's view of Justification and Original Sin run contrary to traditional Catholic teachings. Luther took a view of total depravity—in other words, that human beings were such slaves to Original Sin that they could achieve nothing good without the grace of God and that they could not be saved without a total reliance on that grace. Compare this to traditional Catholic teaching, largely based in Augustine, wherein Original Sin takes more the form of a weakening of the will, wherein the will is oriented more toward worldly desires than transcendental or heavenly ones. In Catholic belief, men are capable of performing good works in tandem with the grace of God. This was an idea that I had toyed with approaching, but had

thrown out in week four. Then, in week seven, as my research began to coalesce more and more into a proper thesis, it came back in full swing and will now provide a substantial part of my analysis.

Ultimately, the great benefit of these eight weeks have not been the research (which was quite great, I read a great many books and took about 50 pages worth of notes), but the ability to reconfigure what precisely I wished to pursue as a thesis. Namely, in deciding to pursue not only how theology influences or manifests in music, but what the ultimate point of music is in worship beyond aesthetic—namely to orient the listener toward God. This work of research and restructuring the approach to my thesis will prove invaluable, my intent being to have it completed this next semester and be able to present it at the Elkin R. Isaac Student Research Symposium in the spring.