

Music Composition: Pre-17th-Century Style

Category Rules

This category is for all musical compositions composed in a pre-17th-c. style. Pieces may be composed in a style from Europe or any culture that had documentable contact with Europe before 1600 C.E. This category is for composition (not transcription, arrangement, etc.) While a limited amount of musical material composed by others is allowable (ex: the use of a preexisting cantus firmus; or: significant reworking of a monophonic tune into a polyphonic composition), the newly composed material must be of sufficient quantity and nature to justify its classification as a separate piece (as opposed to an arrangement of the original piece). All material not composed by the entrant, as well as any spoken/sung lyrics, must be out of copyright (or accompanied by written permission from the copyright owner) and clearly attributed to the original source in the entry's score, documentation, and bibliography. This is not a poetry category, and judges will not evaluate the quality of the lyrics except insofar as they enhance or distract from the musical composition. The composition should be performable (i.e., not written as a purely intellectual exercise or for instruments that never existed). Non-performable compositions may be allowed provided the entrant adequately documents their inclusion in a pre-17th-c. style; judges may adjust requirements accordingly.

This is a mail-in category. All mail-in entries must be sent (postmarked) to the KMOAS by **January 15**. No late entries will be accepted. **THE KMOAS RECOMMENDS THAT YOU EMAIL YOUR ENTRY.** Any updates or changes to this deadline will be published in the Middle Kingdom newsletter, *The Pale*. Post-mail entries are accepted, but will be scanned in and delivered via email to judges. This category is eligible for Regional Faires.

Each entry must include **four copies of each** of the following: printed (or legibly handwritten) score, printed documentation, and recording of a performance of the entry. Judges may choose not to evaluate more than 30 pages of the score; entries with pieces that require scores longer than 30 pages must clearly indicate in the documentation which 30 pages the entrant would like the judges to examine. Judged material need not be contiguous and may include up to five segments, as needed. Recognizing that some cultures and periods have limited amounts of source material, judges shall evaluate entries intending to represent such styles with an allowance for a greater amount of intelligent guesswork on the part of the entrant, while still expecting a sincere attempt to document the entry.

Research and Documentation (Score: 0-4 points)

For full points, documentation should include stylistic information relevant to the piece, discussion of all elements of the composition, the historical musical style to which the entry is intended to belong, and time(s) and place(s) that style was used and its societal context (by whom it would have been composed/performed, under what circumstances, for what purpose, etc.). discuss in detail the relevant musical style, including its characteristics and (wherever relevant) examples to aid understanding, excerpts from other works in modern Western notation, a discussion of all musical elements of the composition (pitch, duration, expression, instrumentation, orchestration, form, themes/motifs, relationship between music and text, etc., as appropriate to the piece's style), explaining how each aspect of the piece conforms to stylistic expectations and giving reasons for any departures from standard stylistic practice.

For full points, the score must adequately convey all information about the piece that the entrant wishes to communicate to potential performers (i.e., all aspects of the piece not intended to be improvised or added by the performer). Scores for judges should be in modern Western notation (including figured bass, lead sheets, etc., if appropriate to the piece's intended style), with allowances made for extended notation when modern Western notation is unable to convey the composer's wishes. All forms of extended notation must be explained in the documentation. If the entrant is unable to produce a score in modern Western notation or such a score is inappropriate to the entry, the documentation should include an explanation of why no such score can be produced, as well as a score in alternate notation and/or a detailed written description of the piece's musical content and (if applicable) lyrics. Additional scores in other forms of notation may be included in the documentation, as stylistically and culturally appropriate to the piece.

Recordings of the entry must be sent on playable CDs or saved as audio files in a commonly used format, either on a USB flash drive or attached to the entry if sent via email. (Note: Recordings sent as audio files must

come with instructions for how to play the files.) For full points, recordings must accurately convey the information provided in the score, except where changes are stylistically appropriate (ex: improvisation, ornamentation, additional instrumental lines, etc., respective of the standard characteristics and historical context of the piece's intended style). If the recorded performance includes any additions or other changes to the piece as conveyed by the score, these changes must be identified in the documentation. The recording should be included in the entry's bibliography, with all performers credited by name. Judges will not evaluate the quality of the performance as part of the entry, except insofar as the performance adequately conveys the information written in the score.

- 0 No documentation provided with entry. Face-to-face judging adds very little information.
- 1 Minimal information is provided for time, place, style. Face-to-face judging adds some background info.
- 2 As in #1, generalized sources are given with no emphasis on primary and/or scholarly resources. In face-to-face judging, no further understanding of the resources is evident. Materials and methods of composition of the entry are described.
- 3 As in #2, there is a good balance of resources: primary and/or scholarly sources well supported by other resources. Documentation and/or face-to-face judging provides well developed discussion of research. Materials and methods of composition are described and reasons for choices discussed.
- 4 As in #3, in-depth and extensive documentation provides a good balance of resources, emphasizing primary (if available) and/or scholarly resources backed up with a significant selection of other resources. Documentation and/or face-to-face judging provide a good explanation of original research and experimentation related to the research. Face-to-face judging indicates a keen grasp of the research and the entrant can discuss it easily with active engagement. Appendices included in documentation (if any) help provide further pertinent information to subject and time period.

Materials and Methods (Score: 0-4 points)

Rate the effectiveness and stylistic accuracy, not the difficulty, of the materials and methods used in the composition. Materials include:

- The instruments called for by the score, plus any instrumental accessories, body parts, or other objects included as part of the performance of the composition. Also, physical capabilities of such objects, such as pitch range, timbre, possible speed of fingering and articulation, volume range, etc., with respect to the physical design of and actual components used in their construction in the relevant culture/period.
- Any musical or lyrical material not composed by the entrant. This material is not to be judged on its quality, as it was not produced by the entrant, but on its appropriateness to the composition.

Methods are the composer's ways of organizing sound for the purposes of the composition, such as:

- Pitch concepts: mode, tonality, melodic shape, harmonic function, etc.
- Durational concepts: tempo, meter, rhythm; expressive concepts (volume, phrasing, articulation).
- Structural concepts: form, phrase, repetition, texture.
- Expectations for the relationship between music and lyrics.

Some compositions will employ all of these methods; others only some of them, or all plus those unlisted.

Evaluate the appropriateness of all methods in light of the specific style to which the piece is intended.

- 0 Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period elements or practices.
- 1 Use of modern materials and methods to produce a composition that does not conform to period practice, but which has some relationship to the medieval or Renaissance period (ex: piece employs some basic period stylistic requirements, but uses modern chordal progressions and sounds modern).
- 2 Use of **both** modern & period materials & methods to produce a composition evokes the intended style (ex: melody conforms to period expectations, but dynamic instructions & internal harmonies are modern; or: song form does not conform to stylistic expectations, but vocal technique/accompaniment are period).
- 3 Use of primarily period materials and methods to produce a composition that feels authentic (ex: most aspects of the piece are period, but a few compositional elements are stylistically inappropriate).

- 4 Use of totally authentic materials & methods (ex: piece is an excellent example of a newly composed work in a period style, with very few elements that might surprise a person from the place/time of origin).

Scope (Score: 0-6 points for each bullet item)

Rank the **ambition**, not the success, of the entry for each applicable element respective to the intended style.

- Complexity of duration elements (rhythm, tempo, meter, etc.).
- Complexity of expressive elements (articulation, phrasing, volume/dynamics, etc.).
- Complexity of notation (legibility/readability of score, accuracy of score to composer's intent, correct use of notational symbols according to standard style, use of extended notation, etc.); entrants will not be penalized for legible handwritten scores.
- Complexity of pitch elements (melody, harmony, intonation, harmonic function, counterpoint, voice leading, tonality, mode/scale, etc.).
- Complexity of structural elements (form, repetition, phrase/period relationships, etc.).
- Complexity of text/music relationship elements (text underlay, relationship of linguistic stress to musical beat, likely intelligibility of lyrics when performed, poetic form, etc.).
- Complexity of timbral elements (instrumentation, orchestration, tone/timbre instructions to performers, idiomatic nature of the music respective to instruments, etc.).

Skill (Score: 0-6 points for each bullet item)

How well are the technical aspects of the performance executed? Rank the **success** of the entry for all **applicable** elements (see Scope for descriptions).

- Effectiveness of duration elements.
- Effectiveness of expressive elements.
- Effectiveness of notation.
- Effectiveness of pitch elements.
- Effectiveness of structural elements.
- Effectiveness of text/music relationship elements.
- Effectiveness of timbral elements.

Ingenuity (Score: 0-4 points)

Judge the ingenuity of the entry. Was the entrant resourceful and inventive in the approach to creating their entry? Does the entry reflect the entrant's vision of period context? Is original thought, contemplation, interpretation, and vision evident according to the entrant's period?

Judge's Observation (Score: 0-6 points)

Rank the entry as a whole. How well do all the separately judged parts fit together? The entry's overall effect is judged in this section. This is the only section of the criteria where the judges may allow their personality, private opinions, and personal preferences to influence scoring.