

Project 2: Introduction to Musicological Analysis 2
April 8-May 6

Student: _____

This is the second graded formal writing assignment of the semester. It will be a musicological essay that ties analysis of a musical work to texts by two other authors, Bryan Magee and Bernard Williams. The assigned musical work for this essay is Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act 3 (1850). In this kind of analytical essay, your analysis builds towards a thesis.

April 8	In-class listening, prewriting, and discussion
April 15	First draft due and in-class editing
April 22	Second draft due via email
April 29	Receive email feedback from the instructor
May 6	Final draft due in class

I. Describe.

II. Compare.

III. Associate.

IV. Analyze.

What does this piece communicate to you? How do the work's musical details create this sense of meaning for you?

V. Apply.

The following paragraph comes from a book by an American musicologist who was writing about issues associated with the music of Wagner:

“A really great creative artist is one who, in freely expressing his own fantasies, needs, aspirations, and conflicts, articulates those of a whole society. This is made possible by the fact that, through his earliest relationships, mother tongue, upbringing, and all his first experience of life, the cultural heritage on which he has entered at birth is woven into the whole fabric of his personality. He has a thousand roots in it of which he is unaware, nourishing him below the level of consciousness, so that when he speaks for himself he quite unconsciously speaks for others.”

Bryan Magee, *Aspects of Wagner* (1968, republished 1988), 23-24

Apply Magee’s concept of an artist expressing the underlying thoughts of society to this piece. What does Wagner’s music tell us about the world in which Wagner lived?

VI. Argue.

Choose one thesis from these 10 choices and begin writing down examples (i.e., musical details that you hear in the piece) to support your idea in the space below:

- 1) It is (not) possible to hear Wagner's philosophy in his music.
- 2) Knowing how Wagner thought and what kind of world he lived in does (not) affect how his music should be heard today.
- 3) There are (no) parallels between the role that Wagner's music played historically and that of musicians of today.
- 4) The music of Wagner should (not) be listened to today.
- 5) An artist does (not) speak for society.