

FA/YSDN 4002 3.0 Type In Motion

Winter Term | Academic Year 2009 – 2010

Design Practicum | Elective for Design Majors

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Exercise 1 – Essence

Music is the language of soul. The quality that “speaks” through a particular piece of music is often intangible and mysterious. Yet, to communicate emotionally, you must be able to express your ideas with a depth that captures this “je ne sais quois” (“I-don’t-know-what”), or **essence**.

This exercise asks you to choose a musical selection and distill its essence. To do this, you must identify a musical piece that resonates with you personally – for whatever reason. To avoid confusion with lyrical content, the song must be **instrumental only** (vocal content in a language foreign to you is also acceptable).

The Challenge

1. Choose your music.
2. Consider your selection in terms of:
 - **Consonance** (where is the flow and agreement?) and **dissonance** (where is the tension?)
 - **Emotional appeal** (what is the piece “about” emotionally? can you craft a story that describes it?)
 - **Narrative arc** (where does the song begin? where does it end? what territories are covered in between?)
 - **Inspiration** (how was this song conceived? why? what purpose does it serve?) and **ideation** (what does it make you think of? what do you see when you listen to it? what does it make you feel?)
3. Describe the qualities you identify.
 - **Format:** Written paragraph of at least 250 words, or list keywords as a mind map.
 - **Submission:** Submit a PDF document of your analysis for grading with a copy of your selected text and video.

This is meant to be a simple exercise.

It isn’t necessary to spend an inordinate amount of time organizing your analysis. Just try to suspend judgement and write down as much as you can, whatever comes to mind, as you experience it – for this exercise, it’s about **quantity** over quality.

Due Week 2 (next week) – 5%

Please bring your results (including a copy of the music) prepared for class discussion and submission.

Tips & Recommendations

- Seek music that surprises and engages you.
- For best results, choose a selection that has a clear and powerful emotional narrative. There should be some form of progression from “A” to “B” (if not more) throughout the piece.
- Avoid familiar, popular, heavily commercialized, “Top 40”, or any other music that is instantly recognizable.
- Avoid “musical wallpaper” (chill / lounge) that is too consistent or evenly paced from start to finish.
- Consult the music librarian in the Sound and Moving Image Library (SMIL) in Scott Library. You may be surprised with how knowledgeable they are. Don’t be shy in your search – they are there to help.
- Ask your friends for their personal favourites and recommendations.
- Search online resources (music blogs) for new or unsigned musicians, such as <http://www.ccmixer.org>. Keep in mind you may be able to use rights-free or creative commons (CC) audio later in your projects.
- Explore music sources from other cultures.