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English 11:8
Guerrilla Teaching

My heart sank when I heard that I was going to have yet another project to work on, but when I looked closer at the directions on our class's website, I began to feel hopeful. This wasn't just another rigid essay assignment; I would be able to choose a topic that I wanted to explore. In fact, my research about medieval music was enjoyable and illuminating. The area that most interested me was how music notation developed. However, I assumed that most of my classmates would not share my same enthusiasm for music, so I didn't include all of my research in the final project. Instead, I chose to include what I thought would pique the interest of the average eleventh grader.

I came across a wealth of information, and at first I was perplexed about how to display it. I decided to present the information in chronological order to avoid confusion. I also found many pictures that would help my presentation, so I decided to create a power point presentation to exhibit those pictures as I spoke. Although I was not able to include any music samples or special effects because my power point program was archaic, it served the purpose. Later I thought of a different idea to include a sample of medieval music in the project: I borrowed a book of medieval songs from my cello teacher and decided to play one for the class. This proved to be more difficult than expected because the music was meant for voice and I had to transpose it for cello.

When I finished the power point, I decided to present it to my parents as the first "students." I did not have access to a projector, so I had to show it to them on our computer. The presentation went reasonably well, although my power point program malfunctioned several times. Hopefully, the program at school will work properly.

I began with a brief description of the history of music, and how music in the Greek and Byzantine time periods developed into medieval music. I then gave an overview of how Christianity influenced music during the early middle ages. This led to a discussion of Gregorian chant, which was developed by Pope Gregory the Great. I explained that Gregorian chant was written in what is now called square notation, and I described how square notation was developed from the earliest forms of written music, called neumes. By this time, I had reached the late middle ages. I said that during later medieval times, a style called polyphony, which consists of multiple melodies instead of one line of music, became common. Composers produced a massive body of this type of music at the School of Notre Dame. This time period, during the late Middle Ages, was also known as the *ars antiqua*- a time when music became more complex and instruments became common.

Thus far, I had only talked about church music because nothing was known about commoners' music before the year 1000 CE. At this point I decided to talk about secular music after 1000 CE. I described the troubadours: musician poets who traveled throughout Europe performing love songs. I also mentioned that instruments were becoming increasingly common, and often accompanied dancing. (A popular pass-time during this time.) To conclude my report, I explained how medieval music gradually developed into Renaissance music. Although there were some interruptions, the presentation was longer than I had expected. It lasted about seven minutes, which was over the maximum, but other students had taken longer than the allotted five minutes so this would most likely be acceptable.

My parents enjoyed the presentation, and gave me some constructive criticism. My mother pointed out that I did not have a real introduction. She suggested that instead

of diving directly into the subject, I should give an overview of the entire presentation as an opening statement. When I included that, it helped the flow of my whole project. My parents also gave me general suggestions such as to speak slower and louder, and not to say “umm” often.

I realized that although the entire subject of medieval music interested me, my classmates might not feel the same way. After they saw my project, I asked my parents if there were any parts that bored them, or if there was any particular area that they thought I should eliminate. My father thought that the section about the School of Notre Dame was too lengthy and unnecessary. However, this was one of my favorite parts, and my mother agreed that it was interesting, so I decided not to heed my dad’s advice. My mother, on the other hand, thought that I spoke too much about the troubadours. I didn’t follow this advice either because I thought that the romantic poets related to the Knight’s Tale and what we had been talking about in class because they exemplified courtly love and chivalry.

I think that this first presentation was helpful and successful. My parents assured me that they enjoyed the presentation and learned interesting information about medieval music. I am confident that my guerilla project will also succeed with my classmates. Music students may be more curious about the subject, but I think that everyone will be able to find something of interest, and come away with new, valuable knowledge.