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Fondren Undergraduate Research Award Application

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Research Strategies employed in “From Theory to Practice: Reflections of Juan Bermudo and Francisco Salinas in Francisco Guerrero’s Canciones y villanescas espirituales”

In this research paper, I combined my interest in music and my knowledge of Spanish to explore the connection between music theory and compositional practice regarding the text-music relationship in music from Renaissance Spain. Throughout the research process, I drew on musical scores, recordings, and sources in English, Spanish, French in Fondren Library.

During the Fall 2010 semester, I took Spanish 341: Masterworks of Spanish Art and Literature with Professor Lane Kauffman. The second unit of this course provided me with a framework for analyzing the Renaissance poetry of Garcilaso de la Vega and Spanish mystic poets such as San Juan de la Cruz. While studying Medieval and Renaissance music history with Dr. Peter Loewen during the Spring 2011 semester, I discovered vocal music with poetic texts in the Romance languages that I would never have encountered as a string bass player. The guidelines for the research paper in this music history course required analysis of the relationship between text and music in a vocal composition from the Middles Ages or Renaissance, affording me an excellent opportunity to apply my knowledge of Spanish poetry to musical analysis.

I began my search for a topic by listening to recordings of Spanish music from the late Renaissance from the Fondren CD collection, ranging from Cristóbal de Morales to Tomás Luis de Victoria. The vocal polyphony of Francisco Guerrero captivated my admiration and interest, both for the intricate beauty of the music and for the subtlety of the poetic texts. As I later
discovered, Garcilaso de la Vega and contemporary poets such as Gutierre de Cetina wrote these sonnets, some of which also appeared in the collection of poetry from Spanish 341, *Renaissance and Baroque Poetry of Spain: with English prose translations*, edited by Elias L. Rivers. I began my research with the goal of exploring the historical context and literary content of several of Guerrero’s pieces, in order to analyze the relationship between the poetic devices employed in the text and the rhythmic, contrapuntal, and harmonic techniques developed in the music.

After selecting Guerrero as my focus, I needed to locate a reliable score of the recorded pieces I had found. On the recording *El Siglo de Oro: Chant and Polyphony of Renaissance Spain* by six male vocalists of the Lionheart ensemble perform samples of music from Guerrero’s *Canciones y villanescas espirituales*, pieces by Cristóbal de Morales, and Gregorian chant. In addition to the strikingly beautiful performances on the CD, the liner notes include translations of the text and a brief biographical essay for each composer. Following Dr. Loewen’s advice, I successfully connected compositions from this disc to the corresponding scores in the first two volumes of Guerrero’s *Opera Omnia*, a fourteen-volume set restricted to use in the library. In addition to transcriptions of the scores in modern notation, this edition of Guerrero’s collected works contains introductory critical studies, as well as parallel listings of the sacred and secular poetic texts attached to each piece. The scores of two of the *Canciones y villanescas espirituales* for four voices and the original Spanish foreword to this urtext edition were central primary sources in my research. While preparing the final draft, I scanned the scores of “Ojos claros, serenos” and “Qué te daré, Señor” at the Fondren BookScan Station in order to insert musical examples in the body of the essay and to include full scores as appendices.

After narrowing the scope of my analysis to two pieces, I searched for historical primary sources related to Guerrero. *El viaje de Hierusalem* [The Voyage to Jerusalem], originally
published in 1589, presents Guerrero’s personal account of his travels in the Holy Lands. Guerrero addresses this quasi-autobiographical work to his patron, the Archbishop of Seville, demonstrating the importance of this work as a statement of Guerrero’s religious experiences. Though not overtly musical in nature, this source provided insight into Guerrero’s religious beliefs, his responsibilities as chapel master of the cathedral of Seville, and the performance practice for his sacred vocal compositions, which he treated as motets.

Among the secondary sources on Renaissance Spanish music that I consulted, *La Pensée musicale espagnole à la Renaissance: Héritage antique et tradition médiévale* by Paloma Otaola González provided key information about the two primary sources on music theory that I incorporated into my analysis. Though the first two parts of this book describe musical thought in the Ancient World and its transmission through the Middle Ages, the third part describes Spanish musical thought in the sixteenth century. The theoretical discussion of the relationship between music, text, and rhetoric in this later section contains analytical concepts that are relevant to the Guerrero’s music. The book does not address Guerrero specifically, however, discussing his contemporaries Cristóbal de Morales, Luys Narváez, and Luis Milán instead. González also described the key tenets of two Spanish music theorists who wrote during Guerrero’s lifetime. I decided to compare certain concepts from each theorist’s writings with Guerrero’s compositional techniques in two pieces, retrospectively asking whether the composer followed these theorists’ ideals.

I requested the two primary sources on music theory via ILLiad, the online Interlibrary Loan system. The writings of Fray Juan Bermudo, *Declaración de Instrumentos musicales* (1555), appeared in a facsimile edition of the original manuscript, handwritten with Renaissance Spanish alphabet and spellings. Francisco Salinas’ Latin treatise on music, *Siete libros sobre la música*
(1577) appeared in a modern Spanish translation. These two sources provided me with specific analytical criteria with which to evaluate the text-music relationship in Guerrero’s compositions.

In addition to gathering primary sources, I searched for secondary sources through the databases on the Fondren Library Website: RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, IIMP (International Index to Music Periodicals), ProQuest, JSTOR, and WorldCat. Dr. Loewen recommended *Devotional Music in the Iberian World, 1450-1800: The Villancico and Related Genres* after reviewing my initial bibliography. The books and articles in both English and Spanish that I secured provided essential historical background on Guerrero, descriptions of the genres and musical style of the *Canciones y villanescas espirituales*, and examples of other scholars’ analyses of the relationship between text and music in Guerrero’s music.

The unique resources of Fondren Library indelibly shaped this research project by providing a varied set of materials relating to Francisco Guerrero and two music theorists of his time. The fortuitous availability of these elements enabled a Spanish-speaking music student in twenty-first century Houston to examine the connections between the music and poetry of sixteenth century Spain.