

Music, Death & Dying: Listening Exercises

1. Open the following web page from the art gallery:

<http://www.faculty.de.gcsu.edu/~rviau/isleofdead.html>

As you view this painting, *Isle of the Dead*, by Arnold Böcklin, use your iPod to listen to Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29, which was composed in response to the painting.

In a posting to WebCT, answer some of the following questions?

How does the music make you feel?

How would you describe the music?

How does the music correspond to Böcklin's painting?

Do the music and painting imply a story, a narration of some sort?

What makes the music "gothic"?

Do any of the "gothic" elements you can identify in the music correspond to elements in the painting?

2. Browse through the play list on your iPod and look (listen) for music that relates to or evokes death & dying. Identify and describe some of the music.

EXTRA CREDIT POSTING!!!! Make a correspondence of your own between a piece of music from the iPod play list and a work of visual art, a story, a scene from a movie, etc.

Listen carefully to the following pieces of music on your iPods:

C. P. E. Bach's *Hamlet Fantasia*, Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 8* ("Pathétique"), and Chopin's *Funeral March*

3. What do the C.P.E. Bach fantasia, the slow introduction to Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata, and the Chopin funeral march have in common in terms of their tempo (fast or slow), registration (Are they in a low or high range of the instrument for which they are composed?), rhythmic pulse (steady or variable),

and their use of dynamics (loud/soft - Does this aspect of the music change often or seldom throughout the pieces and are the changes slight or drastic?)?

4. What does the term "fantasia" suggest to you and how might the C.P.E. Bach fantasia compare with the character of Hamlet and the tragic moods portrayed in Shakespeare's play?

5. Free associate on the word "death." What related concepts, such as "night" or "cold," come to mind.