

Proposal Date: November 1, 2018
Proposed Leave: Spring, 2020
Previous Sabbaticals: 1

Seniority of Service: August, 1991

Sabbatical Proposal

James J. Song, Music Professor

2018

Introduction

After 28 years of teaching Music History, Music Fundamentals, Music Appreciation, and various levels of Musicianship courses while directing the orchestra at Moorpark College, I feel a desperate need for taking some time to re-charge and to renew my commitment to excellence in teaching and to reduce the chance of being burned out from this wonderful profession. As a music historian, I am always trying to find a more meaningful connection with the fast changing generation of students while keeping updated on the current trends in technology. As I have stayed focused on that perspective, my need and hunger for continuation of lifelong pursuit of collecting information and to do further research on European music history has led me to submit a proposal to take one semester off to do just that without the worries of everyday task of teaching, grading, meetings, etc.

Background

In the spring of 2005, I was fortunate to be granted a sabbatical leave, and I attended the International Bach Festival at Leipzig, Germany in April, 2005 and travelled throughout Italy and Germany doing some research and to formulate the programming for the orchestra for the next decade. Since then, all the programming has been finished and the orchestra has prepared and performed those pieces admirably.

Now, I would like to focus more on teaching our Music Fundamentals and Music History courses. Of course, I will continue to conduct the college orchestra, but this shift in my focus will better prepare our students to a more robust completion rates. As part of that change in focus, I need to collect materials to share with our music history students to make the information more personal to them. Once they own that information, then that will stay with them for a long time. Through evaluations, students tell us that personal experiences and stories make the history more approachable and more exciting. And, it should be fun and exciting to

learn about these incredible composers and their lives that affected their music.

Another project that I would like to complete during my sabbatical is to finish the Zero Cost Textbook materials for our Music Fundamentals course. Currently, we are using the printed textbook with the online component to assist our students' learning of those materials, but I would like to build the class that our students would not have to rely on purchasing a textbook to complete. Our online sections of the MUS M01 (Music Fundamentals) course need textbook or an online access fee to use other publishers' materials as our on ground courses do, so by having these Zero Cost materials both online and on-ground courses would be offered to our students at zero cost to them for textbooks.

Proposal

During the Spring 2020 semester, as part of my effort to build Zero Cost Textbook for our Music Fundamentals students, I will work on gathering materials, compiling home works, worksheets, and activity materials to serve our students in these classes. Since learning musical notation for pitches and rhythm, as well as learning about scales, intervals, and chords as part of the fundamentals of music would be akin to learning a new language, building these home works, activities, etc. will be a very time consuming project. I hope to offer Zero Cost Textbook to our Music Fundamentals students starting in the fall, 2020.

Also, as part of this sabbatical leave proposal, I would like to travel to various places in Europe to collect and gather research information that are directly related to the Music History. Particularly, the year 2020 will be an important anniversary year all throughout Germany, especially in Bonn, where Beethoven was born. It will mark the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth, and the commemoration performance, exhibits, etc. will take place all throughout the year. To be a part of this celebration will be very exciting, and that experience will certainly add to my repertoire as I deliver the materials for Music History classes. Our music students know that I am a great admirer of Beethoven, and adding this component to my delivery will most definitely add to the course content.

Benefit to the Students

Every semester, I teach three sections of Music Fundamentals classes. I serve more than 200 students throughout the year in that class alone, and for them to save cost on their textbook to take this entry level music theory course will benefit everyone. I hope to see more potential music majors to come out of these classes, which would mean the overall music program growth as the result. The only cost that they would need is for them to print out those homeworks, worksheets and activities throughout the semester which would be a considerable savings to them. Currently, the 3-ring binder format textbook with the online materials are required for them at a cost of \$86 from our bookstore. The similar materials with more focused activities, that will prepare them for the upper level music theory courses, for zero cost can be in place by the fall, 2020.

As mentioned earlier, the benefit to our students taking Music History class need no further explanation. Beethoven was a pivotal figure in the history of Western Music, and he is often

referred to as the key composer in the pendulum that swung to the romantics from the 18th century classical style of music. I will experience the impact that Beethoven has on our contemporary musicians as they commemorate this composer's anniversary year, and I would be able to share with our students on this unique experience which might never happen again in my lifetime.

Benefit to the College and District

As the college gears towards offering more Zero Cost Textbooks to our students, offering our Music Fundamentals classes with Zero Cost Textbook would be very consistent with the direction and the mission of our college.

Benefit to the Faculty Member

There is no question that this proposal will benefit this faculty member in many ways, including professional growth and overall joy and happiness that will translate to lowering a chance to be burned out from this profession. As stated earlier, I have spent 28 years at Moorpark College, and it has been a wonderful journey through those years which I intend to continue until I am no longer effective as an instructor who can motivate and inspire our students to perform at their best. These projects will help me to balance all these aspects so that I can become a more dynamic and influential music professor.

Conclusion

As I enter perhaps the twilight years of my education career at Moorpark College, I look ahead to the challenges of upcoming years and how I can adapt to the fast changing academe. As part of that effort to stay more connected and to shift my focus to better serve the needs of our students, I propose that I take a spring semester, 2010 to prepare Zero Cost Textbook for our Music Fundamentals course. Also, I propose that I spend some quality time in Europe for various research projects that will benefit our Music History students and our music majors. With a deepest gratitude to the members of the Sabbatical Committee for considering this proposal, I humbly submit this application for a sabbatical leave for spring, 2020.