

The Entrepreneurial Musician

Personal Essay Assignment

Dr. Tanya Kalmanovitch
Spring 2017

Assignment Deadline: February 14, 2017

Overview

In each of the first three weeks of the semester, I'll ask you to complete 20 minutes of free writing on one of the prompts below. Your writing here can be free and unstructured. Save your notes: I'll ask you to submit these as part of your final assignment.

Choose one topic to edit and expand into a compelling personal essay (500-750 words, double-spaced, 12 point font) that you would be proud to submit as part of a college admissions, competition or scholarship application. Your reflective writing should be carefully structured, revealing both an exploration and explanation of the subject matter, and not just description.

Meet with a tutor from NEC's Writing Center to access support in conceiving, writing or editing your essay (see syllabus for contact information). Please make your appointment early, as slots will fill up closer to the deadline.

What to Submit

Submit all three components by sharing them with me on Google Drive (tanya.kalmanovitch@gmail.com). Submit your essay as a Google Docs file, and be sure to enable "editing" on your essay so that I can provide comments on the file itself.

- Notes from your free writing sessions for each of the three weeks. (If these are handwritten, upload a scan or photographs).
- A completed, signed feedback sheet from your Writing Center tutor. (Use the attached sheet. Upload a photograph or a scan.)
- Your personal essay (500-750 words, double spaced, 12 point font), shared as a Google Docs file.

Please label all files clearly, as follows: Lastname – Assignment Name – Component. (e.g. Chen – Essay; Chen – Feedback; Chen – Free writing).

Deadline and Grading

This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade. The deadline is Tuesday, February 14, 2017.

Writing Prompts

Week 1 Prompts

Option 1: Change

Recall an experience in your life where you had a strong reaction to a situation that concerned making change. It may have happened a long time ago, or last week. You could have felt enraged, or overjoyed. Write descriptively about the details of this situation. What were you wearing? What was the setting? What physical sensations can you remember? What were the events leading up to this situation? What was at stake? Who had power? Who was listening or watching? What did you say? What were you thinking? What did you do? What was the outcome?

Option 2: Leading with Hope

In her final address as First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama urged young people to “Empower yourselves with a good education, then get out there and use that education to build a country worthy of your boundless promise. Lead by example with hope, never fear.”

Consider where you are right now, at this point in your educational path. What does empowering yourself with a good education mean to you right now? And what does it mean to you to lead by example, with hope? Write descriptively about the choices you are making right now: in and out of school.

Option 3: Music Without the Music Industry

Imagine you wake up tomorrow and there's no such thing as a music industry. No music schools; no orchestras, bands or choirs; no festivals, concert halls or clubs; no managers, publicists, critics and agents; no record labels or radio stations. Musicians – you, your peers, your teachers and mentors – will still be present, fully equipped with their skills and talents. But the institutional infrastructure will be gone.

First, write about this new landscape imaginatively and descriptively. What will musicians be missing? What will be needed? What will matter to you the most? Next, write about what you will do to keep connecting music's value to the world around you. What great ideas will you want to pursue? What new possibilities will arise?

Week 2 Prompts

Option 1: What does it mean to be an artist in 2017?

In the reading and videos from this week's class, Claire Chase and Mitsuko Uchida offer their perspectives on what it means to be an artist. Compare and contrast their perspectives: where do you think they disagree, and on what points do you think they agree? Describe your own perspectives in answering the following question: “Must an artist also be an entrepreneur?”

Option 2: Collaborative Performance¹

If you could introduce any two living artists from any discipline for a collaborative performance with you, who would they be, and what might you make together? (Note that you do not have to limit yourself to artists in your discipline, or to musical artists.)

Write descriptively about this imaginary performance. Consider all of the details: not just the music itself, but all aspects of production (including the venue, where and how the audience will be placed, how you might engage other sensory channels, what kind of audience members you hope to engage). Write with enough detail that the reader can imagine the performance, and write in such a manner that the reader will be compelled to attend.

Week 3 Prompts

Option 1: Social Responsibility

One of the Juilliard School's essay prompts is this:

At Juilliard we encourage students to become advocates for the arts, and to use their artistic talents to improve the world. What kind of social or political responsibilities do you set for yourself as an artist? How do you plan to fulfill them?²

Develop a response to this essay that is honest to your perspective and experiences. Use specific examples from your experience to support your claims.

Option 2: You Beyond Your Instrument

Manhattan School of Music's essay prompt is this:

The Admission and Scholarship Committee seeks not only dedicated and talented musicians, but individuals who might contribute to the MSM community even apart from their music. Let us know who you are in addition to being a musician. What are your non-musical interests? Where do your priorities lie outside of your musical pursuits? What do you treasure most apart from your dedication to your craft?³

Develop an answer that is both honest to your experience and perspective, and that complements the application materials you might submit in consideration for admission or scholarship aid.

¹ Adapted from The Juilliard School's admissions essay prompts. Source: <http://www.juilliard.edu/apply-audition/application-audition-requirements/bachelor-music-and-diploma/bachelor-music-and#essay>

² Source: <http://www.juilliard.edu/apply-audition/application-audition-requirements/bachelor-music-and-diploma/bachelor-music-and#essay>

³ Source: <http://www.msmnyc.edu/Admissions/Apply-To-MSM/Application-Dates-Deadlines#essay>

**ENTP 351: The Entrepreneurial Musician
Personal Essay: Writing Center Consultation**

Student's Name:

Date of Consultation:

Writing Center Tutor's Name:

Use the space below to summarize the advice received from the Writing Center tutor:

WC Tutor's Signature:
