

Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

Language barrier that presents itself in the music history survey, prevents the use of a lot of primary sources. For instance, use of a primary source for the Concert Spirituel in early France.

Esther's Music in Appalachia class, digitized access to a local newspaper, looked at every issue over a 20 year span from about 100-years ago, about music making. Goal to co-author an article.

Bringing in issues of *The Etude*, 1901-1921, had students look at the role of the musical press in musical life. Similar to a Metropolitan Opera program activity to have students see what composers and works were being performed and what that says about canon formation.

Iconography for historical things: Richard Leppert, *Music and Image*, have students look at paintings and reading them for gender roles.

Popular music: looking at secondary sources as primary source, i.e., word choice used in headlines for news articles on the release of the video for Billie Eilish's "Not My Responsibility." Also comments from when Kendrick Lamar won the Pulitzer. These can provide a large amount of discussion in a quick amount of time, especially for non-majors. I.e. the Internet

Online archives:

<https://lantern.mediahist.org/>

<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>

<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=godeylady>

<https://worldradiohistory.com/index.htm>

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/>

<https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/>

www.diamm.ac.uk

<https://soundingspirit.org/>

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>

<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/etude/>

The only two extant copies of *The Musical Messenger* (the first Black music magazine):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/nmxlzzlnssve2f/Musical%20Messenger%20May%20and%20July%201889.pdf?dl=0>

Finding objects in antique malls and yard sales. Grant to give students \$10-15 to buy music primary sources and then bring them to class for discussion, show and tell. This will have them think about the archive as more than sheet music.

Have grad students go find something by Wagner, students were amazed at what composers would write in letters and criticism.

Discussions of how much has not been explored in the scholarship from reading primary sources.

Barriers:

Takes extra forethought and preparation

No one reads

Takes time to unpack in class, guidance

In-class use so students can read together

Karin Thompson's Assignment: get a piece of paper and have students make a facsimile of a manuscript, asked students to document their sources, students don't know how to find the original without navigating multiple websites.

Students also say something is on YouTube when it was a recording.

Reading primary sources at home, respond with guided questions to prepare for in class discussion. For example, Reba Wissner's assignment: Read Haydn's *Employment Contract from the Archives of the Esterházy Court*. What does this document tell us about a composer who is in the employment of a monarch during the eighteenth century? What were the dos and don'ts for working as a court composer?

Matteo Magarotto's assignment on the same Haydn contract: have students create a calendar by time of day based on the contract

Mikkel Vad's assignment: having students look at the history of the Pulitzer Prize winners, discussion of the nature of the source materials. Takes a lot of time due to the number of sources you have to pull.

Book: Sam Weinberg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*: using primary documents in American history teaching

Postcards article:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/m8up6j8u72yhqpr/Wissner%20Postcards%20Chapter.pdf?dl=0>

Handouts:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/56s5ndaeseory6a/Postcards%20Handout%20Photos.pdf?dl=0>

Use of facsimiles:

Music library

Personal collection

Karin Thompson: requires students for some research assignments to BRING the books they've discovered to class

Students have a low attention span that they can't concentrate on lectures but also don't like active learning.