MU298: Final Exam (Take-home Paper)

Choose one of the five topics below. For each topic, do the suggested readings, then write a paper of approximately 6-10 pages. The paper should take the form of a scholarly review-essay. Such reviews typically summarize the views of the authors for a reader, then go on to compare the views of the authors and to evaluate the quality of the work.

For your topic, identify one or two significant issues in thinking about music that seem central to all of the readings. Next outline the viewpoints of your authors. (Some of the articles explain several positions.) Finally compare, contrast, and most importantly, evaluate the main arguments. Explain which positions you found most convincing and explain why. If there are weaknesses or incomplete areas in an author’s article, identify and explain them as well.

You may have to do additional research and reading in order to evaluate the articles fully. Exemplary papers will:

- show a firm understanding of the main ideas of the articles
- be able to distinguish main ideas from subsidiary ones (in other words don’t spend 2 pages discussing an idea that is not central)
- apply information and terminology from the course to the selected readings
- draw on at least one reading beyond those assigned
- show careful, detailed thought about the issues that the articles raise
- be well organized and clearly written

The final paper counts for 30% of the semester grade.

I. What is the Nature of Musical Performance?

   A. Peter Kivy, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*, Chapter 12, “And the Performance thereof.”


II. Songs: How do Music and Words Combine to Create Meaning?

   A. Peter Kivy, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*, Chapter 9, “First the Words; Then the Music.”

III. More on Theories of Expression in Music


IV. More on Ontology


V. The “Persona Theory” Pro and Con

A. Reread Kivy, *Introduction to A Philosophy of Music*, pp. 113-34, with particular attention to his discussion of the “persona theory.”
