

Roleplaying Music History: Honing General Education Skills via “Reacting to the Past”

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Music historians challenge their students to perform in many different ways. Some may require in-class vocal or instrumental performances, while others may prioritize writing or public speaking, research, or collaborative work. These interrelated skills represent the foundation of a college education and provide the tools that students will turn to when building meaningful and productive lives in music after graduation. As James Maiello recently argued, “a praxial music history curriculum . . . is based not on what students should *know*, but rather on what they *can do*.”¹

This article explores the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy as a viable platform for encouraging students to perform these broad skills in the study of music history. As a type of roleplaying game that incorporates debate and persuasive writing with the close study of primary sources, “Reacting to the Past” (RTTP) provides many opportunities for music history teachers to raise student motivation and align courses with broad institutional goals. In addition, the RTTP platform provides students with an engaging environment for performing these many skills in the music history classroom. In this article, I offer a number of resources and tips from games that I have developed for courses in which I use the RTTP platform. These are followed by suggestions for troubleshooting and assessing student performances that may be tailored to individual program needs. Since the study of music history frequently calls upon many different kinds of skills that students develop as undergraduates (such as writing, public speaking, research, and collaboration) the application of the RTTP model in this context provides insight into broader pedagogical questions in the humanities.

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1. James Vincent Maiello, “Towards an Extension of Regelski’s Praxial Philosophy of Music Education into Music History Pedagogy,” this *Journal* 4, no. 1 (2013): 93, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/85/127>.

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The results of the 2011 Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) indicate the need for more rigorous, comprehensive learning experiences. According to Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, who assessed the CLA's data in *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, most students place social activities on campus above, or at least equal to, independent studying.² The authors stress that students will not improve tasks of reading, synthesizing information, and writing a coherent argument if they are not practicing them in the classroom on a regular basis.³ CLA surveys, however, show that students are not engaging in rigorous reading and writing in enough of their courses, leaving the focused development of those skills to individual classes.

The outcomes of a liberal education, moreover, are difficult to measure. The Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education attempted to quantify the impact of undergraduate education on students' intellectual growth.⁴ The program compared first-year students and seniors at forty-nine schools in areas such as moral reasoning, openness to diversity, and attitudes toward literacy, science, and the arts. Furthermore, the Wabash study named indicators of effective teaching tied to significant student growth, such as quality interactions with faculty, high expectations for students, and experiences with diversity. Researcher Robert Zemsky has stated that these indicators reflect a number of "high-impact practices" promoted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) that realize the "promise of an effective education fully informed by the values and precepts of a liberal education."⁵ The Wabash study, as Zemsky argues, suggests that this integrative approach to the curriculum yields student growth at higher levels than the traditional "compromise" of disparate general education courses offered by isolated departments.⁶

Other influential writers on curricular design have criticized institutions that do not make a liberal education transformative and useful. Derek Bok, in his critique of the distribution of general studies, elective, and major courses in

2. Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). The Council for Aid to Education (CAE) reached a more favorable assessment of collegiate instruction with the CLA data than reported in *Academically Adrift*. Further critiques of Arum's methodology and analysis may be found in Doug Lederman, "Less Academically Adrift?" *Inside Higher Education* (May 20, 2013), <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/05/20/studies-challenge-findings-academically-adrift> and Alexander W. Astin, "The Promise and Peril of Outcomes Assessment," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 3, 2013), <http://chronicle.com/article/The-PromisePeril-of/141337>.

3. Arum and Roksa, *Academically Adrift*, 93.

4. Charles F. Blaich and Kathleen S. Wise, "From Gathering to Using Assessment Results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study," Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, <http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/storage/4-year-change-summary-website.pdf>.

5. Robert Zemsky, *Checklist for Change: Making American Higher Education a Sustainable Enterprise* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 143.

6. Zemsky, *Checklist for Change*, 143.

undergraduate education, considers the curriculum a “political accommodation rather than a carefully considered framework for achieving the lengthy list of generally accepted educational goals.”⁷ Meanwhile, students complete more major-specific courses than ever, particularly at regional public schools that have turned from their traditional liberal arts identity. The squeezing of general education courses at these institutions goes hand in hand with the dim results of the CLA.

Initiatives like “Writing Across the Curriculum” have attempted to offset these trends, and music history has participated in a more general effort to revise liberal arts curricula. Some music history courses satisfy degree requirements in research, writing, and intercultural concentrations, among others, but the exploration of music history could play a more important role in this area. Effectively integrating skills within the music history sequence both reinforces the purpose of a liberal education and illustrates its relevance to individual disciplines. And yet music history has often been isolated from other fields. The study of music history traditionally focuses on canonic repertoire (especially from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and on the products of archival discovery. Interdisciplinary trends in musicological scholarship over the past few decades have expanded the content of the music history sequence in many programs to include narratives tied to popular and film music, non-Western music, and the music of the socially marginalized.⁸ While an intellectual scrutiny of music history’s borders and contexts is at the heart of a collegiate learning experience, expanding the content and repertoire of the music history sequence makes it difficult to allot time for meaningful engagement with all of the available material. To paraphrase Mark Sample, we tend to teach for coverage rather than for uncoverage.⁹

The key to accomplishing skill-based goals in a course traditionally aimed at covering an ever-growing body of repertoire is student motivation. The role-playing platform “Reacting to the Past” that I’ve recently adopted in the music history sequence for music majors not only places music history in the center of the undergraduate learning experience, it also ranks high in student engagement and satisfaction.¹⁰ Game-based learning supports the shift in curricular

7. Derek Bok, *Higher Education in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 176.

8. Standards set by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) also play a role in the addition of this material to music history courses. See “NASM Handbook 2013–2014,” National Association of Schools of Music, <http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Standards-Handbook>.

9. Mark Sample, “Teaching for Uncoverage rather than Coverage,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 23, 2011, <http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/teaching-for-uncoverage-rather-than-coverage/35459>.

10. Steven J. Stroessner, Laurie Susser Beckerman, and Alexis Whittaker, “All the World’s a Stage? Consequences of a Role-Playing Pedagogy on Psychological Factors and Writing

thinking that emphasizes skills outcomes over content coverage, and these goals strike a balance between Millennial learning attitudes and preparation for the challenges and opportunities facing postgraduates in music.¹¹ RTTP offers music history teachers a viable model for motivating students to write, speak in public, think critically, and collaborate with peers.

Reacting to the Past

“Reacting to the Past” is in its third decade of widespread use in history courses and first-year seminars and has gained considerable traction in the social sciences and in STEM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields; however, its presence in the music history classroom is undocumented.¹² Developed by Mark C. Carnes at Barnard College, RTTP now forms an important part of the curriculum at over 300 institutions of higher education.¹³ A series of RTTP games is published with Pearson Education and will soon continue with W. W. Norton.¹⁴ National and regional RTTP conferences and workshops continue to test new games, train instructors, and refine learning goals and outcomes. The RTTP website provides instructors with a variety of resources, including copies of published games and manuals as well as guides to developing and running games.¹⁵

For Carnes, the Reacting to the Past pedagogy was an attempt to overcome the power imbalance between young learners and a senior scholar that many students perceive in the classroom.¹⁶ He created his first game not only to empower students with resources to build cases for class discussion but also to assume the roles of powerful figures in history.¹⁷ For the music history class, this role reversal puts music majors in the shoes of famous conductors, performers, composers, and other influential individuals, compelling them to draw on the

and Rhetorical Skill in College Undergraduates,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 101, no. 3 (2009): 605–20.

11. Robert G. Kane, “Teaching as Counterinsurgency: Enhancing Pedagogical Effectiveness and Student Learning in a Culture of Distraction,” *The History Teacher* 43, no. 3 (2010): 383.

12. Mary Natvig suggests RTTP as an active learning example for the music history classroom in “Classroom Activities,” in *The Music History Classroom*, ed. James A. Davis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 28.

13. Mark C. Carnes, “Setting Students’ Minds on Fire,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 6, 2011, <http://chronicle.com/article/Setting-Students-Minds-on/126592/>.

14. Reacting to the Past, “Announcement from W. W. Norton: Availability of RTTP Series Titles,” October 30, 2013, <http://reacting.barnard.edu/news/new-publisher-ww-norton-co>.

15. Reacting to the Past, “Instructor Resources,” accessed October 30, 2013, <http://reacting.barnard.edu/instructors>.

16. Mark C. Carnes, “The Liminal Classroom,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 8, 2004, <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Liminal-Classroom/9659/>

17. Carnes, “The Liminal Classroom.”

resources of the game to boost their credibility and chances of victory. Students compete by winning over classmates through persuasive speaking, writing, and negotiating, while the instructor assesses the quality of the performance.

The structure of an RTTP game, therefore, inverts the typical instructor–student relationship. Students read and research primary texts to absorb content outside of the classroom and engage in debates, discussions, and mock assemblies “in character” during class time. In assuming various historical roles, students have the ability to collaborate through strategic partnerships, vote in parliamentary procedures, and enact significant turning points in history. While the instructor delivers important information during the opening and closing days and will grade performances and assignments, students run the game. In many cases one or more students may have character roles that compel them to assume leadership positions. Removing the need for lecture and building game sessions around an interactive dialogue decentralizes the formal design of the traditional learning environment, in effect creating what Pamela Starr calls a “centrifugal classroom.”¹⁸

Game manuals and character role sheets guide students through significant historical content and precipitate the series of events tied to the game. Manuals typically include primary source readings, maps, character biographies, and a schedule of events, among other resources, and the character sheets provide students with background information, specific objectives tied to the game, and assignment sheets. In some cases, students perform as actual historical figures; at other times, they are assigned indeterminate roles that represent a particular position or idea tied to the historical setting. These students are free to take any number of sides on the issue, depending on the persuasiveness of their colleagues. Competing perspectives on major topics not only illustrate the many voices that may be eclipsed by traditional, monolithic narratives, but they also facilitate rich discussion and engaging gameplay.

Gamification has assisted in managing employees, marketing products, and promoting healthy and responsible lifestyles, and it is increasingly becoming an important model in education as well. While the disruption of the lecture format is an attractive element of the RTTP experience for students, the main driver of motivation is the game. Therefore, just as histories present facts in a comprehensible narrative for audiences, RTTP positions historical themes, characters, and events in the framework of a functioning game setting. Character objectives, markers of achievement, and conditions for winning are necessary components aimed at driving student engagement with important historical texts, content, and ideas.

18. Pamela Starr, “Teaching in the Centrifugal Classroom,” in *Teaching Music History*, ed. Mary Natvig (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 171.

Game elements themselves, though, do not drive student motivation alone. According to Joey J. Lee and Jessica Hammer, the rules of the traditional classroom can impact students at emotional and social levels, which can lead to disengagement. Changing the rules of typical classroom engagement at levels that tap into social and self-identity “can motivate students to participate more deeply and even to change their self-concept as learners.”¹⁹ Carnes also acknowledges the psychological impact that occurs when people experience history vicariously: “Often students genuinely care about the outcomes of the game because the conflict is bound up with issues that echo through the centuries and resonate with the present.”²⁰ RTTP games allow students, through a liminal process of transformation, to enact behavior that the traditional classroom hinders.

While a focus on game objectives may appear out of place in understanding history, the motivational strategies point to the general education goals of problem solving. Puzzles and strategy-based games can drive people to commit hours of full concentration in order to achieve victory. The multi-day period of RTTP games presents students with several challenges to overcome, reflecting the tendency of games to continuously challenge victors at increasingly more difficult levels. Furthermore, the various interactions with adversaries and collaborators harness the drivers of competition and teamwork. Therefore, while a responsible sensitivity to historical accuracy is important, an understanding of what circumstances will drive the desired learning behavior is crucial to managing a successful game.²¹

Although the RTTP series is in wide use, substantive research on it is in early stages. Beyond anecdotal evidence and measurements of student satisfaction and engagement, comprehensive data is a challenge to find due to the disparate adoptions, practices, and outcomes of games at a variety of institutions.²² Still, however, what *is* measurable is the need for enhancing student motivation and for challenging students with rigorous levels of reading and writing, as reported by Arum and Roksa.²³ Therefore, while a dedication to covering content and repertoire remains a primary objective for the undergraduate music history survey, it is a dedication to the college learning experience as a whole

19. Joey J. Lee and Jessica Hammer, “Gamification in Education: What, How, Why Bother?” *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (2011): 2.

20. Mark C. Carnes, *Pedagogy Manual*, Reacting to the Past Series (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2005), 8.

21. Lee and Hammer, “Gamification,” 3.

22. Mark D. Higbee provides data from student surveys demonstrating perceived successes with the RTTP model in “How Reacting to the Past Games ‘Made me Want to Come to Class and Learn’: An Assessment of the Reacting Pedagogy at EMU, 2007–2008,” in *Making Learning Visible: The Scholarship of Learning at EMU*, ed. Jeffrey L. Bernstein (Ypsilanti, MI: Eastern Michigan University, 2008), 58–59.

23. Arum and Roksa, *Academically Adrift*, 122.

that suggests that music history instructors take an opportunity to respond to the CLA reports in creative ways.

RTTP in the Music History Classroom

Interaction with primary sources and historical artifacts is at the forefront of RTTP games. And while contemporary documents are common to any historical role-playing experience, the music history classroom has the added layer of students experiencing a piece of music, of living it, in time as was done by the characters they represent in the game. Concerns of historical accuracy and ontology aside, students are invited to develop an emotional attachment to historical artifacts that is enhanced by the dual personas of student and character. In doing so, a gamer acquires a distinct insight into what Mark Auslander calls “touching the past.”²⁴ According to Auslander, the power of performance and historical objects yields two critical transformative experiences: “an internal subjective transition, from being in the here and now to being intimately bound to or co-present within a past historical epoch” and “a visible interior transformation, which [scrambles] conventional distinctions between actor and role” and is “key to establishing the event as ‘real’ for those who beheld it.”²⁵ Understanding comes by experiencing history as a whole.

Currently, there are no games published in the RTTP series that involve music history directly; however, a number of them prove useful springboards to themes and scenarios highlighted in the undergraduate survey.²⁶ Many obvious topics could yield enriching RTTP experiences, and this article includes examples related to the Council of Trent, the Invention of Opera, the *Querelle des Bouffons*, and the War of the Romantics. To ensure that students have a positive experience, curricular content must work well within the necessary parameters of the game mechanism; not all topics are feasible for an RTTP game. Therefore, instructors should be selective in choosing a topic that will include all of the members of the class and provide an engaging environment to inspire student motivation. All RTTP games should hold students to high levels of reading, writing, collaborative learning, and public speaking.

The dynamic environment of live roleplaying employs skills in public performance and creative interaction that will serve undergraduate music majors well in a variety of scenarios after graduation. Based on my previous success

24. Mark Auslander, “Touching the Past: Materializing Time in Traumatic ‘Living History’ Reenactments,” *Signs and Society* 1, no. 1 (2013): 161–83.

25. Auslander, “Touching the Past,” 163.

26. J. Patrick Coby, *Henry VIII and the Reformation Parliament*, Reacting to the Past Series (New York: Pearson, 2006), for example, even includes a suggested playlist in the appendix. Stephanie Jensen-Moulton is currently developing the game *Music in Crisis! Paris to Darmstadt, 1959*, which is under review by the RTTP Series editors.

with the RTTP model, I encourage music history teachers to consider how it could align the unique structure of their sequence with their broad institutional goals. In the remaining sections of this article, I discuss what I feel are the most practical concerns of game development and assessment. RTTP games are in-depth activities surrounding a single historical topic that cannot and should not substitute for the comprehensive study of music history.²⁷ In most cases, I recommend a single game during four to seven classroom meetings of a semester course to provide students with the alternative learning experience. Because most games are designed for small, interactive classrooms where students have already demonstrated college readiness and foundational knowledge in the discipline, care is needed in choosing where and when a game is appropriate. Although I speak about some of most general challenges with implementing the RTTP model in the music history classroom, individual institutions may have other needs to address.

Reading

In order for students to immerse themselves in the dynamic issues of history that are intimately tied to an RTTP game, it is important that a variety of required and suggested primary sources are available to them. Most game books include excerpts of texts that are applicable to all participants in the game as well as further reading lists that are advantageous to certain character roles. While secondary literature can be useful and most game books necessarily include brief summaries and background information, students will have a more personal interaction with texts that would be familiar to the characters they assume. Assessments that require specific references to texts circulating at the time in which the game is set will further motivate students to read and apply contemporary ideas to their advantage.

RTTP games alter the motivation for student reading significantly. While traditional textbooks navigate students through important content and prescribe critical thinking by using excerpts of primary sources and suggested questions for discussion, game books invite students to more self-guided and creative reading experiences that are motivated by character roles and game strategies. Primary source readings in the collections edited by Treitler and by Weiss and Taruskin that frequently supplement music history courses serve as excellent resources for developing an RTTP game book (see Appendix A).²⁸

27. Carnes (“The Liminal Classroom”) also stresses the RTTP should not replace conventional college courses, but rather enhance the collegiate experience.

28. Leo Treitler, ed. *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1998) and Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds. *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd. ed. (Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008).

The readings not only introduce students to relevant content and ideas, but are excellent models of historical convention and style for students to emulate in writing assignments tied to the game.

Writing

Writing assignments are at the heart of RTTP games. Carnes recommends that students complete between 8 and 12 pages of writing, with at least half submitted by the middle point in the game.²⁹ In most cases, students submit position papers from the viewpoint of a character role and a final reflection on the overall game experience. These may or may not require independent research beyond the game book, but all will challenge students to position their ideas strategically based on peer interaction and historical resources. Public arenas for publishing student writing assignments (discussion forums, blogs, newsletters, etc.) offer incentives for interfacing with classmates.

Students' abilities to stay "in character" will obviously vary greatly. Letters, pamphlets, treatises, and concert criticism are all important primary sources that students can emulate in the role-playing environment, but success is not dependent on students' ability to imitate the prose style of past periods. Appendix B is an assignment sheet from a game about the War of the Romantics, which requires students to publish short position papers in historical journals like the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* on a regular basis throughout the game.³⁰ These brief essays require students to develop and clarify ideas in preparation for each class meeting, and I grade them on a 5-point scale to give students succinct and prompt feedback. Some essays may serve as a springboard for a longer writing assignment that is due after the reflection period.

Collaborative Learning

One of the unique qualities of an RTTP game is that group work and student interaction are tied to the historical scenario used, not to an arbitrary system. Many of the typical challenges of peer-learning environments are resolved when tied to objectives of a game and a historical narrative. In traditional scenarios students tend to allow their personalities to guide them into stock roles of group work (leader, scribe, spectator, etc.) but gameplay requires some

29. Carnes, *Pedagogy Manual*, 21.

30. An RTTP game blog can offer a suitable medium for simulating historical journals like the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. For ideas on how students can take leadership roles in the publishing process, see Kimberly Francis and Travis Stimeling, "E-Publishing in the Undergraduate Music History Classroom: The University of Guelph Book Review Project," this *Journal* 4, no. 1 (2013): 1–22, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/92/124>.

students to “get into character” in order to be victorious. Furthermore, since class time for RTTP games usually provides a forum for speeches, or centers on debates and other famous meetings, group work must occur outside of class. This requires students to engage with material persistently via physical and online study groups in order to gain an edge over game opponents.

In addition to collaborative work, students also learn when they confront each other during game time through debate, position papers, speeches, and parliamentary procedures. Presentations of work through online discussion forums and public speaking offer many opportunities for undergraduate peer review, defined by J. Peter Burkholder as a “process, formal or informal, in which students read or hear other students’ work and offer evaluation and feedback.”³¹ In an RTTP setting in particular, student feedback is immediate, pointed, and diverse due to the nature of the learning environment and the broad spectrum of philosophical belief systems that govern the character roles and complex issues of the game.

RTTP games place students into natural opposing factions that represent the main historical groups involved in the event. These groups collaborate in order to persuade the students playing indeterminate roles to make choices tied to the goals of the game. In most scenarios it is advantageous to have a mix of named and unnamed roles to accommodate various class sizes and mutable aspects of the game. The unpredictable nature of indeterminate roles provides RTTP players with real choices and encourages students to seek strategic opportunities for teamwork, requiring a strong familiarity with the historical climate of the game. In Appendix C is a grouping of character roles from an RTTP game on the *Querelle des Bouffons* into opposing and indeterminate factions that facilitate group work both in and outside of the classroom. Grouping students into factions is beneficial for establishing broad goals and channels of communication and collaboration, although instructors should ensure that game books and character role sheets promote individual goals and choices as well as keep each student engaged and thinking independently.

Ultimately, the RTTP experience creates a special type of learning community, one of the high-impact practices espoused by the AAC&U.³² These communities are neither randomly assigned nor driven by traditional social markers. According to Carnes, friendships “are built not on common interests but on an understanding that comes from working with people and also against them.”³³ Relationships are

31. J. Peter Burkholder, “Peer Learning in Music History Courses,” in *Teaching Music History*, ed. Mary Natvig (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 207.

32. George D. Kuh, “High-Impact Educational Practices: A Brief Overview,” Association of American Colleges and Universities, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>

33. Carnes, *Pedagogy Manual*, 1. Carnes’s point on having students work against each other is not to invite antagonism, but to encourage students to voice different sides of an issue for

solidified in much the same way as physical communities and families, through complex, shared experiences.

Public Speaking

Formal public speaking (aside from short presentations on assigned composers or works) may be less common in a traditional music history course than writing, but it aptly complements the skill development of future performers and educators. Undergraduate music majors mostly move on to careers in performance, education, and arts administration, among others, where strong presentation skills are necessary. Furthermore, as with the writing component, music history includes many complex themes that are open to debate.

Debate, according to RTTP creator Carnes, helps students clarify and create ideas, yet our cultural push toward reconciliation among diversity has encouraged many students to resist voicing opinions or pushing opposing views in the classroom.³⁴ Assuming character roles, though, enables students to take ownership of one or more critical ideas that exist around complex issues. In traditional class discussions, many students either withhold or fail to generate opposing positions because of concerns over social and emotional identity. RTTP gamers, however, can bring these important ideas to the debate by replacing their own views with those of the controversial position they channel through their character roles.

RTTP debates, though, still require students to think for themselves. According to the *Game Designer's Handbook*, simple goals should have many paths to completion, allowing for students to develop intermediary goals and continually reflect on their process to achieving character objectives.³⁵ This matching of guidance and self-reliance allows for debates to move the game forward, while allowing for creativity, problem solving, and risk taking. Unlike historical re-enactments that require students to memorize and reproduce ideas in their speeches, an RTTP debate is unique and challenges students on many higher order levels of thinking and reasoning.

Appendix D is a schedule of events for an RTTP game on the Council of Trent. The student-led days (in *italics*) that typically occur in the middle of a game most directly facilitate debate and speech-making.³⁶ Appendix E is a sample debate preparation sheet for RTTP class sessions set prior to the Age of more productive and meaningful discussions in the classroom.

34. Mark C. Carnes, "Inciting Speech," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 37, no. 2 (2005): 6–11.

35. Nicolas W. Proctor, *Reacting to the Past: The Game Designer's Handbook*, 3rd. ed. (New York: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011).

36. A typical game schedule and several examples are included in Proctor, *Game Designer's Handbook*, 12–13.

Reason. Although most of the directions would be applicable to any time period, this worksheet invites students to base arguments on a variety of grounds. The purpose of the worksheet is to guide students to preparatory research in order to align their position and strategy to character objectives.

Trouble-Shooting

There are several reasonable concerns with the RTTP methods. The first is that learning environments will become too chaotic when the instructor relinquishes control of the classroom. The traditional classroom setup represents the order and discipline stressed by common primary school practices, to which students are accustomed; the rhythms of class time are familiar and routine. RTTP games, however, are by nature highly unpredictable. The instructor cannot exercise any form of control because it is detrimental to the focus of the game. But the experience itself is empowering for students, and proponents of flipped classrooms have already observed how an inverted classroom structure and culture yields new forms of student engagement and performance.³⁷ Any dramatic change in routine behavior will require some substantial risk-taking, an adventurous path to bountiful rewards that Dave Burgess calls “teaching like a pirate.”³⁸

Secondly, many instructors may find that “reacting” inhibits the presentation of accuracy and facts by drifting into the realm of fiction and by perpetuating clichés about history found in popular culture. Such responses by students, however, are not directly antithetical to the main objectives of RTTP. Students gain understanding of the major themes and issues surrounding history and become intimately familiar with its major players by engaging with primary source texts, challenging and affirming prevalent ideas, and exercising higher order thinking skills. Reflecting on the experience once the game has concluded will allow students to tease through the “boundaries” that separate historical fact from historical fiction and the activity itself can prove a valuable lesson in historiography.

Thirdly, the depth achieved in addressing one historical event over the course of 1–3 weeks may distract from the wide breadth of content traditionally surveyed in undergraduate courses. Even as the field of musicology began challenging the implications of narrow canon formation over the past two and a half decades, the amount of content and repertoire continued to expand. The

37. Paula Kay Lazrus and Gretchen Kreaehling McKay, “The Reacting to the Past Pedagogy and Engaging the First-Year Student,” in *To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*, vol. 31, ed. James E. Groccia and Laura Cruz (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 357.

38. Dave Burgess, *Teach like a PIRATE: Increase Student Engagement, Boost your Creativity, and Transform your Life as an Educator* (San Diego, CA: Burgess Consulting, 2012).

desire to “get through all the material” still often governs the undergraduate survey to the detriment of deep, reflective learning. The shifting attitudes of Millennials further complicate the content-driven course, as today’s students grow increasingly skeptical of memorization and the study of material easily accessible over the Internet through smart phones, tablets, and laptops.³⁹ As a driver of student engagement and performance, RTTP addresses head-on the dwindling levels of motivation for the study of music history.

Not all of the learning goals for the music history classroom, of course, can be met by RTTP gameplaying. By its very nature, the RTTP format focuses more on written texts than on the musical materials themselves. With the exception of more recent historical periods, musical manuscripts and printed music were more rare than printed text, and opportunities to perform and listen to ensemble works prior to the advent of audio recording technology were scarce. The focus of the most feasible music history games will therefore most likely center more on the ideas of music and music making than the music itself. In the music history classroom, then, RTTP gameplaying will probably work best in conjunction with other kinds of activities.

Assessment

Due to the unpredictable nature of the inverted classroom and the diverse paths to success students will take in gameplay, assessment of RTTP gameplaying work is a persistent challenge. Music history teachers must make the assessment process as consistent and transparent as possible. While the chief motivator of student performance could be tied to the objectives of the game, the learning outcomes should be attainable to both the winners and the losers. The scenario might inspire an uneven level of independent reading and writing, depending on the goals of specific role sheets, so a specified number of graded components should be spelled out directly for students, whether those be online posts, short position papers, public speeches, or tests. Instructors should inform students directly about the activities upon which they will be graded, so that questions of fairness do not arise due to the individualized experience of assuming specific character roles.

The AAC&U, which has a membership of over 1,100 private and public schools, has determined the standards of undergraduate curricular design for almost a century. Although institutions remain varied in design, student body makeup, and mission, the fundamental characteristics of the undergraduate liberal education are relatively consistent. Outcomes rather than content are the focus. The AAC&U’s VALUE rubrics (VALUE is an acronym for the *Valid*

39. Robert G. Kane, “Teaching as Counterinsurgency,” *The History Teacher* 43, no. 3 (2010): 383.

Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) present a common core of Essential Learning Outcomes ranging from oral and written communication skills to behaviors like civic engagement and ethical action.⁴⁰ The AAC&U publishes its core VALUE rubrics online, which are available to instructors who may not have institution-adopted rubrics at hand.⁴¹

When possible, cross-referencing institutional outcomes can provide instructors with some direction on what to evaluate. Explaining to students the assessment measures before the game will guide them in their individual performance. The Essential Learning Outcomes and High-Impact Practices compiled by the AAC&U reflect many RTTP series standards listed in *The Game Designer's Handbook*.⁴² The "Rich Text" series standard, for example, supports game books with a variety of primary and secondary source readings for students to mine. Since students must be judicious in selecting material appropriate to individual character objectives, they must demonstrate the "Information Literacy" outcome at high levels. The bibliographies that typically accompany game books also push students to conduct further research when additional support is required. The RTTP series standard of "Persuasion" is another example, challenging students to improve the outcome of "Oral and Written Communication"; in addition, it can serve as the High-Impact Practice of a "Writing Intensive Course," common to many institutions affiliated with the AAC&U.

The AAC&U's VALUE rubrics can assist music history teachers in assigning assessment measures appropriate for student development, depending on when an RTTP game will occur in the collegiate experience. The oral communication rubric, for example, scores levels in central message, delivery techniques, language, organization, and use of supporting material. Each VALUE rubric provides graduated "levels" from 0–4, which echo the stages of Bloom's traditional taxonomy:⁴³ 1 is the benchmark, 2 and 3 are key milestones in student development, and 4 indicates the capstone. In some cases the level expectations

40. Terrel L. Rhodes, ed., "Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics," Association of American Colleges and Universities, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index.cfm>.

41. The VALUE rubrics are available at <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/>.

42. Proctor, *Game Designer's Handbook*, 11–12. The AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes and High-Impact Practices are available at Association of American Colleges and Universities, "Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP): Essential Learning Outcomes," accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>; and Association of American Colleges and Universities, "High-Impact Educational Practices," accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>.

43. Benjamin S. Bloom, ed. et al., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain* (New York: David McKay, 1956). Bloom's taxonomy continues to influence educational standards and outcomes for a variety of educational institutions. An updated presentation of the model is presented in Lorin W. Anderson et al., *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longman, 2001).

are quite different; in other cases, such as with the oral communication rubric, they represent levels of quality and scope. The latter case alerts both teachers and students to the difference between the work of first year students and that of seniors. In the case of the music history course, instructors may want to integrate expectations for student competencies in form, style, and harmonic analysis in delivering speeches.

Conclusion

While the undergraduate music history sequence has long contributed to broad higher education goals, satisfying specific degree requirements in research, literature, and cultural studies, an RTTP game integrates most institutional learning goals into a single activity. Furthermore, RTTP games also offer foundational insight into the field of musicology, requiring students to explore large collections of scores and primary source texts and develop independent ideas to present to their peers. Game books offer a significantly different course text than traditional survey textbooks and anthologies, permitting students to build and shape their own narrative and wrestle with the ethics of historiography. As opposed to vignettes and excerpts that guide students to an intended point, these resources stand as an open body of artifacts with which students can formulate and support their own ideas. To effectively and creatively persuade their colleagues, students are compelled to perform in a number of areas, whether by delivering a speech as a sixteenth-century cardinal, forming a strategic partnership as an eighteenth-century *philosophe*, or even publishing an open letter as a nineteenth-century music critic. Used carefully and creatively, RTTP games help meet the primary learning goal of the music history classroom, namely, to foster student engagement with the music cultures of the past.

APPENDIX A: A Selected List of Primary Sources for an RTTP Game on the Invention of Opera

Texts

Aristotle. "Aristotle on the Purpose of Music." In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 8–10. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.

Bardi, Giovanni. "Discourse Addressed to Giulio Caccini, Called the Roman, on Ancient Music and Good Singing." In *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations*. Edited by Claude V. Palisca, 91–139. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

- . “Discourse on how Tragedy should be Performed.” In *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations*. Edited by Claude V. Palisca, 141–51. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Bardi, Pietro. “Pietro Bardi on the Birth of Opera.” In *Opera: A History in Documents*. Edited by Piero Weiss, 8–10. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Buonarroti, Michelangelo, the Younger et al. “*L’Euridice*, the econd Opera.” In *Opera: A History in Documents*. Edited by Piero Weiss, 11–18. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Caccini, Giulio. “The Birth of a New Music.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 143–44. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.
- da Gagliano, Marco, and Alessandro Striggio. “The Earliest Operas.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 147–50. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.
- Giunti, Filippo. “Music at the Medici Wedding.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 97–101. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.
- Guidotti, Alessandro, and Emilio de’ Cavalieri. “Cavalieri’s *Rappresentazione di anima, et di corpo*.” In *Opera: A History in Documents*. Edited by Piero Weiss, 19–23. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Mei, Girolamo. “Letter [to Vincenzo Galilei] of 8 May 1572.” In *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations*. Edited by Claude V. Palisca, 56–75. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Ovid. “Orpheus and the Magical Powers of Music.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 1–2. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.
- Plato. “Plato’s Musical Idealism.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 5–8. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.
- Quintilian. “The Kinship of Music and Rhetoric.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 10–12. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.
- de’ Rossi, Bastiano. “The Medici Wedding Festivities of 1589.” In *Opera: A History in Documents*. Edited by Piero Weiss, 1–7. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Strozzi, Giovanni Battista. “The Prescriptions for Intermedi.” In *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations*. Edited by Claude V. Palisca, 221–25. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Vicentino, Nicola et al. “Radical Humanism: The End of the Renaissance.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 136–41. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.

Musical texts

Caccini, Giulio. *Euridice* (1600). Firenze: Edizioni Musicali Otos, 1980.

———. “Deh, dove son fuggiti,” *Le nuove musiche* (1602). In *Anthology of Baroque Music*. Edited by John Walter Hill. New York: Norton, 2005.

———. “Torna, deh torna, pargoletto mio,” *Le nuove musiche* (1602). In *Anthology of Baroque Music*. Edited by John Walter Hill. New York: Norton, 2005.

———. “Ultimo Coro del Rapimento di Cefalo” from *Rapimento di Cefalo*, (1602). In *Anthology of Baroque Music*. Edited by John Walter Hill. New York: Norton, 2005.

———. “Udite, udite amanti,” *Le nuove musiche* (1602). In *Anthology of Baroque Music*. Edited by John Walter Hill. New York: Norton, 2005.

———. “Vedrò ’l mio sol,” *Le nuove musiche* (1602). In *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. Volume 1: Ancient to Baroque. New York: Norton, 2009.

Cavaliere, Emilio de’. *Canto Intermedi et Concerti* (1591). Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique (1963-).

———. *Rappresentatione di anima, et di corpo* (1600), excerpt. In *Anthology of Baroque Music*. Edited by John Walter Hill. New York: Norton, 2005.

Monteverdi, Claudio. *L’Orfeo* (1607), selections. In *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. Volume 1: Ancient to Baroque. New York: Norton, 2009.

Peri, Jacopo. *L’Euridice* (1600), Prologue and excerpt from Scene 2. In *Anthology of Baroque Music*. Edited by John Walter Hill. New York: Norton, 2005.

APPENDIX B: Assignment Sheet for Short Essays in the RTTP Game “War of the Romantics”

Short Position Papers

Objective. To develop skills in proposing arguments, thinking critically about music, and engaging with cultural topics through succinct writing examples.

Directions. Position papers are tied to the Reacting to the Past game “War of the Romantics.” Students will receive topical assignments in their character role sheets and are expected to reference/quote primary source readings and address the issue at hand directly. Students are NOT evaluated on what position they take, but rather are evaluated on how proficiently they argue on behalf of their character’s objectives. Position papers should be published to the course’s blog, undersigned by the appropriate character or characters, and posted in the respective journal forum (*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, etc.). Blog profiles must include full character names and portraits that will appear next to each post.

Preparatory Readings. Although students may draw on content, ideas, and style from a variety of sources in the game book, students should read the following examples first to shape their own position papers to the appropriate style and discourse.

Brahms, Johannes et al. “Manifesto.” In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 328–29. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.

Brendel, Franz. “Inaugural Address” (1859). In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, 2nd ed. Edited by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, 327–28. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008.

Hanslick, Eduard. “On the Beautiful in Music” (1854). In *Strunk’s Source Readings in Music History*, rev. ed. Edited by Leo Treitler, 1202–11. New York: Norton, 1998.

APPENDIX C: Factions for the RTTP Game *Querelle des Bouffons*

OPPOSING →	—————INDETERMINATE—————		← OPPOSING
<i>coin de la reine</i>	<i>troupe de Bambini</i>	<i>Académie Royale de Musique</i>	<i>coin de la roi</i>
Rousseau	Bambini	Francoeur	Rameau
d’Holbach	Tonelli	Rebel	Cappeval
Grimm	Italian Musician 1	French Musician 1	Castel
d’Alembert	Italian Musician 2	French Musician 2	Cazotte
Diderot	Italian Musician 3	French Musician 3	Jourdan
Philosophe 1			Freron
Philosophe 2			Travenol

APPENDIX D: Schedule for the RTTP Game *Music and the Council of Trent*

Day 1: Introduction to the game and overview of historical content

Day 2: Role distribution and initial faction meetings

Day 3: *Session of the Committee (10 September 1562)*

Day 4: *22nd Session (17 September 1562)*

Discussion of the proposed Canon 8

Day 5: *24th Session (11 November 1563)*

Discussion of the proposed Canon 12

Day 6: *General Congregations (23-27 November 1563) before 25th Session*

Discussion of musical restrictions concerning monasteries

Day 7: Debriefing and reflection

APPENDIX E: Debate Preparation Worksheet

Debate Worksheet

Objective in Debate. Reference your character role sheet. If you are to deliver a prepared speech, you may copy it on the back of this sheet for easy reference.

Main Point(s). List each point you are trying to make in order of importance. Keep them succinct, as this is a reference tool for you.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Grounds for Points. On what grounds do you base your point(s)? You may argue on grounds of morality, faith, loyalty, logic, tradition, etc. from the view of your character or faction.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Supporting Minds. What primary source readings include ideas that support your main point(s)? Quote them in shorthand and be able to cite them during the debate.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Counter Arguments. Identify some of the main points your colleagues are likely to bring up in debate that counter yours. Your character role sheet identifies some of those oppositional figures. Below, list your rebuttals.

1.
R.
2.
R.
3.
R.

Analysis. In some cases, musical examples can illustrate points more clearly than words. Write down some of those passages in the repertoire anthology or game book and be prepared to present or perform them during the debate.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Speech. If your character is scheduled to give a formal speech at this meeting, you may provide it here for reference.

APPENDIX F: Select Bibliography for Creating and Running an RTTP Game

Carnes, Mark C. "Inciting Speech." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* (March/April 2005): 6–11.

———. *Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.

———. *Pedagogy Manual*. "Reacting to the Past" Series. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005.

Higbee, Mark D. "How Reacting to the Past Games 'Made Me Want to Come to Class and Learn': An Assessment of the Reacting Pedagogy." In *Making Learning Visible: The Scholarship of Learning at EMU*, edited by Jeffrey L. Bernstein, 41–74. Ypsilanti, MI: Eastern Michigan University, 2008.

Houle, Amanda. "Listening to Students: Reacting to 'Reacting.'" *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* (July/August 2006): 52.

Kelly, Kathleen A. "A Yearlong General Education Course Using 'Reacting to the Past' Pedagogy to Explore Democratic Practice." *International Journal of Learning* 16, no. 11 (2009): 147–55.

- Lazrus, Paula Kay, and Gretchen Krehling McKay. "The Reacting to the Past Pedagogy and Engaging the First-Year Student." In *To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*, vol. 31. Edited by James E. Groccia and Laura Cruz, 351–63. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013.
- Lightcap, Tracy. "Creating Political Order: Maintaining Student Engagement through Reacting to the Past." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42, no. 1 (January 2009): 175–79.
- Proctor, Nicholas W. *Reacting to the Past: Game Designer's Handbook*. 3rd Ed. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011.
- Stroessner, Steven J., Laurie Susser Beckerman, and Alexis Whittaker. "All the World's a Stage? Consequences of a Role-Playing Pedagogy on Psychological Factors and Writing and Rhetorical Skill in College Undergraduates." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 101, no. 3 (2009): 605–20.