

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## KATHRINE G. McGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Moore School of Music

### **DMA Lecture Recital Guidelines**

The lecture recital generally takes place after finishing all of your coursework and your comprehensive exams. Before beginning work on the lecture, you should define your research committee, the chair of which should be the MSM faculty member most knowledgeable about your area of research (often a member of the musicology or music theory departments). The topic of the lecture is usually the same as that for your DMA essay or document, and so you should work with your committee chair on narrowing your topic down to something that will function well as a spoken lecture of about 30 minutes in length. You will also want to keep your studio instructor closely involved, however, as the decisions regarding which music you will perform on the recital will be made with their assistance.

Composing the lecture recital script is a lot like writing a term paper: it should have a thesis (you need to argue or prove something) and it will typically be 4000 to 5500 words in length (although this can vary depending on the topic, and the ratio between speaking and performance that you and your committee have agreed upon). It's also a good idea to include source citations (footnotes) in the script so that your committee can evaluate the depth and quality of your research. Since you are preparing for a public event, your script will often go through multiple drafts before it is approved by your committee chair. This can be a time-consuming process, as your committee chair can take up to a couple of weeks to read and comment on each draft, and you'll need time to make the changes and do the additional research he/she asks for. Once your committee chair has approved your script (and only at that point), you should send it to the other members of your committee and schedule your pre-recital jury. You will present most or all of your lecture during the jury, so make sure to allot extra time (usually an hour). Be sure to work with your committee members to find a jury time that all of them can attend.

Since the lecture recital script is meant to be read aloud, you should strive to write in a way that is more conversational than you would for a term paper: use contractions, incorporate humor, and avoid getting too technical, among other things. In terms of this last point, you can certainly use the language and terminology of our profession, but you will need to walk the audience through examples and ideas more slowly and carefully than you might do for someone who was absorbing your content with their eyes and has time to think through your points. Don't overwhelm your listeners with data or a ton of examples: reading a formal or chordal analysis aloud, for instance, will only serve to bore and/or alienate friends and family. Choose from among the most interesting and straightforward of the examples that illustrate your thesis and take us through those and only those: the biggest mistake lecturers make is to try to cover too much material. If you do need to provide your audience with data, use a handout. You might also consider blending performed examples into your talk rather than saving all the music for the end; this makes for a much more varied and entertaining lecture. Finally, remember that the lecture is itself a performance: practice it to the point that you can read it fluently and naturally, and so that you can make regular eye contact with your audience (practice with friends and have them give you feedback). We have posted on the MSM forms website a sample lecture recital script and handout that was written by one of our graduates—it's an excellent example of a very successful presentation.

As with all recitals, the pre-recital jury must be scheduled two weeks before the recital. Remember to provide your committee with copies of the script before that point and to confer with them when choosing both your pre-recital and recital dates.

Dr. Jeffrey Sposato  
Director of Graduate Studies