

SOAR Research Proposal: SUMMER 2016

Moravian Music: Creating Performance Editions of Choral Works

Faculty: Dr. Hilde Binford, Chair, Department of Music
Assisted by Gwyneth A. Michel, Assistant Director, Moravian Music Foundation

Student: Matthew Obszarny. BMus Music Education and Performance.

Dates: May 31 – August 5, 2016. Ten weeks.

Project Description

Moravian Music: Creating Performance Editions for Anthems and Choral Works describes both the research activity and experiential nature of the summer project, undertaken in collaboration between the Moravian College Music Department and the Moravian Music Foundation. Matt Obszarny, majoring in Music Education and Performance (Vocal) with a two semesters of college German, will obtain invaluable experience in cataloging and preparing modern performance editions of anthems and choral works from manuscript copies in the archival collections of the Moravian Music Foundation. In addition, he will participate in a two-week German Script course offered from June 1-14, 2016, which will prepare him to read and decipher the 18th-century German script.

The Moravian Music Foundation is custodian of some 10,000 manuscripts and early imprints of music composed, copied, and collected by the early Moravian settlers in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Less than ten percent of these pieces have been prepared for modern performance. This process involves the careful and time-consuming creation of a full choral/orchestral score from manuscripts of individual performance parts; often the comparison of two or more copies of the same work in different hands and in different locations; the resolution of difficulties caused by copying errors, damage to manuscripts, or missing parts; the creation of a piano or organ reduction from orchestral parts; and translation of the text from 18th-century German into modern English; painstaking proofreading and correction; the creation of performance recommendations for the modern choir and orchestra; and final preparation of music preparatory for publication in the Moravian Music Foundation's music series. This series is under the supervision of Dr. Nola Reed Knouse, Director of the Moravian Music Foundation, with Gwyneth Michel as Series Editor. This proposal indicates that Matt will prepare editions of one to three works; the final output will depend on the length and complexity of the works selected, and on the magnitude of editorial decisions that may need to be made with each piece. In addition to his work with Dr. Binford, Matt will work most closely with Gwyneth Michel. Gwyn is a professional editor with some 25 years' experience, and she will supervise Matt's editorial work for accuracy, clarity, and scholarly and musical integrity. Gwyn has worked with other students, and she always works with the students to find works that reflect the student's interests and aptitude.

Past SOAR projects in collaboration with the archives have resulted in the students' works being performed and published. We expect that this summer's project would be performed either at Vespers or at a Moravian festival.

Roles and Responsibilities, Schedule

The summer project will encompass the ten weeks from May 31 – August 5, 2016.

June 1 – July 14 German Script Course at Moravian Archives
July 15 – August 5 Work on transcriptions and editions, final report

Benefits

The benefits to Matt are many: practical experience in scholarly music editing from original sources, along with their history and performance decisions; and experience in reading and deciphering 18th century German script. Matt is currently hoping to earn a Masters degree in musicology; this research and exposure to the archives and manuscripts is of particular interest to him.

The benefits to the Moravian Music Foundation are the creation of new works ready for publication and performance. The College will benefit from Matt's experience and the availability of new editions for performance consideration by the College choir. Matt's project will benefit Dr. Binford, as she continues her work with the Moravian History and Music Conference and research of 18th-century music of Pietists and Anabaptists. One of the first projects will be to work in the Moravian College Archives to find out more about the first celebration of Vespers nearly 60 years ago, with the idea of preparing a piece for performance that is related in honor of the upcoming 60th anniversary.

Budget

1. Matt will need on-campus housing from June 2 through August 5	
2. Tuition for German Script Course (\$785, of which Matt will pay \$285)	\$500.00
3. Stipend for Matt (40 hours/week, 10 weeks)	\$3,000.00
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Total expenditures requested	\$3,500.00

Other Information

Through this project, Matt will be the principal editor of these music works, making all the preliminary editorial decisions and thus learning in the best way possible the challenges, difficulties, and rewards of scholarly music editing. Although Dr. Binford will supervise the project, Matt will benefit from working closely with Gwyneth Michel in the creation of these editions, and any final editorial decisions will be made in collaboration between the principal editor (Matt) and the Moravian Music Foundation.

The collaboration between Moravian College and the Moravian Music Foundation over the years has really benefitted our students. The students who have worked with Dr. Binford and Gwyn Michel on similar projects have all had their edited works performed and prepared for publication. Moreover, this SOAR project has helped them achieve their future goals, including two who have gone on to PhD graduate programs in music history. Matt Obszarny '17 is interested in pursuing graduate studies in musicology. With his interest in archives, editing, German, and vocal studies, this is a perfect opportunity for him to develop skill sets that would not be possible in the music department curriculum.

Student Statement

Moravian Music: Creating Performance Editions of Choral Works

Matthew Obszarny '17

Major: BM in Music Education and Music Performance

Dr. Hilde Binford (Associate Professor), Department of Music

Assisted by Gwyneth A. Michel, Assistant Director, Moravian Music Foundation

On-Campus Housing is requested

Prior to enrolling at Moravian College I had very little exposure to the Moravian Church and its traditions. During the past four years my interactions in the college community and participation in the College Choir and the College's Vesper Services has broadened my understanding of the Church and has given me an admiration and respect for their progressive ideas. In particular their liberal approach to education and the embracement of music as a cornerstone to worship resonate strongly with my ideals.

Throughout my life I have always had a love of music and history. I have always been intrigued by the motivations of the past and how they have come to impact our present age. In regards to the Moravians, I would love to have a deeper understanding of their history and how it influenced the music that I have been exposed to and enjoyed during my college years.

Moravian College has a commitment to helping students grow and prepare for real world experiences. I would love to participate in the following project as both an academic and personal undertaking that will enhance my education and help to illuminate the long musical history that the Moravian Church has long cherished.

I am proposing to work on transcribing one to three (depending on the difficulty level of the compositions) archived Moravian choral works into modern notation. I intend to research Moravian works that have not been performed in over two hundred years, and hold, as my ultimate goal, the possible publication of my edition(s) within the Moravian Music Foundation's Moravian Star Anthem Series. I also hope my edition(s) could be offered to the Moravian College Music Department for performance consideration either at this year's 60th anniversary Vesper Service or in another venue.

I also believe this proposition would afford me a great opportunity to work with two professionals in this particular field, Dr. Hilde Binford and Gwyneth Michel. My intent is to continue my education and pursue a Master's in Music History. Working under their guidance will help my future studies in both researching and editing. As a Music Education major I think this experience would also enhance my offerings as a teacher, by my bringing a greater depth of understanding of composition and history to a younger generation.

The SOAR program is a great opportunity that Moravian College and the surrounding community have to offer. I would be excited to work in this kind of environment and to work with distinguished faculty on this project. Thank you for this opportunity.