Classics and Music:

An Interdisciplinary Major Proposal by Colleen Fuhrmann

My original interest in the Music major came from my love of choir and singing. In pursuing the major, I found that I was also captivated by the historical portion, and I received comments from classmates about how well I seemed to understand it, how I grasped the big picture. At the same time as I began my study of music, I also took my first class in Latin, and my interest there motivated me to take further classes in the Classics field, and to flesh out a Classics minor. Unfortunately, my success in the Music major was hindered because I found other aspects to be less engaging, and did not perform as well when I attempted them as I felt I did in the historical portion. So, to combine my interest in both musical and classical history, I am proposing this interdisciplinary major.

In my studies, I've found that each period of music history has its own relationship to the classical past. The Western tradition of music starts with the Medieval Church, through the plainchant which was used to carry the Latin words of the Bible, and which was elaborated and grew into organum, motets, and other works with a chant basis. In the Renaissance period, there came a revived interest in actual Greek and Roman musical practices. Using their knowledge of the ancients and some imagination, members of a group known as the Camerata wrote works which attempted to recreate the style and effect of Greek drama – the first operas. Opera grew in popularity and scope during the Baroque period, but the subject matter for serious operas remained mythical or legendary, and librettists drew stories from Ovid, Virgil, and other classical authors. In the Classical period, interest in balance and the timelessness of ancient art became values that were reflected musically through the containment of emotion, simpler harmonies and

textures, and the canonization of sonata form. At the other extreme, much music of the Romantic period was an expression of self by the composer. The same intensely personal and emotional qualities of this music can also be found in classical lyric poetry. Modern music has tested the limits of tonality, rhythm, timbre, and sound itself and draws on all of these practices and more – composers today are as interested in the music of other cultures as in the deep roots of our own Western tradition.

My own odyssey through musical history intersected with classics not only in my courses on music history, but in other projects and classes as well. In choir, I often sang works in Latin for the Candlelight services, and knowing the meaning of the words allowed me to be more expressive in my singing, and made the music more meaningful to me. In spring of 2003, I also sang Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Hendrix Choir and Arkansas Symphony, which is a twentieth-century setting of medieval Latin lyrics. In Latin 210 I studied the Vulgate, which was the Latin Bible used by the Medieval Church, and still used by the Catholic Church until Vatican II, and was the major source for lyrics of medieval hymns and songs. I also drew upon the ancient words of the Vulgate when I sought to write a religious song for my composition course, a musical elective. I am currently enrolled in Latin 410, a course focusing on the Latin poetry of Catullus and Horace which two other interdisciplinary majors are using for their capstones. With my capstone research project, I plan to revisit Carl Orff through his *Catulli Carmina*, yet another communication between Latin and music, and a thus a synthesis of the two components of my major.

Latin language courses: Study of ancient and medieval Latin

Latin 110 Fundamentals of Latin 1 Latin 120 Fundamentals of Latin 2

Latin 210 Readings in Latin Literature (The Vulgate)

Latin 410 Advanced Readings & Research in Latin Literature (Catullus & Horace)

Classical culture courses: Survey of ancient history, culture and practices

Classics 200 Classical Mythology History 301 Greek Civilization Classics 302 Roman Civilization

Musical history courses: Survey of music from its ancient origins to present day

Music 101 Introduction to Music Studies
Music 150 Survey of Western Classical Music
Music 401 Music History: Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque
Music 402 Music History: Classical, Romantic, and Modern

Musical activity courses: Experiential application of knowledge of Latin and basic music skills

Music Activity Choir (6 semesters)

Capstone

The capstone project is in conjunction with Latin 410 and contains a portfolio with the following components:

- 6 annotated bibliography (on articles dealing with Catullus, Orff's *Catulli Carmina*, or on other aspects of the intersection between Classics and Music)
- Colleen's choice:
 - lexical analysis of dulcis, dulce (1st choice)
 - original composition based on a poem of Catullus (2nd choice)
- focused research paper (on Orff's Catulli Carmina)
- in-class presentation (during the time scheduled for the final exam)