

Focused Listening

Listen to two songs at least three times through. During each listen, focus on a different specific instrument (suggested: an acoustic guitar, electric guitar, keyboard/piano, bass guitar). Try to hear the whole production, but focus as if you are the player of that particular instrument.

How:

1. Listen with headphones or earphones – the fullest set of headphones you can use the better; Listen at good medium volume – loud enough to block out external sounds and feel like you are ‘inside’ the song (but please not too loud to hurt our ears!)
2. No interruptions and no distractions: turn off your phone, turn down the light, if you are listening through the computer, darken screen or turn your back, or close your eyes.
3. Get into the song – become part of the band/group.

Songs:

1. Suggested 1st song-Pick a song by The Eagles (you can find them on youtube and other places if you don't own any songs). Suggested tracks include Life In The Fast Lane, Hotel California. The original album versions, as there is great left/right separation so you'll have fun focusing on each instrument.
2. Pick a song by any artist you like – vocal band, singer with backing band, instrumental group. Listen in the manner described – three times and focusing on one of the instruments.

Purpose:

To learn to hear each individual component of what makes up the whole. Avoid focusing on the lead solo instruments and voices. Try to notice things that you maybe never noticed before. Try notice or hear something new each time. Listen to the tone, timber, how instruments are played, mood and emotional elements, energy, etc. – of whatever you are focusing on at that time.

Writing for each song:

1. What is the name of the song and who is it by?
2. How many instruments do you hear, including the singer?
3. What are the instruments you hear?
4. Are any instruments louder than the others? Why do you think that is?
5. Which instrument(s) drive the beat?
6. Which instrument(s) has the melody?
7. Which instrument(s) provides the harmonies?
8. Do all of the instruments play the whole time?
9. What is the pattern of the song? example: Verse, chorus, Verse, chorus Bridge, chorus 2x
10. Put the pattern again and for each section write which instruments are playing.
11. If you were making a movie what type of scene would this song go to? Describe the scene and what type of mood this piece of music would bring to it.

Turn in this assignment typed as a Google Doc through Edmodo