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“Heartless”

For my project I chose to contrast the original and a cover of the song “Heartless” by Kanye West. The song was covered by Taylor John Williams for a performance on the television show The Voice. Despite being the same song, these recordings could not be more different in many aspects. First, in West’s original recording it features electronic musical accompaniment which gives the song a steady, repetitive beat in the background. In Williams’ cover he sings with a very different accompaniment, featuring simple guitar at the beginning building into a similar repetitive pattern with softer and more acoustic sounding instrumentals. Additionally, in West’s version he is accompanied by background vocals creating a texture that mixes some heterophony (some of the background vocals repeat sections of the main melodic line) and polyphony where the background vocals make additions of their own separate from that of the melody. In the cover by Williams, he sings solo for the whole piece and there are no accompanying voices giving the cover a strong monophonic texture very different from that of West’s original recording. Another difference between the two is that the range of the cover is wider than West’s original performance. In West’s original he doesn’t have too wide a range and many of the lines are almost spoken in nature as his style is far more similar to rap for a large part of the song, with the range opening at the chorus. The range of William’s cover is wider, especially at the end when he hits much higher notes than what is featured at the finish of the original. The beginning of the cover starts much slower than the original, but eventually I think the rhythm isn’t too far from the original although the sound is very different throughout. Though this cover does not share many similarities with the original, the text of the cover is identical to the original and both share a similar repetitive accompaniment pattern, though they feature different instruments/tones.

Link to cover:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/0zdu2fYvh4t14MXfBtDWzt?si=bupCYcmnSgWuumFdWW8vsg>