



TOPICS ON ITALIAN MUSIC

GENESIS, EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE ITALIAN MELODRAMA

CAS IT 344 – Spring 2012
Tuesday-Thursday, h. 9.15-11.00

Instructor: Dr. Piergabriele Mancuso



COURSE OUTLINE

Music is probably one of the commonest and most accessible forms of art. Being non-semantic and non-iconic, music has often been said to have a universal language and a message that everybody can understand. This is only partially true: music is product of a specific cultural milieu and the expression of a socio-cultural place. Every composer and every composition bear the peculiar marks of a specific time and socio-cultural environment. The aim of the course is to offer a general outline on European music history, especially the study of birth, evolution and characteristics of Italian opera and melodrama. The aim of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of music production in Italy and to give them the necessary interpretative and critical tools for further analysis and research.

While no prior knowledge of history of music, music theory or skill in music are required, a good command of Italian is warmly recommended. The teacher will be

glad to offer a supplementary course of 2 hours a week on music theory (music reading and notation) upon request of a group of at least four students.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MAIN TEXTBOOK

- Mario Baroni, Enrico Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*. Einaudi, Turin, 1988 (Reprint 1999).

FURTHER READINGS (SEE COURSE PACK):

- Alberto Basso, ed., *Music in scena – Storia dello spettacolo musicale*, vol. I, Turin, 1995.
- Mark Evan Bonds, *Listen to this*. Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2009.
- Matthew Broyden, *The Rough Guide to Opera*. 4th Edition. London, 2007.
- Vincenzo Coletti, *Da Monteverdi a Puccini – Introduzione all'opera italiana*. Einaudi, Turin, 2003.
- Lorenzo da Ponte, *Le nozze di Figaro – dramma giocoso in quattro atti*, a cura di Anna Biguzzi. Bonacci editore, 1997.
- J. Q. Davies, “‘Veluti in Speculum’: The Twilight of the Castrato,” in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Nov., 2005), pp. 271-301.
- William DeFotis, *Mozart, Quartet in C, K. 465*, in *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Summer, 1982), pp. 31-38.
- D. J. Grout & C. V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*. NY-London, 1988.
- Robert C. Ketterer, *Why Early Opera Is Roman and Not Greek*, in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Mar., 2003), pp. 1-14.
- Reinhard G. Pauly, *Benedetto Marcello's Satire on Early 18th-Century Opera*, in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Apr., 1948), pp. 222-233.
- Peter Stamatov, *Interpretive Activism and the Political Uses of Verdi's Operas in the 1840*, in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Jun., 2002), pp. 345-366.

Field trips are part of the curriculum and participation is **mandatory**. Lectures are part of the study load, so please take note of the lectures, for some themes and subjects presented in them are not in the textbooks.

ACADEMIC RULES

Absence will be excused only due to health or other major problems. A medical certificate must be produced in case of absence due to health problems. Absences for other reasons will affect your grade. Class will be divided normally, but not necessarily always, into two sections: a lecture (first hour) and discussion/listening section (second hour). Please bring with you paper and pen.

The lecturer can be reached by e-mail (gmancuso@bu.edu), by phone (349 6400459) or after class in his office.

SYLLABUS

WEEK 1

FEBRUARY

TUESDAY 28

Introduction to the course. Study guidelines, methodologies, papers, presentation and exams. The course syllabus

MARCH

THURSDAY 1

FLORENTINE RENAISSANCE – THE CAMERATA DE' BARDI AND THE GREEK DRAMA: HISTORY OF A GLARING MISTAKE

The music of Renaissance Italy: mecenatism and the political ideology of Italian Renaissance.

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 70-102).

WEEK 2

TUESDAY 6

"Dreaming of Orpheus...". From polyphony to monody. Myths and hypotheses about the birth of the Italian *melo-dramma*.

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 119-128; Grout & Palisca, *A History...* pp. 260-279; Broyden, *The Rough Guide...*, pp. 3-5; P. Fabbri, "Origini del melodramma," in *Music in scena – Storia dello spettacolo musicale*, vol. I, Turin, 1995, pp. 59-82).

THURSDAY 8

***Orfeo e Euridice* by Claudio Monteverdi: the genesis, the composition and the main technical features of an early Italian "dramma in musica".**

Complete opera screening – part 1

WEEK 3

TUESDAY 13

***Orfeo e Euridice* by Claudio Monteverdi: the genesis, the composition and the main technical features of an early Italian "dramma in musica".**

Complete opera screening – part 1

THURSDAY 15

***Orfeo e Euridice* by Claudio Monteverdi; opera screening – part 2**

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 128-136; Broyden, *The Rough Guide...*, pp. 6-14; Coletti, *Da Monteverdi a Puccini*, pp.42-52. "Arie e recitativi").

WEEK 4

TUESDAY 20

THE AGE OF BAROQUE MUSIC – INTRODUCTION

Political absolutism and the characteristics of Baroque art. Features and characteristics of Baroque operas:

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 147-165; *The New Grove Italian Baroque Masters*, pp. 181-206; Broyden, *The Rough Guide...*, pp. 38-42; 55-68).

THURSDAY 22

Antonio Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans* (Venice, 1716) and George Friederich Handel's *Agrippina* (Venice, 1709–10 Venice): screening, analysis and study of selected passages.

WEEK 5

TUESDAY 27

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, *La serva padrona* (1733), between drama and *commedia dell'arte*.

THURSDAY 29

***La serva padrona*, complete opera screening**

WEEK 6

APRIL

TUESDAY 3

THURSDAY 5

N. B. MID-TERM WRITTEN EXAM (WRITTEN).

Types of human voices in the Baroque opera: from soprano through tenor to basso. The *castrato* voice and its roles in the drama and operatic plots.

(Vincenzo Coletti, *Da Monteverdi a Puccini*, pp. 53-67, especially pp. 60-66, "Le voci"; J. Q. Davies, "'Veluti in Speculum': The Twilight of the Castrato," in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Nov., 2005), pp. 271-301).

N. B. 6-11 APRIL, MID-TERM BREAK

WEEK 7

THURSDAY 12

THE MUSIC OF 18TH CENTURY ENLIGHTENMENT – INTRODUCTION - European Enlightenment and the concept of "Classic style".

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 191-223).

N.B. FRIDAY 13

(MAKE-UP LESSON FOR WEDNESDAY 11 CLASSES). The development of the Italian opera in Italy and abroad. *Opera buffa* versus *opera seria*?

Bourgeoisie on stage: Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*. Cimarosa's career and the spread of 18th century Italian *opera buffa* in Europe.

(Grout & Palisca, *A History...* pp. 472-505; Broyden, *The Rough Guide...*, pp.96-113; Vincenzo Coletti, *Da Monteverdi a Puccini*, pp. 110-126, "L'opera buffa").

N.B. PRESENTATION SESSIONS BEGIN + N.B. START READING DA PONTE'S LIBRETTO *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*

WEEK 8

TUESDAY 17

THE DA PONTE-MOZART ITALIAN TRILOGY - *COSÌ FAN TUTTE*, *FIGARO* AND *DON GIOVANNI*: ITALIAN OPERA ON GERMAN SOIL.

THURSDAY 19

W. A. Mozart. *Le nozze di Figaro*. Complete opera screening.

WEEK 9

TUESDAY 24

THE DAWN OF EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM – INTRODUCTION. A magnificent case of Italian Classic “nostalgia”: Rossini and the Italian opera between late Classicism and early Romanticism.

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 253-264; 313; Broyden, *The Rough Guide...*, pp. 167-185).

N.B. Evening event.

Venice, Teatro La Fenice: *La sonnambula* (1831) by Vincenzo Bellini, libretto by Felice Romani, h. 7 p.m (T.B.C.).

THURSDAY 26

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA, complete opera screening.

MAY

WEEK 10

N.B. 1 MAY NO CLASS – LABOUR DAY/FESTA DEL LAVORO

THURSDAY 3

The opera of Italian Romanticism: the tradition of *belcanto* from Donizetti through Bellini to Verdi.

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848): life and works of an Italian opera master. Screening and analysis of selected passages from *Elisir d'amore* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* – LAST PRESENTATION SESSION

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp.313-318; Grout & Palisca, *A History...* pp. 660-668).

WEEK 11

TUESDAY 2

The age of European nationalisms. 1861: the birth of the Italian Kingdom. One state, one language, one opera. The life, career and operas of Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901).

(Baroni-Fubini, et als., *Storia della musica*, pp. 318-326; Grout & Palisca, *A History...* pp. 679-688; **n.b. start reading *Othello* by Shakespeare and *Otello* by Arrigo Boito).**

N.B. 10 MAY PROGRAMME FIELD TRIP TO RAVENNA

WEEK 12

TUESDAY 15

Verdi's *Otello*, the moor of Venice! Genesis of the opera, the libretto and its political significance.

(study Peter Stamatov, *Interpretive Activism and the Political Uses of Verdi's Operas in the 1840*, in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Jun., 2002), pp. 345-366).

THURSDAY 17

Screening of selected scenes from acts I-IV. **N.B. FINAL PAPER DUE.**

TUESDAY 22

FINAL EXAM (WRITTEN)

COMPONENTS OF THE FINAL GRADE

1. Attendance and class participation: 25%
2. Midterm exam (written): 25%
3. Class presentation: 25%
4. Final exam: 25%

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Promptness and punctuality are expected, and they will affect your participation grade. Attendance at all classes, field trips and class visits is mandatory; you will be docked a *minus* for missing any session, unless ill (medical certificate necessary). Please notice that weekend trips and family visits are not acceptable reasons for either lateness or absence.

PLAGIARISM

Simply stated, plagiarism is taking another's work and presenting it as you own. Dictionary definitions of plagiarism frequently include terms such as 'theft' or 'steal'. Plagiarism is, in fact, intellectual theft. It is one of the most serious forms of academic misconduct. Plagiarism committed by a student will certainly result in course failure and may result in suspension or dismissal. For more details please see Boston University's *Code of Student Responsibilities*: <http://www.bu.edu/lifebook/university-policies/policies-code.html>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states: 'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.' See Chapter 151C of the General Laws, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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