Music and Ideas from Mozart to the Jazz Age

Spring, 2016

Professor James H. Johnson

Department of History, Rm. #403
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 3:00-5:00, Thursday 12:30-2:00 and by appointment
226 Bay State Road
jhj@bu.edu

Music and Ideas from Mozart to the Jazz Age is a senior-level seminar focusing on understanding music in its historical and cultural context. Masterworks of the repertoire from the eighteenth century to jazz of the 1950s are at the center of the course, and their musical and textual features will receive significant attention. The political and intellectual climate, dynamics of patronage, composition and expectations of audiences, and changing social status of the artist will be considered in understanding the creation, performance, and reception of music.

Critical musical essays and works of literature and philosophy from the period will illuminate each work’s intellectual setting, and recent historical and musicological scholarship will provide a range of approaches for understanding music in context. Historical approaches will draw from methods now employed in cultural and intellectual history.

Familiarity with classical music (or a willingness to discover it) is strongly recommended for those wishing to take the course. The ability to read music is not required but will be advantageous.

Required Recordings (links listed on Blackboard Learn website)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Don Giovanni (1787)
Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 9 (1824)
Franz Schubert, Songs to texts by Goethe
Hector Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique (1830)
Richard Wagner, Parsifal (1877)
Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 1 (1888)
Erik Satie, Selected piano music (1888-90)
Claude Debussy, Préludes, Books 1 & 2 (1910, 1913)
Arnold Schoenberg, Pierrot Lunaire (1912)
Igor Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring (1913)
Charlie Parker, The Best of the Dial Years (1946-8)
Duke Ellington, Live at Newport, 1956 (1956)
Miles Davis, Kind of Blue (1959)

Required Books (available at Barnes & Noble at Boston University)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther (1774; New York, 2005)
James H. Johnson, Listening in Paris (Berkeley, 1995)
Arthur Schopenhauer, Suffering, Suicide, and Immortality (Mineola, 2006)
Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner (1872, 1888; New York, 1967)

**Class Website, Assignments and Goals**

The website for HI 426 can be found on Boston University Blackboard Learn. It contains all recommended readings and all required readings not available at the bookstore. All materials on this website are intended solely for educational purposes; their use is strictly limited to work for this class.

Unless otherwise specified, all required recordings are accessed through the Naxos Music Library, an online collection to which BU subscribes. To access the site go to the Boston University Libraries webpage of electronic indexes and databases (http://www.bu.edu/dbin/ejournals/esources/alpa-es.php#N) and click on Naxos Music Library. You may be asked to enter your BU login name and Kerberos password. Then enter the code found next to the required listening on this syllabus. When the recording appears, select the tracks you wish to hear and click play.

Each section of the course features a major musical work. You are responsible for listening to this music actively and attentively with the same concentration you would devote to a difficult piece of writing. If there are words, follow the text as you listen. Please jot notes to yourself as you listen for reference during discussion. If you have difficulties with this page, please let me know and we’ll try to work them out. (Sometimes when it fails to work, for instance, you need to close all other window browsers, restart your internet browser, call up Naxos, and reenter your login name and password. Note also that two players are available within the Naxos popup window; if one fails to work, activate the other.)

Many classes will begin with a discussion of the music. Here are some of the questions we will ask: How does the music make you feel? What do you “see” when you listen? What words come to mind as you listen? Why? How do you think the composer accomplishes these effects—using, for instance, instrumentation, musical structure, scale of forces, consonance vs. dissonance, melody vs. harmony, etc.? How are the words related to the music—are they consistent in expression? at odds with one another? In vocal works, does the music in any way complicate or qualify the sense of the text?

With each piece of music your listening assignment will be to select one track, or a moment in a track, and be prepared to discuss one of these aspects (or one not included). Why did you choose this? What stands out about it to you? What surprised, or pleased, or thrilled, or irritated you? Why? At the beginning of each class discussion in which there is a listening assignment, I will select three names at random to share with us their thoughts on the track selected.

Our goal will be to fit the music each week into the intellectual and cultural landscape. We will do this by considering a variety of readings, including fiction, philosophy, criticism, musical analysis, and works of history. Our discussions will be evenly divided among the music and required readings. At all times we will work to find connections between music and ideas.

If feasible, please print all required readings from the website for classroom discussion. This includes all texts, libretti, articles, chapters, etc. Or, you may bring a laptop to class and access the readings via wireless internet. You are also encouraged to take notes on the required and recommended readings.

If you use a laptop during class, you will be expected not to consult the internet for any purpose unrelated to the class. Do not text, e-mail, check Facebook, browse the headlines, shop for birthday gifts, watch funny animal videos, check the baseball standings, etc. If I notice you doing this, I will speak with you once and, on, the second occasion, forbid you from bringing your laptop to class.
**Grading Policy**

Final grades will be based upon four 6-8 page essays (20% each), three listening quizzes (5% each), and classroom participation (5%). Essay topics will be distributed in advance, with the expectation that you incorporate elements of musical detail, assigned primary and secondary readings, and contemporary scholarship.

Essays must also include a serious consideration of one or more of the recommended readings; they may also include relevant scholarship not on the syllabus (e.g., books or articles cited in assigned or recommended readings).

If you wish to write on aspects not included in the assigned topics, you may meet with me for approval up to one week before the due date.

Class attendance is mandatory. Three unexcused absences, and each additional multiple of two, will lower your final grade by one-third (e.g., B to B-). Please let me know of any excused absences (illness, family emergency, jury duty, etc.) in advance whenever possible.

**Academic Conduct**

I expect the work you perform in this course to be your own. Presenting the work of someone else as your own is plagiarism, and it will be punished by an F for the assignment and possibly for the course, with possible further sanctions by the University Academic Conduct Committee. The Boston University Academic Conduct Code describes a plagiarist as “the student or scholar who leads readers to believe that what they are reading is the original work of the writer when it is not.” Plagiarism includes copying the work of others, restating the work of others without citing the source, and collaborating with others without acknowledging their contribution. A detailed discussion with examples appears in the Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code (http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/#Plagarism). It is your responsibility to read these pages carefully and know exactly what constitutes plagiarism.

All websites consulted for use in written work must be acknowledged in your papers. Unacknowledged use of material from the internet will be considered plagiarism and punished as such.

**Schedule of Classes**

**Music and Ideas**  
**January 19**  
Introduction to the course

**January 21**  
Required Listening:  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni* (1787), Act I [Naxos: 0724357287753]

Required Reading:  
Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Don Giovanni*, Act I (libretto)

**January 26**

**Required Listening:**
Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, Act II [Naxos: 0724357287753]

**Required Reading:**
Da Ponte, *Don Giovanni*, Act II (libretto)


**Recommended Reading, Mozart:**


**Music, the Individual, Community**

**January 28**

**Required Listening:**
Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 9* (1824) [Naxos: CD93-088]

**Required Reading:**


**February 2**

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading, Beethoven:**


**February 4**
Required Reading: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), 1-67

**February 9**
Required Listening:
_______, *Lied Edition 13, Goethe, vol. 3* [Naxos: 8.554667]

Required Reading:
Goethe, texts of assigned songs: click *View Song Text* on each Naxos webpage


Recommended Reading, Schubert:

**February 11**
Required Reading:
Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 68-134

**February 16 - Monday Schedule, no class**

**Music, the Artist, and Audiences**

**February 18**
Required Reading:

**February 23 - Essay #1 due**
Required Listening:
Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) [Naxos: 8.550093]

Required Reading:
E. T. A. Hoffmann, “The Sandman,” “The Artushof,” from *Tales of Hoffmann*

Recommended Reading, Berlioz:


**February 25**

**Listening Quiz #1**

**Required Reading:**

Johnson, *Listening in Paris*: Chapters Twelve-Thirteen, 206-36; Chapters Fifteen-Sixteen, Afterward, 257-85

Hoffmann, “Councillor Crespel,” from *Tales of Hoffmann*

__________, Review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony (on Blackboard Learn)

**Music and Philosophy**

**March 1**

**Required Listening:**


**Required Reading:**

Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde* (text), Act I


**March 3 - No Class**

**March 15**

**Required Listening:**


**Required Reading:**

Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde* (text), Acts II & III


**Recommended Reading, Wagner:**


March 17
Required Reading:
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), 17-60

March 22
Required Reading:
Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 61-98

March 24 - Essay #2 due
Required Listening:
Mahler, *Symphony No. 1* (1888) [Naxos: CDX 5123]

Required Reading:
Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 99-144

Recommended Reading, Mahler:


Music & the Public
March 29
Listening Quiz #2
Required Listening:
Erik Satie, *Piano Music* [Naxos: ABC4766289]

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading, Satie:

March 31
Required Listening:

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Readings, Debussy:**

Jane Fulcher, *Debussy and His World*, “Speaking Truth to Power: The Dialogic Element in Debussy’s Wartime Compositions”

**April 5**

**Required Listening:**
Arnold Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire* (1912)

**Required Reading:**
Albert Giraud, *Pierrot lunaire* (text)


**Recommended Reading, Schoenberg:**

*Dunsby, Schoenberg*: Chapter Four, “Pierrot lunaire,” 28-72


**Music and War**

**April 7**

**Required Reading:**
Jean Cocteau, *Cock and Harlequin. Notes Concerning Music* (1921)

**April 12**

**Required Listening:**
Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring* (1913) [Naxos: 8.550472]

**Required Reading:**
Recommended Reading, Stravinsky:

Peter Hill, *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring*, “Anthology,” “Stravinsky’s Collaborators” (93-117)

**Music and Race**

**April 14**
Required Reading:

**April 19 - Essay #3 due**
Required Listening:
Charlie Parker, *The Best of the Dial Years* (1946-48)

Required Reading:
Miles Davis, *Autobiography*, “Bird” (577-81)

**April 21**
Required Listening:

Required Reading:


7:00 p.m. [Makeup class from March 3rd] - James Johnson plays the music of Maurice Ravel: Concert with Remarks (The Castle, 225 Bay State Road); attendance required

**April 26**
Required Listening:
Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue* (1959)

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading, Parker, Ellington, Davis:
Kirchner, ed., *A Miles Davis Reader*: Gary Giddins, “Miles’s Wiles” (1981), 217-23


April 28
Listening Quiz #3
   Required Reading:

Thursday, May 5th - Essay #4 Due (by 5:00 p.m., via e-mail: jhj@bu.edu)