

MU 171 BERLIN: CITY OF MUSIC, Spring 2022

Seminar Leader: Benjamin Hochman
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Course Times: Tuesdays 15:45-19:00
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

Berlin's musical life presents an embarrassment of riches- where to begin? This course helps you chart a path through Berlin's endlessly fascinating musical offerings, from chamber music to symphonic music and opera, covering a wide range of musical styles from the last three hundred years. We will make field trips to attend concerts, masterclasses, and open rehearsals throughout the city, Corona regulations and safety permitting. We will also explore a range of musical performances in digital format, from live broadcasts to historical recordings. Choice of events to attend, in person or virtually, will depend on Corona regulations, scheduling, and the availability of free or low-cost tickets. Venues may include Komische Oper, Barenboim-Said Akademie, Berlin Philharmonie, Berlin Konzerthaus. We will prepare for each event by reading texts (musicological, historical, critical), listening to recordings, and watching videos. We will host guests representing the rich variety of current musical and interdisciplinary art in Berlin. Written requirements will include short weekly assignments relevant to the week's subject and two longer assignments such as a concert review or a response to one of the musical events we attend. Each student will also give an oral presentation on a piece of music, performer, composer, or musical organization with ties to Berlin. No prior musical knowledge is required for this course: music-lovers and musicians of all levels are equally welcome.

This course is organized with Google Classroom. Materials will be provided there.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons

for the absences, whether excused or unexcused. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Students are expected to attend all off-campus excursions punctually, from start to finish.

Special Considerations for Spring 2022

Some students or instructors may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, situations could also arise during the semester that might prevent students or instructors from in-person attendance. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors will make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assignments

1. Weekly written responses to assigned material, approximately 300 words
2. An oral presentation, 15-20 minutes, on a piece of music, performer, composer, or musical organization with ties to Berlin. The presentation should include background and discussion
3. Two papers, the first a review/reflection/report of a concert (approximately 1000 words), the second a piece that elaborates on one of the themes of our class (approximately 1500 words)

Paper due dates

Paper 1: Friday, March 11, by midnight

Paper 2: Friday, May 13, by midnight

Presentation

To be given in class on a mutually coordinated date, no later than Tuesday, May 3.

Grade Breakdown

1. On-time responses to weekly questions: 20%
2. Active class participation: 20%
3. Oral presentation: 20%
4. Two papers: 40%

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. If a legitimate extension is needed, students must make a request no later than 3 days before the due date, barring special circumstances. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a

failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Schedule

Spring classes start on Monday, January 31 and run until Friday, May 20 with spring break planned from April 11 – April 18. Completion week is from May 16 through May 20.

Students are required to be on campus during completion week.

Please note that our schedule may change due to additional off-campus opportunities and/or unforeseen changes. Maximum notice will always be given to the extent possible. It is your responsibility to pay attention and stay informed.

Week 1, Tuesday, Feb. 1

Introductions. Each student should come to class with a proposal (and an alternative) for their oral presentation. We will set up dates for the presentations.

Week 2, Tuesday, Feb. 8

Guest: Tim Summers, violinist, Mahler Chamber Orchestra

Subject: Classical Music- Mixed Reality

Saturday, Feb. 12, 19:00-21:30

Performance visit

GOURZI, MÖNKEMEYER & YOUN: WHISPERS

Pierre Boulez Saal, Französische Straße

We will meet at Boulez Saal at 18:30 sharp

Proof of 2g+ test or booster + FFP2 mask required

Week 3, Tuesday, Feb. 15

Guest: Alexander Polzin, sculptor

Subject: From Stone to Stage

Week 4, Tuesday, Feb. 22

Guest: Netta Weiser, choreographer

Subject: Radio Choreography

Sunday, Feb. 27, 18:00-21:00

Performance visit

Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin at Komische Oper Berlin, Behrenstraße 55-57

We will meet at Komische Oper at 17:30 sharp.

Proof of 2g+ test or booster + FFP2 mask required

Week 5, Tuesday, March 1

Guest: Amihai Grosz, 1st Principal Viola, Berliner Philharmoniker

Subject: Life in the Berliner Philharmoniker

[Week 6, March 8](#)

[Federal Holiday: No class](#)

Week 7, Tuesday, March 15

Guest: Roi Amotz, flutist

Subject: Food, Music, Senses

AND

Tuesday, March 15, 20:00-22:30

Performance visit

Antje Weithaas with members of Berliner Philharmoniker Akademie

Philharmonie-Berlin Kammermusiksaal, Herbert-von-Karajan Straße 1

Week 8, Tuesday, March 22

Guest: Frederieke Brillembourg, mezzo-soprano

Subject: The World of Opera

Week 9, Tuesday, March 29

Guest: Misagh Joolaei, kamancheh

Subject: Persian Classical Music

Week 10, Tuesday, April 5

Subject: An Historic Moment, Nov. 1989

[Week 11 Spring Break April 11-18](#)

Week 12, Tuesday, April 19

Guest: Christopher Gibbs, James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College

Subject: The Past, Present, and Future of Berlin Concert Life

Week 13, Tuesday, April 26

Guest: Tomoki Park, pianist

Subject: Peter Serkin and his Legacy

Week 14, Tuesday, May 3

Remaining student presentations and TBA

TBC

Week 15, Thursday, May 12, 20:00-22:00

Performance visit

Bach Mass in B minor

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs, RIAS Kammerchor Berlin

Konzerthaus Berlin, Gendarmenmarkt

Every effort is being made to arrange concert attendance for lowest possible cost. Most tickets for concert visits will be purchased through the college, though some tickets may need to be purchased directly by each student at their own expense. Total costs should not exceed 25 Euros per student per semester.