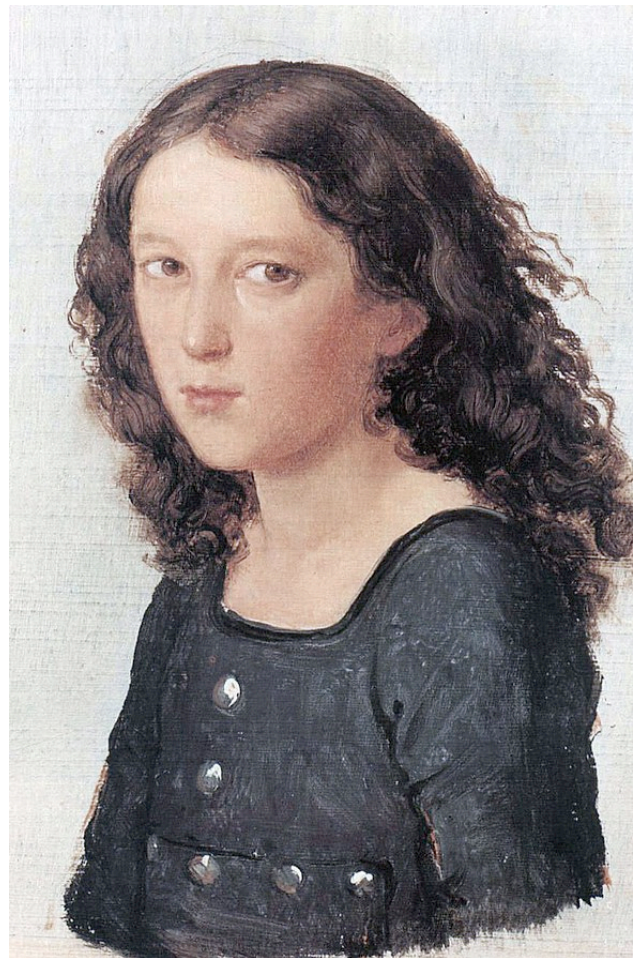


MU171 Spring 2022

Berlin: City of Music

~ A History of Western Classical Music Made in the Hauptstadt ~



Mondays 15:45-19:00
Lecture Hall
Seminar Leader: Paul Festa
Email: p.festa@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

For more than three centuries, Berlin and its environs have nurtured a steady output of musical genius so influential that a reasonably thorough perspective on the history of Western classical music can be gleaned from it with only a few *Ausflüge* (excursions) to parts south. This course will start from the earliest origins of European music in church plainchant and its basis in the physics of sound, then swiftly pivot to the monumental contribution of JS Bach, his sons' role in the transition to the Classical period dominated Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven who in turn opened the door to musical Romanticism; the triumphs and tribulations of Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn (pictured above); the agon between revolution and tradition in the post-Wagnerian world of Ferruccio Busoni and Richard Strauss; the role of classical music and cabaret in the Weimar era and Nazi regime, and up through the contemporary composers from around the world who call Berlin home today. No prior musical knowledge required.

Attendance and preparation

- The class meets in person, as of this writing, and a combination of common sense, good will, open communication, and flexibility will help us navigate exceptions. Obviously don't come to class if you feel at all ill. If you are well enough to join us virtually, Zoom in. If not, take the absence—ways to make it up are described below.
- Two 90-minute absences, no penalty. Each additional absence, 0.3 is deducted from the semester course grade unless excused by leave of absence from the registrar or made up as described below.
- You may make up as many as three unexcused 90-minute absences in one of two ways:
 - By giving a ten-minute presentation at your subsequent appearance that covers the assigned material of the missed class. The presentation should cover the basics of the material along with your own take on it, and you'll answer questions from the group. This process is designed to help everyone: review is the ally of retention.
 - By attending a concert in some way related to the syllabus, or (with permission from instructor Benjamin Hochman) a session of the Tuesday section of MU171, and presenting a review, approximately 10 minutes, of your experience. This second extra-credit option is available to anyone regardless of attendance (i.e./e.g. a student with no penalized absences and a 3.4 [B+] at the end of the term would potentially get a 3.7 [A-]. Everyone is strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.
 - Credit is awarded on a scale of 0.0 – 0.3, depending on the presentation.
- Eight and a half 90-minute absences—excused, due to illness or death, made-up, or otherwise—amount to more than 30 percent of the course, and Bard does not award credit. Consult the student handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.
- These policies apply equally to sessions missed during the add-drop period.
- Lateness is billed in 30-minute increments (so 5 min. late = 1/3 attendance).
- Phones powered off or, if we're using them, in airplane mode.

Policy on Late Submission of Coursework

Submissions up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept submissions that are more than 24 hours late. Weekly responses, due Sunday at 11:59, are meant to be shared with the group and as such can't be accepted after the section meets. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late submission, 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 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 work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss class participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

The coursework consists of weekly responses of approximately 300 words to the music and reading (25 percent of the grade), a creative project, probably a film, about a contemporary composer in Berlin (35 percent), and an oral final exam identifying music studied over the course of the semester (25 percent). The remaining 15 percent is determined by your contribution to *l'esprit de corps* (more commonly referred to as class participation).

Schedule

WEEK 1: January 31

Musical basics and ancient history

The overtone series through Johann Crüger

- Begin researching local—living—composers for your project, which is probably a film.

WEEK 2: February 7

JS Bach in Brandenburg, Leipzig, and the Beyond

Cantatas, Brandenburg Concertos, Art of the Fugue

- Narrow your search to no more than three composer and file them.

WEEK 3: February 14

A Lutheran in Calvinist Köthen

Bach's suites and sonatas for solo strings

- Choose your composer, secure the composer's participation.
- File a preliminary description of the project with a production schedule.

WEEK 4: February 21

Against Bach

His sons and heirs en route to the Classical period: WF & CPE Bach, Mozart & Haydn

- Research your composer and file 100 – 200 words on what you've learned.
- In-class interview practicum.

WEEK 5: February 28

Ausflug to Vienna

Beethoven en route to Romanticism

- Begin shooting (interviews, rehearsals, concerts, b-roll—nothing to file).

WEEK 6: March 7

Meyerbeer and the Mendelssohns

The Bach revival, musical conservatism, misogyny, antisemitism, and a sprawling dynasty of artistic geniuses, eccentrics, and capitalists

- Keep shooting (interviews, rehearsals, concerts, b-roll—nothing to file).

WEEK 7: March 14

Hungarian Dance

Joseph Joachim, Brahms, the Schumanns, Bruch, and an African-American in 19th-century Berlin

- Keep shooting (interviews, rehearsals, concerts, b-roll—nothing to file).

WEEK 8: March 21

Ausflug to Bayreuth

Richard Wagner and Wagnerism

- File rushes (Group A)

WEEK 9: March 28

Berlin cabaret and the avant-garde

Kurt Weill, Pierrot Lunaire, Edgar Varèse

- File rushes (Group B)

WEEK 10: April 4

Wagner's heir and Hitler's recalcitrant pawn

Richard Strauss

- File rushes (Group C)

*****FALL BREAK: April 11*****

Listen to techno or something

WEEK 11: April 18

FEDERAL HOLIDAY—CLASS DOES NOT MEET

Frohes Ostermontag to those who celebrate!

WEEK 12: April 25

Doctor Faustus

Arnold Schönberg

- File rough cuts (Groups A & B)

WEEK 13: May 2

Doktor Faustus

Ferruccio Busoni

- File rough cuts (Groups B & C)

WEEK 14: May 9

The here and now

Composers working in Berlin today

- The MU171 Film (etc.?) Festival: FINAL CUTS

COMPLETION WEEK: May 16

Oral exam

In which we review notable passages from pieces we've listened to and identify composer, work, and points of historical and musical interest, influence, and relevance.