

הפקולטה לאמנויות ע"ש יולנדה כץ, ביה"ס למוזיקה ע"ש בוכמן-מהטה
Faculty of the Arts, the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music

***"In search of a home":
Expressions of loneliness in 19th and 20th-century music and literature
Seminar – First semester 2014-15***

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Course description

This course will explore artworks created in Europe in the cultural atmosphere after the Enlightenment. Its focus will be on one particular problem: the sense of homelessness, of alienation from society. Alienation is usually associated with 20th-century art but it permeates also Romanticism. The course is structured around a central piece: Felix Mendelssohn's *Symphony in a-minor No. 3, Op. 56 "Scottish"*. This piece is extremely rich in its symbolism and associations, and therefore it will be analyzed in full and serve as the framework for the course. Around this work and provoked by this work, the course will discuss a variety of literary and musical pieces with extension to (1) social history (e.g. "Wagner versus Mendelssohn" debate), (2) folk music (traditional Ashkenazi folk song), (3) Romantic literature (e.g. Wackenroder), (4) 20th-century literature (Paul Celan) and (5) 20th-century music (György Ligeti).

Brief overview of unit-topics

- I. The narrative of homelessness: Felix Mendelssohn's *Symphony in a-minor No. 3, Op. 56 "Scottish"* (1842) with extension to literature (weeks 1-4)
- II. The context: anti-Semitism, traditional Jewish music and the concept of religion and art in Romantic music and literature (weeks 5-7)
- III. Extension to twentieth-century literature and music: Paul Celan and György Ligeti (weeks 8-11)
- IV. Discussion of independent projects (week 12)

V. Conclusion (week 13)

Grading

Preparation, participation and class presentations (40%), independent research (60 %)

- (1) preparation for the classes
 - a. bringing to class the musical score and/or the text assigned
 - b. reading, listening to, and analyzing the work assigned for the class according to directions
- (2) participation in class discussion
- (3) preparation for independent meetings/exams
- (4) independent research
- (5) written project = final work.

All students are required to have their own personal copy of the works studied in this class and must come to the class with the section of the assigned pieces prepared according to schedule!

Missing a class: the student is responsible to record the class and prepare its material for the exam.

No late arrival!

Grades:

Above 92: present in every class, no late arrival for any class, prepared the scores/materials for all classes, prepared for independent meetings/exam/project discussions, demonstration of the knowledge of the material, originality and depth in independent research.

80-91: missing 1 class, 1 late arrival, prepared the scores/materials for all classes, prepared for independent meetings/exam/project discussions, minor lacunae in the knowledge and comprehension of the material, less originality and depth in research.

70-79: missing 2 classes, 1 late arrival, prepared the scores/materials for all classes, prepared for independent meetings/exam/project discussions, considerable problems with the knowledge and comprehension of the material, little originality/depth in research.

60-69: missing 3 classes, 1 late arrival, prepared the scores/materials for all classes, less than 2 independent meetings/exam each semester, insufficient knowledge of the material, no originality/depth in research.

Syllabus with topics

I. The narrative of homelessness: Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony in a-minor No. 3, Op. 56 "Scottish" (1842)

Weeks 1-2: Musical structure as story and poetry and metaphor

Analysis: Mendelssohn's *Symphony in a-minor, First movement*.

The focus of this and similar units marked as "analysis" is on the analysis of the music.

Contextual topics to be discussed:

- Musical and literary narrative
- Classical form: its possibilities and disintegration in the Romantic era
- Style games, references, quotation (Baroque, imaginary past, irony, kitsch)
- Classicism and enlightenment as home
- Narratives of homelessness
- Emotional journey and performance
- Dream structures in music and literature
- Metaphor of sea, darkness, storm and the cave
- Writing workshop
- Thematic connections with Wagner's *Ring*
- The first theme in Mendelssohn's other compositions and their metaphoric meaning (*Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, choral works, etc.)

Week 3: Theater, magic, mask, legends and miracle – music and literature

Analysis: Mendelssohn's *Symphony in a-minor, Second movement* and sections from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Contextual topics:

- Mendelssohn and theater
- Theater and stage characters in Romanticism and Romantic music
- The "Scottish", the "Italian", the wanderer, and other roles and masks
- William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's dream* and German literature

- Mendelssohn's *Overture in E major, Op. 21, for A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1826)
- The Night as the space and time of metamorphosis with extension to the 20th century

Week 4: The home and the memory and death and past

Analysis: Mendelssohn's *Symphony in a-minor, Third movement*

Contextual topics:

- The concept of home in Romanticism
- Death, funeral, and memory
- The expression of time and space in music:
the memory and the present, the here and the faraway
- The composer's games and tricks: what is "real" and what is a game (see also theater)
- Expressions of tragedy: the home as tragedy

II. The context: anti-Semitism, traditional Jewish music and the concept of religion and art in Romantic music and literature

Week 5/a: Felix Mendelssohn

How typical is the narrative of the Scottish symphony in Mendelssohn's oeuvre as a whole? Brief discussion of Mendelssohn's life, conversion and brief analyses of sections of selected compositions in connection with their texts (where relevant):

- *String Quartet No. 1, E flat major, Op. 12* (1829)
- *Symphony No. 4, in A major, op. 90, "Italian"* (1833/1834/1851)
- *Elijah, Op. 70, oratorio* (1846)
- *Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64* (1838-1844)

Week 5/b: Wagner and Mendelssohn

- Wagner on the Jews and German Romantic Anti-Semitism
- Wagner's text and music for the Ring
- the Wagner-Mendelssohn debate
- "how Jewish is Mendelssohn (or any work of music and literature)?"

Week 6: Song and homelessness in traditional Ashkenazi Jewish song:

- The concept of song as prayer

- “Homelessness” in Hassidic writings and in the writings of the Mendelssohns
- Song types and song-compositions
- Song-workshop

Week 7: The concept of religion and spirituality in Romanticism:

Week 7/a: Mendelssohn’s sacred music – interplay of text, music and philosophy
Guest lecturer: Efrat Frommer

Week 7/b: Music as religion: discussion of Wackenroder, W. H, “The Remarkable Musical Life of the Musician Joseph Berglinger”

III. Extension to the twentieth century: literature and music

Week 8-9: “Where strangeness is set free...” – the poetry of Paul Celan

Analysis of selected poems

Topics:

- Correlation between expression and language: writing against one native tongue
- The symbolism of de-contextualized words
- The problem of translation
- The music of poetry: Celan’s reading of his poems
- Celan’s writing about his aesthetics

Week 10-11: Ligeti’s – the control, the collapse, the explosion and the “fair”

Analysis of selected sections from:

- *Etudes pour piano* – premier livre (1985)
- *Requiem* für Sopran, Mezzosopran, zwei gemischte Chöre und Orchester (1975)

Topics:

- Concepts of “frozen emotions”, “spider web”, “emotion under the glass lid”
- The “fair” as metaphor
- The Last Judgment as “comic strip”
- The art of suppression versus parody
- Structure and expression
- Broken machines

- Aliens and us (film music)

→ **WEEK 12: PROJECT DISCUSSIONS**

IV. Conclusion: Mendelssohn's Symphony in a-minor – its final message

Week 13-14: Au lieu "home": the problem of ending in Romantic and modern music

Analysis: Mendelssohn's *Symphony in a-minor, Fourth movement*

Topics:

- Contemporary criticism of the ending of the symphony
- The problem of ending in Romantic music and literature
- Beethoven's "Ninth" – humanistic message or failure?
- The problem of ending in the works of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Bartók
- Mendelssohn and Schubert

Bibliography according to topics

I. Felix Mendelssohn

Musical score – printed sources:

Symphony in a minor, No. 3, Op. 56 "Scottish" (1842) in *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdys Werke – Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Julius Rietz. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1874-77, Serie 1: Symphonien für Orchester ("Old Mendelssohn Critical Edition"). Reprinted in *Dover Music Scores*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975.

Musical score – Internet sources (both sources seem to be scans of the first edition by Breitkopf and Härtel, 1842):

(a) [http://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.3,_Op.56_\(Mendelssohn,_Felix\)#Full_Scores](http://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.3,_Op.56_(Mendelssohn,_Felix)#Full_Scores)

(b) http://imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/e/e8/IMSLP13099-Mendelssohn-Symphony_No.3_I.pdf

Some sound recordings:

The New York Philharmonic, cond. Leopold Stokowski (October 26, 1947)
Reissued in *The New York Philharmonic Historic Broadcasts 1923-1987* NYP 9705

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; Vladimir Ashkenazy

Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Sir Georg Solti

Wiener Philharmoniker; Christoph von Dohnanyi

Required readings:

Botstein, Leon. "The Aesthetic of Assimilation and Affirmation: reconstructing the Career of Felix Mendelssohn" in R. Larry Todd, ed., *Mendelssohn and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 5-42.

Mercer-Taylor, Peter. "Mendelssohn's 'Scottish' Symphony and the Music of German Memory." *19CM*. 19 (1995): 68-82.

Suggested readings:

General:

Felix Mendelssohn in the *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Todd, R. Larry. *Mendelssohn – A Life in Music*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003

About the character of Mendelssohn's personality and music:

Botstein, Leon. 'Songs without Words: Thoughts on Music, Theology, and the Role of the Jewish Question in the Work of Felix Mendelssohn', *MQ*, lxxvii (1993), 561–78.

Allerton-North, Mary. *Mendelssohn – The Caged Spirit. A New Approach to the Composer and His Family*. Kent, UK: Prestige Press, 2008

Werner, Eric. *Mendelssohn: a New Image of the Composer and his Age* (New York, 1963; enlarged 2/1980)

(The Musical Quarterly published a discussion about the issue of Mendelssohn's "Jewishness" by Botstein, Steinberg, Sposato and others in the issues of 1998-99.)

About "program", visual imagination, and Romantic aesthetics in Mendelssohn's music:

Grey, Thomas. "Tableaux vivants: Landscape History Painting, and the Visual Imagination in Mendelssohn's Orchestral Music," *19CM* XXI/1 (Summer 1997), 38-76.

Todd, Larry. "Mendelssohn's Ossianic Manner." *Mendelssohn and Schumann: Essays on Their Music and Its Context*. Ed. Jon W. Finson and R. Larry Todd. Durham: Duke UP, 1984.

---. "'Of Sea Gulls and Counterpoint'": the Early Versions of Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*', *19CM*, ii (1978–9), 197–213

For the source study of *Symphony No. 3 "Scottish"*:

Seaton, Douglass. "A Draft of the Exposition of the First Movement of Mendelssohn's 'Scotch' Symphony." *JAMS* 30 (1997): 129-135.

II. Contextual topics – required readings:

Wagner and Mendelssohn:

Ruth Ha-Cohen, "Between Noise and Harmony: The Oratorical Moment in the Musical Entanglements of Jews and Christians." *Critical Inquiry* 32 (Winter 2006): 250-277

Irada Atir, "Jews and Germans in Wagner operas" Ph.D. dissertation, Bar Ilan University, 2014 (in Hebrew – selected sections)

Romantic conception of art:

Wackenroder, W. H, "The Remarkable Musical Life of the Musician Joseph Berglinger," in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity through the Modern Era* (New York: Norton, 1950), 750-963.

Song in traditional Ashkenazi Jewish culture

Frigyesi, Judit. "The finger-telescope's story" from *Silence Behind the Words* (unpublished English translation)

III. Extension to twentieth-century literature and music

Paul Celan: TBA

György Ligeti

Musical scores:

Etudes pour piano, Mainz: Schott, c1986 – premier livre (1985)

Lux aeterna – für sechzehnstimmigen gemischten Chor a cappella (for sixteen-part mixed choir a cappella), Frankfurt : H. Litolff's Verlag/C.F. Peters, c1996.

Requiem für Sopran, Mezzosopran, zwei gemischte Chöre und Orchester, Klavierauszug von Zsigmond Szathmary, Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, c1975.

Sound recordings:

A cappella choral works – Complete edition

Complete piano music with Frederik Ullen

Requiem, Mainz: Wergo p1985, Wer 60045-50

Required readings:

György Ligeti in Conversation with Péter Várnai, Josef Hausler, Claude Samuel and himself (London: Eulenburg, 1983)

Suggested readings:

Griffiths, Paul. *György Ligeti* (London: Robson, 1983)

Lobanova, Marina. *György Ligeti: style, ideas, poetics* (translated from the Russian by Marc Shuttleworth) (Berlin: Kuhn, 2002)

Michel, Pierre. *György Ligeti* (Paris: Minerve, 1995)

Richard, Robert. *György Ligeti: a bio-bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990)

Steinitz, Richard: *György Ligeti: music of the imagination* (Boston: Northeastern University press, 2003)

Burde, Wolfgang. *György Ligeti: Eine Monographie* (Zurich: Atalantis Nusikbuch, 1993)