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Office Hours: TBA (Please ALWAYS make an appointment – a variety of times are definitely available!)

MUSIC 110 HONORS Fall, 2009

OBJECTIVES

- The students will be able to listen to a variety of styles of music with some degree of musical and intellectual understanding of those styles. (Emphasis will be placed on vocal music and sonata/symphony compositions this semester.)
- The students will understand some of the factors that lead to a successful and expressive musical performance.
- The students will establish and accomplish personal objectives relating to doing things with and about music that are meaningful for them.

CLASS ACTIVITIES/REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend class (maximum of two unexcused absences), listen to lots of music, talk about it.
2. Attend a minimum of SIX (6) formal, on-campus recitals/concerts.
3. Make a very brief presentation (about five minutes) regarding music that you listen to and enjoy that includes a short explanation relative to what about THE MUSIC is important to you.
4. Complete out-of-class reading, writing, and/or listening assignments and accomplish to the fullest extent possible personal objectives set out at the beginning of the semester.

NOTE: *Any student who has a disability and is in need of classroom accommodations, please contact Dr. Young and the Services for Students with Disabilities Office in Old Library 2136 at the beginning of the semester.*

Our time together this semester will address the following of the Baccalaureate Goals:

An understanding of a liberal education

An appreciation of the university as a learning environment

Ability to inquire, think, analyze (although maybe in a less than traditional way!)

Ability to write, read, speak, listen

An historical consciousness

An appreciation of the arts

An understanding of values

GRADING

Your grade for this course will be determined by you at one of our early class meetings. The only way that you can be responsible for altering your pre-determined grade would be a clearly demonstrated lack of “good faith” effort to complete the class activities as outlined above. This is the eleventh semester that I have taken this approach to grading, and it has been a tremendous success – and NOT because everyone (for the most part) just gets the grade that they want. The educational philosophy behind this approach has been embraced by the students, and a lot of extremely effective learning has taken place in a way that I have never previously experienced. It should be immediately obvious that it’s my hope that as a class we can become more focused on learning how to listen to music and enjoying that process and less on “grade to be earned” tension. Until something happens to negate the effectiveness and excitement we’ve been able to generate with this approach, I have every intention of continuing this practice into the future. I very much enjoy experimenting with approaches to teaching and grading with this course, and this aspect is now beyond experimentation as far as I’m concerned.

READING/DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS, GENERAL ASSIGNMENTS

An on-going project: there’s always an incredibly diverse range of musical knowledge and non-knowledge in the population of this class every semester – which has great potential to make things even more fun and interesting. It REALLY inhibits discussion, though, for less than good reasons. Some “better informed” folks are worried about being perceived as “show-offs” and the “less informed” are worried about asking dumb questions – this shouldn’t happen in an honors class. We’re (once again) tackling this relative to the assigned readings. There is an assigned reading list with a time line, and we will take a few minutes each week to discuss some aspect of the reading and the music it references. We have tried a couple of different approaches the past three semesters based on student suggestions with improvement each time, but it’s not good yet. We’re going to try something TOTALLY new this semester... First, the purpose of the reading/listening is to give you some historical/musical context to use as an educated person. In a one-semester course, we can only hope for “broad strokes,” and that’s the idea. The details of what we’ll be doing and how are in the “course plan” document. Please give this your best effort and let me know (very frankly) what you think at semester’s end.

NONE of the assignments as outlined in the course plan (see separate document) that we undertake will be, taken alone, exhaustive. I expect that the assignments we pursue will give me a clear indication of your understanding of the subject matter. Hopefully, in fact, these assignments (including the reading/listening) will all be a break from daily work in other classes and quite enjoyable. I will expect you to complete all assignments in a timely manner (which we will define together).

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RECITAL ATTENDANCE

With regard to recital attendance, there is a variety of things available right here on campus at a fairly reasonable number of times. I'll provide you with a calendar each month that details what's happening when, where, and cost (if any). Most recitals and concerts are free and take place in either Phillips Recital Hall or Gantner Concert Hall here in the Fine Arts Building. Some Artist Series events take place in Schofield Hall. Some concerts are free or a couple of dollars with your ID. Artist Series events are a bit more expensive, but prices are reduced with your ID - and they are well worth the cost. Music events (*not theatre events*) on your calendar are "punched" events.

You will be given a recital card to take with you to on-campus recitals, and to receive attendance credit for this class, you must have the card punched **BEFORE and AFTER** each recital you attend. If you attend an approved off-campus concert, keep your ticket stub or program, bring it to class, and have me initial your recital card **within one week** of the event. This makes life easier for me at semester's end. All recital cards are due at the same time as your final assignment, although earlier is fine, too. If your card isn't turned in or if you do not complete the recital attendance requirement, **your grade will be lowered one letter** from your pre-determined grade. For each recital you attend, select one piece that you thought was particularly good or well performed and find out a little more about that piece and its composer. If it's POSSIBLE to find one in the library or on the Internet, hear a recorded performance of that piece. (Sometimes this just isn't possible - don't worry about it when it's not realistic. Sometimes you'll like a piece that's brand new or for some other reason has never been recorded.) Write a short reflection on the piece - why you happened to like it, how it complemented the recital, any particularly interesting things you were able to find out about it, how it might relate to something we've done in class (if applicable), etc. **IMPORTANT: Do this within a week of the day you attend any given recital.** I'm not one to specify a "number of pages" or such for something like this - if you need to think that way, a page might well be sufficient, but if you find something that you need to "converse" about more, don't restrict yourself to that. You can turn these reflections in via e-mail or hard copy, but **DO complete them within ONE WEEK of attending a recital.** I will respond to your comments. This little activity/assignment has been enjoyed by virtually everyone (including the teacher) since we started doing it. It's a way for each one of you and me to get to "converse" about so many issues. I often write more than you do, but it's because it's extremely enjoyable and stimulating for ME to find out what you think and to be able to help you direct and enjoy your listening more.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regarding class attendance, every absence (unexcused) after two will deduct half a grade from your pre-determined final grade. Assuming a final grade of "A" is earned, 3

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unexcused absences would lower the grade to A-, 4 to a B+, etc. I'll pass around a "sign-in" sheet at each class meeting. Without patting myself on the back, I have to tell you that attendance just has never been a problem. It's been years since I had to lower a grade based on non-attendance. DO let me know if you're ill, etc. Either leave a message on my answering machine or send me an e-mail. I do notice, and I do care.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS REGARDING RECITAL ATTENDANCE

- Casual dress is OK at on-campus concerts. You'll be listening to performers dressed in suits, dresses, or tuxedos. Don't embarrass yourself by showing up in cut-offs and a T-shirt, but, on the other hand, you don't have to dress "to the nines" for these concerts.
- Don't carry books or other materials into the concert hall. (Would you believe that some folks have actually taken their iPod into concerts and tried to USE it during a live concert?!?!?) You're going to listen to music in a group setting. Anything that causes a distraction is just plain rude. You'll find that just being aware that someone is reading while the performance is going on is annoying and embarrassing. Be sure your watch alarm is de-activated and your cell phone is turned off, and if a friend is along, be sure that they understand that conversation during the course of a performance is not appropriate. Respect for others and the listening space is the bottom line.
- Don't be punctual. Be early. In the case of concerts, as with so many other things in life (except in France and Belgium), to be on time is to be late. To be early is to be on time. Sometimes, particularly in Phillips, it's hard to get a seat. If you're more than five minutes late, you likely won't be able to get your card punched.
- Don't be a participant in the famous Eau Claire "Standing Evacuations." Wait until the applause has totally ceased after the last piece to leave your seat. Again, it's just plain rude to do otherwise. Unfortunately, I have to promise you that you'll see lots of rude folks, but you don't have to join'em. The punch line is ALWAYS completely gone within five minutes after ANY concert, so don't worry about a delay in getting away.
- DO feel free to speak to performers after concerts. If you look around, you'll usually see a receiving line of some sort. For Gantner concerts, it's usually on the music office hallway entrance (left facing the front of Gantner), and for Phillips concerts, it's usually at the entrance to the hallway leading to the art department or the hallway behind Phillips Recital hall. You won't always feel moved to do so, but if you were particularly excited by a performer's presentation, whether it was a student, faculty member, or guest artist, you really should feel free to let them know. Short answer-type questions are even in order. You should also feel free to TELL the person that you're a music appreciation student. You can't possibly imagine what a lift it is to a performer to know that someone who isn't necessarily an expert musician or music major student really enjoyed what they did.

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“The Plan” (see Course Outline for detailed semester plan)

The coming week:

Please read the following items (you will find these on my web page at:

www.uwec.edu/mus-the/Faculty/FacPgs/YoungJerry.htm)

- a) the excerpts from *I Like What I Know* by Vincent Price.
- b) *The Happy Medium*
- c) Fill out the general survey provided to you and return it to me on Tuesday, the 8th

Works/Genres we will probably listen to, learn from, and discuss this semester:

- The Art Song and Song Cycles: *The Stranger* (Billy Joel), *Die Schöne Müllerin* (Franz Schubert) plus songs and song cycles that you discover and have interest for you.
- Music Drama (opera!): *La Traviata* (Giuseppe Verdi)
- Symphonic music: Symphonies by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Berlioz, Tchaikowsky, Brahms, Prokofiev.

The music drama introduction has been a consistent highlight over the years. We'll have a guest lecturer and view a complete production on class time at the end of the semester. We have also had additional guest lecturers from time to time. If there are other topics that interest you that might call for a guest, let me know, and I'll see what can be done. I am in the process (together with Dr. Vahlbusch) of planning a trip to see a live opera in St. Paul in the spring semester – news as it develops!

For a detailed list of activities/reading and listening responses, etc., see the “Music 110 Course Outline and Assignments” (separate document).

Your Five Minute Presentation: a few guidelines:

- 1) DO try to keep your presentation to about five minutes, including the music that you're playing. I don't use a stopwatch – if it's a minute or so longer, don't sweat it.
- 2) DO share with the class the things that are important about the music TO YOU and why you choose this particular kind of music – that's what has really interested past classes and actually gained “fans” and changed minds.
- 3) DO NOT just say “I like this because it has a good beat.” While you don't have to go into all the technical ins and outs that we'll be discussing in class, try to talk about what you like about the style in general, the piece specifically, and what attracts you to it.
- 4) While it's okay (and maybe important) to talk about the performer a little, make the MUSIC your focus.

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FINAL ASSIGNMENT:

The final assignment for this course will consist of a summary of the semester's experience, which will hopefully serve as a review/reminder of the things that, upon reflection, you valued most from our semester together. This assignment also serves as a reflective guide for me as I work to make this course more meaningful for future classes. This syllabus and the course outline were constructed with a lot of input from students given in this assignment and through personal consultations with students. It's not just a "front." I really rely on you to improve this course, and your honest appraisal and ideas are invaluable to me. It will be due on Tuesday, December 15 between 1:00 and 3:00 (our "final" time).

SOME FINAL NOTES

"Honors" in the most strict application of the term is rather difficult to apply here in the traditional sense that you find in most of the other honors courses you may have experienced. I think of this course as an opportunity for you to explore the experience of listening to and talking about music in the friendly environment of a small class and an opportunity for you to get a lot of interaction. This is a class wherein we deal with learning about emotions and reactions in dealing with an art form while (hopefully) dealing with the art form directly. I hope you know yourself and more about your own personal relationship with music (and maybe other aspects of your life) at the semester's end. In any case, I will be looking forward to YOUR comments and ideas regarding ways the class could be changed/improved as we go through the semester, as well as at the end of the semester. Please feel free to tell me both when you like the way things are going AND when the road is getting rocky (in whatever sense) for you. Your comments and ideas are extremely important to me.

You should also be aware that I am, indeed, an artist/teacher-type person. This means that from time to time I get called away to be a performer and/or master teacher in some far removed place. I promise you that I will do my best to see that if/when such occasions arise you will have some kind of special treat awaiting you in the form of an extra special guest lecturer covering an area we are hearing at the time or some other appropriate activity. Generally, we'll all know about such occasions well in advance. At this point in time, my only absence for such stuff should be October 29 unless an emergency situation with my elderly parents in Arkansas or the need to serve as a substitute performer because of a colleague's emergency would pull me away. (I REALLY don't like to miss class, *regardless* of what I might be doing!!)

Whatever you do as the semester progresses, don't allow yourself to become confused when/if things seem to be going a bit awry in your head or ears. You will learn quickly that I'm far from an ogre of any description. Either let me know in class (somebody else may also be confused), leave me an e-mail note, or see me after class or at the office. I'm VERY anxious for you to learn all you can, for you to accomplish your goals, and for you

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to understand everything that's going on to the fullest extent possible. The single consistent regret that students express at semester's end is that they wished they had taken advantage or *more* advantage of this opportunity. Know that you're truly welcome at my studio to talk about clarifying things from class or just issues about music in general that are of interest to you ANY time I'm free. Have a terrific semester. I'm looking forward to getting to know you. Again you are *always* welcome at my office when I'm not teaching lessons!

A short addendum/clarification...

Although we'll discuss this in class, I thought it best to put something more into print on the topic of concert attendance. I am a consumer and fan of music of all kinds, and at the same time, it's impossible for me to be as "aware" of every musical language or style as I'd like. The latter part of that statement is true for all of us. I make those statements only to reassure you that I'm not some kind of "musical bigot!" Nevertheless, over the years students who have taken this course have gone to lengths to impress upon me the fact that the primary reason they're in this particular class is to get some insight into music that they would not ordinarily hear or with which they are less than well-acquainted. It is with that spirit in mind that I expect concert attendance to be an opportunity (albeit maybe a forced one) for you to attend/experience some things that you might not otherwise just arbitrarily choose, thus, for most students, the need to take advantage of things that are happening here on campus. If you happen to be a person who has **never** attended, for instance, a country-western concert or a live concert by a contemporary rock group or a concert of Native American or Hmong music then maybe you would want to consider one of those options in consultation with me. **NOTE: DO NOT go to a musical event thinking, "Oh, Doc's a great guy, and he'll give me credit for this." You DO need to ask IN ADVANCE.** On the other hand, most people in this class HAVE attended at least some kind of contemporary concert, whether it was Simon and Garfunkel or the Stones in the Cities or Milwaukee, Dave Matthews Band, or maybe Rockfest or Countryfest or even Bon Iver. The bottom line is that you need to plan your recital attendance so that you are expanding your horizons – not just fulfilling a class requirement. Most times, just spending an evening at the Cabin isn't what I have in mind for your "broadening" experience, so there's really little need to ask about Cabin events as a "for credit" recital. **I also won't give credit for attending a high school band concert or musical production back home.** I simply know little about the artistic quality of what's happening in your home town, and what you think is "pretty good" from the perspective of the standard back home and the standard that I want you to experience for this class are often not close to the same. **PLEASE** don't ask to get credit for that sort of thing.

MUSIC PERFORMERS: If you're performing in one of the vocal or instrumental ensembles on campus, I WILL give you concert credit for every performance with those groups *that involves different repertoire*, but I'd still like to get a reflection on each one with your thoughts about the music, the performance, and how the performance experience affected you.