

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Division of Humanities & Social Sciences

Mu 140 – The Great Orchestras: Their History, Conductors and Repertoire

Fall 2018, Tu/Th, 1:00 – 2:25

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Office Hours: T/Th 9-10 am or by appointment

Course website on Moodle (entry key: neenan)

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Welcome to Mu140! I am passionate about orchestral music and symphony orchestras and hope to share that passion with you. I have been a professional conductor for more than 35 years and vividly remember my college orchestra conductor giving me my first opportunity to conduct an orchestra when I was 19. (I was a not-so-great trombone player so maybe he wanted me out of the section). I attend orchestra concerts whenever and wherever I can and love learning about orchestral music, the great orchestras and those who lead and play in them.

Tom Neenan

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Symphony orchestras are among the most cherished cultural institutions in Europe, the Americas, and Asia. Symphonic music is pervasive in our lives but often goes unnoticed unless we intentionally listen for it. When you watch your favorite show on TV or Netflix, go to the movies or sit in a doctor's waiting room, you are more than likely going to hear a symphony orchestra playing in the background. How did the tiny ensemble created 300 years ago to accompany singers and dancers on a stage or liven up friendly outdoor dinner parties in Enlightenment Europe grow into the 110-plus highly-trained and highly-paid professional musicians performing in front of 2,000 people three or four times a week in most major cities around the globe? What, besides money, do the musicians and conductors get out of it, and what prompts members of the audience to pay \$200 or more for a seat to hear them perform?

In this course we will delve into the history of the great orchestras, the music they play, and the occasionally temperamental, erratic and neurotic conductors that lead them. Questions we'll consider include:

- What is an orchestra and what is a conductor?
- How have approaches to *performing* music changed over time, and how has recording technologies and the "star conductor" affected the individuality of orchestras?
- How did musical style evolve over the last couple of centuries, i.e., what makes Beethoven's music sound so different from Rachmaninoff's?
- What is the "meaning" (if any) of music and how do we account for the emotional impact of music on the performer and listener?
- How did composers and conductors from central Europe at the beginning of the 20th century create the "sound" of the classic American film score and how are film composers such as John

Williams (*Star Wars*), Hans Zimmer (*Interstellar*) and Michael Giacchino (*Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom*) influenced by them today?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, we will:

- Develop critical listening skills and a means to express in words what we hear and feel in music
- Expand and deepen our understanding of concert and film music and those who perform in symphony and studio orchestras
- Enhance our ability to perceive and evaluate different musical styles and approaches to performance
- Better understand why we react to music the way we do (cognitively and emotionally), whether performing or listening
- Develop skills in communicating effectively both in writing and verbally in front of a group
- Develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

We will use several modes of evaluation and assessment. The course is designed to allow a degree of flexibility in completing certain assignments; however, assignments directly related to the specific requirements of an advanced humanities course (writing) and giving an in-class presentation are mandatory.

Academic report – 32%

Writing an academic report, “The Classical Film Score from *King Kong* to *Star Wars*,” will help you develop skills in writing and research while learning about interesting topics in orchestral music and composers, film scores and scoring techniques, and studio orchestras. The paper requires you to gather information about the topic, organize it in a coherent fashion, and report on it clearly and concisely – all components of good writing that we will work on together throughout the class. Because the paper is an academic *report* and not an expository *essay*, you will not be asked to do original research, evaluate resources or defend a proposition, all of which require a degree of expertise in music theory and analysis that is outside our purview. Refer to the **Academic Report Guidelines** in the **Writing Projects Folder** on Moodle for more information.

In-class Presentation – 19%

Doing an in-class presentation (PowerPoint or Keynote) helps you develop skills and confidence in creating and giving a presentation in front your peers (and your benevolent prof.) before you inevitably have to do one in front of a potentially more critical audience. Topics range from the technological development of instruments and historical performance practices to the workings of the brain in processing complex music and music and emotions. Students will be assigned a topic (see course calendar) and present either alone or with one other person. Individual presentations should be about 30 minutes. Team presentations should be about 45 minutes. Each team member must participate fully in all aspects of the **Presentation Checklist** components (see Moodle) and the presentation itself.

Topics will be assigned on October 11. Students who wish to team up with a specific person in the class, or who would like to present on a specific topic including one not shown in the course calendar must communicate with Prof. Neenan **by class time** on October 9.

Program notes for an LA Phil concert – 10%

Writing program notes for the scheduled field trip to the LA Philharmonic at Walt Disney Concert Hall (November 3 – see course calendar) helps you develop your writing skills in a specific area while preparing you to hear the music that will be performed at the concert. Like the academic report, the writing of good program notes does not require any previous musical experience or knowledge but does require good research and an attention to writing processes. Program notes are generally written in a less formal, more personal style than an academic report so you will have more flexibility in what you cover and how. See guidelines and sample notes in the Writing Projects folder on Moodle. If a student cannot attend the scheduled concert, it is their responsibility to attend a substitute LA Phil concert (approved in advance by Prof. Neenan).

Weekly responses – 19%

Writing responses (usually 100 – 200 words – open book) to questions related to the weekly readings or listening activities you do on your own is intended to motivate you to do the assigned reading in advance of the class discussion/lecture/presentations and/or to have you think critically about issues covered in class. Responses are done on Moodle and must be completed by **1pm each Tuesday**. Questions are more subjective than objective; excellent responses reflect the student's doing the reading or activity and thoughtfully reflecting on the questions. Grading scheme: 30 points (100% credit) per week for complete and thoughtful responses; 15 points (50% credit) for responses that reflects some thought and reflection but are incomplete or perfunctory; 0 points for responses that reflect a lack of thought and reflection. Feedback will be given the first few weeks but not thereafter unless requested. The course grading scheme is designed so that you do not need to complete all weekly responses or receive full credit on your responses in order to do well in the class.

Class attendance, participation and the Daily Question – 20%

A good deal of class time is spent listening to music or watching performances on video. In order for you to participate in guided listening and viewing activities and for you to learn by sharing your thoughts with others you need to be present. For that reason, attendance is taken very seriously. Come to class and come prepared – you'll get a great deal more out of the class if you do. Class discussion is primed by your completing a Daily Question at the beginning of class where you write down the name of a piece of music you listened to since the previous meeting and comment on what you liked or disliked about it. **Music should be related to the reading or discussion for the given week or the week just gone by.** You receive 15 points for completing the Daily Question, which also serves as an attendance record. Students arriving more than five minutes late may turn in the Daily Question but will receive only 5 points.

COURSE TEXTS

All texts required for weekly reading assignments are available online with the exception of one or two Kindle books available at Sherman Fairchild Library. Links are provided in the course calendar. I have placed a number of books on reserve at SFL which will be helpful in writing your academic report and program notes (see Academic Report Guidelines in the Writing Materials folder on Moodle). In addition to those on reserve, the **New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians** and the **Oxford History of Western Music** are only two of several great print sources, available on **permanent reserve in Dabney Library**.

OTHER MATTERS

Prerequisites

You do not need to be a musician to do well in this course. All are welcome and encouraged to explore the world of orchestral music regardless of previous experience and the course is taught accordingly. Those who are experienced musicians are encouraged to actively participate as they can be very helpful to those with less experience in explaining musical concepts and terminology.

Special needs

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (CASS). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact CASS as soon as possible, since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. <http://cass.caltech.edu/>. Undergraduate students should contact Dr. Lesley Nye, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students (administrative contact: Beth Larranaga) and graduate students should contact Dr. Kate McAnulty, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (administrative contact: Angelica Medina-Cuevas).

Honor Code

"No member of the Caltech community shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the Caltech community." The honor code is an important aspect of life on the Caltech campus. I honor it and expect you to do the same.

Collaboration Policy

You are encouraged to collaborate with others in the class in completing course assignments and activities. However, it is imperative that you review the collaboration policy found on Moodle.

Attendance

Regular Class attendance is required and taken seriously. Students are excused for justifiable reasons, e.g. you are sick, have a job or college interview, are attending a required out-of-town field trip or sports meet etc. Some verification may be requested. If you are going to be absent, send Prof. Neenan an email **before class**.

<u>Number of unexcused absences</u>	<u>Total Points deducted (cumulative)</u>
1	15 (equivalent of one Daily Question)
2	40
3	70
more than 3	automatic fail, no exceptions

Peer review

The Peer review (see course calendar) provides you with the opportunity to get valuable feedback on your academic report prior to turning it in. Any student who is absent from the peer review or does not have a complete and viable copy of their peer review draft on the day of the peer review will be penalized 50 points.

Laptops, Tablets and Cellphones

Your main activity in class will be watching, listening and discussing. You are expected to be engaged in those activities while in class. Studies have shown that when students have laptops or other devices out and open in class, the temptation to web-surf or email is almost irresistible. Therefore, there is a **NO LAPTOP/TABLET/CELLPHONE** policy in this class. If you wish to take notes, please do so on paper.

Please carefully review rules regarding writing assignments:

1. In order to receive credit for an assignment, at least 50% of the total points for that assignment must be earned; otherwise, *no points* will be recorded for the assignment.
2. In the academic report assignment, you must turn in a satisfactory outline, first page draft, first draft and final draft – **in that order** – or you will forfeit all points and fail the course.
3. You must complete, and receive a passing grade on **all** writing assignments in order to pass the class. Writing assignments turned in after the due date are subject to a penalty equivalent to 15% of the points possible on the assignment. Penalties increase by an additional 10% each week thereafter.

Moodle Profile and Syllabus Quiz

Join Mu140 on Moodle and complete your personal profile. Make sure to add a few details about yourself in the description and be sure to include what if any music background you have. Do you play a musical instrument or sing? If so, for how long? Do you play – or have you played – in an orchestra or chamber ensemble? **Take the Syllabus Quiz (required activity) before class on Tuesday, October 9.** You get 3 chances on the quiz. The Syllabus Quiz verifies that that you understand and acknowledge the requirements and grading procedures of this course.

Developing a game plan and understanding course grading scheme

Keep in mind that this is an advanced humanities credit course and requires 4,000 words of composition. In order to fulfill the writing requirement, you **must** satisfactorily complete the academic report and the LA Phil program notes. Be realistic. It is highly unlikely that you will get all the points possible for the assignments. The course is designed so that if you need to skip one or two weekly responses or you need to be absent once or twice, you may do so without doing serious damage to your grade. Stay abreast of your points total on Moodle and the point totals needed for each grade.

	<u>Max Points ea. component</u>	<u>Max. Total Points</u>
Syllabus Quiz		25
Academic report (~ 2500 words)		500
<i>Outline</i>	150	
<i>First Page Draft</i> ¹	50	
<i>First Draft/Peer Review Draft</i>	200	
<i>Final Draft</i>	100	
LA Phil concert program notes (1,000 – 1,500 words)		150
Weekly Reading responses		300
Presentation (see Presentation Guidelines on Moodle for points breakdown)		300
Attendance/Daily Question – 19 total ²	15	<u>285</u>
Total		1,560

Grade scale and rationale

Grades will be based on a Grading Point of 1,482 points, or 95% of the total points possible (1,560)

Grade Scale (based on 1,482 Grading Point)

A	95% or more of Grading Point, i.e. 1,408 points or more
A-	90% - 94% of Grading point
B	80% - 89% of Grading Point (B- = 80% - 83%; B = 84% - 86%; B+ = 87% - 89%)
C	70% - 79% of Grading Point
D	below 70% of Grading Point
F	below 60% of Grading Point

The grade of A+ will not be awarded

Taking this course Pass/Fail

Students may take the course P/F. However, in order to pass, students must do **all of** the following:

1. Complete **all** components of both writing projects with a minimum score of 74% on each
2. Participate in an in-class presentation and receive a passing grade on all components
3. Earn at least a C in the class (74% or more of the Grading Point)
4. Not exceed the maximum number of unexcused absences

¹ The First Page Draft is, in essence, the first page or two of your academic report. It allows me to see a sample of your writing and offer feedback so that if a "course correction" is required you are aware of it early on and with little impact on your overall grade.

² Daily Questions turned in more than 5 minutes after the beginning of class earn 5 points.

COURSE CALENDAR – READING AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS, LECTURE AND PRESENTATION TOPICS

Week 1

- Reading: Carter, Tim and Erik Levi. “The history of the orchestra.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521806589>
- Assignments:
 - Join Moodle (password: Neenan) and complete your profile – tell me a little about yourself
 - **Complete Syllabus Quiz** (on Moodle) by October 9
 - Complete **Week 1 and 2** response questions by 1pm on Tuesday, Week 2
- Lecture Topics: *Overview of principal themes– What is an orchestra? What is a conductor? Precursors of the modern orchestra and modern conductor; Some interesting conductors: Beecham, Strauss, Nikisch, Walter*

Week 2

- Reading: Bowen, José Antonio. “The rise of conducting.” *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*. Ed. José Antonio Bowen. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 91-113. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521821087>
- Assignments: Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
- **Deadline to submit presentation topic and teammate preferences:** Tuesday, October 9. Assignments will be made October 11.
- Lecture Topics: *Introduction to musical meaning and instrumental musical style to c. 1800; Some interesting conductors: Klemperer, Furtwängler, Toscanini*

Week 3

- Reading: Reading: Philip, Robert. “Life before Recordings.” *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 10-28. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.clsproxy.library.caltech.edu/lib/caltech-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4585698&query=>
- Assignments: Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
- Lecture Topics: *Crash course in nineteenth-century musical style; Introduction to the classic Hollywood film score and Wagner’s leitmotiv technique. Stokowski, Reiner, Szell*

Week 4

- Reading:
 - Philip, Robert. “Questions of Authority: The Archeological Approach.” *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 184-206 (you need only read through p. 200). <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.clsproxy.library.caltech.edu/lib/caltech-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4585698&query=>
 - Reading: Taruskin, Richard. “Tradition and Authority.” *Early Music*, Vol. 20, No. 2, *Performing Mozart’s Music III* (May, 1992), pp. 1 – 11. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3127887>
- Assignments:
 - Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
 - **LA PHIL PROGRAM NOTES DUE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 11 PM**
- Lecture Topics: *Comparing recordings of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven; Focus on Leonard Bernstein*
- Presentation Topics:
 - Issues for performers of 18th century music (1)³
 - The arguments for and against “authentic” performance practices (1)

³ (1) indicates presentation by one person

Week 5

- Reading:
 - Ross, Alex. "The Anti-Maestro: Esa-Pekka Salonen at the Los Angeles Philharmonic," *The Rest is Noise*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007. Kindle book, available at SFL.
 - Hawthorne, Christopher. "Frank Gehry's Disney Hall." *Slate* October 20, 2003. http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/architecture/2003/10/epic_architecture.html
- Assignments:
 - Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
 - **LA PHILHARMONIC CONCERT FIELD TRIP SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3. LEAVE CIT 6:45 PM**
- Lecture Topics: *Crash course in 20th century musical style; Historic recordings and what they tell us; Focus on Pierre Boulez*
- Presentation Topics:
 - Development of Woodwind Instruments (1)
 - Development of Brass Instruments (1)

Week 6

- Reading: Tolansky, Jon. "International Case Studies." *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*. Ed. Colin Lawson. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, 126-154. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521806589.008>
- Assignments:
 - Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
 - **ACADEMIC REPORT OUTLINE AND FIRST PAGE DRAFT DUE 11 PM SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11**
- Lecture Topics: *Berlin (Beethoven's Third and Fifth); London (Elgar and Holst); New York (Mahler's First)*
- Presentation Topics:
 - West-Eastern Divan Orchestra – successes and failures (1)
 - Communications between conductors and ensemble musicians (1)

Week 7

- Reading: Bowen, José Antonio and David Mermelstein. "The American Tradition." *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*. Ed. José Antonio Bowen. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 163-177. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521821087.013>
- Assignments: Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
- Lecture Topics: *Historical Perspective on Concert Programing; Focus on Russian Orchestras and Conductors*
- Presentation Topics:
 - Social interaction within music ensembles (1)
 - The "Mozart Effect" – what science tells us twenty-five years later (1)

Week 8

- Reading: Burkholder, J. Peter. "Museum Pieces: The Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years." *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol 2, No. 2 (Spring, 1983). Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/763802>
- Assignments:
 - Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
 - **PEER REVIEW IN CLASS, TUESDAY, WEEK 8**
 - **ACADEMIC REPORT FIRST DRAFT DUE 11PM SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25**
- Lecture Topics: *Focus on French Orchestras and Conductors*
- Presentation Topics: Neurological aspects of Human Cognition and Complexity in Music (1 or 2)

Week 9

- Reading: Reimer, Bennett. "The Experience of Profundity in Music." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol 29, No. 4 (Winter, 1995) Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3333288>
- Assignments: Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
- Lecture Topics: *Philosophical Aspects of Music and Emotions*
- Presentation Topic: Is music a universal language? Music and emotional response in non-western cultures (1 or 2)

Week 10

- Reading:
 - Cattrell, Stephen. "The future of the Orchestra." *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*. Ed. Colin Lawson. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 126-154. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521806589.008>
 - Ross, Alex. "How the L.A. Phil can stay on the top of the Orchestra World." *The New Yorker*, March 23, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/how-the-l-a-phil-can-stay-on-top-of-the-orchestra-world>
- Assignments:
 - Complete response questions by 1pm on Tuesday
 - **ACADEMIC REPORT FINAL DRAFT DUE 11PM FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14**
- Lecture Topics: *tba*
- Presentation Topic: Music and Emotions in Film Music (1)