Music 3754A
The Symphony, 1850-present

Fall 2018
Mondays 10.30am-12.30pm and Wednesdays 10.30am-11.30am in TC202

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Office: Talbot College 229
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-4pm
Course description
This course considers the evolution of the symphony as a genre between 1850 and today, examining particularly significant contributions to the genre in depth as well as musicological scholarship that assesses the issues that these works raise. But we cannot understand the symphonies of the past without also understanding the institution that has allowed listeners to hear them: the orchestra. Many of the world’s symphony orchestras now find themselves in a complicated, economically challenging position: some say the orchestra is dead; others see huge potential for its future. Alongside our examination of the development of the symphony, therefore, we will also consider the past and present state of the symphony orchestra. In considering the symphony orchestra today at the same time as examining the history of the genre that made it so successful, we will get a better sense of what the great symphonies of the last one-and-a-half centuries might still have to offer to twenty-first century audiences.

Objectives
1. Gain a greater understanding of the development of the symphony as an artistic genre between 1850 and today, and the societal issues this music can help us better understand.
2. Gain a greater understanding of the history of the symphony orchestra as a social institution by examining some of the debates about the social function and financial viability of the symphony orchestra during this period, and particularly today.
3. Apply knowledge about the history of the symphony and the orchestra to propose solutions to some of the symphony orchestra’s present day challenges.
4. Develop critical thinking skills and the ability to assess music in intellectual and socio-cultural terms.
5. Improve ability to write and present for a range of audiences.

Readings, Scores and Recordings
A coursepack is available for purchase from the campus Book Store, containing a large selection of our readings. A number of the journal articles could not be included in the coursepack for copyright reasons and are available by clicking on “course readings” on the library homepage and selecting Music 3754A. Those readings that are not in the course pack but are on the library site are marked “course readings site” on the schedule below.

When readings are taken from a book, this book is on 1-day reserve in the library. If you need additional books that turn out to be in high demand to be placed on reserve, please let me know.

Please listen to the works that are to be presented on before class and any additional listening assignments listed here. All scores of these works are on 2-hour reserve, and most of the recordings can be accessed electronically through the “course readings” page.

Evaluation
Attendance and Participation 15%
Orchestra challenges analysis 20%
In-class Presentation 20%
Programming Post 10%
Final project 35%
Assignment summary
1. Analysis of contemporary challenges for the symphony orchestra
1000-1200 words. Write a scholarly essay that discusses one particular challenge facing the 21st-century symphony orchestra, describing 1-2 strategies that specific orchestras have employed to address it. Your essay should use as its source material: 1) scholarly work on the symphony orchestra 2) documents/materials from orchestras that are available on their websites and 3) discussions of such issues in the media (blogs, newspapers etc.). Submit as an MS Word document through the course website by October 7, 5pm.

2. Presentation
Working with one other person, choose from:
a) a 20 minute presentation on a symphony for a Monday class OR
b) leading a 50-minute discussion in a Wednesday class
Further information about each of these options will be circulated, along with a signup sheet, early in the semester, but whichever you choose, you and your partner will need to demonstrate that you have done detailed research on the topic, and then present it in a compelling way. Both the preparation and presentation should be shared equally amongst the two presenters. Please come see Prof. Ansari during her Wednesday office hours during the week before you present to discuss your plans.

3. Programming Post
800-1000 words. Review programming for this season by an orchestra of your choosing. Write an accessible blog post that describes its positive and negative features. This can include hyperlinks to resources, but need not include footnotes or scholarly references. The goal of the post is to demonstrate to an ordinary reader with some classical music knowledge what is effective in a chosen season’s programming, and, if appropriate, it’s limitations. The reader should find themselves thinking about the ingredients of effective symphony orchestra programming. Submit as an MS Word document through the course website by October 28, 5pm.

4. Final Research Paper
2000-2500 words (excluding footnotes/bibliography). Write a musicological paper about some aspect of the history of the symphony between 1850 and today. You could look at a single symphony, an issue raised in our study of symphonies, or a specific composer and his/her approach to the symphony. You are especially encouraged to try to utilize new musicological approaches in your essay, for example, one of those used in our readings. An “A” grade paper will show a detailed consideration of existing literature, but also offer a compelling and original argument of its own. It will also employ both primary and secondary sources. A 1-page proposal for your project should be submitted to Prof. Ansari in hard copy in class on November 5. Include a brief description of your planned argument/claims/research focus, and a preliminary bibliography. The final paper should be submitted as a MS Word document through the course website by Wednesday December 3, 5pm.

Course policies
• Documentation will be required in the case of medical-related absences and delayed submissions of work worth more than 10% of the final grade and should be submitted to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate. University policy on accommodation for medical and mental illness can be found under “Rights and Responsibilities” at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html
• Students that are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

• This course is all about **discussion and participation**: attendance and participation represent 15% of your grade. If you miss classes or are silent in class, this grade will be affected. If you cannot attend class for a degree-related or medical reason, please let me know in advance. Please come to each class having done the reading and listening assignments and having considered the issues and questions listed on this syllabus for the class. Your participation grade will be even higher if you also bring questions and issues of your own to raise in class. Remember that this is a topic with very few right or wrong answers, so don’t be afraid to speak up. The more you have to say, the more stimulating class will be, the more you will learn, and the better you will do.

• How you present your thoughts in presentations and papers represents the major part of your grade. Please take time to craft these assignments so that they have a thesis and a clear, cogent argument. And don’t forget to proof-read. An ‘A’ paper or presentation will contain a clear and thoughtful presentation of your ideas that brings new ideas to existing conversations.

• Please turn off your **cell phone** and **don’t surf** the web during class.

• Unless you have either the **requisites** for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

• **Plagiarism**: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).
SCHEDULE

Monday September 10 – Introductions

Wednesday September 12 – Background: The History of the Symphony Orchestra
Reading:

Monday September 17: The Orchestra as “Museum” and the “Death” of the Symphony Orchestra
Reading:

Wednesday September 19 - Dealing with Beethoven: Brahms
Listening: Brahms Symphony no. 1
Reading:

Monday September 24 - Rejecting the Symphony: the Symphonic Poem
Presentation: Debussy, Prélude à l’après midi d’un faune
Listening: Debussy, Prélude à l’après midi d’un faune, Liszt, Hunnenschlacht and Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo
Reading:
Hugh Macdonald, “Symphonic Poem,” in Grove Music Online. (access Grove through library catalogue)

Wednesday September 26 – Presentation and discussion: The Role of the Orchestra in the Community
Is the orchestra for an elite few, or for everyone? Our presenters will lead a discussion on this issue by examining the impact of an orchestra (from any time and place, 1850-today) that decided to make itself invaluable to many members of its community.

Monday October 1 –The Symphony as Personal Expression: Tchaikovsky
Presentation: Tchaikovsky, Symphony no. 5
Listening: Tchaikovsky, Symphonies no. 4 and 5
Reading:
Wednesday October 3 – Transnational Conversations: Beach
Listening: Amy Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony
Reading:

**Analysis of contemporary challenges for the symphony orchestra due October 7, 5pm.**

Monday October 8 and 10 – NO CLASS: READING WEEK

Monday October 15 – The Symphony as a World: Mahler
Presentation: Mahler, Symphony no. 5
Listening:
Mahler, Symphonies no. 2 and 5
Readings:
Ryan R. Kangas, “Mourning, Remembrance, and Mahler's 'Resurrection'.” *19th-Century Music* 36/1 (Summer 2012), 58-83. ("Course readings" site)

Wednesday October 17 - Presentation and discussion: Financing the symphony orchestra
*Our presenters will help us explore different contemporary models for financing the symphony orchestra, comparing traditional models with more innovative approaches. We will also consider ethical questions raised by spending public funds on symphony orchestras instead of other musical organizations or social projects.*

Monday October 22 – Questioning 19th-Century Norms: Nielsen and Schoenberg
Presentation: Schoenberg, Chamber Symphony no. 1
Listening: Nielsen, Symphony no. 5; Schoenberg, Chamber Symphony no. 1
Reading:

Wednesday October 24 – The Neoclassical Symphony: Stravinsky
Listening: Stravinsky, Symphony in C

**Programming post due October 28, 5pm.**

Monday October 29 – Symphonies and Nation-Building I: the UK
Presentation: Walton, Symphony no. 1
Listening:
Walton, Symphony no. 1
Vaughan Williams, *Sinfonia Antartica*
Readings:


**Wednesday October 31 — Presentation/discussion: Orchestras and Nation-Building Today**

*Our presenters will explore how the symphony orchestra itself functions in relation to the nation today, looking at examples of orchestras that have positioned themselves as helping to build or nurture national unity or undertaken other nation-focused political projects. How do orchestras position themselves in relation to the nations in which they are located?*

**Monday November 5 - Symphonies and Nation-Building II: USA**

Presentation: Harris, Symphony no. 3
Listening:
Harris, Symphony no. 3
Copland, Symphony no. 3
Readings:

**Final project proposal due in class today**

**Wednesday November 7 –Nation-Building and Race: USA**
Listening: William Grant Still, *Afro-American Symphony*
Readings:

**Monday November 12 – Symphonies and Nation-Building III: USSR**
Presentation: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 7
Listening: Shostakovich, Symphonies nos. 5 and 7
Reading:

**Wednesday November 14 – The Postmodern Symphony: Berio**
Listening: Berio, *Sinfonia*
Reading:
Monday November 19 – Challenges to the Symphony
Presentation: Andriessen, *De Staat*
Listening: Andriessen, *De Staat*

Wednesday November 21 – The Minimalist/Post-Minimalist Symphony
Presentation: John Adams, *Scheherazade.2*
Listening: John Adams, *Scheherazade.2*; Glass, The “Low” Symphony

Monday November 26 - Postmodernism with a Message
Presentation: Gorecki, Symphony no.3
Listening: Gorecki, Symphony no.3; Corigliano, Symphony no. 1

Wednesday November 28 - Case studies of Orchestral Innovation
Our presenters will closely examine the goals and achievements of at least two symphony orchestras from the last 100 years who have developed an innovative approach to increasing their audience or better serving their community. Possible case studies might include: the Louisville Orchestra, Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, or the New World Symphony.

Monday December 3 - Making New Social Connections with Symphonies: The Digital Age
Presentation: Dun, Internet Symphony ‘Eroica’
Listening: Dun, Internet Symphony ‘Eroica’ (watch at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w47v5I5g7Q); Cope, *Beethoven Symphony no. 10*

Final research paper due at 5pm.

Wednesday December 5 – Closing Thoughts