CHORAL LITERATURE AND TECHNIQUES 3831 - 2017-2018

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Thursday  1:30 - 3:20
Fridays  9:30 - 10:20
Music Building,  Room 254
Prerequisite: Music 2830, Practicum in Choral Techniques or departmental permission.

Materials:

- an SD video card for the video camera or a cell phone camera to record your conducting for your personal study.

- a folder of choral music for 3831 (obtained from the library)

- relevant books on choral technique will be found in the library.

- a baton

Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to provide conductors with practical experience in advanced conducting and rehearsal techniques for choral ensembles. Topics such as conducting style, score analysis, performance practice in various stylistic eras and genres, instrumental/choral rehearsals, and programming will be addressed.

Procedures:
Class time will be devoted primarily to the development of conducting and rehearsal techniques. Classes will also include lecture sessions.

**Evaluation:**

**I - Attendance, Class Participation and Conducting Assignments  60**

- Attendance 20
- Class Participation 20
- Conducting assignments 1st and 2nd term: 20 (10 and 10)

**II - Written Projects 30**

- II (a) Project A 15 (Brahms) - Due Friday, October 20th, 2017
- II (b) Project B 15 (Program Building) - Due Friday, February 9th, 2018.

**III - Final Performance Assignment 10 - Thursday, March 15th, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. (Works to be chosen for this assignments by Thursday, December 7th, 2017)**

**Total: 100**

**Participation and Attendance:**

Because of the practical nature of this course, **attendance and participation are both required for all classes. Two (2) marks will be deducted for each absence.** Written or verbal explanation of an absence must be received before the class begins, and conducting assignments missed for unacceptable reasons will result in a grade of "zero" for that assignment. Of course, you will want to be an active participant for the continuing progress of your conducting skills. As well, your colleagues rely on you, as much as you do on them, for participation in the conducting assignments.
1 - Conducting Assignments will be scheduled at least a week in advance of your rehearsal time. Each assignment involves preparation and rehearsal of a short choral piece or an excerpt from a larger work. **It is important that you inform the pianist and the professor of your repertoire selection one week prior to your scheduled conducting time** so that the pianist has time to prepare the accompaniment for you. Please give the pianist a copy of your work at the same time - one week before your scheduled conducting time.

**Conducting Assignments: Preparation**

1) **Students must submit a rehearsal plan to the instructor before conducting the rehearsal. Please include the following:**

A photocopy of the music showing:
- a) the simple structure of the musical excerpt or piece and elements of form and structure that are relevant to the rehearsal process;
- b) conducting cues and entries;
- c) markings that assist you with phrasing, articulation, dynamics, breathing, points of emphasis and other stylistic considerations;
- d) markings that assist with clarifying the text (e.g. where to place ending consonants, strong/weak syllables, IPA designations for difficult vowels, etc.);
- e) anticipated challenge areas in the music.

2) **A note to yourself including:**

- a) Brief background information about the composer and the piece;
- b) Objectives for the choir: What would you ideally like the singers to achieve in your rehearsal;
- c) Set the time you are going to give yourself to achieve your goals.

**Conducting Assignment Evaluation** will be based on the following:

1) score preparation

2) in-depth knowledge of the music
3) an effective rehearsal plan
4) effective implementation of your plan in rehearsal
5) appropriate rehearsal techniques
6) effective communication of the music through gesture
7) musicianship and understanding of the score
8) clear instructions and confident leadership

**Dress rehearsal and final class Performance Assignment (10 marks)**

**Thursday, March 15th, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.**

You will have 3 rehearsals and a dress rehearsal to prepare a piece of your choice with the class. (Rehearsals for the Performance Assignment will be graded as conducting assignments.) You should choose a piece and confirm its suitability with the Professor by Thursday, December 7th, 2017, (last class of Term 1), so that it can be included in the folder of music for the 2nd Term. You should choose this work from the Music Library, unless you confirm other available scores and suitability with the Professor.

**II. Written Projects:**

A. **Score analysis (15 marks). Due date: Friday, October 20th, 2017**

**Part I**: Analysis: Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen (How lovely are Thy dwellings) from Brahms’ *Requiem* using the full choral/orchestral score for your analysis found with the following link.


You may find the choral/organ score helpful for an initial reading of the score.

http://www2.cpdl.org/wiki/images/7/7e/Part_4_Brahms_Requiem_English_SATB_piano.pdf
a) Outline sections and subsections (Indicate the number of measures in each grouping.)

b) Identify the main melodic, motivic and rhythmic material in each section.

c) Identify text with a translation - choirs and voices involved - all orchestral instruments and their markings -

d) Show choral breath marks, lifts, and where consonants fall at the end of phrases in the score.

e) Consider the orchestra to be an important part of the analysis.

f) Show broad harmonic outlines (tonal areas).

g) Show all entries you should be cueing - both choral and instrumental.

h) Translate all German markings into English.

Include any other analytical observations that would help you as a conductor understand the structural content and why Brahms was inspired to use the compositional techniques evident in this piece.

**Part II: Rehearsal Preparation:**
Outline the challenges in the music and describe rehearsal strategies to address them.

a) What are the challenges in the pitch content of this piece? (e.g. difficult intervals, finding the pitch in a new entry, harmonic juxtaposition of voices, motives and phrases to be rehearsed, etc.)

b) What are the rhythmic and/or metric difficulties presented by this piece?

c) Show phrase structures that aid in the interpretation of the music.

d) Show text considerations (e.g. where to place consonants at phrase endings, considerations of vowel colouring and pronunciation, etc.)

e) Articulation (e.g. legato, non-legato, accented, etc.) How does the articulation enhance the character of each passage? Are there sections in the score that will require emphasis in rehearsal?
B. Program assignment: (15 marks). Due date: Friday, February 9, 2018.

Part 1
a) Create a 50 minute program of about 10 – 15 selections. You may use the repertoire from the repertoire lists for this course, as well as repertoire of your choosing or a combination of both. Perhaps you wish to choose a theme for this program.

b) Give a brief description of the choir for which you are programming.

c) Give a clear rationale for the overall structure of your program. Then explain how each piece fits into the program contributing to unity and interest.

d) Give a brief description of the pedagogical merits of each piece.

e) Include timings and publishers for each piece on the program.

Part 2
a) Describe the number of rehearsals planned (weekly, bi-weekly, daily), and the duration of each rehearsal.

b) Create a broad rehearsal outline showing how you might proceed from week to week in order to be able to rehearse this repertoire for a concert. (You may find a “table” grid to be useful.) Prioritize the needs of the repertoire according to the difficulty of each piece. Plan more rehearsal time for the difficult pieces than for the easy pieces.

c) Plan each rehearsal estimating how much time to spend on individual pieces and, where appropriate, which sections of the piece you will rehearse on that particular day.

Late written assignments will only be accepted and graded if permission has been granted by the instructor in advance of the deadline.

Please note (university policy)
Prerequisites: Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will 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 Checking:** The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written *work in electronic form for plagiarism checking*.

**UWO Senate statement on plagiarism.**

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 academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

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Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offense, at the following website: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

**SUPPORT SERVICES**

A variety of support services are available at Western.

If you need advice or assistance, do not hesitate to get in touch with any of these services.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Registrarial Services (http://www.registrar.uwo.ca)

WRITING SUPPORT: Student Development Centre (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)

LEARNING SKILLS SUPPORT: Student Development Centre (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Student Development Centre (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS: Student Development Centre (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)

STUDENTS with DISABILITIES: Student Development Centre (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)

SOCIAL & CULTURAL ISSUES: University Students’ Council (http://westernusc/services/).

EMOTIONAL or MENTAL DISTRESS: Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western [http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.