GREAT PIANISTS PAST AND PRESENT (MUS 3496B/9701B)

Professor: Dr. Michael I. Kim  
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Department of Music Performance Studies  
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Office hours by appointment  
Class meeting time and location: Mondays, 9:30 am, TC 100

OBJECTIVES:
1. To gain a broader knowledge and greater familiarity of the great classical pianists and their performance styles and legacies, building on each student’s respective background and level of knowledge.
2. To build a stronger interpretative and analytical perspective and apply that linked perspective towards enhancing one’s performances and interpretations of classical keyboard compositions.
3. To build a critical/analytical perspective that can help define and build a student’s unique interpretative viewpoint as a performer.

Required Texts:
The Art of The Piano                      David Dubal  
The Great Pianists                      Harold C. Schonberg

Suggested Supplemental Texts:
Reflections From The Keyboard                  David Dubal  
Evenings With Horowitz                    David Dubal  
The Ivory Trade                               Joseph Horowitz

Grading:
In-class presentation  20%
Class participation  20%
Listening Log (weekly)  15%
Mid-term paper  15%
Final paper  30%

Attachments to syllabus:
Class synopsis  
Assignments
CLASS SYNOPSIS

January 9  Overview of semester and syllabus
What makes a pianist’s performance truly great?
Musical and technical elements that all great pianists have in common
Digital vs analog
Illustrative performances, in-class discussion
LISTENING LOG: Choose two of your favorite piano recordings. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances memorable (in your view)?

January 16  Vladimir Horowitz: his life and legacy
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose three of Horowitz’s piano recordings that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

January 23  Sviatoslav Richter and Emil Gilels
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Richter and Gilels that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

January 30  Josef Hoffman and Josef Lhevinne
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Hoffman and Lhevinne that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

February 6  Alfred Cortot and Ignaz Friedman
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Cortot and Friedman that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

February 13  William Kapell and Byron Janis
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Kapell and Janis that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

February 20  NO CLASS

February 27  Martha Argerich and Alicia De Larrocha
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Argerich and De Larrocha that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

March 6  Dame Myra Hess, Clara Haskil, and Annie Fisher
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose one piano recording each for Hess, Haskil, and Fisher that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

March 13  Shura Cherkassky and Ivo Pogorelich
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Cherkassky and Pogorelich that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

March 20  Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli and Maurizo Pollini
Performance highlights
In-class discussion and observations
LISTENING LOG: Choose two piano recordings each for Michelangeli and Pollini that have not been heard in class. Considering today’s discussions and observations, what are the musical and technical elements that make these performances compelling (in your view)?

March 27  In-class presentations

April 3  In-class presentations
ASSIGNMENTS

**Listening Log:** you will be asked to keep a listening log for each weekly class. These will be informal, blog-like entries (maximum 2 pages for each weekly blog) in which you be asked to listen to more recording/performances and offer your personal observations on each classical pianist’s performance/interpretative approach. DUE by end of day, April 14, 2023, to my email.

**Mid-term paper:** select one classical pianist that has been covered to date in class. Write a 4-5 paper in which you examine the pianist’s uniquely distinctive technical and musical characteristics through their performances, concert reviews, writings, etc. What makes this pianist unique and special to you? DUE by 1 pm, February 27, to my email.

**In-class presentations:** select one classical pianist that has NOT been covered in our class this semester. Prepare an oral presentation (with supporting PowerPoint slides) which outlines your pianist’s biographical information, stylistic influences, and your favorite performance. Why is this pianist unique and important to you? You are especially encouraged to choose pianists of racialized, black, or indigenous backgrounds (March 27 and April 3, 2023).

**Final paper:** select one classical pianist who you consider the most influential on your musical style and approach (the pianist need not have been covered in class). Write a 7–8-page paper in which you outline why this pianist is important to you, and what specific musical/technical aspects are particularly compelling and inspiring to you. DUE by end of day, April 17, 2023, to my email.

OTHER

**Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work (≥10%):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate policy on
accommodation for medical illness at the following website for further details regarding requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

**Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (i.e. two or fewer assignments) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean’s office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean’s office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

**Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. 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

**Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (https://www.uwo.ca/health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green “I Need Help Now” button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

**Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.
Contingency Plan: Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 restrictions may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.