

Music 9540A: Mozart and the Promise of the Enlightened Stage

Fall 2020
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Office hours by appointment

W 9:30am–12:20pm
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A little ways into the second act of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Sarastro accuses the Queen of the Night of scheming "durch Blendwerk und Aberglauben das Volk zu berücken" (to bewitch the populace through delusion and superstition). A passage like this opens up onto an Enlightenment where areas that scholarship has often regarded as distinct are in fact deeply intertwined: theater and religion; opera and the spoken stage; and, more broadly, ecclesiastical and secular activities and modes of thought. Indeed, Sarastro has, willy-nilly, stated a central contention of reformers of the stage: that a Baroque, ceremonial, visual culture had corroded rather than advanced public piety. That such a concern appears in a stage work itself, and one that is musically ravishing, to boot, simultaneously speaks to a different potency that the Enlightenment discerned in the stage—a sensuous power that could be harnessed toward the cause of virtue, to make the stage, as the refrain went, into a school of morals for a nation.

The purpose of this seminar is to understand more clearly these eighteenth-century dynamics, and to see how they might shape our understanding of the repertory, including the operas of Mozart.

Students from a range of disciplines are welcomed to contribute to the work of the seminar, and musical expertise will not necessarily be a requirement. A (non-exhaustive) list of topics for further exploration includes education in the eighteenth century (in which theater had a big part, especially among the Jesuits); different stage repertories (court v. suburban; Jesuit drama; theater in Spain, France, or Italy, among other places); pertinent theological debates; institutional histories; the influence of Rousseau's anti-theatrical treatise (which generated hundreds of responses); poetic theories (including neo-classicism or the grotesque, as well as allegory); the reception of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century (where myth, history, religion, and farce sometimes collide); and germane political developments.

We will approach this topic through primary sources and some important critical literature. Among the required projects will be a brief paper and presentation on a contemporary theatrical treatise in a language other than English. The other requirements, along with weekly reading and discussion, will be a term paper and a presentation based on that.

This course will take place online but synchronously.

Requirements

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| 1. Presentation and commentary (ca. 1,000 wds)
on contemporary theatrical treatise | 25% |
| 2. Participation | 15% |
| 2. Report on term paper | 15% |
| 3. Term paper | 45% |

The term paper will have the following components: 1) a working thesis and bibliography, due 21 Oct. 2) an in-class oral presentation based on your research; 3) the completed paper, due December 22d.

Tentative Schedule

9 Sept. Introduction. (Please do the reading in advance of class.)

Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" (1784); Friedrich Schiller, "Theater Considered as A Moral Institution" (1784); Horkheimer/Adorno, "The Concept of Enlightenment," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford, 2002), 1–35; Mozart: *Figaro*, third-act sextet; *Don Giovanni*, "O statua gentilissima."

16 Sept. The Austrian Enlightenment

James van Horn Melton, "From Image to Word: Cultural Reform and the Rise of Literate Culture in Eighteenth-Century Austria," *The Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 1 (March 1986): 95–124; R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy* chap. 3, "The Anatomy of Catholic Learning," 311–45; Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement, 1700–1800*, 115–47; Y. E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna*, 1–24; excerpts from Goldoni's *Don Giovanni Tenorio* and Da Ponte's *Don Giovanni*.

23 Sept. Religion, the stage, and Austria's Counter-Reformation legacy

Ernst Wangermann, "'By and By We Shall Have an Enlightened Populace': Moral Optimism and the Fine Arts in Late-Eighteenth-Century Austria," in *The Great Tradition and Its Legacy*, 19–32; Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, translated by Goddard (1984), 109–20; Anton Cremeri, *Eine Bille an Joseph der II.* (1780), translated by Jennifer Bywaters.

30 Sept. The Enlightenment and feminism. Guest symposiarch, Catherine Coppola, Hunter College, CUNY

Readings, listening TBA

7 Oct. Projects on theatrical treatises

14 Oct. Rousseau

Rousseau, *Letter to D'Alembert on the Theater*, translated by Allan Bloom, in *Politics and the Arts*; Jonas Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, chap. 9, "The Case of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," 256–94; David Marshall, "Rousseau and the State of Theater," *Representations* 13 (Winter, 1986): 84–114; Lionel Trilling, "Sincerity: Its Origin and Rise," in *Sincerity and Authenticity*, 1–25.

21 Oct. *Don Giovanni* and the popular stage

Carol Lazzaro-Weis, "Parody and Farce in the Don Juan Myth in the Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 8, no. 3 (May 1983): 35–48; Mladen Dolar, *Opera's Second Death* (London, 2002), 45–58; Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow*, 219–28; Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame*, 19–77. *Don Giovanni*: "Non ti fidar," "Ah chi mi dice mai"; "Ah taci, ingiusto core."

28 Oct. *Don Giovanni* and Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. Swenson (1944), "The Immediate Erotic Stages, or, The Musical-Erotic," pp. 35–110. *Don Giovanni*: "Batti, batti," second-act sextet, "Dalla sua pace," last-act finale.

4 Nov. Reading week.

11. Nov. Two *Figaros*

Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*; Da Ponte, *The Marriage of Figaro*; Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro*, second- and last-act finales

18 Nov. *Figaro* as Allegory?

Wye Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 73–75, 127–36, 185–94; Mladen Dolar, *Opera's Second Death*, 38–45; Jane K. Brown, *The Persistence of Allegory*, 3: "Secular Tragedy," 46–75; David Levin, "Figaro in Translation," in *Unsettling Opera*, 69–98. Mozart, *Figaro*: "Se vuol ballare," "Dove sono."

25 Nov. Presentations or optional session.

2 Dec., Presentations.

Materials

Most readings will be available as electronic media or digitized. I recommend purchasing your own score to *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*; as well, have available a good translation (Auden's of *Don Giovanni* is great, but it's not literal). Below are ISBNs of recommended or longer texts, in case you want to purchase them.

Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, translated by Allan Bloom.

ISBN: 0801490715

Diderot, *The Paradox of the Actor*, translated by Pollock. ISBN 1514652358

Accommodation for Medical Illness: 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 his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor. Students with special learning needs or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered.

Statement on Academic Offences: 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

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Statement on Health and Well-Being: Campus mental health resources may be found at

http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

Online Etiquette: Nuance gets lost in email, so at a minimum please observe basic formalities and use proper spelling and grammar. That said, I want the class to feel free to test out ideas and would rather err on the side of too much liberality than too much censoriousness.