

Gustav Mahler

Basic Texts

Gustav Mahler--Three Dover Scores, Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 / 3 and 4 / 5 and 6 in Full Score.

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IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE.**

ASSIGNED READING

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Very basic. Dahlhaus is probably the most important and influential German music historian of the second half of our century. This reading can help us to get a more Germanic/philosophical view of what is at stake in the problem of trying to "understand" the works of Mahler. (English-language writers on this repertory have been, with few exceptions, scandalously shallow.) Read these excerpts very slowly and do not expect to absorb all of it in one or two sittings. In part, we are trying to slip out of the Anglo-American "mind-set" in dealing with this repertory.

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Topic: Consider the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony (composed in 1901-02, with premiere in 1904) as the product of a given culture at a very specific time and place. In which senses is the second movement of the Fifth a recognizably "modern" symphonic product? Include concepts from the readings and the class analyses. These should include some Adornian concepts, when relevant; concepts from Hobsbawm and Dahlhaus; concepts of form and formal structure; the concept of "early modernism"; and so on. This is not by any means to be a "complete analysis," but it should be a clear, sensible introduction to the movement and its central issues, and it should contain somewhere in it some significant analytical observations.

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Music 5950--Mahler

Assignment: Carl Dahlhaus, Selections from Nineteenth-Century Music:

Pp. 263-68 (Intro. to Ch. 5 and beginning of "The Second Age of the Symphony");

Pp. 330-39 (Intro. to Ch. 6 and the essay, "Modernism as a Period in Music History")

Pp. 360-68 ("Program Music and the Art Work of Ideas")

Reading and understanding Dahlhaus is not easy. To the best of your ability, explain your current understanding of the following terms or phrases in at least three or four sentences; all are key ideas in the thinking of the influential German music historian. Include parenthetical page-number references in the Dahlhaus book where helpful. You may wish to begin by quoting a phrase or two of Dahlhaus, but be sure in each case to restate the point or principle in your own words. Your explanations must be precise, accurate, and, for the most part, **restated in your own words. For class, be prepared to read your explanations, and then to expand on their relevance to the way in which we understand later nineteenth-century music--and ultimately, their relevance to the music of Gustav Mahler. How do these terms relate to the Hobsbawm and Banks/Mitchell readings?**

1870-71 as 'break' in political/music history

The "aesthetic of truth" and its potential relationship to music

The mid-century symphonic crisis + the basic definition of "the second age of the symphony"

What explanations might there be for the resurgence of the symphony in the years around and after 1870?

Thematic/Musical "miniaturism": Why is this a late-century problem?

Explain the sentence, 7 lines up on p. 266, "To put it bluntly"

Explain the two sentences, beginning 8 lines down on p. 268, "Thus in the 'second age'"

The importance of the years 1889-90 in the history of art music.

Define "musical modernism" (synthesize pp. 330-39)

Problems with the term "Late Romanticism"

1890s viewed as a decade of "cultural critique": Nietzsche's and Wagner's role (reception history)?

Rise of "mass musical culture"

Concept: "magnum opus" and its relation to "modernism"

Schoenberg and the "shift of emphasis in the system of genres"

Schopenhauerian notions of how a "program" should relate to instrumental music

“Formal motive” (or “form motive”)

Strauss’s view of a “program,” according to Dahlhaus

“Art Work of Ideas”

Explain the two sentences in the middle of p. 364, beginning, “Mahler’s notion of form. . . .”

Three central categories under which we should analyze Mahler's music (what is the aesthetic and formal function of each)?

1. Formal integration

2. Stylistic discontinuity

3. Unity of "tone"

"Aesthetic subject of the music"