Music 467: Mahler, Modernism, and the Symphony

Senior Seminar, Monday: 1:30-3:20 SML 107: Music-analytical studies of Mahler's Symphonies Nos. 1-3 considered in the context of an emerging European musical "modernism," ca. 1885-1905. (A final paper could involve your own work on Symphony No. 4 or a movement from Nos. 5 or 6 of your choice.) Much of the seminar will involve close readings of selected movements, linked to larger interpretations of program and structure. We shall also sample current and influential discussions of this music—including especially the views of Adorno, Monahan, Franklin, and Knapp.

Required purchases:

Mahler: Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 in Full Score (Dover).

Mahler: Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score (Dover).


Assigned reading will also be drawn from the Selected Bibliography provided on the final pages of this syllabus. Some additional listening will also be expected: see the Seminar Schedule, pp. 3-6.
Seminar Expectations:

- **This is a seminar involving intensive music analysis.** All students in the seminar must keep up with the work and prepare adequately for each upcoming meeting. In practice, this means: attaining a *close familiarity* with all of the music assigned (listening to it several times over several days) and beginning to sketch out potential analyses of these pieces; studying all of the readings relating to that piece; accomplishing any additional assigned listening.

- **Regular attendance in the seminar and active participation in the discussions:** approximately 20% of your final grade. You will sometimes be called upon to provide your assessment of analytical “situations” or moments in these works: keys, thematic zones, structures of broad sections, hermeneutic implications, relationships to earlier moments of Mahler that we have considered (“where have we seen this before?” and so on).

- **“E-mail assignments”:** Brief written assignments to be submitted quasi-informally to the instructor via e-mail before several of the seminar sessions. (The e-mail usually must be in on the morning of the seminar.) These are often short reports (two or three paragraphs, etc.) responding to assigned preparatory work, which will have asked you to confront certain analytical or reading issues before they are addressed in class. Your e-mail may be used as a basis for a question or a discussion during the seminar; come prepared to explain or defend what you have written. The e-mails themselves are ungraded and will usually not be returned to you. Nonetheless, they must consistently attain a level of thoughtfulness and care, and, of course, they must be always submitted on time—before class. With those guidelines in mind, they will constitute 20% of your final grade.

- **PAPER 1 (ESSAY) (approximately 1500-1700 words).** Select a telling extract (not one discussed in the seminar) from Adorno’s book on Mahler that makes a strong critical-interpretive point. Write a considered response to this way of thinking about Mahler (and music). Explicate and evaluate Adorno’s perspective, making sure to interweave your own thoughts with the details of a specific movement or passage not dwelt upon in the seminar. **DUE ON MONDAY, 25 MARCH, AT THE SEMINAR MEETING (TOPIC 9):** approximately 30% of the final seminar grade. (This paper must be completed to pass the course.)

- **PAPER 2:** an analytical-interpretive essay on any movement of the Fourth, Fifth or Sixth Symphonies or on any song not discussed in the seminar (2500-3000 words); **DUE DURING EXAM WEEK; exact date to be determined:** approximately 30% of the final seminar grade. (This paper must also be completed to pass the course.)

**Seminar Procedure:** Normally, each session will be concerned with analyzing and discussing individual movements of the Mahler symphonies: going through these movements phrase-by-phrase with open score (and listening to recordings). Most of this—particularly the close analyses of the orchestral scores—will be presented by the instructor. (Several sessions may consist primarily of this.) As much as is possible and productive, the students will be responsible for engaging in the seminar discussions, questions, and analyses. For each seminar session you must have familiarized yourself thoroughly with the assigned pieces and must be prepared to present or discuss your own analytical understandings of the various sections that will come up for discussion in the seminar.
Seminar Schedule

(Modifications may occur as the semester proceeds.)

The reading and listening for each topic is to be done before the seminar meets for that week.

Reading references are to the Selected Bibliography on the final pages of this syllabus.

Topic 1

Framing Mahler historically. Mahler: Symphony No. 1, first movement, introduction.

Topic 2:

Mahler: Symphony No. 1, first movement—sonata and structure.

- ADDITIONAL LISTENING and first e-mail assignment: Mahler: Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, complete. Once you have heard the whole cycle, focus on No. 2, “Ging heut’ morgen über’s Feld.” (Which portions of this Lied appear “directly” in the Symphony? Where? Map the one onto the other.)

SUBSEQUENT (OFTEN WEEKLY) E-MAIL ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT LISTED FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEKS. THOSE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED ON AN AD HOC BASIS IN CLASS.

Topic 3

Comparison of Adorno and Knapp on Mahler—discussion. (Perhaps preceded by a brief look at aspects of the slow movement.)

- Floros, pp. 36-43 (middle movements of the First Symphony)
- Adorno, Mahler: A Music Physiognomy, pp. 3-17 (“Curtain and Fanfare”), pp. 52, 110-4 (on counterpoint; slow movement mentioned on p. 113), 124 (disintegration in I/3).
- Leppert, Commentary on Adorno’s Mahler, pp. 538-46.
- Darcy, “What Lies Buried under the Linden Tree?” (typescript ms. + typescript handout)—two Darcy files on v2.
Topic 4  
**Mahler: Symphony No. 1, finale: topic, structure, and implication**

- Floros 1993, pp. 43-48.
- Buhler, “‘Breakthrough’ as Critique of Form: The Finale of Mahler’s First Symphony” pp. 125-43
- Knittel, “‘Ein hypermoderner Dirigent’: Mahler and Anti-Semitism in Fin-de-siècle Vienna,” pp. 257-76.
- Kravitt, “Mahler, Victim of the ‘New’ Anti-Semitism,” pp. 72-94. [a response to Knittel]

Topic 5  
**Mahler: Symphony No. 1, finale (concluded). Visit to Beinecke Library to View Mahler Manuscripts.**


Topic 6  
**Mahler: Symphony No. 2, first movement; Program issues.**

- Floros 1993, pp. 50-61 only.
- Heffling 1988 (“Mahler’s ‘Todtenfeier’”), extract, pp. 30-32 only (the initial program).

Topic 7  
**Mahler: Symphony No. 2, first movement (concluded); Scherzo and “Urlicht”; More Adorno on Mahler**

- Floros 1993, pp. 61-67 only.
- Knapp, “Representing Alienation: ‘Absolute Music’ as a Topic,” *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, pp. 71-119. (Note: complete familiarity with this scherzo is crucial for understanding the Second Symphony—especially its finale-to-come, but we will probably not deal at length with it in the seminar: Knapp’s and Darcy’s work—which differ in important respects—provide the analytical and expressive background that you will need to grasp the tone and issues at stake.)
- Darcy, “‘Sie bleiben wie Allen’: Rotational Form and the Thematization of Failure in Mahler’s Fish Sermon.” (Unpublished typescript 2001).
- Adorno 1992, 41-52 (from “Characters,” especially the [famous] new material categories of form, 41-44)
Topic 8  Mahler: Symphony No. 2, finale

- Floros 1993, pp. 67-78.
- Adorno 1992, pp. 83-96 (from “Variant—Form”: especially the concept of themes as gestalten, pp. 87-88, and the important discussion of traditional sonata-form and its categories, 92-96 [here, through the Fifth Symphony]).

Topic 9  Mahler, Symphony No. 3, first movement—“Der Sommer marschiert ein”—background issues

- (Review the seminar’s analysis and discussion of Mahler I/1.)
- Floros 1993, pp. 79-97.
- Franklin, Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 3, pp. 3-52, 77-90, 91-94.
- Adorno, Mahler, pp. 61-80 (“Novel”—note that pp. 77-80 discuss the first movement of the Third Symphony)
- Nietzsche, excerpts from The Gay Science (Mahler 3rd extracts correlated with Franklin): on v2:
  - Preface to the Second Edition (pp. 32-33)
  - Section 54 (p. 116)
  - Section 166 (p. 200)
  - Section 337 (pp. 267-69)
- Nietzsche, additional excerpts from The Gay Science (“God is dead,” etc.): on v2:
  - Sections 108-110 (pp. 167-71)
  - Sections 22-34 (pp. 178-87)
  - Sections 283-88 (pp. 228-31).

- ADORNO ESSAY DUE (also to be sent to all other participants in the seminar)

Topic 10  Mahler, Symphony No. 3, first movement—“Der Sommer marschiert ein,” analysis, the sonata, etc.

- Adorno, Mahler, pp. 83-104 (“Variant—Form”)
- Franklin, Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 3, pp.41-52, 77-90, 91-94.

Topic 11  Completion of Symphony No. 3, movement 1 and all of movement 4 (“O Mensch! Gib’ Acht!”).

- Listen to Movements 2 and 3 on your own.
- Floros 1993, pp. 97-105.
- Nietzsche, excerpts from Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Hollingdale translation):
  - (Hollingdale, Introduction, pp. 11-35.)

• ADDITIONAL LISTENING: From Lieder und Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit: “Ablösung im Sommer.”
• ADDITIONAL LISTENING: “Das Himmlische Leben” from Des Knaben Wunderhorn (= the finale of Symphony No. 4). (Recall also “Das irdische Leben” from Des Knaben Wunderhorn).
• Knapp, additional comments in Symphonic Metamorphoses on the two vocal movements, pp. 26-40, 46-53, 205-06.
• Franklin, Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 3, pp. 53-71

• CHOOSE TOPIC FOR FINAL (ANALYTICAL) PAPER THIS WEEK

**Topic 12**  Symphony No. 3, movement 5 (“Es sungen drei Engel”) and the start of the Adagio finale (beginning)

• Floros 1993, pp. 105-07.
• Knapp, comments in Symphonic Metamorphoses on the finale, pp.30-32, 51-57.
• Franklin’s view of the finale, pp. 71-76.
• ADDITIONAL LISTENING: Beethoven, Quartet in F, op. 135, third movement, Lento assai, cantabile e tranquillo.
• ADDITIONAL LISTENING: Beethoven, Quartet in A minor, op. 132, third movement, Molto adagio (“Heiliger Dankgesang”).
• ADDITIONAL LISTENING: Beethoven, Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130, fifth movement, “Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo.”
• ADDITIONAL LISTENING: Wagner, Parsifal, Prelude to Act 1.

**Topic 13**  Mahler, Symphony No. 3, finale, concluded

Mahler: Selected English-Language Bibliography


Darcy, Warren. “‘Sie bleiben wie Allen’: Rotational Form and the Thematization of Failure in Mahler’s Fish Sermon.” (Unpublished typescript 2001.)


