

What to Listen for in Classical Music

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Course Description:

This course examines the evolution of Western music from the Baroque era through the 20th century. Different parameters such as harmony, rhythm, and melody are concisely explained and examined in representative masterpieces drawn from eras, genres, and styles, including the works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Stravinsky among others. Rich historic context will be provided. This class will be a lively combination of lecture, analysis, and listening. Music literacy is not required.

Morning Session:

A. Definition of musical components

- Melody
- Harmony
- Rhythm
- Form
- Instrumentation
- Genre

B. Definitions of Musical Terminology

- Tempo indications
- Special nomenclatures for expression and articulation:

C. Historical Overview of Western Art Music from Bach to current times

D. Performance by John Gibbons, selected pieces as historical and stylistic examples:

- Bach (Baroque): Prelude and Fugue in C Sharp Minor from WTC Book 1
- Beethoven (Classical): Piano Sonata Op. 2, No. 1 – Allegro and Andante movements
- Chopin (Romantic): Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2
- Schoenberg (20th Century): Sechs Kleine Klavierstuecke, Op. 19

-Lunch Break-

Afternoon Session:

E. Discussion of the performed pieces as exemplars of essential aesthetics in Western music

F. A fairly brief survey of musical theatre genres, principally opera but also including the art of the conductor (presented on DVD)

H. Question and Answer session

Musical Eras

All dates must be approximate; there is considerable overlap

Before 1450 – Medieval

1450-1600 – Renaissance

1600-1750 – Baroque

1750-1820 – Classical

1820-1900 – Romantic

Beyond 1900 – Age of the “isms”

John's Recommended Resources:

www.holdekunst.com/classical-music-books-cds-dvds/

Web Sites

HoldeKunst.com - Classical Blog by John Gibbons

EssentialsofMusic.com - (Sony Masterworks, Norton) - Overview of musical styles and eras, brief composer biographies, and a glossary all accompanied by sound samples from recommended recordings.

Music History Timeline-

www.classicalworks.com/his.pages/timeline.html

Music History 102 - www.ipl.org/div/mushist/
Designed, compiled and created by Robert Sherrane, Librarian, The Juilliard School

Chicago Symphony Orchestra Classical Music Glossary -

www.cso.org/main.taf?p=1,1,4,12

Wikipedia.org – Generally a good source of composer biographies and other music reference information, including some detailed descriptions of musical pieces. However, Wikipedia is written and edited by the public, so it may not be a reliable source, especially on controversial subject matter.