

The Lives and Music of Jewish Composers

Matthew Mugmon, Associate Professor of Musicology

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Course length: 10 Weeks

Class Duration: 2 Hours

Overview:

From the Gregorian Chant of the medieval Catholic Church, to the masses and motets of Palestrina, to the cantatas of Bach, and to the requiems of Brahms and Britten, the tradition of classical music is one largely based in Christianity. At the same time, and increasingly in the 20th and 21st centuries Jewish figures have played a significant but often overlooked role in shaping that very tradition. Significant names such as Giacomo Meyerbeer, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, Leonard Bernstein, and Philip Glass are only a few of the Jewish composers whose music defines the classical tradition.

Primarily through lectures and listening to musical excerpts, we will explore the history of classical music through the lens of the contributions of these and many other Jewish composers. We will do so by examining the lives and music of a range of Jewish composers whose music engages both directly and indirectly with the larger Christian tradition of classical music and with the composers' own identity as Jewish artists. Discussions of composers will include (but not be limited to) those listed below in the class meeting schedule.

Materials:

The main "texts" for this class will be the music of these composers. Links to recordings of many of the works we will study, along with publicly available program notes and, at times, supplemental readings relating to the pieces and composers to be studied, will be provided on the course portal and should be consulted before each class meeting.

Class Meeting Schedule:

Week 1: Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Music

Week 2: The Classical Period into the Romantic

Week 3: French Romantic Opera

Week 4: Ushering in the 20th Century

Week 5: American Popular Song

Week 6: Between the World Wars

Week 7: American and Jewish Identity

Week 8: "Forbidden Music" During World War 2

Week 9: Minimalists

Week 10: Contemporary Voices

Instructor Bio:

Matthew Mugmon is Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Arizona. He has served as the New York Philharmonic's Leonard Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence, and his research appears in the *Journal of Musicology*, *Music & Letters*, the *Journal of Musicological Research*, and the essay collection *Rethinking Mahler*. His monograph *Aaron Copland and the American Legacy of Gustav Mahler* was published in 2019 by the University of Rochester Press. Dr. Mugmon is a Distinguished Fellow with the Center for University Education Scholarship for a project whose goal is to explore the role of archives in the teaching of undergraduate students. He is also a partner on a University of Arizona Libraries grant through the Library of Congress to incorporate primary sources into coursework. In 2018 he earned the Charles and Irene Putnam Award for Excellence in Teaching.