The Symphonies of Gustav Mahler
University of Toronto Faculty of Music
Seminar meets: Tuesdays, 1:00–3:00 p.m., EJB E012

Instructor: Dr. Sherry D. Lee
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Course Description: The symphonies of Gustav Mahler have been variously viewed as enormous curiosities, the culmination of the Austro-German symphonic tradition, the dying gasp of overblown German Romanticism, and the seeds of twentieth-century Viennese modernism. The goal of this seminar is to examine Mahler’s symphonic output, its reception, and the musicological literature devoted to it, investigating the repertoire from varying points of view including analytical, biographical, philosophical/aesthetic, hermeneutic, semiotic, and narrative. Exploration of selected works in terms of the socio-cultural milieu in which they arose will be accompanied by immanent analysis of the scores and critical encounters with the literature surrounding the composer and his music.

Course Materials: All required reading and listening materials are available through the Music Library, whether on reserve (books, some articles), in the non-circulating collection (collected edition scores, journals), or online (journal articles, sound recordings).

Expectations: All students should attend each session, and should complete weekly assigned reading and listening in advance, in preparation for active participation in class discussion. Seminar presentations should be delivered in an organized and polished form. Written work should be completed with a computer word processor, carefully edited and spellchecked, and printed in a 12-point font on white 8-1/2 x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins. Written work should be accompanied by properly-formatted bibliographies and foot/endnotes in which all sources consulted for completion of the assignment are duly acknowledged. Details of all required coursework are given below.

Students should visit the website of the School of Graduate Studies to familiarize themselves with policies regarding academic conduct: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/>

Evaluation: Seminar Participation 20%
Seminar Presentation 15%
Written Assignments 2 @ 15% = 30%
Final Paper 35%

Please take note of the University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies Policy on Graduate Grading and Evaluation, including the Graduate Grade Scale, available at: <http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/grgrade.html>
Course Schedule: (N.B.: This schedule is flexible and subject to change.)

All weekly reading and listening assignments are detailed below. Readings are on reserve unless they are available in journals to which the UofT library subscribes; please consult the attached bibliography and library reserve list. After Week 2, each week’s assignment automatically includes listening with the score to the symphonic movement(s) under discussion. Consult appropriate chapters in Floros, La Grange, Mitchell, etc. as an analytical accompaniment to listening.

Week 1  Introduction
12 Sept.  Introduction to the course

Week 2  Views of Mahler I
Franklin, “. . . his fractures are the script of truth: Adorno’s Mahler”
Adorno, “Mahler Today,” “Marginalia on Mahler,” in Essays on Music
[N.B.: also read R. Leppert’s preceding commentary, pp. 538-46]

Weeks 3-4  The First Symphony: introducing issues of form, genre, tone, text
26 Sept.  Symphony No. 1: FOCUS – mvmts. 1, 2
Listening: Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.
Reading: Adorno ch. 1, “Curtain and Fanfare”
  Johnson, “Mahler and the Idea of Nature,” in Perspectives on Mahler
  “Mahler’s German-Language Critics – The First Symphony,” in
  Painter, ed., Mahler and his World (pp. 283-98)

3 Oct.  Symphony No. 1: FOCUS – mvmts. 3, 4
Reading: Draughon/Knapp, “Mahler and the Crisis of Jewish Identity”
  Buhler, “Breakthrough as Critique of Form: the Finale of Mahler’s
  First Symphony”

Weeks 5-6  The problem of program music
10 Oct.  Symphony No. 2: FOCUS – mvmts. 1, 3
Listening: “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt” (Des Knaben Wunderhorn)
Reading: Abbate, “Mahler’s Deafness: Opera and the Scene of Narration in
  Todtenfeier”
  Franklin, “Funeral rites’ – Mahler and Mickiewicz”
  Heffling, “Mahler’s Todtenfeier and the Problem of Program Music”

17 Oct.  Symphony No. 3: FOCUS – mvmt. 1
Reading: McGrath, “The Metamusical Cosmos of Gustav Mahler”
  Micznik, “Ways of Telling’ in Mahler’s Music: The Third Symphony
  as Narrative Text”
**Week 7**  
**Symphony, Song, (Con)text**  
24 Oct.  
Symphony No. 3: FOCUS – mvmt. 3; Symphony No. 4: FOCUS – mvmt. 4  
Listening: “Ablösung im Sommer” (*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*)  
“Das himmlische Leben” (*Des Knaben Wunderborn*)  
Reading: Solvik, “Biography and Musical Meaning in the Posthorn Solo of Mahler’s Third Symphony”  
Knapp, “Suffering Children: Perspectives on Innocence and Vulnerability in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony”  
*Written Assignment 1 Due In Class*  

**Week 8**  
**Views of Mahler II**  
31 Oct.  
Reading: Schoenberg, “Gustav Mahler,” in *Style and Idea*  
Mitchell, “The Modernity of Gustav Mahler”  
Solvik, “Mahler’s Untimely Modernism”  

**Week 9**  
“Reading Break”  
7 Nov.  
No class meeting; instructor available for meetings during class time  

**Week 10**  
**Instrumental Symphonies: Form, Sign, Meaning**  
14 Nov.  
Symphony No. 6: FOCUS – mvmts. 1, 4  
Reading: Del Mar, analysis of 1st mvmt., and Samuels, ch. 5  
Analyses of 4th mvmt. in Floros and La Grange Vol. III  
*Written Assignment 2 Due In Class*  

**Weeks 11-12 Late Style**  
21 Nov.  
Symphony No. 9: FOCUS – mvmts. 1, 2  
Reading: Diether, “The Expressive Content of Mahler’s Ninth”  
Micznik, “The Farewell Story of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony”  

28 Nov.  
Symphony No. 9: FOCUS – mvmts. 3, 4  
Reading: Newcomb, “Narrative Archetypes in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony”  
Johnson, “The Status of the Subject in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony”  

**Week 13**  
**Wrap-up:** Screening, Ken Russell, *Mahler* (1974)  
5 Dec.  
*Final Paper Due*  

**DETAIL OF ASSIGNMENTS:** Each student will give one seminar presentation, and complete two short written assignments and one final research paper.  

1. Presentation: Prepare an analysis of one movement of one symphony for presentation to the class, and lead the class in discussion of the movement. You may wish to provide the
class members with a brief handout to accompany your analytical discussion of the movement (an analytical chart or diagram, for example, or musical examples of thematic materials under consideration, etc.). You should play excerpts of the music under discussion during your presentation; however, the majority of time should be devoted to discussion. Consult appropriate texts and the weekly assigned readings in preparing your analysis.

(2) Written Assignment 1: an analysis (5-6 pp. in length, exclusive of musical examples) of the 3rd movement Scherzo of Gustav Mahler’s Symphony No. 3. Address both intramusical and extramusical considerations. Although you are welcome to (and should) consult existing sources of information on the work, the aim is to present your own response to the music, both in purely analytical terms, and in the ways in which you think the movement communicates meaning(s). Due in class Tuesday, 24 October, 1 p.m.

(3) Written Assignment 2: an analysis (5-6 pp. in length, exclusive of musical examples) of the 1st movement of Symphony No. 6, based in a comparative/critical discussion of the analyses of this movement by Norman Del Mar and Robert Samuels. All assignments are due in class Tuesday, 14 November, 1 p.m.

(4) Final Research Paper: a paper (12-20 pp. in length, exclusive of musical examples and bibliography) on a topic of your choice, as approved by the instructor. Please note that your topic must be approved no later than Tuesday, 21 November 2006 – papers will not be accepted unless their topics have been approved. Due in class Tuesday, 5 December, 1 p.m.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:


