



## MUSIC: THE TRANSCENDENT LANGUAGE

Seminar Leader: **Patrick Sanguineti**

House Leader: **Yiping Zhang**

### Course Description

Throughout almost all of human history, nothing has quite brought man together as has music: though it sometimes uses language to convey additional meaning, it is itself a language of its own, one with the power to pierce the heart and put fire into one's soul. How, though, can we clearly describe what and how music makes us feel? Should music be understood differently by different people, or should a piece only have one interpretation? Moreover, when analyzing music, what kinds of things should we listen for, and how should we listen for them?

In this class, we will be taking a very "human" approach to all different kinds of music, ranging from classics, like the symphonies of Gustav Mahler and The Beatles' revolutionary *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album, to newer, less known works. One of the primary goals of this class is to consider and appreciate a number of seemingly different pieces of music, looking not only at their similarities, but also about how each of our interpretations of their intended meanings differ. As such, there are no prerequisites – just a love of music!

### Schedule

#### **Day 1:** *The Music of Western Romanticism*

In this class we will cover the basics of personal musical analysis, in particular the questions that we should ask ourselves and the things that we should listen for. We will first look at the Romantic composers, whose goal was primarily to convey pure human emotion and describe the complexities of life through musical endeavors.

#### **Day 2:** *The Album*

Today, we will focus primarily on the "concept album" as a form of artistic expression. Although today's style is very different from the first day, we will find that we can analyze the album much like we did the symphony. In particular, we will focus on The Beatles and their *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album, widely considered to be the first "real" concept album. We will discuss what kinds of themes are present, as well as some of its possible influences.

#### **Day 3:** *In Response*

Music very often acts like poetry, adeptly and eloquently criticizing some sort of contemporary event. Today we will look at the art of the "protest song," taking examples from both American and Japanese repertoire. How effectively do these pieces convey their messages? How can we compare them to the pieces we've already studied? Do we even want to listen to them as songs, or can we only appreciate them for their meanings? In particular, we will focus on the work of Bob Dylan, a singer who was often called "the voice of his generation," and also a large influence in Japan.



**Day 4: *The Value of Electronic Music***

Over the last few years, Electronic Dance Music (EDM) has taken the world by storm: relying on computer-generated beats and sounds, electronic artists have created songs that are both catchy and energetic, thus making them ideal for parties. Can they still convey emotion in the same way as symphony and concept album, though? Does electronic music serve a purpose other than a party scenario? Moreover, is all electronic music the same just because it was created through a computer? Can we just automatically group them together because of their “instrumentation”? Furthermore, can someone who remixes another’s song be considered an artist with a style of his own?

## Pre-Seminar Assignments and Readings

- Day 1: Mahler’s Fifth Symphony (\*Abbado\*)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOvXhyldUko>  
Program Notes (only the first section is required, but all is recommended) -  
<http://mahlerfest.org/mfXV/notes.htm>
- Day 2: “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” (The Beatles)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMMcEpxa\\_as&list=PL243C95455F3C57AE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMMcEpxa_as&list=PL243C95455F3C57AE)  
Review: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/reviews/5dcz>  
Review (optional) -  
<http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/13435-sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band/>
- Day 3: “The Times They Are a-Changin’” (Bob Dylan)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7qQ6\\_RV4VQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7qQ6_RV4VQ)  
Bob Dylan and Protest Music – <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/the-politics-of-bob-dylan/>  
Protest Music (optional) –  
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/essays/protest-music-1960s>
- Day 4: “Sleepless” (Flume)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7-yAX9ijuM>  
The Making of EDM (a tutorial) -  
<https://lauriegoldsteincsp4project.wordpress.com/2011/11/20/electronic-dance-music-analysis-structure/>  
A Breakdown of Electronic Genres (\*ignore the name\*) -  
<http://www.complex.com/music/2013/03/an-idiots-guide-to-edm-genres/>

## Message from the House Leader

Hello everyone! My name is Yiping Zhang, a junior in the University of Tokyo. I am major in educational psychology and at the same time, keep studying my 10th year of Japanese. Glad to be your house leader this year! As for my hobby, I like watching movies and reading detective stories. Also on weekends, I go shopping with my friends and sing in Karaoke! Luckily this seminar is about communication through music, so we can share our ideas on



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music then. Hope that we will spend a good time in Komatsu Summer School together! I am so excited to meet you all! If there is any questions or comments on the seminar, feel free to email me at any time!

## **Message from the Seminar Leader**

Hi everyone! My name is Patrick Sanguineti, and I'm a rising junior at Harvard University. I'm currently studying Classics (Latin Language) and East Asian Religion, but I spend a majority of my time playing and studying music. I have studied trumpet, both classical and jazz, for ten years now; I currently play in a number of orchestras on campus, as well as a rock band that a few friends and I started last year. Without a doubt, though, most of my time is spent just listening: whether walking to class, studying, or even sleeping, it seems I can't do anything unless I have something playing! In my experience, there is always a song or piece for every occasion, one that can best reflect the weather, the time of day, or one's feelings in the moment. I can't wait to discuss such a fun and dynamic topic with you all! I truly believe that you will be a teacher just as much as I will throughout this musical journey, as each and every one of you will contribute something unique because of your own inherently unique background. If you have any questions, or would just like to say hi, send me an e-mail - I can't wait to meet you!