Music 500 (CRN # 12352) and 531 (CRN #12355)  

**WAGNER SEMINAR**

Wednesdays, 13:00-15:50 (Mac B 117)  
Instructor: Professor Michelle Fillion (mfillion@uvic.ca)  
MacLaurin Building B110, 721-7906  
Office Hours: TF 11:30-12:15; Th 3:30-4:30; F 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

**Description**

The dramatic music of Richard Wagner is required listening for anyone involved in composition or the study and performance of music of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Few composers at the turn-of-century escaped the ‘Wagner fever’ that left its mark on the dramatic music, harmony, compositional process, and orchestration of such as Richard Strauss, the Second Viennese School, Puccini, Ives, and even (briefly) Debussy. The ongoing impact of Wagner’s works continues today in such fields as theatre direction and film music. Finally, Wagner’s career provides a chilling example of the power of music and musical thought to fuel social theory and political propaganda.

This seminar will examine three major works by Richard Wagner: the Romantic grand opera *Tannhäuser* (‘Dresden version’ completed 1845; ‘Paris version’ revised 1861); and the music dramas *Tristan und Isolde* (completed 1859) and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1861-67). These three works were subtly interrelated from their very genesis. The first prose draft of *Die Meistersinger* was written in 1845, immediately after the completion of and as a comic counterpart to *Tannhäuser*. When in the wake of the failed ‘Paris’ revival of *Tannhäuser* Wagner again took up the *Meistersinger* draft in 1861, his initial purpose was to provide a lighter antidote to *Tristan und Isolde* and the interrupted Ring project. The mastersingers look back to the German Minnesingers of *Tannhäuser*, while Hans Sachs compares himself to King Marke, Isolde’s betrayed husband. The Paris/Vienna revisions of *Tannhäuser* are also indebted to the new style of *Tristan*.

To understand Wagner, one must know his works—not an easy task given their length, complexity, and analytical challenges. The purpose of this seminar is to come to know three of Wagner’s major works, their libretto, music, structure, orchestration, dramatic strategies, and performance practices from two perspectives: the analytical (MUS 500) and the historical/interpretive (MUS 531). Seminar members will be expected to become thoroughly familiar with these works by repeated listening with score and libretto throughout the term. Weekly discussions will focus on analytical projects and select readings exploring major issues in modern Wagner research, with viewing of video productions. By the completion of the course, each seminar member should have a comprehensive understanding of Wagner’s music and compositional style, and experience with a broad overview of contemporary Wagner research and productions of his works. Each student will prepare a final project dealing with one of these three works for presentation in the seminar’s closing Wagner Conference, its focus determined by the selected perspective.
Required Textbooks

The Cambridge Companion to Wagner, edited by Thomas S. Grey (Cambridge University Press, 2008). Strongly recommended (but will also be on reserve in Library)

Richard Wagner, Tannhäuser, WWV 70 (full score). New York: Dover ISBN 0486246493 Required (also available online IMSLP)

Richard Wagner, Tristan und Isolde, WWV 90 (full score). New York: Dover ISBN 0486229157 Required (also available online IMSLP)

Richard Wagner, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, WWV 96 (full score). New York: Dover ISBN 048623276x Required (also available online IMSLP)

Additional online reading: Barry Millington, “Richard Wagner,” New Grove 2/Grove online, 26: 931-35, 945-46 (to be read throughout the seminar)


Assessment

(1) Participation in seminar (25%), including short reports
(2) One research report max. 8 min. (10%)
(3) Oct. 29: Preliminary title and formal 250-300-word abstract of project due in class (2 c.)
(4) Nov. 19: Final version of your title and abstract (10%), submitted as .doc attachment to MF and program coordinator (tha)
(5) Nov. 26, Dec. 3: 20-minute presentation at Wagner Conference (20%) (attending both sessions is a seminar requirement)
(6) Dec. 8: Formal written paper due today, 15-20 pages MAXIMUM (35%)

Seminar Expectations

(1) Students are expected to attend all classes regularly and punctually, and to contribute to a collegial and respectful learning atmosphere.
(2) Please complete reading and listening assignments before the relevant seminar.
(3) The University of Victoria Policy on Academic Integrity will be applied as defined in the University of Victoria Graduate Calendar (please consult it): http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GRAD/FARc/PoAcI.html

Grading Standards

Grades will be assigned in numerical percentages according to the official grading equivalents used by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, which can be accessed in full at:
http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GRAD/FARc/Grad.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Percentage Equivalents</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Achievement of Assignment Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 - 100</td>
<td>Exceptional Work</td>
<td>Technically flawless and original work demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations; often publishable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85 - 89</td>
<td>Outstanding Work</td>
<td>Demonstrates a very high level of integration of material demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>Excellent Work</td>
<td>Represents a high level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity, as well as mastery of relevant techniques/concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>Very good work</td>
<td>Represents a satisfactory level of integration, comprehensiveness, and complexity; demonstrates a sound level of analysis with no major weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 - 76</td>
<td>Acceptable work that fulfills the expectations of the course</td>
<td>Represents a satisfactory level of integration of key concepts/procedures. However, comprehensiveness or technical skills may be lacking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 - 72</td>
<td></td>
<td>Represents an unacceptable level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity. Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking. Every grade of 4.0 (B-) or lower in a course taken for credit in the Faculty of Graduate Studies must be reviewed by the supervisory committee of the student and a recommendation made to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such students will not be allowed to register in the next session until approved to do so by the Dean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>Unacceptable work revealing some deficiencies in knowledge, understanding or techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 - 49</td>
<td>Failing grade</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Outline

Overture and Vorspiel

Sept. 3  
Brief introduction to the seminar goals and materials, and a presentation by MF on Wagner bibliography, with reference to Arnold Whittall, “Criticism and analysis: current perspectives,” in Cambridge Companion to Wagner, 276-89. We will then examine the overtures/preludes to The Flying Dutchman (Der fliegende Holländer), Tannhäuser, and Parsifal, Act 3 as models for music theoretical and interpretive problems in Wagner. Sample report by MF on: Thomas S. Grey, “Wagner, the Overture, and the Aesthetics of Musical Form,” 19th Century Music 12 (1988): 3-22 (http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/)

Repertoire:
Wagner: Overtures to Der fliegende Holländer and Tannhäuser.
CD 9990cd; score M1004 W13F64 1953a c.2 (Dutchman).
CD 1397, 1451 (Tannhäuser)

Unit 1: Tannhäuser (‘Paris’ Version): Sept. 10, 17, 24

Resources for Unit 1:
Libretto:
Libretto online: Tannhäuser Libretto in German:
http://opera.stanford.edu/Wagner/Tannhauser/libretto.html
Tannhäuser Libretto in German and English:
Dresden version, with English translation:
http://www.archive.org/details/tannhaeuserconta00wagnuoft/

Score:
   Dresden version and revisions to 1860; Bd. 6, Heft 1-3 (ed. P. Jost; Paris and later revisions)

Videorecording:
VHS: Metropolitan Opera, conducted by James Levine (Eva Marton) (1982): M1500 W13 T352

Recordings: Konwitschny

Elmendorff (Paris version; with cuts; late 1920s Bayreuth live):
http://uvic.naxosmusiclibrary.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/catalogue/item.asp?cid=8110094-95

*Sawallisch, Bayreuth 1963: CD1397 (also on 16956st): Dresden version with the Paris ballet inserted and Vorspiel; directed by Wieland Wagner


Cluytens, with Windgassen (historical performance): 9619 cd
Solti, Vienna Phil. (1972), with Kollo, Ludwig as both Elisabeth and Venus: 16955st (“Paris” version—actually Vienna version, in German)

Sessions:

Sept. 10  
**Tannhäuser**: A study of the Venusberg scene of **Tannhäuser**, with a comparison of the ‘Dresden’ and ‘Paris’ versions of Act 1


This report will be shared by 2 students

MF: Synopsis of the versions of Wagner’s Tannhäuser as described in the prefaces to Richard Wagner: Sämtliche Werke, Band 5/1 (ed. R. Strohm), pp. V-VII; and Band 6/1 (ed. P. Jost), pp. VI-IX: M3 W28 1970, Bd. 5, Heft 1; Bd. 6, Heft 1

Listening: Tannhäuser, Overture and Act 1 (with score and libretto)

Sept. 17  
Wagner and German Romantic opera: **Tannhäuser**, Act 2
The confrontation of ‘low’ and ‘high’ love, romantic tradition and the pathway to the “art-work of the future”

Report (and reading for all):

Listening: Tannhäuser, Act 2 (close study of score and libretto)
Sept. 24  **Musical-dramatic period and musical narrative in *Tannhäuser*: Analyzing Modernist Trends Wagner**

Topics: the Act-3 *Vorspiel* and ‘Rome’ narrative in Act 3; Wagner in the late 1840s and early 1850s; preparations for *Tristan und Isolde* via *Opera and Drama*; tools for analyzing the music dramas

**Required Reading:**

**2 Reports:**
(2) Thomas S. Grey, “Leitmotif, temporality, and musical design in the *Ring,*” *Cambridge Companion to Wagner,* 85-114, esp. leitmotif (87) and the three major formal concepts of monologue, action dialogue, and narrative.

**Listening:** *Tannhäuser,* Act 3 (close study of score and libretto)

**Unit 2: *Tristan und Isolde*: Oct. 1, 8, 15**

**Resources for Unit 2:**

**Libretto:**


**Full score:**
*Dover score: M1500 W13T7 1973
Richard Wagner Sämtliche Werke, Bd. 8: M3 W28 1970, Bd. 8, Heft 1-3
Miniature score (Broude): M1500 W13T7

**Video:**
DVD: Kollo, Meier, and Schwarz (Bayreuth; dir. Ponnelle), cond. Barenboim (DGG) M1500 W13T72 2007

**Recordings:**
Furtwängler (1952): 14834cd
*Cond. L. Bernstein with Bayr. Rundfunk (1983), Behrens and Hofmann: 19cd
Karajan, Berlin (1972), with Dernesch and Vickers: 14721st (vinyl)
Vorspiel und Liebestod (Norman), with Wesendonck Lieder: 145 cd

**Sessions:**

Oct. 1  **Tristan und Isolde, Prelude and Act 1**

Required reading and report:

Listening: *Tristan und Isolde*, Prelude and Act 1 (close study of score and libretto)

Oct. 8  **Tristan und Isolde, Act 2**


Listening: *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 2

Oct. 15  **Tristan und Isolde, Act 3**

Required reading:

Report:

Listening: *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 3
Closing discussion

**Unit 3: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg: Oct. 29, Nov. 5, Nov. 19**

**Resources for Unit 3:**

Libretto:
*ENO: ML50 W14 M46 1983*
Libretto in German and English:

Library online libretto with translation: Web Link:
0hadduo0f/

Full Score:
*Dover score: M1500 W13M45 1976
Piano-vocal score (Klindworth) available online:
http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/variations/scores/bhr7019/index.html

Video:
DVD: Bayreuth, Weikl, Jerusalem, Stein M1500 W13M452 2006

Recordings:
*Jochum, Berlin (1976), Ligendza, Domingo: CD88 cd (also 11300st)
Karajan, Dresden (1971), Donath, Kollo, Schreier: 7205st
Karajan, Bayreuth (1951), Schwarzkopf, Edelmann:
.110872-75

Sessions:

Oct. 29

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act 1

Bring in to class: Preliminary title and formal 300-350-word abstract of project (2 copies on paper)

Report:
(http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/)

Listening:
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act 1

Nov. 5

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act 2 and the Riot Scene

Report:
(http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/)
Listening:
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act 2

Nov. 12 reading break

Nov. 19
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act 3: “Wahn” and the Musical Control of Madness
Final version of project title and abstract due (for program)

Reading:

Report:

Listening:
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act 3

Wagner Conference (November 26, December 3)

Nov. 26 Wagner Conference–Session 1
Dec. 3 Wagner Conference–Session 2
Dec. 8 Final papers are due by 4:00 p.m. in my office (B110)