

VPAS 6312 Art & Society: Music & Mythology
Tuesdays, 7:00 – 9:45 p.m.; Jonsson Performance Hall

Course Description & Syllabus

Dr. Robert Xavier Rodríguez (Instructor of Record)
Home Phone: 972-238/8703 / Office Hours: by appointment only
E-mail: RobertXavierRodriguez@tx.rr.com

Dr. Dennis Kratz (Guest Instructor)
Office Phone: 972-883-2986 / Office Hours: by appointment only
E-mail: dkratz@utdallas.edu

With vaccinations, masks and safe distancing, we plan to give the class face-to-face.

Course Description

A composer-conductor and a classicist will jointly analyze themes, stories and archetypes from myths of both the Eastern and Western hemispheres and the ways that musical masterpieces have represented them. We will explore the ways that myths reflect universal human experience as well as the ways that a particular culture's telling of its myths reveals political and social truths about that culture. We will study the elements of drama and storytelling. We will consider the theory and structure of both myth and music; we will identify musical techniques which composers throughout history have employed to convey extra-musical ideas and information; we will observe the use of those techniques applied to selected myth-related compositions by composers from widely different historical periods and cultural contexts; and we will develop vocabulary and methods for verbalizing the elusive, non-verbal experience of music. We will also consider corollaries in psychology, literature, theater, film, dance and the visual arts. The course will center around the Greco-Roman tradition and will branch out to other cultures, as we explore the following topics:

Aesthetic and Archetypal Polarities: Apollo vs. Dionysus, Good vs. Evil, etc.
Nature & The Elements: The Creation of the World, The End of the World
Transformations
Heroes, Journeys, Epics, Quests, Rescues
The Artist Hero: Orpheus
Love Potions, Passion and Seduction, Doomed Lovers, Don Juan, *Femmes Fatales*
The Comic Hero, Magicians, Tricksters, Clowns, Fools
The Greco-Roman Tradition: Electra, Oedipus, *The Bacchae*, Medea, Acis & Galatea, etc.
The Biblical Tradition, The Life of Jesus
Dreams, Death and the Afterlife, Heaven and the Underworld, Eternity
The *Commedia dell' Arte*

REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION CRITERIA:

There will be no tests or term papers. Each week, students will be expected a) to discuss the assigned readings, b) to bring a specific work of art in any medium which illustrates the topic listed in the syllabus for that week, c) to read one topic sentence that cites the nature and source of your example and d) to be prepared, if time permits, to give a short class presentation (one or two minutes) that

presents a point of view concerning the example. Students will also be asked to write four short, formal analytical essays, one of which can be creative in nature, (four or five pages each) based on the class topics and examples. Students will receive written feedback on the first three assignments, and they will have the option of revising any or all of those assignments before turning in all four assignments -- the originals and any revisions -- in a final notebook at the end of the semester. Students will be graded equally on their written work (50%) and on their class participation (50%).

MUSICAL EXPERIENCE IS HELPFUL, BUT NOT REQUIRED.

Specific Learning Objectives for Students - Develop and demonstrate:

1. Understanding of the major mythological themes and archetypes of world culture, including the use of those myths and archetypes in iconic musical masterworks.
2. Awareness of the historical, social and political context in which works of art are created.
3. Expertise in formal academic writing, with particular emphasis upon myth, aesthetics, analysis of dramatic structures and the verbalization of the non-verbal experience of music.
4. Expertise in explaining the ways in which music can convey extra-musical information.
5. Awareness of corollaries to these literary themes and musical examples in theater, cinema, dance, the visual arts and video games.

Required Texts:

Leeming, David Adams. *The World of Myth: An Anthology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1990)
Martin, Charles. *Ovid: A New Translation*, New York: Norton & Co. (2004)
Storr, Anthony. *Music and the Mind*, New York: The Free Press (1992)

Plus additional assigned reading, listening and online handouts.

Recommended reading:

Bonds, Mark Evan. *A History of Music in Western Culture*, Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall (2003)
Jung, Carl G. *Man and His Symbols*, Dell (Random House) Publishing (1968)
Copland, Aaron. *What to Listen for in Music*, New York: McGraw-Hill (1967)
Langer, Susanne K. *Philosophy in a New Key*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1976)

Syllabus

► 1. Aug. 24, *Definitions and Overview / The Magic of Storytelling*

Points of Attack for Verbalization:

reporter, theorist, analyst, historian, judge, companion, independent creator

The Elements of Myth & Storytelling

Fact vs. fiction; signs vs. symbols; ritual

Definition: a traditional, orally disseminated narrative of collective religious or societal significance.

Function: 1) to help understand ourselves and the world around us, 2) to establish a continuity with the past and the future, 3) to give our lives a wider meaning beyond our individual existence.

Types: 1) origin (creation, eschatology, time rebirth, renewal), 2) providence and destiny (gods, other supernatural beings, messianic myths, magical transformations, miracles, foretelling the future), 3) models of individual human behavior and wish fulfillment (personal achievement, ethics, family relationships, parables), 4) cultural traditions (heroes, sagas, epics, quests, legends).

Story elements (journey vs. stranger)

Archetypes: anima vs. animus, trickster, shadow, etc., plus other recurring themes (Beauty and the Beast, rebirth, paradise, the labyrinth, the dream, the island, rites of passage, rituals of submission and liberation, etc.)

Layers/Approaches/Schools of thought: religious significance; psychological, philosophical, literary, aesthetic, historical and cultural perspectives (what the myth tells about the teller)

The Elements of Music:

Definition: human construction of sound and time, intended for or perceived as aesthetic experience.

Location: antiphonal music, performance spaces

Intensity: dynamics, crescendo/diminuendo, ppp/fff/balance

Duration: rhythm (regular, irregular), meter (simple/compound, duple/triple), tempo, accent/stress, syncopation, accelerando/ritardando, beat/pulse, measures, prestissimo/larghissimo, rubato, articulation, legato/staccato

Timbre: voice types, families of musical instruments, score order, pizzicato, col legno, solo, tutti, electronics

Pitch: note/tone, register (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), voices/texture, pitch class, interval/unison, harmony, melody, ratios, overtone series, dissonance/consonance, tension/resolution, musical gravity, common practice, keys/scales, chords, sequences, parallel/contrary motion, diatonic circle of 5ths, modulating circle of 5th, pandiatonic, polytonality, atonality, 12-tone (serial), microtones, clusters, sound mass

The Organization of Music:

Elements of Form: unity vs. variety; motif, theme, melody, phrase, period, movement; variation, development, diminution vs. augmentation; counterpoint, imitation; genre

Dramatic Structure: exposition, conflict, crisis, climax, dénouement

Music in Society (Historical Context):

Dates, Periods, Style Characteristics, Schools of Thought (isms), Genres, Major Figures and their Musical Personalities, Representative Masterworks, Political/Economic/Social Climate (Power Structure and Market), Corollaries in Literature/Theater/Visual Art

♪ **Musical Examples:** Songs with Narrative Lyrics; Grieg *Peer Gynt* (Sunrise); Strauss *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Sunrise); Wagner *Das Rheingold* (Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla); Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man*; Ravel *Mother Goose Suite* (The Fairy Garden)

▶ **2. Aug. 31. Meaning in Myth/Meaning in Music**

Words vs. Music; Absolute vs. Program Music; Absolute vs. Inherent vs. Referential (Imitation, Symbol, System); Characterization vs. Narrative; Representation of Concrete vs. Abstract Ideas (Mendelssohn, Chopin quotes)

□ **Reading:** Storr (all); Langer (Chapters 1-3); Copland (all – recommended for a musical introduction; not required); Handouts: excerpts from: *Odyssey*, Sophocles *Philoctetes*, Dante (Canto 26), Cavayy *Ithaca*, Tennyson *Ulysses*

♪ **Musical Examples:** Irish Reel, Schumann *Piano Quartet* (slow movement), Mozart Jupiter Symphony, Apache Rain Song, Bach *WTC I* (Prelude in C), Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Händel *Israel in Egypt*, Stalling *The Stalling Project*, Ives *The Unanswered Question*, Wagner *Lohengrin Overture*, Prokofiev *Peter & the Wolf*

▶ **3. Sept. 7, Aesthetic and Archetypal Polarities, Good vs. Evil**

Aesthetics: Apollo vs. Dionysus; Classical vs. Romantic; Opposition vs. Unity; Dialectics (thesis, antitheses, synthesis); Significance of numbers (Ratios, Pythagoras)

Musical Depictions of Archetypal Polarities: Good vs. Evil, Angels vs. Devils; Light vs. Darkness (shadow), Gods vs. Mortals, Pacts with the Devil

□ **Reading:** Jung (all); Leeming, pp. 3-9, 123-133

♪ **Musical Examples:** Schönberg *Transfigured Night*, Stravinsky *Apollon Musagète*, Stravinsky *l'Histoire du Soldat*, Gounod *Faust* (finale), Boito *Mefistofele*, *The Rake's Progress*, Mozart *The Magic Flute* (Sarastro vs. The Queen of the Night), Estévez *Cantata Criolla*

▶ **4. Sept. 14, The Creation of the World, Nature, The Elements (Air, Earth, Fire, Water) (PAPER #1 DUE)**

Poseidon (Neptune), Persephone; origins vs. entropy; forbidden knowledge (Prometheus)

□ **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 15-63, 76-90; *Genesis* (Chapters 1-3); Ovid: Book 1; Calvino, *All at One Point* & additional handouts

♪ **Musical Examples:** Vivaldi *The Four Seasons*, Milhaud *La Création du Monde*, Haydn *The Creation*, RXR *Con Flor y Canto*, Beethoven *Pastoral Symphony*, Wagner *Die Walküre* (Magic Fire Music), Siegfried (Forest Murmurs), *Götterdämmerung* (Final Scene), Stravinsky *The Flood*, *Persephone*, *The Rite of Spring*

► **5. Sept. 21 *Metamorphoses/Transformations***

Philemon and Baucis. Cupid, Eros & Psyche, Beauty & The Beast, etc.

- Reading: Ovid (Books 2, 6 & 8*); Handout: "Lila, the Werewolf"
*8.863-1021 + re-read 1.607-783 [Apollo & Daphne]

♪ Musical Examples: Ravel *Mother Goose Suite* (Beauty and the Beast), Debussy *Syrinx*, RXR *Favola I*; Cocteau film, Händel *Apollo e Dafne*; Lassus *Echo*; Wigglesworth *Echo & Narcissus*; Haydn *Philemon and Baucis*; Bartók *Cantata Profana*

► **6. Sept. 28 *Prometheus, Heroes, Battles, Journeys, Epics, Quests, Rescues***

Allegory of human trials; submission (death)= liberation vs. return after quest; hero vs. trickster

- **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 215- end; Kratz *The Heroic Strain in Western Thought* (handout); Hercules (Ovid Book 9), Perseus (Ovid Book 4), Jason & Theseus (Ovid Book 7); Alex Ross Article (handout)
- ♪ **Musical Examples:** Mozart *The Magic Flute* (Trial by Fire and Ice), Beethoven *Fidelio*, *Eroica Symphony*, Wagner *Götterdämmerung* (Siegfried's Rhine Journey and Funeral Music), *Die Walküre* (Ride of the Valkyries), Tchaikovsky *1812 Overture*, Strauss *Ein Heldenleben*, *Don Quixote*

► **7. Oct. 5. *Orpheus I***

The artist hero; alternate endings; use of mirror structure

- **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 146-162; Ovid (Books 10 & 11)

♪ **Musical Examples:** Monteverdi *Orfeo*, Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Stravinsky *Orpheus*, Ligeti *Le Grand Macabre*, RXR *Invocation of Orpheus*;

► **8. Oct. 12 *Orpheus II/Depths & Dangers of Love (PAPER #2 DUE)***

- Reading: Ovid: Cephalus and Procris (Book 10); Ceyx & Alcyone (Book 11); Pygmalion (Book 10), Pyramus and Thisbe (Book 4)

♪ Musical Examples: Films: Cocteau's *Orpheus*; Camus' *Black Orpheus*; Offenbach *Orpheus in the Underworld*

► **9. Oct. 19 *Love Potions, Passion and Seduction, Don Juan, Femmes Fatales***

Opposites; Desire vs. Fulfillment (Keats, Wagner quotes) Opposite: nurturing Earth Mother; Aphrodite (Venus), Eve = Pandora, Calypso, Circe; indifference vs. intentional malevolence

- **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 134-145; *Tristan and Isolde* (handout); Ovid (Book 4) & Poems of Love & Passion (handout); RXR *Fiery Femme Fatal* (handout)

♪ **Musical Examples:** Medieval songs of courtly love, Händel *No, di voi non vo' fidarmi*, Monteverdi *The Coronation of Poppea*, *Ballo delle Ingrate*, Mozart *Don Giovanni*, Strauss *Don Juan*, Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*, RXR *Favola Concertante*, *Canto*, *The Last Night of Don Juan*; Film: Bergman's *Don Juan*; Offenbach *Tales of Hoffmann*; Bizet *Carmen*, Saint-Saens *Samson and Delilah*, Strauss *Salome*, Berg *Lulu*, Film: Sternberg's *Blue Angel*

▶ **10. Oct. 26 *The Comic Hero, Tricksters, Clowns, Fools***

Childlike vs. childish; wise beyond rational (adult) limits; theories of comedy; *commedia dell'arte* (Pierrot vs. Harlequin), Germanic Myths (Till Eulenspiegel, Loki), The Monkey King

□ **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 163-174; Ovid (Book 12) Monkey King excerpts (handout) & *Odyssey* (Odysseus and Polyphemus excerpt) + Acis, Galatea & Polyphemus (Ovid Book 13)

♪ **Musical Examples:** Strauss *Till Eulenspiegel*, Stravinsky *Petrouchka*, *Pulcinella*, Puccini *Gianni Schicchi*, Leoncavallo *I Pagliacci*, Verdi *Falstaff*; Film: *Les Enfants du Paradis*, Stravinsky *Renard*

▶ **11. Nov. 2 (PAPER #3 DUE) *The Greco-Roman Tradition I: The Muses, Electra, Oedipus, etc.***
Role of the gods in human life: capricious, intent only on justice and their own glorification and desires, subject to fate; Aristotle's elements of tragedy; Catharsis; Narcissus, Acis & Galatea

□ **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 98-122, 175-214; Ovid (Books 12 & 13) & *Oedipus, the King* (play)

♪ **Musical Examples:** Händel *Acis & Galatea*, Strauss *Elektra*, Stravinsky *Oedipus Rex*, Milhaud *Les Choéphores*

▶ **12. Nov. 9 *The Greco-Roman Tradition II: The Trojan War***

□ **Reading:** Ovid (Book 14); Handout: *The Aeneid* excerpts

♪ **Musical Examples:** Berlioz *Les Troyens*, Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, Offenbach *La Belle Hélène*

▶ **13. Nov. 16 *The Biblical Tradition I: The Old Testament***

□ **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 157-161, *Bible* (Genesis, Exodus & Job)

♪ **Musical Examples:** Hebrew Chant, Medieval Mystery Plays, Schütz *Fili mi*, *Absalon*, Händel *Israel in Egypt*, Stravinsky *Abraham and Isaac*, Schönberg *Moses und Aron*; Gershwin *Porgy & Bess* (It Ain't Necessarily So)

▶ **Nov. 23 - No Class Meeting - Fall/Thanksgiving Break**

▶ **14. Nov. 30 *The Biblical Tradition II: The Life of Jesus, The Mass, The Apocalypse***

□ **Reading:** See above, plus Bible (Matthew, Mark & Luke): handout: excerpts from *Heliand* & *Dream of the Rood*.

♪ **Musical Examples:** Machaut *Mass*; Victoria *O vos omnes*, Bach *St. Matthew Passion* (Last Supper Scene), *Mass in B-Minor*, Händel *Messiah*, Mozart *Mass in C-Minor*, Stravinsky *Mass*

Dec 3, 8:00 p.m. *Musica Nova* Concert – University Theater

▶ **15 Dec 7 *Death and the Afterlife, Heaven and the Underworld, Eternity***

Pluto (Hades); Lethe (waters of forgetting); rebirth; changing states vs. constant states

□ **Reading:** Leeming, pp. 64-75; Ovid (Book 15), handout: excerpts from Dante

♪ **Musical Examples:** *Skolion of Seikilos*, Gregorian *Dies Irae*, Elgar *Dream of Gerontius* Requiems by Mozart, Verdi, Fauré, Mozart *Masonic Funeral Music*, Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*, Stravinsky *Requiem Canticles*, Messiaen *Quartet for the End of Time*, RXR *El Día de los Muertos*

(PAPER #4 & FINAL NOTEBOOKS DUE)

Topics and assignments subject to change at the discretion of the instructors.

<https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>