

ITALIAN MUSIC

Fall 2020
[class meets on Microsoft Teams,
link available on Valutami]

Instructor: dr. Carlo Lanfossi



COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is “Italian” about Italian music? What do Italians think about their own music, and what is its image/sound abroad?

The course aims to answer these questions by engaging with several musical genres (opera, instrumental, pop music, film music, folk), discussing interconnected topics (politics, economy, culture, and so on) and listening to a wide variety of music.

Classes will feature lectures, group discussions, brief assignments, and guided listenings.

No previous knowledge of music theory is requested.

There will also be an opportunity to attend an actual performance of an opera at the Teatro di Pisa.

Italian music is engrained in public and private rituals and connects people across the world and across the vast community of history. Yet while we know that we like Italian music, and that it has a certain effect on us, it is often difficult to determine why, and harder still to explain what it is that makes its sound “Italian”. This course takes on those issues. It aims to introduce you to a variety of music, and a range of ways of thinking, talking, and writing about Italian music. We will explore music as a cultural phenomenon, considering what music has meant for different people from different societies across the ages and across geographical boundaries.

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GOALS

- To connect music as you hear it to culture and history, in addition to making connections between music and other disciplines (literature, drama, art, economics, technology, etc.).
- To contribute to the classroom experience by participating openly and collegially, working with each other to make the course enjoyable and intellectually rigorous.
- To experience the history of Italian music as a culture different than your own, to see music as emerging not from a vacuum but as one strand in the fabric of society.
- To combine auditory perception with intellectual thought--i.e. becoming a close and attentive listener.
- To engage with the history of music in Italy, acquiring essential information on historical context, major--and minor--works, composers, styles, and genres.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography will be made available online, together with the Powerpoint slides and the video recordings of the classes which I will upload right after class for you to study and review at home.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Class attendance: 25%

I value participation in the class as an active contribution to the general discussion and to specific tasks. Don't be afraid to raise your hand during lectures, group assignments, or other activities.

Presentation: 25%

Each of you will be asked once (throughout the entire course) to present on a topic related to the class and previously arranged with me.

Music review: 25%

Before the end of the course, you will write a 1-page report on a musical performance available on video. More info during the first class.

Final written exam: 25%

The exam will be based on the readings and topics covered in class. You will be able to choose between two dates.

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COURSE SCHEDULE

- Week 1 – Introduction to the notion of “Italian Music” and its role in the construction of “Italy” as a nation
- Week 2 – Italian Opera
- Week 3 – Italian Classical Music
- Week 4 – Italian Popular Music and its Songwriters
- Week 5 – Italian Folk and World Music
- Week 6 – Italian Film Music