Should not an entire nation, which teaches great aims and patriotism on every page, raise to Beethoven something a thousand times grander?

And so let a high obelisk or some pyramidal edifice proclaim to future generations that the contemporaries of a great man, contemporaries who treasured his works above all else, were mindful enough of their debt to acknowledge it by an extraordinary symbol.

- Robert Schumann, composer and critic

“A Monument to Beethoven”
1836

SYNOPSIS:

Contests between stalwart custodians of “tradition” and rebels searching for new, untested modes of expression pervade Western music history. This course will survey some of the most dynamic debates on music’s past, present, and future waged in impassioned arguments between music theorists, critics, artists, and audiences as preserved in historical literature. Our focus is on the seemingly inevitable tension between what music is, what it should be and what it can be. How are traditions constructed? Who defines the boundaries of a tradition, or what’s permissible in a particular style of music? What happens when an artist transgresses upon what’s deemed conventional or acceptable? This course will bring us closer to answering these questions.

We begin by interrogating the writings by ancient Greek philosophers on music, going on to examine debates on the music of figures like Claudio Monteverdi, Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Wagner, Duke Ellington, and Bob Dylan, and explore the backlash against and defense of styles like jazz, folk, and punk.

The goal of this course is to better understand how culture is “made” during moments of charged debate, where a particular music’s perceived transgressions or merits serve as the pretext for larger conflicting ideological issues. Art, in this sense, becomes a site where competing aesthetic values reveal and articulate deep social and cultural rifts. This class will meet twice a week; our first session is devoted to scrutinizing and discussing primary sources, i.e. letters, newspaper and magazine articles, journal entries, audio recordings, film, and even commentary from the internet (e.g. Youtube). For our second session we will read secondary (scholarly) sources for context and use this as a way to think critically about our own aesthetic judgments. Debates on tradition and innovation in music, as we shall see, are a long-standing tradition in their own right.
COURSE MATERIALS:
All of the reading and listening assignments, as well as handouts, can be found on our course site:

http://wp.nyu.edu/inwiththeold2017

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Attendance: You are required to attend all meetings, arriving punctually. More than one unexcused absence lowers your final grade by one full point (e.g. “A” becomes “B”). More than two unexcused absences is an automatic fail.

2. Discussion Leader: Each session, one student will be assigned to opening our discussion by summarizing the key points of the readings, thinking through them in relation to the theme(s) of the course, focusing on important dates or events touched on in the material, offering a personal reflection on both the reading and listening assignment, and raising important questions to discuss. This “introduction” should last no more than ten minutes. The discussion leader can meet or correspond with me in advance of class to discuss their summaries and questions. Discussion leaders do not submit a response paper for the week in which they present.

3. Assignments: There are four assignments in total, excluding the final paper. During the first half of the semester, students will complete three short papers based on prompts from the instructor. The fourth assignment is a final paper proposal, the guidelines of which will be made available in advance. Important note: all assignments should be e-mailed to the instructor in either .doc, .docx, or .rtf file formats (no PDFs!), and you should include the assignment title in the subject line.

4. Final Paper: Students will submit a final paper (approx. 12-pages, double-spaced, 12-pt. font) on their chosen topic on Wednesday, May 10, at 11am. This paper should cite at least ten sources (some may be from class) explaining, in detail, the terms of the debate and adding a historical and/or cultural perspective on the issues at hand.

GRADING RUBRIC:
Participation and Discussion Leading: 30%
4 Assignments: 40%
Final Paper: 30%

EXPECTATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
As a Gallatin student, you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html)
COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK I
Case: Introductions.
Music: N/A
   Jan. 23: Introduction to course objectives; logistics.
   Jan. 25: Open discussion on tradition and genre.

WEEK II
Case: What is “tradition” in Western music culture(s)?
Music: N/A
   Feb. 1: Composers and artists, art music and popular music. Read: A) Taruskin, The Oxford History of Western Music Vol. 1, Ch. 1: The Curtain Goes Up:
      a) “Literacy”
      b) “The Romans and the Franks”
      c) “The Carolingian Renaissance”
      d) “The Chant Comes North”

WEEK III – Western Antiquity
Case: The Greek foundations of Western aesthetics in music.
Music: N/A
   Feb. 6: Plato, Republic, a) Book II, 376e-364e (pp. 611-625); b) Book III, 392c-403c (pp. 637-48, 656); c) Book IV, 424b-c, 441a-443e (pp. 683-6).
   Feb. 8: Aristotle, a) Politics, Book VIII, Chs. 3, 5-7 (pp. 1306-8, 1309-16); b) Poetics, Chs. 1-4, 6-10 (pp. 1455-9, 1460-5).

WEEK IV
No class.
- Assignment 1 Due on Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 11am -

WEEK V – Seventeenth Century, “Baroque”
Case: Giovanni Maria Artusi vs. Claudio Monteverdi
Music: Claudio Monteverdi, “Cruda Amarilli” (madrigal, 1605)
   Feb. 20: No class (Presidents’ Day)
      b) Excerpt from Giovanni Maria Artusi, Artusi, or, Of the Imperfections of Modern Music (1600) Grout pp. 526-534.
c) Claudio Monteverdi’s letter in his Fifth Book of Madrigals (1605) and Giulio Cesare Monteverdi’s explanation of his brother’s letter, Grout pp. 536-544.

WEEK VI
No Class
- Assignment 2 Due on Wednesday, March 1st, at 11am -

WEEK VII – Nineteenth Century, “Late Classical/Early Romantic”
Case: Beethoven’s critics
Music: Tuesday: Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in Eb Major (“Eroica”), Op. 55, first movement (1803); Thursday: Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, first movement (1807)
March 6: a) Reviews from Der Freymüthig 3 (1805), Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 7 (1805), the Berlinische musikalische Zeitung 1 (1805), and the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 9 (1807), Senner pp. 15-20; b) E.T.A. Hoffmann’s review in the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 12 (1810), Senner pp. 95-98, but glance at pp. 99-112; c) E.T.A. Hoffmann, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” Charlton pp. 96-103.
March 8: Taruskin, OHWM Vol. II, Chapter 13: C-Minor Moods, a) “Devotion and Derision” and “The Music Century”

WEEK VIII
Spring Break – No Class

WEEK IX – Nineteenth Century, “Romantic”
Music: Richard Wagner, Tristan und Isolde, Prelude (1859/60)

WEEK X – Twentieth Century, “Popular/Swing”
Case: The Dangers of Popular Music
Music: Paul Whiteman Orchestra, “Changes” (1927) and Duke Ellington Orchestra, “It Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing” (1932)
March 27: Theodor Adorno, “Farewell to Jazz” (1933) and “On Jazz” (1936) in Leppert, pp. 496-500, 470-495.
March 29: - Assignment 3 Due at 11am -
WEEK XI – Twentieth Century, “Bebop”  
Case: Bebop vs. “Moldy Figs”  
Music: Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, “Bebop” and “Groovin’ High” (1945)  
   April 5: Final Paper Proposal Due at 11am -  

WEEK XII – Twentieth Century, “Experimentalism/Avant-Garde”  
Case: The Euro- and Euro-American Avant-Garde vs. Convention  
Music: John Cage, Atlas Eclipticalis (1961), performed by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein (1964)  
   b) Edgard Varèse, Excerpts from The Liberation of Sounds (1936-59), Strunk pp. 1339-1346.  

WEEK XIII – Twentieth Century, “Experimentalism/Avant-Garde”  
Case: Jazz Avant-Garde and Jazz Fusion vs. The Mainstream  
   April 19: a) Stanley Crouch, “On The Corner: The Sellout of Miles Davis” (1986); b) Film: Miles Davis: A Different Kind of Blue (in-class viewing)

WEEK XIV – Twentieth Century, “Popular/Folk”  
Case: Bob Dylan vs. (Folk) Authenticity  
Music: Bob Dylan, “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965)  
   April 24: Film: Bob Dylan: Don’t Look Back (in-class viewing)  
   April 26: Benjamin Filene, “Performing the Folk: Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan” in Romancing The Folk, pp. 183-218.

WEEK XV– Twentieth Century, “Popular/Rock”  
Case: Punk vs. Respectability  
Music: The Sex Pistols, “God Save The Queen” (1977) & The Slits, “Instant Hit” (1979)  
   May 1: Film: Punk: The Early Years (in-class viewing)  

FINAL PAPER DUE: Wednesday, May 10, 11am.