

CLASSICAL MUSIC IN AN AGE OF POP 3/9 fix

Greg Sandow

Spring 2020

phone: 917 797-4265

[email me](#)

[my website](#)

[my blog on the future of classical music](#)

[find me on Facebook](#)

[find me on Twitter](#)

[course overview](#)

Class Schedule and Assignments

You should read this every week, to find out what we're going to do in our next class. And to find out what your assignments for that class will be. For most of our classes, you'll have reading to do, and maybe music to listen to and videos to watch. Everything you have to read, hear, or watch is online. Just follow the links.

You'll also have written assignments (two short papers), and one presentation to do in class. I've alerted you to these in boldface type, a week before they're due.

This schedule might change, depending on how long some of our discussions take. The assignments might change, too, because I might get new ideas — maybe from you! — of what I want to teach. I'll email all updates.

And one last thing. If you're reading the assignments for any week and come to a page break, please scroll down past the break. There may be more for that week on the next page. This may seem obvious, but after many years of life (and 22 years of teaching) I've learned that people — all of us, including me — sometimes miss what ought to be obvious.

January 15

Introduction to this course. I'll tell you about myself, and about the course. Then I'll ask you all to tell me about yourselves. And, above all, why the course interests you.

January 22

Your life in classical music

In this first week after the introductory class, we'll talk about what you're doing in music now, and how you feel about it. The readings and video are only meant as things to think about, or in the case of Ray Chen's video, simply to enjoy. Maybe they all convey a kind of joy that I hope we all can find in our musical work, but beyond that, I don't mean to be suggesting goals you're supposed to reach, or things you're supposed to be doing. Whatever you do in music is your choice. And while it's true that things in classical music are changing, and that there are more career choices than there used to be, what you do is entirely up to you.

We'll break into small groups in class, so you can talk with each other about things you like and don't like about your career so far in classical music.

reading:

Mark Rabideau, “[Dear Recent Music Graduate](#)” (from [21CM](#), the webzine of the 21st Century Musician Initiative at the [DePauw University School of Music](#); Mark is the director of the initiative, which forms the basis of DePauw’s undergraduate conservatory curriculum)

videos:

Ray Chen, “[Typical practice session \(that involves traveling back in time to clutch that embarrassing mistake you made 10 years ago\)](#)”

Mike Block, “[Breaking Away from ‘Classical’](#)” (A talk from a 2016 conference about classical music education, at the DePauw School of Music. [Mike](#) is a cellist who invented the [Block Strap](#), which lets him strap his cello to his chest so he can move around and even dance while he plays. Among many other things he does, he plays world music with Yo-Yo Ma’s [Silk Road Ensemble](#), and directs the [Global Musician Workshop](#), a Silk Road summer program, in which musicians from many musical traditions work together. At one point in his talk he mentions something I said; I gave the keynote talk at this conference.)

January 29

The crisis in classical music

Small group discussion in class: Why you think classical music is valuable. Why it should survive. Why you think other people should listen to it, and go to performances. I won’t suggest any ideas of my own this week. This week it’s all about your ideas!

reading:

Classical music before the crisis:

Greg Sandow, “[Before the crisis](#)” (a post from my blog)

Greg Sandow, “[When opera was popular](#)” (another post from my blog)

In 1923, Geraldine Farrar, a popular soprano, retired from singing. She gave a farewell performance at the Met Opera. Which a famous soprano might do today. But — as a *New York Times* article on the event shows — a farewell performance in 1923 was a much bigger thing than it would be now. Farrar had teenage fans, and they went wild, hanging a banner from the Met Opera balcony during the opera, and throwing flowers on the stage. Reading about this is like taking a trip to another world, a world that really did exist, in which the classical music audience was young.

“[One and Two and...](#)” (*Life* magazine, June 29, 1962)

Again a trip to another world. *Life*, in 1962, was one of America’s most popular magazines. Here it celebrates the piano, with an article on a small-town piano teacher, another on a family buying a piano, and then one by a writer who loves playing the piano at home.

And then there’s something that really shows that 1962 was another universe. The magazine commissioned a new piano piece from Aaron Copland, then America’s leading composer, and printed it for readers to play. Would any popular magazine do that today?

To find all this, follow the link, which takes you to the June 29, 1962 issue of *Life*, as archived on Google Books. The story on the piano starts on page 38 of that issue. To go there, find the words “Front Cover” in small print just above the full reproduction of the cover of the magazine. Click the down arrow next to those words, and find the link to the story, either by looking for its title — “One and Two and...” — or by looking for page 38. Once you get there, you may have to make the image smaller in order to read the articles.

the crisis now:

Greg Sandow, "[Portrait of a crisis](#)" (blog post)

Greg Sandow, "[Timeline of the crisis](#)" (blog post)

Greg Sandow, "[Timeline of the crisis additions](#)"

I did my timeline blog post in 2012, so I've added these additions, focusing on orchestra labor disputes and cuts in musicians' pay that have happened since then. Along with a few from earlier years. When we put all these orchestra problems together, do they look at all scary?

February 5

Classical music and the rest of our culture

Small group discussion in class: Some objections to classical music, some reasons why other people might think it's not so valuable. You'll find some in the reading from Marcus Westbury, below, and I'll suggest others. Then you all can talk about your reactions to that.

reading:

Marcus Westbury, "[Mozart cover bands rake in the moolah](#)" (*Sydney [Australia] Morning Herald*, October 18, 2007)

A challenge to classical music. Or, specifically, to classical music funding. Why should orchestras and opera companies get so much money, when other things in our society — including other arts — get so much less?

Richard Florida, [excerpt](#) from *The Rise of the Creative Class*

What do educated, creative, artistic younger people — people your age and in their 30s — like to do when they go out at night? Richard Florida, a business consultant, offers some thoughts on that in a book that became famous for its analysis of a new kind of creative younger people, and their economic importance to the cities they're in. Nightlife isn't Florida's main subject, but what he says is worth reading. If he's right — if this is what people your age and a little older look for when they go out at night — then classical music has a serious problem. Because the people Florida describes are looking for something more contemporary, more informal, and more rooted in the cities they live in. This was written awhile ago, and millennials aren't exactly like these people. But from what I've seen, they're not so different.

Jasper Parrott, "[Classical music must play its part in tackling the climate crisis](#)" (*The Guardian*, December 20, 2019)

We surround ourselves with classical music, and then maybe we read or watch the news, full of problems like climate change. And we may not think that classical music has much to do with world problems, because when we play Brahms, current world problems don't seem to be discussed. In this reading, though, is someone who doesn't feel that way. He's a busy artist manager in Britain, and isn't the first to notice that when classical musicians go on tour, there's a bad impact on climate. We fly to our destination, and there's growing awareness that planes release great amounts of carbon into the atmosphere, thus contributing to global heating. This is especially bad when orchestras tour, because they charter private planes that otherwise might not be flying. Parrott says we should take this seriously, and either tour less, or travel by train. Do you agree?

Now comes some reading about pop music. We'll discuss pop music more fully later in the course, but this week we should understand that pop music plays a huge role in worldwide culture. It's just about everyone's musical universe, and helps shape peoples' view of who they are, and of what's going on in the world around them. You may know

this, of course, and maybe you've found it true for yourself. But in my experience, this is something that not everyone in classical music truly understands. Nor do we understand that, however profound classical music might be, it might not offer the connection to the world around us that pop music does.

So here are reading and video assignments, to help show how important pop music can be, in countries as varied as the U.S., Britain, Germany, Senegal, and Ukraine.

Michael Cooper, "[Celebrating David Bowie, A Star Who Burned Bright to the Last](#)" (*New York Times*, January 11, 2015) A pop star dies, and he was considered so important that in the days just after his death, the *New York Times* did more than 20 stories about him. This is one of them. As you'll see, Bowie had a tremendous influence on many peoples' lives. Optional: If you'd like to hear Bowie's music — and, most importantly, see him — you could sample , put together a few years ago by the *Times*.

Ricci Shryock, "['Rap does not shut up': hip-hop women of Senegal](#)" (*The Guardian*, December 31, 2019). Or instead of reading this, just watch a [video](#). only five and a half minutes long, in which one of these Senegalese women says everything written in the reading. The reading is fine, but the video is much more fun.

Liana Satenstein, "[Meet Alyona Alyona, Ukraine's Most Unlikely Rap Star](#)" (*Vogue*, April 11, 2019). Alyona Alyona's most recent video is linked in this piece. But I like [this one](#) better. It's Alyona's first big hit — called "Ribki" ("Fish"), in which this large woman looks happy and free, showing herself off in a bathing suit.

I don't know whether you'll like any of this music. I do like it, but no matter what any of us might think, we should ask ourselves what I think is a crucial question. Can classical music have as much impact?

February 12

What is classical music? Why should it survive?

Small group discussion in class: More reasons why classical music might be valuable, in our culture right now. You'll find some reasons in your reading, and I'll suggest others in class. Then, in your small groups, you can put all of this together, along with everything we've talked about in small groups up to now. And you can decide for yourselves what the value of classical music might be, for you and for others. And then you'll write a paper about that.

Paper due next week, emailed to me by midnight next Wednesday, February 19: What do you personally think the value of classical music is? By now we'll have talked about this quite a lot. So now I'm asking what you've brought away from all this discussion. As you think about what we've talked about, what are the reasons *most important to you* why classical music is valuable, and why it should survive?

This should be a very personal paper. You don't need to repeat all the reasons we've talked about, why classical music might be valuable. You just should say which reasons matter most to you. Which might even be reasons we haven't talked about.

We've also talked about objections to classical music. If any of them seem relevant to your personal reasons for thinking classical music is valuable, you can write about them, and say why you disagree with them. But you don't have to mention every reason people give for rejecting classical music. Just mention the ones that might affect your personal ideas about classical music's value.

This paper is due next week, by midnight on the day of our next class, February 19. You should email it to me at greg@gregsandow.com. If you're going to be late with this or any other written assignment, you *must* let me know in advance, so we can set another due date.

How long should this paper be? As long or short as you want it to be. I might suggest writing three pages, but if you can say what you're thinking in less space than that, go for it.

Feel free to write in a normal, everyday, informal style. This isn't a formal paper!

reading:

[Some definitions of classical music, and comments about it, from various sources](#)

And then three strong statements by famous classical musicians, insisting in different ways that we need classical music in our culture. I've quoted one of the statements below. The others can be found by following the links:

Kyle MacMillan, "[Violinist Zukerman decries sad state of classical music](#)," (*Denver Post*, November 15, 2007)

Daniel Barenboim, speaking of a recording of the Beethoven symphonies that he made with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, as part of a project called "Beethoven for All":

Many people feel or think, without really knowing, that music is somehow elitist – that it is for people who can afford the money and the time; it's something that has only to do with leisure. But music is not elitist. On the contrary. Music is not only not elitist, music is universal. Even though all the great composers of the past are European, music doesn't speak only to Europeans. (I was born in Argentina; if I were limited to "my" music, I could only play tango!) This music, although it was written by Beethoven in Bonn or in Vienna, speaks to people in Ramallah, in Australia, and everywhere else. This is why it is not elitist. Music is for all, for everybody – everybody who opens their mind and heart to it. It needs that curiosity, and it needs attentive listening, but then it's for all. And if you ask people who do not think of themselves as musically inclined: "Who do you know?" they all say, "Beethoven." So if we want music for all, then it must be Beethoven.

David Finckel and Wu Han, "[Classical Radio's Fade-Out](#)" (*New York Times*, April 20, 2002)

In 2002, WNYC — New York's public radio station — drastically cut back its classical music broadcasts. Before that, they played classical music all day. But in 2002 they stopped playing it during the day, and only played it at night. (Since then the cuts have gone further, and now WNYC hardly plays classical music at all.) Most other public radio stations have made similar cuts. David and Wu Han, who now run the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, argued in the *New York Times* that WNYC and other classical stations were making a big mistake. (David at the time was the cellist in the Emerson Quartet.)

What do you think of the three statements? Are they convincing? When Barenboim talks about music, what music does he mean? Do you think music — as he seems to define it — is universal? If you ask most people what musicians they've heard of, do they say Beethoven? And about WNYC — do you think David and Wu Han explain why WNYC cut back its classical music broadcasts? Would any of these statements convince the people we need to convince, namely people who currently don't listen to classical music and may not care about it?

February 19

Paper due: Why you think classical music is valuable, why it's important, why it should survive.

Classical music in the past (1)

This week we'll see that classical music wasn't always formal. The audience wasn't at all silent. It applauded or cried out when it heard music it liked. Musicians didn't stick to the written notes. They ornamented the music they played, they improvised, and they welcomed audience participation. Mozart, as you'll see, even designed one of his symphonies to make the audience applaud — while the music was playing.

reading:

E.M Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes: The Economics of Music Composition in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, [excerpt from chapter 3](#), about how composers made a living, what they got paid to do.

Many of us may believe — because this is a common belief in the classical music community — that composers in the past were supported in large part by patrons. But that's not completely true, as this reading shows. Composers in past centuries made their living in many ways. Often, they had jobs — Prince Esterhazy was Haydn's employer, not his patron — and often they engaged in commercial activity, working on their own to earn money, and in fact acting like entrepreneurial businessmen. From which we see that the current emphasis on entrepreneurship, in conservatories and elsewhere in classical music, isn't entirely new. Handel and Mozart, to name just two examples, wouldn't be surprised at all by what we're talking about now.

James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris*, [excerpt from chapter 1](#), about Baroque opera in Paris, and its noisy audience

Some [descriptions](#) of performances in past centuries, from various sources. Note, among many other things, how much improvisation and ornamentation there was.

[excerpt from a letter Mozart wrote to his father](#) on July 3, 1778, about the premiere of his Paris Symphony. In which he describes how he constructed the piece in a way that was meant to make the audience applaud.

listening:

[Mozart, Symphony No. 31, "Paris," first movement](#) (Academy of Ancient Music; Jaap Schroeder, concertmaster, Christopher Hogwood, continuo.)

Mozart didn't say exactly where he put the music that was meant to make the audience applaud. Where in this movement do you think it might have been?

Wilhelm Backhaus, a great pianist from the last century, [improvises a prelude](#) to Schumann's "Das Abend"

This was recorded at Backhaus's last recital, which he played in 1969 in Carinthia, Austria. First there's an announcement from the stage, saying in German that Backhaus isn't well, and won't play the scheduled work, Beethoven's Op. 111 sonata. Instead, he'll play a short Schumann piece, which we then hear, starting with the improvised prelude. How do you like hearing this piece, with a prelude that Schumann didn't write?

February 26

Classical music in the past (2)

Old recordings will show us how lively and personal, how spontaneous and individual — at least in my view — classical musicians were in past generations.

listening:

Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, [overture](#) (live 1940 performance by the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Ettore Panizza, conductor)

Beethoven, Archduke Trio, [first movement](#): Jacques Thibaud, violin, Pablo Casals, cello, Alfred Cortot, piano (recorded in 1928)

Optional: you might also like to hear these musicians play the [first movement](#) of the Schubert B flat trio. Not as controlled a performance, but maybe freer, and thus more typical of performances from that era.

Mendelssohn, Violin Concerto, [second movement](#): Joseph Szigeti, violin, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor (1933)

Schubert, “[Serenade](#),” recorded in 1941, and sung in English (instead of the original German) by Richard Crooks, a Met opera star who had a popular radio show. No serious singer would sing German lieder in English today, or take as much freedom with the tempo as Crooks does. But isn’t it beautiful?

videos:

In these videos, I think all the performers have larger than life personalities — rock star personalities, as we might say it today. That was common, generations ago, but I think it’s less common now.

Puccini, *La bohème*, [end of Act 1](#): sung by Jussi Björling and Renata Tebaldi, with the Showcase Symphony Orchestra, Max Rudolf, conductor (from *Festival of Music*, a classical music show broadcast live on network TV in 1956, complete with car commercials). The host of the show, whom you’ll see introducing the performance, is Charles Laughton, a famous British actor. He’s not the kind of show business personality we’d see on TV today, and clearly isn’t following a script. He’s making it up as he goes along.

Gregor Piatigorsky ends a recital with an arrangement of “[The Swan](#),” from *Carnival of the Animals* (from *Carnegie Hall*, a 1947 Hollywood movie, which featured performances by many classical music stars). There’s an amazing show-business element here — the accompaniment, played by seven young women on seven harps. Would anyone dare to try that at Juilliard today? Or anywhere?

Artur Schnabel plays Debussy’s “[Ritual Fire Dance](#)” (also from *Carnegie Hall*; Schnabel’s performance is wonderfully theatrical, but he doesn’t exactly play what Debussy wrote)

March 4, March 11 — spring break

March 18

Pop Music

reading and video:

Joe Coscarelli, “[‘Slow Burn’: Watch Kacey Musgraves Turn Country Music Psychedelic](#)” (*New York Times*, October 24, 2018; please read the article and watch the video embedded in it).

Kacey Musgraves was the unexpected winner of the top award, for best album, at last year’s Grammy awards, the top awards show in pop music. Meaning that her album was voted the best album of 2018, from anyone in any pop music genre. She was an unexpected winner, because her genre is country music, and country music isn’t found at the top of the pop charts. Plus — even though she wasn’t a household name — she beat out some of the biggest stars in pop music, who were also nominated for the best album award.

She won the award for the album, *Golden Hour*; that her song “Slow Burn” is on. The *Times* has a regular feature called “Diary of a Song,” in which they describe how a particular pop song was made. Months before the Grammys, they looked at “Slow Burn,” and the results were (at least to me!) as delightful as I’ve found Kacey Musgraves to be. (I’ll admit that after the Grammys I became a big fan.)

But most important, by interviewing Musgraves and two of her musical collaborators, the *Times* shows that pop music is a collaborative art. Musgraves started with the basic idea for the “Slow Burn” lyrics and melody. But what we hear on the final record comes from both her and her collaborators. That’s especially true of the what in pop music is called the production, which is the sound of the song, meaning the choice of musical instruments in the accompaniment, and the way the voice and instruments are recorded, with the use of various digital ways to modify that sound.

You can hear Musgraves and her collaborators talk about how the collaborators would have ideas that Musgraves either accepted or rejected. That means she functioned more like a film director than as a composer. A classical composer creates every detail in a composition. Film directors don’t do that. They don’t plan the look of the film, don’t operate the camera, don’t edit the film, and don’t design the costumes the actors wear. To name just a few of the things they don’t do!

The film is made under their direction, and following their ideas and inspiration. They sign off on the final result. But the film is very much a collaboration, and pop songs are made in similar ways. In the next reading, you’ll see how many people collaborated on an Aretha Franklin song made long before the digital era, in the 1960s. The process is very similar to what happens today. The only difference is that in the 1960s almost everything had to be done live in the studio, whereas now a lot of things are created using music software. But the process is very similar.

[listen to "Slow Burn"](#)

reading:

Peter Guralnick, [excerpt](#) from *Sweet Soul Music*. About Aretha Franklin recording “I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You),” her first big hit. This will show you one way that pop records are produced:

This excerpt from a very long and detailed book (about the history of African-American music in the 1960s) starts in the middle of Aretha Franklin’s story. So you may be confused at first about what’s going on.

Here’s what you need to know. Aretha Franklin was a gospel singer from Detroit. Her father was pastor of a large and important church in Detroit’s black community, at a time when Detroit was a thriving city, not the troubled (but recovering) place it is today.

Franklin was an amazing talent, as recordings of her singing when she was a teenager show. But when she started her pop music career in the early 1960s, record companies didn’t think her gospel sound would sell many records. So they toned her down. They recorded her singing pop and jazz songs. These recordings are quite good, but don’t remotely show what Aretha could do. (She’s such a titanic force in pop music that people always call her by her first name, whether they know her or not.)

By the late 1960s, the climate had changed, and the mainstream white world was ready for a gospel vocal sound. There were a few mainstream record producers who knew how to record gospel music, and one of them was Jerry Wexler, now a pop music legend. Wexler signed Franklin to a recording contract, and brought her to a recording studio in the American south, where musicians understood the gospel style, which had now developed into something called soul music.

Wexler hired musicians — guitar, piano, drum, bass, horns (a pop music term meaning saxophones and brass instruments) — to record with Franklin. These were all musicians, some black, some white, who knew how to play soul music.

The recording session began when Aretha sat at the piano, and sang and played a song she wanted to record. That's how it normally works in pop music. Nobody writes the music down. Instead, someone demonstrates how a song goes, and the musicians work out for themselves what to do with it.

But Aretha provided more than a demonstration. From the first chord she played on the piano, she was so impressive that the piano player hired for the recording session immediately said that she should play the piano, instead of him.

And things went on from there, with the horn players going to another room to work out what they would play. So what you hear on the record is a cooperative enterprise, worked out by all the musicians together.

When you hear the song, listen (among much else) for the entrance of the horns. Can you believe that these musicians, all on their own, planned something so perfectly right (at least in my opinion), and that — when they start playing offbeats — gets so dramatic?

[listen to the song](#)

listening:

Frank Sinatra, "[I've Got You Under My Skin](#)" (from *Songs for Swingin' Lovers*, 1956)

Lucinda Williams, "[Ventura](#)" (from *World Without Tears*, 2003)

Eric B. & Rakim, "[Follow the Leader](#)" (from *Follow the Leader*, 1988)

James Brown, "[Get Up \(I Feel Like Being a\) Sex Machine](#)" (this is a single from 1970; a single, in pop music terminology, is a song released on its own, apart from any album)

Björk, "[An Echo, A Stain](#)" (from *Vespertine*, 2002)

We all agree that classical music is art. But what is pop music? Listen to these songs, and think about how you'd classify them. Clearly they're not classical music, but why? What are the differences? What makes them pop, and not classical?

And could they be art? If not, why not? As you think about this, ask yourself what's happening in the music in each song, just as you'd ask about a classical piece. In each song, is the music simple? Complex? Can it be analyzed by looking for the things that happen in classical pieces — you might especially ask this about the James Brown song — or is something else going on?

If these songs are art, they pose a serious challenge to classical music. People in our culture listen to pop music. If it's giving them art, why do they need the art that we're offering them?

We'll talk about all this in class.

March 25

Fixing the crisis: Some ideas for the future, and some things that people have done

video:

Greg Sandow, [keynote talk](#) at the 21CMPosium, a conference held two years ago at the DePauw School of Music (the only conservatory I know of that radically changed its curriculum to address the needs of the future; we'll be learning more about them later in the course) This was a conference about what it means to be a 21st century classical musician, and what conservatories should do to prepare classical musicians for the

contemporary world. In my keynote talk, I tried to lay out the current condition of classical music, and what needs to change.

reading:

Greg Sandow, "[Four Keys to the Future](#)"

[A long list of new things](#) that classical musicians and classical music institutions have tried, assembled from various sources (including my own experience)

Sarah Robinson, "How the classical world went clubbing" (Guest post on my blog by someone who wrote a doctoral dissertation about classical musicians who've played in clubs, after playing in clubs for many years herself. The post is in two parts, [here](#) and [here](#).)

new kinds of performances, new kinds of music (audio and video):

Dan Tepfer, [The Goldberg Variations Variations, excerpt](#). (Jazz pianist Dan Tepfer plays the *Goldberg Variations*, and instead of repeating the aria and each variation, as the score indicates, he plays improvisations on them. This recording was made some years ago. I heard Dan play this live recently, and his performance has grown greatly.)

Tchaikovsky, Violin Concerto, [third movement](#) (Patricia Kopatchinskaja, violin; MusicAeterna, Theodor Currentzis conducting)

Mozart, Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K. 216, [last movement cadenza](#) (Gilles Apap, violin, Sinfonia Varsovia)

Caroline Shaw, *Partita for Eight Voices*, first movement, "[Allemande](#)"

The Pulitzer Prize is America's highest honor in composition, and in 2013 Caroline Shaw became the youngest composer ever to win it. She won it for the *Partita*, which she wrote for A Roomful of Teeth, a vocal ensemble she sings in. This is a live performance at the Music on Main series in Vancouver. The video I've linked to is of the entire piece. Your assignment is only to watch the first movement, which ends at 5:45. Of course if you like it and want to watch the rest, feel free! If you like the first movement, I think you'll like the rest of the piece even more.

-This is an example of a style of composition very common among young American composers. Very free, very relaxed, very informal, using any kind of harmony — and, in fact, any kind of sound — the composer likes.

Debussy, *Afternoon of a Faun*, University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra.

As played in 2012 from memory, without a conductor — and *danced* by the student musicians. A video that just about went viral in the classical music world. Liz Lerman, a very original choreographer, designed the dancing, building it around movements the musicians were comfortable making. James Ross, who at the time was the much-loved conducting teacher and orchestra director at the school, conceived the project and led the music rehearsals.)

April 1

Creativity and careers; What should conservatories teach? What should all of you be learning? How creative can you be in your careers?

You'll have reading assignments for this class, and I think you'll find them interesting. All of them are about new ways to train musicians. Some of them may be provocative. Certainly they're different from what goes on at Juilliard. It'll be interesting to discuss all this in class. Since we're talking about something we're all intimately involved in, this discussion might be especially hot.

reading:

Ivan Trevino, "[My Pretend Music School](#)" (blog post by a percussionist)

Greg Sandow, “[A Stunning Manifesto](#)” (blog post about new ideas at the University of Maryland School of Music)

Greg Sandow, “[Path-breaking piano curriculum](#)” (blog post about what piano students do at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario; they improvise, and play music in many genres)

DePauw University School of Music (where the curriculum has been radically revised to focus on training entrepreneurial musicians):

The DePauw University School of Music, in Greencastle, IN, was the first conservatory I know of to change its curriculum in response to the classical music crisis. Other schools, like Eastman and New England Conservatory, were among the first to start entrepreneurship programs, and they did it before the changes at DePauw. But these entrepreneurship programs were voluntary. DePauw, to my knowledge, was the first school to make entrepreneurship and other 21st century topics required parts of its curriculum.

You can find a quick outline of their program [here](#). Unfortunately they don't give details, but here's some of what they've done:

The school's [concert series](#) has been changed, so that now it features entrepreneurial chamber ensembles. Some of them, like [Fifth House](#), have been in residence at the school and have worked closely with students.

The school publishes a monthly webzine, [21CM](#), about new developments in classical music, including new ways that classical musicians make careers.

The school [took over the music program](#) at Greencastle's middle school. DePauw students teach instruments and help coach the middle school choir and band.

There are also courses in entrepreneurship and other contemporary subjects.

A donor couple gave \$15 million to the new curriculum when it was first established. They remained close to DePauw, and more recently gave money to buy and redesign a building in Greencastle, to serve as a community facility for the school, .as described below

“[21CM at DePauw](#)”

A short video about the goals of the program. The trio you see playing is Project Trio, whose bassist, Peter Seymour, once played in the Cleveland Orchestra, and is the bass teacher at DePauw. All three members of the group are trained as classical musicians, but you couldn't call what they're playing classical music. It's a sign of what DePauw wants to teach that they hired Peter to be their bass teacher. Of course he can teach classical bass playing, but he can go far beyond that.

In this video, you'll see Yo-Yo Ma playing a Bach movement to open a new space, and his participation is much more than a celebrity appearance. He's a big supporter of what's happening at DePauw, and is the chairman of the 21CM Advisory Board (which I'm also on).

The new space is a luxurious performance/party/teaching space downtown in Greencastle, IN, the town where DePauw is located. The idea was to bring the music school into its community, and the space has been so successful that the donors who funded it now have bought an adjoining building, so that even more can be done.

David Wallace, "[Becoming Village People](#)"

A talk at the 21CMPosium at DePauw. David is the chair of the string department at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Where every student can and does study with every teacher, learning to play in many musical styles.

Creative musicians describe their highly personal careers (in talks at the 21CMPosium):

Sarah Robinson, "[How I Stopped Asking Permission to Have a Career in Music](#)"

Optional! Mike Block, "[Breaking Away from 'Classical'](#)" (Optional because you've watched this already. Now that you've been in the class longer, and we've discussed so many things, you might want to watch this again. Maybe some of what Mike says will strike you differently. But it's up to you. You're not required to watch this a second time.)

April 8

Something you can do on your own: Entrepreneurship

reading:

Seth Godin, [Tribes](#) (excerpt)

Greg Sandow, "[How to do it](#)" (blog post)

Clive Thompson, "[Sex, Drugs, and Updating Your Blog](#)," from the *New York Times Magazine*, May 13, 2007 (about how to promote a pop music career all by yourself, on the web)

entrepreneurial musicians:

[Anderson & Roe](#) (A piano duo. Both of them took this class. They say I encouraged them, but I can't take credit for what they do. They were doing it long before they met me.)

Lara Downes:

"[Walking the Walk](#)" (how an entrepreneurial pianist in San Francisco got an audience for a concert series she created)

"[Success and Surprises](#)" (more on her concert series: how she drew a large audience to a performance by pianist Christopher O'Riley)

Victoria Paterson, "[Filling the House for New Music](#)" (how the American Modern Ensemble, here in New York, sells out the house for new music's concerts, and also pays its musicians very well)

Alecia Lawyer, founder, director, and principal oboe of ROCO, formerly River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, an entrepreneurial chamber orchestra in Houston, now in its 15th successful season:

Greg Sandow, "[We personalize what music is](#)" (blog post, in which Alecia talks about the group.

"[Why Not? With Alecia Lawyer](#)." (an episode of The H, a podcast about Houston, in which Alecia talks — irresistibly, I think — about what she does and how she got there).

April 15

Two current topics — community and diversity

Community

Diane Haithman, "[Music's Newest Career Track Has a Social Conscience](#)" (21CM magazine, May 2016)

Peabody Breakthrough Curriculum: Excellence and Innovation in 21st Century Training for Performing Artists

Please read this page from the Peabody website, and watch the short video on it. Probably I should have assigned this for the class on conservatories. It certainly would have fit there, and introduces you to Peabody's new concept — similar to DePauw's— of what a conservatory could be. But I've assigned it for this class because the way they talk about community engagement gives us a chance to discuss how it can benefit classical musicians, and how it fits with everything else we do. (The man speaking at the start of the video is Fred Bronstein, Peabody's dean.)

Diversity

Fred Bronstein, "[Diversity critical to survival of classical music field](#)" (*Baltimore Sun*, March 1, 2019; the dean at Peabody writes in the Baltimore newspaper that classical music can't survive without diversity).

another statement from Peabody (from the dean's quarterly update, posted online four times a year; this one is from March, 2018):

In much the same way that Peabody has put a stake in the ground around its new Breakthrough Curriculum so too have we as it pertains to diversity and inclusion initiatives. So much so that we have now added Diversity as a fifth pillar to our strategic vision as articulated in our Breakthrough Plan. There are four fundamental reasons for this commitment. First, it's the right thing to do and doing the right thing will always be in the interest of the institution. Second, as we have seen in business and other enterprises, diversity begets excellence. And we are all about excellence. Third, musical barriers are breaking down. Different genres of music are influencing today's composers, and vice versa – classical music is influencing other voices. In order to foster this fantastic and rich landscape, we benefit from different voices in that conversation, as performers, composers, and audiences. Which leads to the fourth, final and equally important point. Diversity is key to future audience development. If we want to be growing audiences for the future, we need to attract a more diverse audience. This will be even more essential as demographics shift in the United States over the coming three decades. We need to understand and leverage that shift. And ultimately, we will only truly diversify our audiences if we diversify performers on our stages. That is quite simply why the focus on diversity and inclusion is not only right, it's also smart and vital for the future of classical music and in the interest of all genres of music.

["League of American Orchestras Launches The Catalyst Fund Advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Orchestras"](#) (press release from the League, January 9, 2019)

Mark Brown, "["Preserved in aspic": opera embarks on diversity drive](#)" (*The Guardian*, January 28, 2019)

These last two items make an interesting pair. The League launches a diversity initiative, while the English National Opera announces its own diversity plan. Each takes a different approach. How would you describe the difference?

April 22

Fixing the crisis: Shaping your brand (1)

reading:

Jade Simmons, "[Are You a Victim of Artistic Identity Theft?](#)" (a post from her "Emerge Already" blog)

Greg Sandow, "[Sell What You Are](#)" (blog post)

Greg Sandow, "[How to Write a Press Release](#)"

“[Ghosts and Flowers: The Handel-Halvorsen Passacaglia](#)” (A video made by two Juilliard graduates, Arianna Warsaw-Fan and Meta Weiss.)

“[Handel Hits the Road!](#)” (Daria van den Bercken, a Dutch pianist, goes on the streets of Amsterdam to promote her project of playing and recording Handel's keyboard music.)

I don't think these three musicians — Arianna, Meta, and Daria — meant to brand themselves with these videos. But still the videos (which are very different) serve as at least tentative branding. That's because they give anyone who watches a strong idea of what the people who made them might be like, as musicians and, maybe even as people.

How would you describe what you see in these videos? What would the videos make you expect from the three musicians in the future?

websites:

Look at these websites, and ask yourself how they make you feel. You don't have to look at any of them for a long time, and you don't have to look at anything except the home page (unless you want to).

The point is just to look at how each of these sites presents the group, institution, company, or town it represents. Does it make you want to go to these schools, hear these musicians, live in this town, buy what this company sells? And if you did go to the schools, hear the musicians, live in the town, buy what the company sells, what would your experience be?

You don't need to think very hard about this. Trust your first impressions. For instance: Zipcar is a company that rents cars for short periods of time, typically three to four hours. When you look at their homepage, do you get the idea that renting from them will be difficult? Or will it be very simple?

Why doing this is useful: Because in the future, or even now, you might want to promote yourself. And if you do, you want to do it in a way that makes people feel they want to go to the concerts or whatever else you're promoting.

Here are the websites I'd like you to look at:

[Viktoria Mullova](#). Look at her [photos](#). Especially my favorite, which is [this one](#). So moody, not like a standard publicity shot. Makes me want to hear how she plays.

[Juilliard](#)

[Curtis](#)

[Berklee College of Music](#)

[DePauw School of Music](#)

[Jack Quartet](#)

[Warwick, NY homepage](#) (this is the town where my country house is)

[Zipcar](#)

assignment for next week, due April 29:

Write something down – a short phrase, a sentence, or simply a collection of words – that you could use to describe yourself as a musician. Words that sum up your musical essence.

You might want to think of more than one phrase, or more than one sentence. And don't worry if what you write doesn't seem perfect, or even if you think it's not very good. I'm not asking you to come up with something polished, something finished, something you can show the outside world. I'm just asking you to take a first step in describing yourself.

Also look for graphics that seem to evoke what you do. You can find them in print (in a magazine, for instance), or on the web. They can be photos, drawings, advertisements – anything. Most likely they won't be about you (unless you have a logo, or photos or drawings of yourself that you want to use). The idea is simply to find something visual that seems to inhabit the same world you do. What you find doesn't have to fit you perfectly. Like the words that you'll think of, they're just a first step.

Bring these materials – your phrase or phrases, and your graphics – to class. If you found graphics on the web, please print them out for all of us to see. We'll talk about what all of you bring, and see what your next step might be – your next step toward finding words and images that you really could use to define your personal brand.

April 29

Fixing the crisis: Shaping your brand (2)

You'll present your words and images in class. And we'll talk about shaping your personal brand.

assignment:

informal paper, due by email May 13, the date of our final class:

Imagine a concert you might give, that's an expression of your brand. By which I mean a concert that's entirely you, a concert that expresses the essence of your musical self, the same self that you've worked to capture in words and images. Describe the program, the setting (where you'd give the concert), and also how you'd promote the event. Everything – from the music you choose to the way you'd publicize the performance – should be an expression of everything that, as a person and as a musician, you care about most.

This paper might be three pages long. But, as before, write at whatever length – shorter than three pages, or longer -- that seems to make sense, to say what you want to say. Creativity and careers. What should conservatories teach? What should all of you be learning? How creative can you be in your careers?

May 6 jury week, no class

May 13

Final discussion. There's no exam in this course. Among other things, we can see if your ideas about classical music's value have changed. And if you have new thoughts about what to do in your careers. Not that these are required! You may feel you're fine with the goals you had when you started this course. But if you do have new ideas, I'd be happy to hear them.

informal paper due

