The New York Philharmonic and the Musical Geographies of the City

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Time: Wednesday 2-4:45  
Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2 or by appointment

Course Description:

In order to celebrate their 175th anniversary the New York Philharmonic has created the “New World Initiative.” This is a community outreach project based on the relationship between the Philharmonic and the broader musical communities of New York City. One of the main inspirations for this is the “New World Symphony” of Antonín Dvořák, premiered at Carnegie Hall on December 15th, 1893. Dvořák, a European composer who had become head of New York’s National Conservatory attempted to create a progressive vision for American music by incorporating many bits and pieces of the country in his symphony. He was particularly concerned that the people at the bottom of the power structure, African and Native Americans, be represented in anything that would be called American music.

The students in this course will explore issues related to the legacy of musical outreach; work with the New York Philharmonic on a series of community encounters; explore New York musical culture broadly; attend a series of concerts at the New York Philharmonic and develop research projects in the Philharmonic’s extensive archives. Part of the reason for doing this course at this time is that the instructor has just been named the Leonard Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence of the Philharmonic for 2016-17. This will allow the class special access to the orchestra and the administrative staff.

The class will also be divided up into four groups to pursue agreed-upon topics relating to Dvořák’s American years and several student ensembles will be created to provide music for the site.

We are also fortunate to be working with Andrew Greene, Educational Technology Specialist with the FAS Office of Educational Technology. His help with the various project has been and will continue to be invaluable.

Requirements:

Grades will be based on four factors; class attendance and participation (10%), in-class reports (20%), written assignment and journal entries (40%), and a final project (30%). Students must go to at least five musical events, including three by the New York Philharmonic. The first assignment will be graded but the grade is optional. All other assignments will count toward the final grade. There will be neither mid-term nor final exams.
**Journal:**

Because of the nature of this course, there may not be specific “homework” assignments for a given week, although there will be some. Students are expected to keep track both of the larger class projects we are working on collectively, and also collect thoughts and ideas based on various experiences, including visits to places and institutions, and especially reflections on your concert experiences. Writing should include at least five pages a week of journaling in addition to the writing associated with our geomapping project.

**Listening Assignments:** This course treats musical works as texts. While it may be useful to do contextual readings, and those may be suggested, a listening assignment for a musical work is different from other kinds of readings. The only way to properly engage these works is through multiple listenings. It is assumed that each piece assigned will be listened to several times and that students will take notes on these and have journal entries that go along with them.

**Course Paper Submissions**

Papers must be submitted on time in Word format on NYU Classes. Papers must be double-spaced.

**Syllabus**

**Sept. 7: Course Introduction**

--What we do at a university
--The aim of this course
--The New York Philharmonic’s “New World Initiative”
--Brief introduction to geomapping (Andrew Greene)

**Assignment 1: Due September 14th**

**Exploring Geomapping and Data Collection**

The class will be divided into three groups of five each, and each group will be responsible for a different program or app for creating representations of large collections of data, especially focusing on maps.

In a folder titled Mapping Project Examples in the Resources section of the NYU Classes site, you will find five files. I am asking each group to assess each file and come back next week with a 15 minute report. Each group is expected to prepare a report about the usefulness and efficacy of the applications and try to figure out which one is best. You might use SECTIONS as a guide:

- Students
But also, you may ask how each one of them can represent knowledge, the past, spatial elements, ideas, various kinds of files, and anything else you think is important. At the end of your report I’d like to have to “vote” on which one you think we should use, and feel free to summarize any dissent within the group.

In a second file you will also find several reading about GIS (Geographical Information Systems). In particular I would like you to look at “GIS Best Practices,” and “Musings on Maps-Attempts to Map Music.”

**Sept. 14: Musical Geographies of New York**

**Part 1.** This class will introduce the class to the practice of “geomapping” with our guest Andrew Greene. Groups will deliver reports about particular applications for map-making and we’ll choose the best one. We shall also outline the class project of making a website about New York.

**Part 2: Walk-Music in Greenwich Village** (Charles Ives, Edgard Varese, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, John Cage, Joan Baez; Café Society, Billie Holiday/Lena Horne; Bitter End, Gaslight Café, Café Wha; Blue Note)

**Assignment 2: Due September 21st-“New World Symphony”**

**Sept. 21: Dvořák’s “New World” Symphony**

**Reading:** Robert Winter’s DVD Rom about the “New World” Symphony; Beckerman, *New Worlds of Dvořák*, Chapters 2-3 (on NYU Classes)

**Listening:** “New World” Symphony (on NYU Classes but available in many recordings on almost all streaming services)

**Assignment 2:** One copy of Robert Winter’s DVD-Rom will be available in the Music Department and another will be placed on course reserve in Bobst Library. Plan to spend some time exploring it. It contains an enormous amount of information about the symphony and its contexts and some fun things to play around with. Please do not remove the disc from the Music Department; the Bobst disc is available for library usage. Then do the following: **A.** Listen to the “New World” Symphony for as long as it takes to familiarize yourself with it; following the score if you like on the DVD-ROM disc and looking at the commentary. **B.** Write a 2-3-page double-spaced
either essay based on any of the primary source documents in Robert Winter’s DVD-Rom (in the section called “Direct Testimony”) or attempt a musical analysis/discussion of any aspect of the symphony. This could involve poetic and other sources for the thematic material; the rhetorical style of the work; or even an extended discussion of a particular theme or movement. I’m giving this assignment two weeks ahead so please plan ahead and make sure to ask questions if you have any.

**Sept. 21: 7:30 PM Gala Premiere, NY Philharmonic-Dvořák’s “New World”**
Class will meet for discussion before

**Sept. 28th: Trip to the Philharmonic Archive**
We will be joined by Barbara Haws, the Archivist of the New York Philharmonic and Gabe Smith. We will have a chance to look at some music manuscripts and get a sense of what happens in an archive, and in this archive in particular. We will meet with Philharmonic archivists Barbara Haws and Gabryel Smith who will give us an idea of some projects we might do together with the archive.

**Oct. 5: Walking/Mapping Dvořák’s New York**
We will spend the afternoon walking Dvořák’s familiar haunts in the area near NYU, photographing buildings and other landmarks, including Stuyvesant Park, St. George’s Church, Friends Seminary, Dvořák’s favorite beer hall, and many other things that were there in his day. After doing a good deal of study about Dvořák and his work, on this guided walk, we will be compiling images for a geomapping project that will have Dvořák walking to the National Conservatory on a date to be decided...

**Readings:** Extended Preparatory Readings from Robert Winter’s DVD Rom, newspaper archive searches and *New Worlds of Dvořák*

**Listening:** “American” Quartet and Quintet

**Oct. 12: No Class—Yom Kippur (individual 20 min. meetings with each student on Tuesday or Thursday)**

**October 19: New Music in New York**
When Dvořák’s “New World” was presented in 1893 it was a brand new work, never before heard by the audience. The classical canon features works that, for the most part, are performed and heard again and again. But what about new music in our day? What kind of exciting premieres are there today? Who are the composers who might be the equivalent of Dvořák? Where do they live and work, and how do they support themselves? This class will feature visits from several composers who will speak about their own work, their relationship to contemporary audiences and their goals.
Reading and Listening: Listening list of John Zorn's work and read interview with John Zorn at: https://newclasses.nyu.edu/access/content/group/e3cf796f-b50a-46e8-ac66-a3d889220430/Zorn/Zorn%2C%20Interview%201988.pdf

Concert October 20: John Zorn at Columbia University's Miller Theater 8PM (6PM meet and have dinner together)

Oct. 26: Visit to DAHA, Dvořák American Heritage Association
When Dvořák's home on 17th St. was razed to make an AIDS hospice, the Dvořák American Heritage Association (DAHA) was formed to preserve the composer's American legacy. For the last two decades DAHA has sponsored concerts, lectures, and has collected materials related to Dvořák's American years. Today DAHA is part of the BBLA (Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association) and is housed in the magnificent Bohemian National Hall, built in 1896 to house various Czech organizations. We will have a tour of the hall, visit the “Dvořák Room” on the 3rd floor of the Bohemian Hall, and stay for a concert of Czech vocal music in the evening.

Listening: Janacek, Jenufa, Cunning Little Vixen, and Moravian Folk Poetry in Song.
Reading: DAHA website articles including “Dvořák’s Biography” by David Beveridge, and “Dvořák in America,” by Maurice Peress

5:30-Group Dinner

Oct. 26--Concert: Evening concert of Czech music at Bohemian National Hall

Listening: Schubert #9, Shankar Concerto for Sitar
Visit to Music Inn for talk and discussion of sitar

Nov. 3: Concert at NY Philharmonic (meeting with Anoushka Shankar)

Nov. 9: Ensemble Rehearsals/ Community Outreach? (Marcus Pyle)
The idea of community outreach seems straightforward and positive. While there are many such aspects to the process, there are also conflicts, fault-lines, and imbalances of power that make the process less transparent than it may seem. This class will focus on the history of outreach and we will look at several examples.

Nov. 16: Jazz in New York (Timucin Sahin)
This class will feature a lecture demonstration about jazz by a prominent jazz musician as well as a walking tour of the most important jazz destinations in Greenwich Village.

Readings: From Jazz in New York folder
Listening: Listening list in Resources Folder of NYU Classes, including Monk, Coltrane, etc.

Nov. 23: THANKSGIVING!
Nov. 30: Geomapping: Follow ups and fine tuning the model

The four groups who have been exploring *1. Dvořák and African American Music; 2. Jeannette Thurber, the National Conservatory; 3. Dvořák’s Walk to the Conservatory* and *4. American Music in Dvořák’s Time* will make 20 minute presentations updating the class on their progress. We will begin the process of integrating all the information, images, etc. on to our map.

Dec. 7: Beethoven, Dvořák, Janacek (Jiri Belohlavek)

Student performance ensembles will present their work and we shall explore the two longer pieces on the program.

**Listening:** Beethoven, *Piano Concerto #3; Dvořák, Symphony #6*

Dec. 8: Concert, NY Philharmonic

Dec. 14: Class Project Presentations