

The Symphony as a genre I—the Classical era

A course for OLLI, Winter 2018

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Meets at the Freight & Salvage

Course description: This course introduces the central musical genre of the 18th and 19th centuries, its history, its musical characteristics, and as a place to experiment and innovate.

Course objectives: To explore the birth of this beloved, authoritative, innovative genre as associated with the rise of the public symphonic concert, the development of our modern concept of “orchestra,” and the progressive codification of the genre. The goal of the class is to analyze some representative examples of the first decades of the genre, by placing them in the cultural and social environment where they were created (composed, maybe commissioned, rehearsed, performed, and perhaps published).

Course schedule:

Date	Topics to be presented	Repertoire to be analyzed
24 Jan.	The emergence of the symphonic genre as a central one in the Classical period, in Vienna. The composer as a house servant.	Haydn’s earliest symphonies, Nos. 6-7-8 “Le matin” “Le midi” “Le soir”
31 Jan.	Mozart’s Salzburg works. The development of our modern concept of orchestra in Mannheim.	Mozart, “Little G minor symphony” K. 183
7 Feb.	Haydn and the paying public in London—the great last 12 works. Public orchestras and playing techniques.	Haydn’s Symphony No. 104
14 Feb.	Mozart and the sublime. 1788 and the last 3 symphonies.	Mozart’s symphony No. 41 “Jupiter” K. 551
21 Feb.	Beethoven and the symphony. Thematic and motivic manipulation. Cohesion and unification of the symphony	Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5, Op. 67
28 Feb.	The culmination of the first half of the symphonic century—introduction of the voice. Performance practice and audiences in the pre-technology era	Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, Op. 125

Some supplementary readings will be made available on the Canvas site. A partial list includes parts or all of the following:

Downs, Phillip. *Classical Music*
Lockwood, Lewis. *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*
Ratner, Leonard G. *Classic Music*
Robbins Landon, H.C. *Essays on the Viennese Classical Style*
Rosen, Charles. *The Classical Style*
Sisman, Elaine. *Mozart: the “Jupiter” symphony*

Solomon, Maynard. *Beethoven AND Beethoven Essays*

Spitzer, John and Neil Zaslaw. *The Birth of the Orchestra*

Stevens, Jane. "An 18th-Century Description of Concerto First-Movement Form"

Various authors. *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart*, ed. Keefe

Zaslaw, Neil. *The Century of Bach and Mozart*