

Music of the Classic Era: The Bach Sons (MH 724/824)

Class meetings: Mondays, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon, FLR 281

Office hours: immediately after class, and by appointment

Instructor: David Schulenberg (office at Wagner College: 718-420-4288; cellphone: 617-851-3471; email: dlschulenberg@outlook.com). *The best way to reach me is by email.*

This graduate course will focus on music by three sons of J. S. Bach—Wilhelm Friedemann, Carl Philipp Emanuel, and Johann Christian—who were among the most original and most influential European composers of the eighteenth century. Closely examining selected compositions in eighteenth-century sources and modern editions, as well as related writings and documents, we will consider how the music of each composer reflected his local cultural environment. We will also attempt to determine what made possible the development by each of them of distinctive compositional and performance styles remote from the music of both their father and each other.

Our objectives include:

- acquiring a basic knowledge of the biographies, oeuvres, and historical environments and contexts of the three composers;
- familiarity with important primary and secondary sources for the same, and selected modern writings about them;
- capability to analyze selected works of each, using both historical and present-day methods;
- awareness of performance issues raised by each composition studied;
- ability to formulate research questions, give aural presentations, and write a research paper on a topic relating to one or more works of these composers.

Work for the course. This class is conducted as a seminar. Each class member is expected to attend every meeting prepared to discuss specific reading and study assignments and to give aural presentations as scheduled by the instructor. Presentations will normally be accompanied by printed handouts or equivalent electronic displays that include bibliography and musical examples (scores, audio recordings) as appropriate. Class members not giving presentations are expected to respond by raising questions and participating in active discussion.

As a final project, each class member gives an aural presentation that summarizes the content or some aspect of a research paper. The presentation must be comparable to talks presented at meetings of scholarly conferences, and the paper, due at the final regular class meeting, must be in a format acceptable for submission to a musicology journal; it should comprise a minimum of 3000 words (approximately 12 double-spaced pages), including notes and bibliography. The topic will be determined in consultation with the instructor but may be on a historical, analytical, or performance-related issue arising in one or more works by one of the composers named above.

Grading. Final grades will be based in equal proportion on (1) attendance at, preparation for, and participation in seminar meetings; (2) seminar presentations as assigned; and (3) final paper and presentation. Absences from seminar meetings, except for illness or emergency, will result in a reduction of grade. If you know in advance that you must miss a meeting, please notify me by email at least 48 hours prior to the meeting in question, or one week previously if you are scheduled to give a presentation at that meeting.

Semester plan. The semester is divided into segments as follows:

- introduction to Bach studies (meeting 1)
- where they worked, what they wrote, why and for whom (meeting 2)
- representative works in particular settings: cultural function, score analysis, performance issues
 - solo keyboard (sonatas: meetings 3–4)
 - keyboard plus ensemble (concertos: meetings 5–6)
 - voice and keyboard (songs: meeting 7)
 - orchestral (sinfonia: meetings 8–9)
 - large vocal works (“cantata,” oratorio, opera: meetings 10–11)
- final presentations (meetings 12–13)

Semester Calendar

The following calendar of meetings will be revised to include specific assignments (reading, listening, and score/source study) after ascertaining the interests and research abilities (languages, etc.) of each seminar member.

<u>class</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>topic/assignment</u>
1	1/26	introduction to Bach studies
2	2/2	where, what, why they wrote
3	2/9	keyboard sonatas
	[2/16	Presidents’ Day holiday]
4	2/17	
5	2/23	keyboard concertos
6	3/2	
	[3/9	spring break]
7	3/16	songs (lieder)
8	3/23	sinfonia (symphony)
9	3/30	
10	4/6	“cantata,” oratorio
11	4/13	opera
	[4/20	Patriots’ Day holiday]
[12	4/22	scheduled Wednesday class: no meeting]*
13	4/27	final presentations

*In lieu of class 12, I will schedule an additional meeting during exam week for presentations; prior to that, I will also schedule meetings with individual seminar members on several Fridays during April to discuss final papers.