



# Mu 101: Introduction to Music

Borough of Manhattan Community College

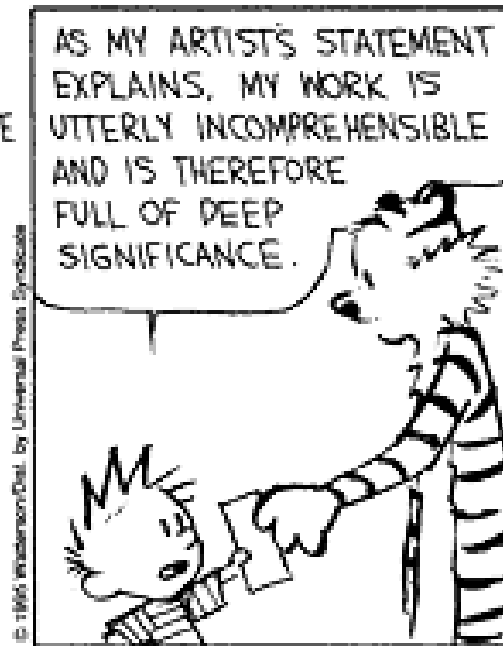
Instructor: Dr. Alice Jones

Fall 2018

Sections 0701 (MW 7:30-8:45a) and 2001 (TTh 8:30-9:45p)



BUT REALLY, ART IS A PRIVATE LANGUAGE FOR SOPHISTICATES TO CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON THEIR SUPERIORITY TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.



# Reading quiz

Which of the following is not a typical feature of Romantic art?

- a) Embracing nature
- b) Fascination with the exotic
- c) Interest in the past
- d) The supernatural
- e) Orderly balance

# Reading quiz

Women in the Romantic period often played a “behind-the-scenes” or administrative role in hosting salons and financially supporting music making.

- a) True
- b) False

# Reading quiz

Public concert halls were more common in the Romantic period than in previous periods.

- a) True
- b) False

# Reading quiz

Comparing historical periods. Circle either “Classical” or “Romantic” for each question.

In which period can you expect a larger orchestra?

In which period can you expect a wider range of dynamics?

In which period can you expect longer melodies?

In which period can you expect more extreme contrasts of tempo?

In which period can you expect a clearer sense of form?

# Reading quiz

What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the reading(s) this week?

# Recap

- Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
- Lieder
  - Songs for voice and piano in German
  - Intended for small, intimate spaces (e.g., a living room)
- Musical analysis = description + “so what”
  - What does the piece of music mean to you?

# Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III (1850)



What are your first impressions of this piece?

What does this piece seem to communicate or convey? What feelings does it instill in you (the listener)?



# Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III (1850)



What inimitable art did Beethoven employ in his “C-minor Symphony,” [No. 5], in order to steer his ship from the ocean of infinite yearning to the haven of fulfillment! He was able to raise the utterance of his music *almost* to a moral resolve, but not speak aloud that final world; and after every onset of the will, without a moral handhold, we feel tormented by the equal possibility of falling back again to suffering, as of being led to lasting victory. Nay, this falling-back must almost seem to us more “necessary” than the morally ungrounded triumph, which therefore—not being a necessary consummation, but a mere arbitrary gift of grace—has not the power to lift us up and yield to us that “ethical” satisfaction which we demand as outcome of the yearning of the heart...

Why do you think Wagner looked to Beethoven as a role model? How does Wagner see himself in relation to Beethoven? How does Wagner feel about his cultural lineage?

# Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, (1865) Act III Liebestod [Love-death transfiguration]

- Idealizes death (a climactic, beautiful, romanticized event)
- Isolde hallucinates about Tristan
- The orchestra is equally important as the singer
- The voice is sometimes engulfed by the orchestra (just like Isolde is engulfed by her passion)



Leontyne Price (b. 1927), soprano

Shall I drink of them,  
plunge beneath them?  
Breathe my life away  
in sweet scents?  
In the heaving swell,  
in the resounding echoes,  
in the universal stream  
of the world-breath –  
to drown,  
to founder –  
unconscious –  
utmost rapture!

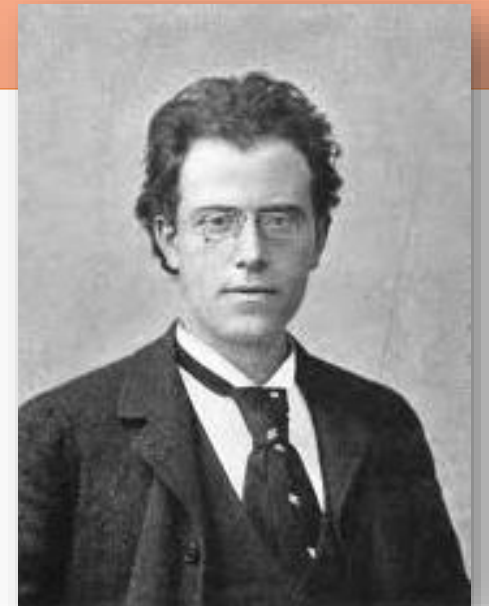


# Reactions to *Tristan und Isolde*

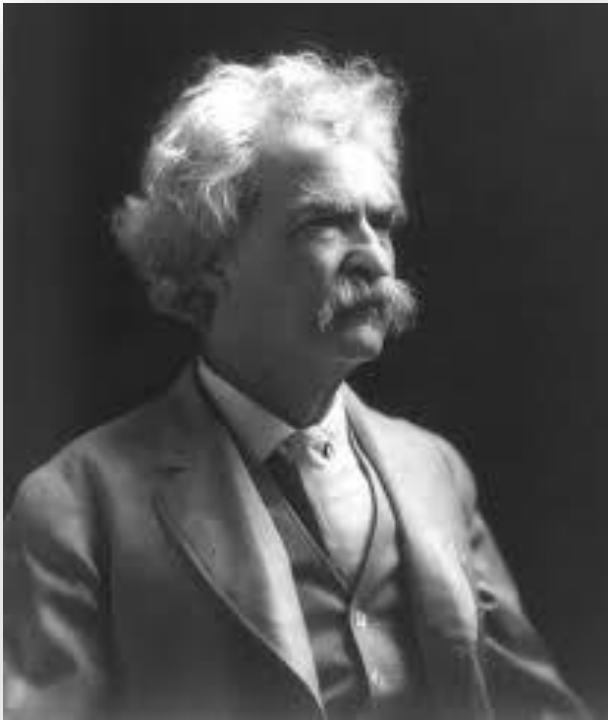


"So there I sat in the topmost gallery of the Berlin Opera House, and from the first sound of the cellos my heart contracted spasmodically... Never before has my soul been deluged with such floods of sound and passion, never had my heart been consumed by such yearning and sublime bliss... A new epoch had begun: Wagner was my god, and I wanted to become his prophet."  
–Bruno Walter, conductor 1889

"There was only Beethoven and Richard [Wagner] – and after them, nobody."  
–Gustav Mahler, composer (1904)



# Reactions to *Tristan und Isolde*



"I know of some, and have heard of many, who could not sleep after it, but cried the night away. I feel strongly out of place here. Sometimes I feel like the one sane person in the community of the mad." –Mark Twain, 1891

It was "the most repugnant thing I have ever seen or heard in all my life."  
–Clara Schumann



# Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III (1850)



Who is another artist or musician that you think commands the same intensity of reaction, admiration, and influence that Wagner did in his time?

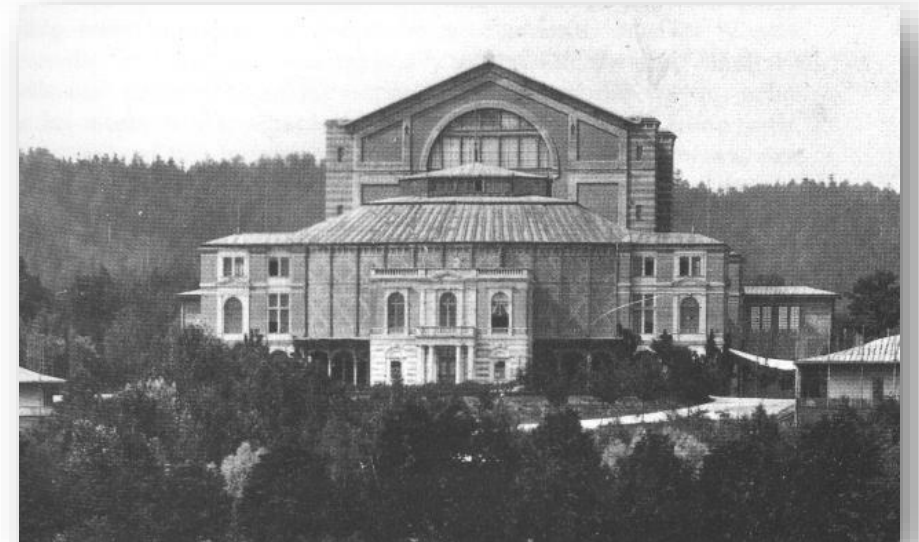
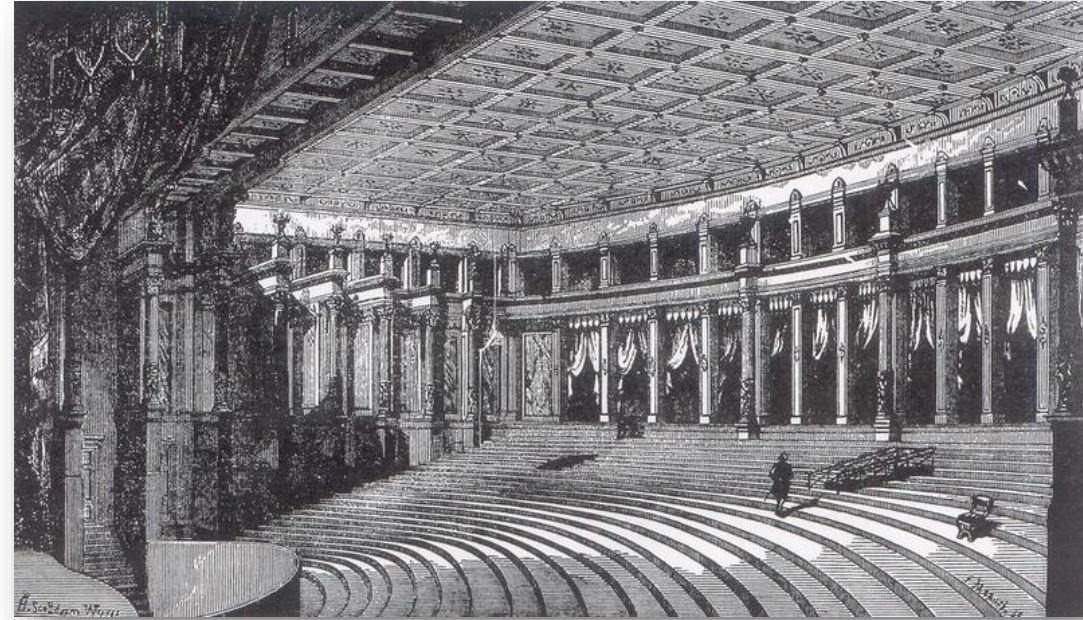
How do Wagner's ideas make you feel?

How would you feel if your favorite artist or musician made similar statements?

How is your listening experience different now compared with your first impressions of the piece?

# Wagner's influence

- Concert going: Bayreuth Festspielhaus
  - Stadium seating (no private boxes and the audience's attention is focused on the stage)
  - Lights are dimmed during performances
  - Sunken orchestra pit
- Every musician working in the West at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had to contend with the shadow of Wagner: imitate, follow, or reject



# Homework and reminders

- This week's (final!) online discussion ends Sunday (Music and violence)
- Reading for next class: Article assigned for roundtable #2 (check your email)
- Optional midterm rewrite due November 19
- Concert Response Essay due December 12
  - BMCC Music Department faculty concert Friday, November 16 at 7:30pm – Fiterman Art Center
- See you Wednesday!



# End write

Write a letter to someone who isn't in this class (e.g., a friend, family member, etc.) and tell them what you learned today and why you think it was important to learn.