**A Historical Perspective on Musical Languages**

## Prof. Enrico Reggiani

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course is open to all LT (three-year degree) and LM (Master’s degree) students, regardless of any musical skills they (may) possess, and is linked to the *Studium Musicale di Ateneo*, directed by Prof. Reggiani with the collaboration of Martino Tosi.

Students NOT from the Faculty of Linguistic Sciences and Foreign Literatures, which delivers the course may request authorisation from their Faculty Dean for the course to be inserted into their study plan as per the specific criteria of their faculty.

The course aims are as follows, defined according to an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach based on the hermeneutic resources of cultural musicology:

a) to consolidate and expand students’ basic musical skills (theoretical and practical);

b) to develop their ability to listen to and analyse compositions of the modern phase of the Western musical experience (especially the 18th-19th centuries);

c) to improve their understanding of “musical language” and of the consequent compositional perspective underlying those pieces, contextualising them in the framework of the human and artistic historical experience of the composers.

By the end of the course, students will have also consolidated their musical listening skills (also known as “structural listening”) in a cultural-musicological sense; moreover, they will be able to reflect on the different concepts of “musical language” and understand evolutionary phases, cultural dialectics and compositional consequences, independently furthering their knowledge of the relative implications and communicating the results of this research in both Italian and English.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Semester 1: *Musical languages from a historical perspective (survey course)*

a) consolidation and development of basic musical skills (sound parameters and paradigms of music)

B) Starting to listen (including in a “structural” sense) and to analyse cultural-musicological passages: Students will learn the fundamental historical, theoretical and cultural features of selected exemplary musical languages by means of the cultural-musicological analysis of paradigmatic extracts by relevant composers.

c) Is art music “a language” or does it “speak a language”? Features of the history of musical languages; linguistic-musical choices and contexts (biographical, institutional, social, economic, etc.); theoretical aspects, their dimensions and cultural implications; communicative logic and rhetoric; analysis of musical languages (approaches and methods).

Semester 2: *The Romantic musical code in Thomas Moore-John Stevenson's* *Irish Melodies* *and some of their 19th-century “re-readings”.*

In the second semester, the Romantic musical code will be examined in two interrelated examples: (a) Thomas Moore-John Stevenson's *Irish Melodies* (1808-1834); (b) some of the “re-readings” (transcodifications) that emerge in their compositional reception by key figures in the European musical experience: Beethoven, Berlioz, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Stanford, et al.

***READING LIST***

Semester 1

A. Copland, *Come ascoltare la musica*, Milano, Garzanti, latest edition (ed. orig.; *What to listen for in music*, New York, Signet Classics, latest edition)

E. Reggiani, *Cultural musicology: an in-progress notebook (edition 2022)* [file WORD in Blackboard/Materiali]

Semester 2

G. Carnall, “Thomas Moore”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, pp. 1-9 (PDF available from the MATERIALI section of the course Blackboard page)

U. Hunt, “The Harpers’ Legacy: Irish National Airs and Pianoforte Composers”, *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland*, 6 (2010–11), pp. 3-53 (PDF available from the MATERIALI section of the course Blackboard page)

J. Travis, “Irish national music”, *The Musical Quarterly*, 24 (1938), pp. 451-480 (PDF available from the MATERIALI section of the course Blackboard page)

***TEACHING METHOD***

In the first semester, the course takes the form of weekly (three-hour) workshops during which the relationship between sound parameters (pitch, duration, intensity, timbre) and music paradigms (melody, harmony, rhythm/meter, timbre) will be explored by listening to and analysing, in a cultural-musicological sense, short compositions that are relevant and easy to access.

In the second semester, some of Moore-Stevenson's *Irish Melodies* will be studied, performed in class and analysed, in a cultural-musicological sense, both in terms of their musical characteristics and their melopoetic components (poetic text + music). The (chronologically) subsequent compositional reception of the *Irish Melodies* will also be analysed, frequently definable as transcoding, produced by certain key figures in the European musical experience.

The pieces examined during the individual workshops and which are relevant for the end-of-course examination will be provided during lectures and made available on the course Blackboard page.

The course can be delivered in Italian and/or English (by prior agreement with the students).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by two alternative and complementary means:

1. Students with this course in their study plan (two semesters for a total of 60 hours of lectures worth 8 ECTS credits) and who are **not** participating in the musical activities of the *Studium Musicale di Ateneo* will take an oral exam on the entire mandatory reading list: this exam will assess their acquired skills in the fields (historical, theoretical and analytical) characterising the study of the musical languages from a historical perspective, in line with the approach of cultural musicology.
2. Students with this course in their study plan and who have **continually and successfully** participated in the musical activities of the *Studium Musicale di Ateneo* in semester 1 2019-2020 can also take the route outlined above in point a) or ask the lecturer **before the exam** to award them the ECTS credits for this participation. If students participate in the musical activity successfully, this can contribute four ECTS (equal to one of the two semesters of the course in question) to the final mark for the skills acquired during the course: these four ECTS credits, combined with the four ECTS credits that students will obtain by passing the exam on the content of semester 1 of this course will ersult in all eight ECTS credits provided by the system.

As regards the syllabus for semester 2, in the examination students are invited to present a cultural-musicological analysis (carried out according to the criteria applied during lectures and proposed in the course reading list) of one of the *Irish Melodies* by Moore-Stevenson to be agreed with the lecturer: if present, this additional task chosen by the students will contribute appropriately to the final mark (and possibly be published on Prof. Enrico Reggiani's blog: Enricoreggianiblog. *A blog on literature, music and other crossings*, https://enricoreggiani.wordpress.com/); where students do not take up the assignment, their mark will not be affected.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Course prerequisites: in terms of merit, students must be willing to recuperate and revise the basic musical skills they acquired on previous courses; in terms of method, they must be willing to experiment with new ways of acquiring and/or enhancing genuine and effective critical autonomy, demonstrate a more mature interpretation of the musical texts analysed and be able to contextualise them accurately on a historical, sociocultural and institutional level.

The information herein is to be considered preliminary and subject to possible changes during the course. Students should base their exam preparation on the syllabus that the lecturer will publish on Blackboard in good time and, in any case, before the end of the course. Students must check all sections on Blackboard regularly and become familiar with its contents.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG>, or on the Faculty notice board.