COURSE SYLLABUS

The goals for Music Through History are to develop a basic knowledge of the western art music tradition and to develop perceptive and appreciative listening habits. The class will have four major areas of emphasis.

1.) Historical Survey - A sequence of in-class lectures pertaining to the stylistic features characteristic of the music of the major composers in each of the style periods from the 10th through 21st Centuries. Emphasis is placed on the similarities and differences each composer exhibits in relation to the style period concerned, as well as significant historical and biographical events that have influenced that composer's output.

2.) Class Discussion - A major component of the class will be 12 class discussion sessions. Two types of discussion format will be utilized: 1.) small group discussions (5-6 persons each), during the first part of each mod, and 2.) large group "fishbowl discussions," at the end of each mod. Each discussion session will focus on 2-3 specific questions or various groups of questions (see attached). The smaller group discussions will focus on developing perceptive listening skills through the recognition of the inherent stylistic features in each of the various periods of music history. The larger group "fishbowl discussions" will concentrate on aesthetic factors (i.e., our perceptions, our value judgments, the role of the composer, performer and listener) and other factors regarding music and our society (i.e., the role of the media, the role of the critic, and the nature and direction of our musical culture).

For each of the 12 total class discussion sessions, the individual student is to prepare a one-page essay (8.5 X 11), summarizing his or her thoughts and reflections on the questions for that particular day. These essays are to be turned in to the instructor at the time of each discussion session.

For the small group discussions, each group will select a group leader, who will lead and facilitate the discussion process for each of the various questions for that day. This structure affords the individual student the opportunity to serve several times, as both a discussion leader and as a discussion participant. The groups themselves will be rotated at the mid-point of the class (end of B mod).

3.) Concert Attendance - The student will be required to attend at least three concerts of varying nature throughout the semester at the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University. The student will then write a review of each concert. Reviews will be based on observations that are pertinent to that individual's concert experience, material from class lectures, various thoughts that were pursued during class discussions, as well as other aesthetic factors, etc. Thus, the concert reviews are not only a personal account of the experiential aspect, but serve as the vehicle by which the individual student integrates, elaborates, and generally synthesizes their understanding of the material from the reading, listening, lectures, discussion, exams and other concert experiences (five pages each - 8.5 X 11).

4.) Reading and Listening - Both reading and listening are combined in the text – Music: The Art of Listening by Jean Ferris. Both reading and listening requirements are listed on the class schedule and should be completed prior to the individual class sessions. Additional listening recommendations will also be made by the instructor throughout the course of the semester.

The evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Attendance - regular and consistent class attendance (10%). It is the responsibility of the student to sign the daily attendance sheets.

- Class Discussion - 20% of the grade for the class will be based on the class discussion component. Of that 20%, one half, or 10%, will be based on the instructor's evaluation of the individual student's overall contribution to the discussions, and the other half, 10%, on the evaluation done by each person's student colleagues within each small group. Since the small groups themselves will be rotated at the midpoint of the class (end of B mod), an evaluation process will be conducted at that point and once again at the end of the class (end of D mod).

- Class Discussion Essays - (20%) - reflecting a consistent and thoughtful effort to address the individual daily discussion questions from a perspective representing an awareness of material from the reading/listening, from one's own concert attendance, from lectures and from thoughts which are relevant to topics and ideas which had been dealt with in other class discussion sessions.

- Concert Reviews - (20%) - reflecting a consistent and thoughtful effort to refine one's listening skills through the recognition and integration of historical and stylistic features inherent in a given composition and development of one's skills and abilities in determining personal preferences in performances.

- Exams - a mid-term (10%) and final exam (20%) will be given.

grade range \* attendance

A 95-100 97.5 1

AB 90-94 92.5 2

B 85-89 87.5 3

BC 80-84 82.5 4

C 75-79 77.5 5

CD 70-74 72.5 6

D 65-69 67.5 7

F 0-64 62.5 8 or more

(\* numerical equivalent of letter grade given to Concert Reviews, Discussion Essays, Class Discussion and Attendance.)

- Excepting significant extenuating circumstances, exams will not be rescheduled.

- Provide appropriate acknowledgement of any information cited from internet sources.

- All work is to be original and not previously submitted from other classes.

- Hand in a hard copy of all class work. Instructor will not accept work turned in via e-mail.

- The student should contact the instructor at the end of the semester should they desire to

have completed course work returned.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### Discussion #1 - Listening to Music

- Essay on your musical background and experience - instruction,

ensemble experience, and solo experience.

## Discussion #2 - Listening to Early Music

- What are the forms and technical factors which characterize "Early

Music?"

- As a member of contemporary culture, how can we best appreciate

these styles?

- What were factors of musical expression that were important for the

Medieval listener, and why?

## Discussion #3 - Listening to Baroque Music

- What are the forms and technical factors which characterize Baroque

music?

- What are the consistencies and differences exhibited between the vocal

and instrumental styles?

- How does this style differ from "Early Music?"

## Discussion #4 - Listening to Classic Music

- What are the forms and technical factors which characterize Classic

music?

- In the sense that this is an "abstract" style, how is emotion and

meaning communicated?

- How does this style differ from Baroque music?

## Discussion #5 - Listening to Romantic Music

- What are the forms and technical factors which characterize Romantic

music?

- In the sense that this is an "emotional" style, how does a composer

achieve structural cohesiveness?

- How does this style differ from Classic music?

## Discussion #6 - What about Listening to Vocal Music?

(an example will have been played in the previous class)

- Overall, what is Mahler expressing?

- Not knowing or understanding the text through the thickness of

the musical texture, what do you infer that the singer is singing about?

- How does the composer coordinate the words and music, in this or any

other vocal composition?

## Discussion #7 - Music in the Vernacular

- What do you feel is the state of vernacular music presently? What are

your thoughts on the recent efforts to combine genres? What do you

perceive as future trends.

## Discussion #8 - Listening to 20th- and 21st-Century Music

- What are the forms and technical factors which characterize 20th and

21st Century music?

- What must we do as listeners to "appreciate" these styles?

- How do these styles differ from Romantic music?

LARGE GROUP "FISHBOWL" DISCUSSIONS

I. Fishbowl Discussion - The Musical Art & Society

- What is the role of music in our western society? What does it do?

Why do we have it? What does it provide for us? What can and does it

signify about us and our culture?

- What is the role of mass media - TV, radio, CD's, other media sources? Who

does it serve - the artist or society? Ideally, who should it serve? What does

it provide for us? What are its weaknesses? What are the possible

ramifications (both + and -) of its presence?

II. Fishbowl Discussion - The Composer, Performer, and Listener

- What is the role of the composer and the performer? What intrinsic

and extrinsic factors should a composer consider in "forming" their art?

In our society, what basic freedoms are the composer and performer

granted and subsequently held accountable for? If you were a

composer, what would be your mission?

- What is the role of the listener in the "artistic process?" What are the

listener's duties and responsibilities? What should we consider in

coming to works and styles that are: a.) older or more familiar; and b.)

newer or more unfamiliar to us, and what factors cause our perceptions

to differ for each?

III. Fishbowl Discussion - Your Value Judgments in Music

- What characterizes your value judgments - for concerts, recordings,

etc.? What do you perceive as structures and patterns in your thinking?

What choices do you make and why? What factors seem to affect your

observations the most?

IV. Fishbowl Discussion - Final Thoughts - Where are we going?

- "Where are we going?" "What are we going to do?" What factors have

emerged for you that seem and will continue to be significant? Will

we see a "splintering" or a "drawing together" of our musical culture in

the 21st Century and what would be the nature of this phenomenon?

- What is the nature of our musical culture today? How do we as a

society and you personally deal with the diversity of expression in our

music? Are we a vibrant or static musical culture and, why?