

## PHIL 285: Philosophy of Music



Wednesdays 11-1:50, RWAC 0472

Instructors: Jonathan Cohen, Matthew Fulkerson

### Overview

This graduate seminar will focus on a variety of issues in the Philosophy of Music. We will discuss issues of musical ontology, genre, musical emotion, improvisation, authenticity, and the relation between music and language. There are several main readings each week, and a number of recommended readings (that may be especially useful for the required presentations and research papers).

### Requirements

The seminar requirements are of two main kinds: presentations, and a medium length (15 page) final paper.

- **Presentation:** All attendees will be required to lead (at least one) seminar discussion by delivering an APA-style commentary on a selected reading of approximately 20 minutes. The presentation, like an APA commentary, should be a critical discussion

rather than a mere summary or book report (the presenter can assume that other participants have done the reading, and the other participants will make it the case that such an assumption is correct!), and the presentation should contain a thesis and arguments for that thesis. It can concern any topic connected with the week's reading that is of interest to the presenter, ideally something narrow and focused. You must discuss your presentation with one of the instructors sometime before the session in which you present, just to make sure we're on the same page. Seminar presentations may be given using notes, a handout, or slides, but they may not be read aloud from a pre-written paper.

- **Final Paper:** Students taking the course for credit will submit in a single ~15 page paper by the end of the quarter, on a topic of their own choosing that relates to the subject matter of the course. All such papers *must* be pre-approved in conversation with the instructors. We mean it. Really.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)

### **Week 1, April 2<sup>nd</sup>: General overview**

--Stanford Encyclopedia Article "The Philosophy of Music":

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/music/>

--Davies, David. "Analytic Philosophy of Music" in OHBMWP\*

### **Ontology of Musical Works (weeks 3-4)**

#### **Week 2, April 9<sup>th</sup>: Platonism**

Main readings:

--Kivy, 1983a, "Platonism in Music: A Kind of Defense", *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 19(1): 109–129. Reprinted in Kivy 1993: 35–58. doi:10.1163/18756735-90000194

—, 1983b, "Platonism in Music: Another Kind of Defense", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 24(3): 245–252. Reprinted in Kivy 1993: 59–74.

--Puy, Nemesio García-Carril, 2019, "The Ontology of Musical Versions: Introducing the Hypothesis of Nested Types", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 77(3): 241–54.

Recommended readings:

--Predelli, Stefano, 1995, "Against Musical Platonism", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35(4): 338–50.

--Levinson, "What a Musical Work Is" (1980), *Journal of Philosophy*

--Sharpe, RA, Music, "Platonism and performance: some ontological strains," *British Journal of Aesthetics*

#### **Week 3, April 16<sup>th</sup>: Nominalism:**

Main readings:

--Caplan, Ben & Carl Matheson, 2004, "Can a Musical Work be Created?" *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 44(2): 113–34

--Tillman, Chris, 2011, "Musical Materialism", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 51(1): 13–29.

Recommended readings:

--Charles Nussbaum (2007). Chapter 4, The Musical Work, In *The musical representation: meaning, ontology, and emotion*. MIT Press: pp. 143–87.

--P. D. Magnus (2012) "Historical Individuals Like *Anas platyrhynchos* and 'Classical Gas'," in *Mag Uidhir* 2012a: 108–24.

--Rohrbaugh (2003), "Artworks as Historical Individuals," *European Journal of Philosophy*, 11(2): 177–205. doi:10.1111/1468-0378.00182

--Davies, David, "The Primacy of Practice in the Ontology of Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 67(2): 159–71.

No class April 23<sup>rd</sup> (moved to finals week)

**Further Ontological Issues** (weeks 4-5)

**Week 4 April 30<sup>th</sup>: Authenticity**

Main Readings:

--S. Davies 2001, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp 201–53

--Dodd 2007, *Works of Music: An Essay in Ontology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp 201–39

--Levinson 1990, "Authentic Performance and Performance Means" in *Music, Art, and Metaphysics*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Recommended reading:

--Malone, Evan (2023). "Country Music and the Problem of Authenticity." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 63 (1):75-90.

**Week 5, May 7<sup>th</sup>: Improvisation**

[will need to select a subset together as a class]

--Gould & Keaton 2000, "The Essential Role of Improvisation in Musical Performance", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 58(2): 143–8. doi:10.2307/432093

--Young & Matheson 2000, "The Metaphysics of Jazz", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 58(2): 125–34. doi:10.2307/432091

--Magnus 2016, "Kind of Borrowed, Kind of Blue", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 74(2): 179–85.

--Alperson 1984, "On Musical Improvisation", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 43(1): 17–29. doi:10.2307/430189

--Kania 2011b, "All Play and No Work: An Ontology of Jazz", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 69(4): 391–403. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6245.2011.01483.x

**Music and Emotion** (weeks 6-7)

**Week 6, May 14<sup>th</sup>: Musical Emotion (empirical basis)**

#### Main readings:

- Koelsch, S. (2010). Towards a neural basis of music-evoked emotions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14(3), 131–137.
- Konečni, V. J. (2008). Does music induce emotion? A theoretical and methodological analysis. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 2, 115–129.
- Juslin, P., & Västfjäll, D. J. H. (2008). Emotional responses to music: The need to consider underlying mechanisms. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 31, 559–621.

#### Recommended Readings:

- Cochrane, Tom (2010). "Music, Emotions and the Influence of the Cognitive Sciences." *Philosophy Compass* 5 (11):978-988.

#### **Week 7, May 21<sup>st</sup>: Musical Emotion (philosophical issues)**

- Di Stefano, Nicola (2023). Musical Emotions and Timbre: from Expressiveness to Atmospheres. *Philosophia* 51 (5):2625-2637.
- Zangwill, Nick (2007). Music, emotion and metaphor. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65 (4):391-400.
- Matt Fulkerson (If he finishes a draft in time): The Bounds of Musical Emotion

#### **Week 8, May 28<sup>th</sup>: Musical Genre**

##### Main readings:

- Brown, Lee. "'Feeling My Way': Jazz Improvisation and its Vicissitudes—A Plea for Imperfection", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 58(2): 113–23
- Malone, Evan (2022). Two Concepts of Groove: Musical Nuances, Rhythm, and Genre. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 80 (3):345-354.

##### Recommended Readings:

- Bartel, Christopher, 2017, "Rock as a Three-Value Tradition", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 75(2): 143–54.
- Jason Miller, 2022. "What Makes Heavy Metal 'Heavy'?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Volume 80, Issue 1, Winter 2022, pp70–82
- Malone, Evan (2024). The Ontology and Aesthetics of Genre. *Philosophy Compass* 19 (1):e12958.

#### **Week 9: June 4<sup>th</sup>: Music and Language**

##### Main Readings

- Patel, Ch 5: Syntax, in *Music, Language, and the Brain*, OUP.
- Kim, Hannah "Convention and Representation in Music" *Phil Imprint*
- Jackendoff 2011, "Music and Language" in Gracyk, Theodore & Andrew Kania (eds.), 2011, *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, New York: Routledge.

##### Recommended readings (including Music and CogSci):

- Appelqvist, Hanne, "Philosophy of Language" in OHBMWP\*
- Lehrdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

--Katz, Jonah (2023). Musical grouping as prosodic implementation. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 46 (4):959-988.

--Davies, Stephen, "Evolution" in OHBMWP\*

--Peacocke, Chris "Perception" in OHBMWP\*

--Alex Kerr, "Feeling a Beat," *Journal of Philosophy*

\**Oxford Handbook of Music and Western Philosophy*

Make up for April 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Week 10: Dealer's Choice**

**Topic TBA**

**Proposed date: June 11<sup>th</sup> (to be discussed on day 1).**