

***rossing the Boundaries: Music as the Expression of Social and Political Ideas in Modern East-Europe
(with extension to the Middle East)***

July 7 - 18

Course director:

[Judit Frigyesi](#), Bar Ilan University, Israel

Resource persons:

[Michael Beckerman](#), New York University, USA

[Walter Feldman](#), Jewish Music Research Center, Jerusalem, Israel

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[Jaroslav Mihule](#), Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Course objectives

The purpose of this course is threefold. First, it aims to make a connection between society and the practice and the structure of music by exploring the potential of music to articulate personal and group responses to social reality. Second, it will articulate some of the special problems of twentieth-century society as they are manifested in music. Third, it will place the musical culture of Eastern Europe within the broader social and cultural history of Europe, showing how it reflects common anxieties of modern European society together with the particular problems of East-Europe. This course hopes to show the depth and the significance of the relationship between issues of social and of artistic developments.

Within this general aim, the course will bring into focus the particularities of Eastern Europe by emphasizing issues such as the musical reflection of the changing nationalist ideologies in the choices of musical genres, styles and musical symbolism, the changing attitude toward folk music and its relation to art music, the disappearance and emergence of musical sub-cultures, and the re-interpretation of musical traditions. By bringing together countries with different histories and cultures, the course aims at exploring the similarities as well as the meaningful differences in the local articulation of common problems.

Course Content

The course will open with two units that will address general issues of group identity and modernism.

Michael Beckerman will discuss nationalism in East-European art music, an issue that will remain in the focus throughout the course. His unit will explore (1) the conception of "idyllic space" as a central preoccupation of human imagination in connection with the definition of group identity and of nationalism; (2) "folk music" as the representation of the idealized space in national musical "dialects," especially in the expression of nationalism vs. the imperial ideal of the Habsburgs 1850-1920); and finally (3) debates over modernism and nationalism (by focusing on examples from contemporary Poland and Czechoslovakia).

Ruth Ha-Cohen will explore the expression of group identity versus and the expression of the unique and the personal. Her (1) introductory session will present this problem in the history of Western music, while the following sessions will deal with two countries where this conflict was played out especially sharply, namely (2) Germany and (3) Israel. While Germany was the birthplace of cultural nationalism, it

also produced the main stream of cosmopolitan European music; German music was often thought of as transcending nationality, expressing exclusively the individual and the original. In contrast, Israel is the most recent country created on the basis of the Romantic nationalist principle: here problems of nationalism, modernism, as well as the special problems of the Middle East come to the surface especially sharply.

The remaining three units will discuss these and related issues in the concrete problematic of three countries.

Jaroslav Mihule will open his unit with (1) the presentation of the problem of symbol in music by highlighting some extreme cases from the modern era, then (2) explore the situation of Czech culture in Europe, and in connection with it, the problem of the use of symbol in the Romantic conception of nation within this Czech milieu (Dvořák and Smetana); and finally (3) explain how the romantic concept of nation, and together with it, this particular manner of using symbols in music lost its validity for the following generations of composers (Josef Suk and Bohuslav Martinů).

Walter Feldman will deepen these ideas by focusing on the transition from the empirical idea of nationalism to the ethnicity-based idea of nationalism, and its consequence for music in Turkey. His unit will discuss (1) the historical development of Ottoman court music from the 17th until the mid-19th century; (2) the sufi music of the Mevlevi, Halveti and Bektashi dervishes in relation to Anatolian folk music; (3) the debate over cultural heritage and musical style in late Ottoman and early Republican Turkey; and finally (4) the continuity and transformation of popular music of the Turkish cities from the late nineteenth century until our era.

With the unit of Hungary, the course will move to a country that stands somewhat in between the previous two cultural regions: that of Czech music (that has been deeply ingrained in the Western tradition) and of Turkish music (a music culture with a historical tradition different from the Western artistic principles).

The unit of **Judit Frigyesi** will discuss the artistic, stylistic and contextual developments in both art and folk music and the manner these two channels intersect. Her sessions will explore: (1) the birth of modernism in Hungary at the beginning of the twentieth century, that brought about the crisis of group identity (politics, literature, music); (2) the avant-garde and the consolidation of modernism in the period between the two world wars with focus on Bartók; (3) the debate of "folk music" and "Gypsy music" throughout twentieth-century Hungary; (4) the ideas and the music of the modernists and post-modernists after the second world war (revival of folk music, Jeney, Ligeti, Kurtág).

In one way or another these three countries that are brought into the focus are transitional cultural regions mediating between East and West – at least, this is how their intellectual leaders and artists viewed them. Yet the concepts of "East" and "West" as well as the idea of "mediation" meant distinctly different things in each case and led to different artistic developments. Furthermore, each of these countries went through a transition from a Romantic to a modernist, and then, post-modernist political ideology and music culture. We wish to discuss and bring together the common aspects and the differences in these developments during the concluding session with the participation of possibly all the teachers of the seminar.

Note: The material discussed in the course and distributed to students will include articles as well as a recording of music.