

## CLASSICAL MUSIC IN AN AGE OF POP

Greg Sandow

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phone: 646 484-8163

[email me](#)

[my website](#)

[my blog on the future of classical music](#)

[find me on Facebook](#)

[find me on Twitter](#)

[course overview](#)

### Class Schedule and Assignments

*You should read this every week, to find out what we're going to do in our next class. And to find out what your assignments for that class will be. For most of our classes, you'll have reading to do, and maybe music to listen to and videos to watch. Everything you have to read, hear, or watch is online. Just follow the links.*

*You'll also have written assignments (short papers), and one presentation to do in class. I've alerted you to these in boldface type, a week before they're due.*

*This schedule might change, depending on how long some of our discussions take. The assignments might change, too, because I might get new ideas – maybe from you! – of what I want to teach. I'll email all updates.*

*And one last thing. If you're reading the assignments for any week and come to a page break, please scroll down past the break. There may be more for that week on the next page. This may seem obvious, but after many years of life (and 20 years of teaching) I've learned that people – all of us, including me – sometimes miss what ought to be obvious.*

January 10

*Introduction to this course. I'll tell you about myself, and about the course. Then I'll ask you all to tell me about yourselves. And, above all, why the course interests you.*

January 17

*The crisis in classical music*

reading:

classical music before the crisis:

Greg Sandow, "[Before the crisis](#)" (a post from my blog)

Greg Sandow, "[When opera was popular](#)" (another post from my blog)

In 1923, Geraldine Farrar, a popular soprano, retired from singing. She gave a farewell performance at the Met Opera.

Which a famous soprano might do today. But — as a *New York Times* article on the event shows — a farewell performance in 1923 was a much bigger thing than it would be now. Farrar had teenage fans, and they went wild, hanging a banner from the Met Opera balcony during the opera, and throwing flowers on the stage. Reading about this is like taking a trip to another world, a world that really did exist, in which the classical music audience was young.

[“One and Two and...”](#) (*Life* magazine, June 29, 1962)

Again a trip to another world. *Life*, in 1962, was one of America’s most popular magazines. Here it celebrates the piano, with an article on a small-town piano teacher, another on a family buying a piano, and then one by a writer who loves playing the piano at home.

And then there’s something that really shows that 1962 was another universe. The magazine commissioned a new piano piece from Aaron Copland, then America’s leading composer, and printed it for readers to play. Would any magazine do that today?

To find all this, follow the link, which takes you to the June 29, 1962 issue of *Life*, as archived on Google Books. The story on the piano starts on page 38 of that issue. To go there, find the words “Front Cover” in small print just above the full reproduction of the cover of the magazine. Click the down arrow next to those words, and find the link to the story, either by looking for its title — “One and Two and...” — or by looking for page 38. Once you get there, you may have to make the image smaller in order to read the articles.

the crisis now:

Greg Sandow, [“Portrait of a crisis”](#) (blog post)

Greg Sandow, [“Timeline of the crisis”](#) (blog post)

I did this post in 2012, so that’s where the timeline ends. In class I’ll update it with things that have happened since then.

David Pitt, [“Piano Stores Closing as Fewer Children Taking Up Instrument”](#) (news story from the Associated Press, January 2, 2015)

This news story from three years ago shows one way in which classical music is vanishing from our mainstream culture. People aren’t buying pianos anymore. Contrast this with the *Life* magazine article. So many people buying and playing pianos in 1962, so few doing it now.

January 24

*What is classical music? Why should it survive?*

I think these are questions we don’t often ask. Instead, I think we more or less assume that classical music is valuable, and take for granted that other people should listen to it.

But why should they listen? Why should they come to our performances? If we want to go out in the world and get people interested in our art, we’d better be

able to tell them why they should like it, using language they'll understand and relate to. Plus, if we want our society to support classical music (for instance with funding), we'd better be able to say why it matters.

This week we'll start answering these questions. Here are your assignments:

*reading*

[Some definitions of classical music, and comments about it, from various sources](#)

And then three strong statements by famous classical musicians, insisting in different ways that we need classical music in our culture. I've quoted one of the statements below. The others can be found by following the links:

Kyle MacMillan, "[Violinist Zukerman decries sad state of classical music](#)," (*Denver Post*, November 15, 2007)

Daniel Barenboim, speaking of a recording of the Beethoven symphonies that he made with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, as part of a project called "Beethoven for All":

Many people feel or think, without really knowing, that music is somehow elitist – that it is for people who can afford the money and the time; it's something that has only to do with leisure. But music is not elitist. On the contrary. Music is not only not elitist, music is universal. Even though all the great composers of the past are European, music doesn't speak only to Europeans. (I was born in Argentina; if I were limited to "my" music, I could only play tango!) This music, although it was written by Beethoven in Bonn or in Vienna, speaks to people in Ramallah, in Australia, and everywhere else. This is why it is not elitist. Music is for all, for everybody – everybody who opens their mind and heart to it. It needs that curiosity, and it needs attentive listening, but then it's for all. And if you ask people who do not think of themselves as musically inclined: "Who do you know?" they all say, "Beethoven." So if we want music for all, then it must be Beethoven.

David Finckel and Wu Han, "[Classical Radio's Fade-Out](#)" (*New York Times*, April 20, 2002)

After you've read all this, please come to class prepared to discuss two things:

First, why do *you* think classical music is valuable? And why do you think our society should support it?

Second, what do you think of the three statements I've asked you to read? Are they convincing? And, especially, would they convince the people we need to convince, namely people who currently don't listen to classical music and may not care about it?

About the first question – the answers you bring to class will most likely be preliminary answers. A starting point for future discussion. Just the first steps on a road to more clarity. In the next couple of weeks, you'll have a chance to look at how classical music fits or doesn't fit into our wider culture. And then you can reconsider what you'll say in this class, and – if you need to – find more satisfying answers than you may have found so far.

January 31

*Classical music and the rest of our culture*

reading:

Marcus Westbury, "[Mozart cover bands rake in the moolah](#)" (*Sydney [Australia] Morning Herald*, October 18, 2007)

A challenge to classical music. Or, specifically, to classical music funding. Why should orchestras and opera companies get so much money, when other things in our society – including other arts – get so much less?

Greg Sandow, "[Who Is Our Competition?](#)" published in *Chamber Music* magazine, fall 2015

In which I suggest that if we want a new classical music audience, we'll have to compete with everything else in our culture. And that we can't assume that classical music is automatically better than everything else out there.

Richard Florida, [excerpt](#) from *The Rise of the Creative Class*

What do educated, creative, artistic younger people – people your age and in their 30s – like to do when they go out at night? Richard Florida, a business consultant, offers some thoughts on that in a book that became famous, for its analysis of a new kind of creative younger people. Nightlife isn't his main subject, but what he says is worth reading. If he's right – if this is what people your age and a little older look for when they go out at night – then classical music has a serious problem. Because the people Florida describes are looking for something more contemporary, more informal, and more rooted in the cities they live in.

Greg Sandow, "[The walls are coming down](#)" (blog post about a festival of vocal music at the Kennedy Center, created by Renée Fleming; she's a classical singer, but her festival gave equal emphasis to classical music, pop music, jazz, R&B, and Broadway musicals)

Michael Cooper, "[Celebrating David Bowie, A Star Who Burned Bright to the Last](#)" (*New York Times*, January 11, 2015)

A pop star dies, and he was considered so important that in the days just after his death, the *New York Times* did more than 20 stories about him. This is one of them. As you'll see, Bowie had a tremendous influence on peoples' lives. Could anything in classical music have such an impact?

listening:

Three pop songs about the African-American experience.

African-American culture is central to life in contemporary America. But you won't encounter much of it – if any – in classical performances. There we engage with the culture of past centuries, but not with much that's happening now.

Pop music is different. It lives in our present world, and ever since the 1950s, African-American life has played a big part in it.

Here are three examples. What do you think of these songs? Would you agree that they offer something – both a cultural and an artistic experience – that classical music doesn't give us?

Chuck Berry, "[Brown-eyed Handsome Man](#)" (1956)

[read the lyrics](#)

We take rock music for granted today. But when it first appeared, in the 1950s (and was called rock & roll), it was revolutionary. It had a stronger beat than pop music previously had. And black musicians, who up to then were mainly heard by a black audience, emerged into the pop music mainstream, and white people listened to them.

Chuck Berry, a black singer, guitarist, and songwriter, was one of the great rock pioneers. And in this song he playfully sang about how cool it was to be black. He did it in a kind of code, but everyone knew what he meant. When he sings "brown-eyed handsome man," just understand that he's really talking about a man with brown skin. In 1956, you couldn't say that out loud. But Chuck Berry found a sly way to say it.

(Note, by the way, his reference to visual art, to a famous sculpture called "Venus de Milo," a statue of Venus whose arms somehow got lost.)

Sam Cooke, "[A Change is Gonna Come](#)" (1963)

[read the lyrics](#)

In the 1950s, Sam Cooke became a famous gospel singer, which means that he sang and recorded the religious music heard in black churches. When the rise of rock & roll allowed black singers to enter the pop mainstream, Cooke thought he'd try it, and had great success. He had many pop hits, aimed at white teenagers.

But in the 1960s, he suddenly got serious. He was deeply influenced by the civil rights movement, which was fighting to give African-Americans things we now take for granted – the right to vote, for instance, and in general to have the same opportunities that white people have.

With this on his mind, he wrote and recorded what became his most famous song. (And which in my opinion is one of the greatest pop songs ever, and in fact for me is one of the most moving pieces of music in any genre.) Its name tells you all you have to know.

Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five, "[The Message](#)" (1982)

[read the lyrics](#)

This song is one of the earliest hip-hop classics, the first rap song to be played on mainstream pop radio. Which means it was the first rap song many white people heard. I vividly remember what a shock it was to hear it on the radio. Here was a new kind of voice, bringing us a message from the inner-city black community, a place we might have read about, but had no direct contact with. Conditions there weren't great in 1982, and Grandmaster Flash told us all about it, in both words and a tone of voice that no one could forget.

**In two weeks, on February 14, you'll have a written assignment due. But I'd like you to discuss it in class next week, on February 7.**

**The subject will be something we've already discussed: why classical music is valuable. Why it's important. And how we can say all this in ways that people who don't know classical music can relate to.**

**This can be a difficult discussion. We all know classical music so well, we love it so very much, and we feel so comfortable with it, that it can be hard for us to see it the way the rest of the world does. As something distant from them, which sounds more or less beautiful, but that doesn't seem to have much to do with their lives, and doesn't engage them in any serious way.**

**So then why does our society need classical music? We've had some ideas about that, and now we'll take another look at them. Please come to class next week, February 7, ready to discuss what you think. And then the next week, on February 14, you'll have a paper due, in which you write your ideas about classical music. Which might have changed after our class discussion on February 7.**

**Here's the assignment for your paper:**

Bearing in mind what we've read and discussed about the value of classical music, and about its place in our culture, please answer the following questions.

- Why do you think classical music should survive?
- What does it offer the world, that nothing else can offer?

How long should this paper be? You could write a page on each question. Or two sentences on each! Your choice. It can be harder to write something short, because you have to focus your thoughts. But one advantage of writing something short is...well, that you focus your thoughts. You zero in on what's most important to you. Take your choice. Write a sentence or two, write a paragraph, write a page. Write two pages. Write whatever you need..

But this is the most important thing. I want you to aim what you write on the people Richard Florida describes. Smart, creative younger people, with wide interests, involved with popular culture, but open to anything. Why should these people listen to classical music? They already have full cultural lives. What will they get from classical music that they can't get anywhere else?

Think hard about this. And try to avoid easy answers. In the many years I've taught this course, many students have told me they think classical music is the deepest, most artistic kind of music there is. I respect that belief. But is this what Richard Florida's people believe? And what will their reaction be, if you say such a thing to them?

If you think they might not believe what you say — even if you're sure it's true! — what can you say to them, about classical music, that they *will* believe?

Feel free to write in a normal, everyday, informal style. This isn't a formal paper!

Please email your paper — and all other written assignments — to me at [greg@gregsandow.com](mailto:greg@gregsandow.com). If you're going to be late with an assignment, you *must* let me know in advance, so we can set another due date.

*And also:*

*Please put your name in the title of your paper. That makes it much easier for me to identify your work after I've filed it away on my computer.*

*And if you send your paper as an email attachment — as most of you do — please send from your personal email account, if you can. There's a strange problem with Juilliard's email system. I have a Mac, and attachments sent from*

*Juilliard's system can't be read on a Mac without taking extra steps. Weird, but true. If you send from your personal account, I won't have that trouble. So thanks for helping me out!*

February 7

*Classical music in the past (1)*

This week we'll see that classical music wasn't always formal. The audience wasn't at all silent. It applauded or cried out when it heard music it liked. Musicians didn't stick to the written notes. They ornamented the music they played, they improvised, and they welcomed audience participation. Mozart, as you'll see, even designed one of his symphonies to make the audience applaud – while the music was playing.

reading:

James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris*, [excerpt from chapter 1](#), about Baroque opera in Paris, and its noisy audience

Some [descriptions](#) of performances in past centuries, from various sources

[excerpt from a letter Mozart wrote to his father](#) on July 3, 1778, about the premiere of his Paris Symphony. In which he describes how he constructed the piece in a way that was meant to make the audience applaud.

listening:

[Mozart, Symphony No. 31, "Paris," first movement](#) (Academy of Ancient Music; Jaap Schroeder, concertmaster, Christopher Hogwood, continuo.)

Mozart didn't say exactly where he put the music that was meant to make the audience applaud. Where in this movement do you think it might have been?

Wilhelm Backhaus, a great pianist from the last century, [improvises a prelude](#) to Schumann's "Das Abend"

This was recorded at Backhaus's last recital, which he played in 1969 in Carinthia, Austria. First there's an announcement from the stage, saying in German that Backhaus isn't well, and won't play the scheduled work, Beethoven's Op. 111 sonata. Instead, he'll play a short Schumann piece, which we then hear, starting with the improvised prelude. How do you like hearing this piece, with a prelude that Schumann didn't write?

February 14

*Classical music in the past (2)*

Old recordings will show us how lively and personal, how spontaneous and individual – at least in my view – classical musicians were in past generations.

listening:

Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, [overture](#) (live 1940 performance by the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Ettore Panizza, conductor)

Beethoven, Archduke Trio, [first movement](#): Jacques Thibaud, violin, Pablo Casals, cello, Alfred Cortot, piano (recorded in 1928)

Optional: you might also like to hear these musicians play the [first movement](#) of the Schubert B flat trio. Not as controlled a performance, but maybe freer, and thus more typical of performances from that era.

Mendelssohn, Violin Concerto, [second movement](#): Joseph Szigeti, violin, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor (1933)

Schubert, “[Serenade](#),” recorded in 1941, and sung in English (instead of the original German) by Richard Crooks, a Met opera star who had a popular radio show. No serious singer would sing German lieder in English today, or take as much freedom with the tempo as Crooks does. But isn’t it beautiful?

videos:

In these videos, I think all the performers have larger than life personalities — rock star personalities, as we might say it today. That was common, generations ago, but I think it’s less common now.

Puccini, *La bohème*, [end of Act 1](#): sung by Jussi Björling and Renata Tebaldi, with the Showcase Symphony Orchestra, Max Rudolf, conductor (from *Festival of Music*, a classical music show broadcast live on network TV in 1956, complete with car commercials). The host of the show, whom you’ll see introducing the performance, is Charles Laughton, a famous British actor. He’s not the kind of show business personality we’d see on TV today, and clearly isn’t following a script. He’s making it up as he goes along.

Bizet, *Carmen*, “[Toreador Song](#),” sung in Italian (instead of the original French) by Gino Bechi (from *Mad About Opera*, a 1950 Italian film)

Gregor Piatigorsky ends a recital with an arrangement of “[The Swan](#),” from *Carnival of the Animals* (from *Carnegie Hall*, a 1947 Hollywood movie, which featured performances by many classical music stars). There’s an amazing show-business element here — the accompaniment, played by seven young women on seven harps. Would anyone dare to try that at Juilliard today? Or anywhere?

Artur Schnabel plays Debussy’s “[Ritual Fire Dance](#)” (also from *Carnegie Hall*; Schnabel’s performance is wonderfully theatrical, but he doesn’t exactly play what Debussy wrote)

February 21

Pop Music

reading:

Peter Guralnick, [excerpt](#) from *Sweet Soul Music*. About Aretha Franklin recording “I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You),” her first big hit. This will show you one way that pop records are produced:

[listen to the song](#)

This excerpt from a very long and detailed book (about the history of African-American music in the 1960s) starts in the middle of Aretha Franklin’s story. So you may be confused at first about what’s going on.

Here’s what you need to know. Aretha Franklin was a gospel singer from Detroit. Her father was pastor of a large and important church in Detroit’s



black community, at a time when Detroit was a thriving city, not the troubled (but recovering) place it is today.

Franklin was an amazing talent, as recordings of her singing when she was a teenager show. But when she started her pop music career in the early 1960s, record companies didn't think her gospel sound would sell many records. So they toned her down. They recorded her singing pop and jazz songs. These recordings are quite good, but don't remotely show what Aretha could do. (She's such a titanic force in pop music that people always call her by her first name, whether they know her or not.)

By the late 1960s, the climate had changed, and the mainstream white world was ready for a gospel vocal sound. There were a few mainstream record producers who knew how to record gospel music, and one of them was Jerry Wexler, now a pop music legend. Wexler signed Franklin to a recording contract, and brought her to a recording studio in the American south, where musicians understood the gospel style, which had now developed into something called soul music.

Wexler hired musicians – guitar, piano, drum, bass, horns (a pop music term meaning saxophones and brass instruments) – to record with Franklin. These were all musicians, some black, some white, who knew how to play soul music.

The recording session began when Aretha sat at the piano, and sang and played a song she wanted to record. That's how it normally works in pop music. Nobody writes the music down. Instead, someone demonstrates how a song goes, and the musicians work out for themselves what to do with it.

But Aretha provided more than a demonstration. From the first chord she played on the piano, she was so impressive that the piano player hired for the recording session immediately said that she should play the piano, instead of him.

And things went on from there, with the horn players going to another room to work out what they would play. So what you hear on the record is a cooperative enterprise, worked out by all the musicians together.

When you hear the song, listen (among much else) for the entrance of the horns. Can you believe that these musicians, all on their own, planned something so perfectly right (at least in my opinion), and that – when they start playing offbeats – gets so dramatic?

listening:

Frank Sinatra, "[I've Got You Under My Skin](#)" (from *Songs for Swingin' Lovers*, 1956)

Lucinda Williams, "[Ventura](#)" (from *World Without Tears*, 2003)

James Brown, "[Get Up \(I Feel Like Being a\) Sex Machine](#)" (this is a single from 1970; a single, in pop music terminology, is a song released on its own, apart from any album)

Björk, "[An Echo, A Stain](#)" (from *Vespertine*, 2002)

We all agree that classical music is art. But what is pop music? Listen to these songs, and think about how you'd classify them. Clearly they're

not classical music, but why? What are the differences? What makes them pop, and not classical?

And could they be art? If not, why not? As you think about this, ask yourself what's happening in the music in each song, just as you'd ask about a classical piece. In each song, is the music simple? Complex? Can it be analyzed by looking for the things that happen in classical pieces – you might especially ask this about the James Brown song – or is something else going on?

If these songs are art, they pose a serious challenge to classical music. People in our culture listen to pop music. If it's giving them art, why do they need the art that we're offering them?

We'll talk about all this in class.

February 28, March 7 – spring break

March 14

*Fixing the crisis: Some ideas for the future, and some things that people have done*

video:

Greg Sandow, [keynote talk](#) at the 21CMPosium, a conference held two years ago at the DePauw School of Music (the only conservatory I know of that radically changed its curriculum to address the needs of the future; we'll be learning more about them later in the course) This was a conference about what it means to be a 21st century classical musician, and what conservatories should do to prepare classical musicians for the contemporary world. In my keynote talk, I tried to lay out the current condition of classical music, and what needs to change.

reading:

Greg Sandow, "[Four Keys to the Future](#)"

[A long list of new things](#) that classical musicians and classical music institutions have tried, assembled from various sources (including my own experience)

Sarah Robinson, "How the classical world went clubbing" (Guest post on my blog by someone who wrote a doctoral dissertation about classical musicians who've played in clubs, after playing in clubs for many years herself. The post is in two parts, [here](#) and [here](#).)

new kinds of performances, new kinds of music (audio and video):

Dan Tepfer, [The Goldberg Variations Variations, excerpt](#). (Jazz pianist Dan Tepfer plays the *Goldberg Variations*, and instead of repeating the aria and each variation, as the score indicates, he plays improvisations on them. This recording was made some years ago. I heard Dan play this live recently, and his performance has grown greatly.)

Tchaikovsky, Violin Concerto, [third movement](#) (Patricia Kopatchinskaja, violin; MusicAeterna, Theodor Currentzis conducting)

Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Notre Dame*, "[Kyrie](#)" (A famous medieval piece, sung by Ensemble Organum, a vocal ensemble whose members don't believe that medieval musicians sang with the pure classical voices we favor today. So this becomes...what? A performance of a polyphonic classical piece, sung people who sound like they're singing folk music?)

Caroline Shaw, *Partita for Eight Voices*, first movement, "[Allemande](#)"

The Pulitzer Prize is America's highest honor in composition, and in 2013 Caroline Shaw became the youngest composer ever to win it. She won it for the *Partita*, which she wrote for A Roomful of Teeth, a vocal ensemble she sings in. This is a live performance at the Music on Main series in Vancouver. The video I've linked to is of the entire piece. Your assignment is only to watch the first movement, which ends at 5:45. Of course if you like it and want to watch the rest, feel free! If you like the first movement, I think you'll like the rest of the piece even more.

This is an example of a style of composition very common among young American composers. Very free, very relaxed, very informal, using any kind of harmony – and, in fact, any kind of sound – the composer likes.

Debussy, *Afternoon of a Faun*, University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra.

As played in 2012 from memory, without a conductor – and *danced* by the student musicians. A video that just about went viral in the classical music world. Liz Lerman, a very original choreographer, designed the dancing, building it around movements the musicians were comfortable making. James Ross, who at the time was the much-loved conducting teacher and orchestra director at the school, conceived the project and led the music rehearsals.)

March 21 no class – snow

March 28 no class – Greg has a family obligation

April 4

Something you can do on your own: *Entrepreneurship*

reading:

Seth Godin, [Tribes](#) (excerpt)

Greg Sandow, "[How to do it](#)" (blog post)

Clive Thompson, "[Sex, Drugs, and Updating Your Blog](#)," from the *New York Times Magazine*, May 13, 2007 (about how to promote a pop music career all by yourself, on the web)

entrepreneurial musicians:

[Anderson & Roe](#) (A piano duo. Both of them took this class. They say I encouraged them, but I can't take credit for what they do. They were doing it long before they met me.)

Lara Downes:

["Walking the Walk"](#) (how an entrepreneurial pianist in San Francisco got an audience for a concert series she created)

["Success and Surprises"](#) (more on her concert series: how she drew a large audience to a performance by pianist Christopher O'Riley)

Victoria Paterson, "[Filling the House for New Music](#)" (how the American Modern Ensemble, here in New York, sells out the house for new music concerts, and also pays its musicians very well)

Greg Sandow, "[We personalize what music is](#)" (blog post, in which Alecia Lawyer describes her entrepreneurial group ROCO – formerly the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra – which is now in its 13th successful season in Houston)

April 11

*Creativity and careers. What should conservatories teach? What should all of you be learning? How creative can you be in your careers?*

You'll have reading assignments for this class, and I think you'll find them interesting. All of them are about new ways to train musicians. Some of them may be provocative. Certainly they're different from what goes on at Juilliard. It'll be interesting to discuss all this in class. Since we're talking about something we're all intimately involved in, this discussion might be especially hot.

reading:

Ivan Trevino, "[My Pretend Music School](#)" (blog post by a percussionist)

Greg Sandow, "[A Stunning Manifesto](#)" (blog post about new ideas at the University of Maryland School of Music)

Greg Sandow, "[Path-breaking piano curriculum](#)" (blog post about what piano students do at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario; they improvise, and play music in many genres)

Two things to look at about the DePauw University School of Music – where the curriculum has been radically revised to focus on training entrepreneurial musicians:

Greg Sandow, [Revolution at DePauw](#), from my blog, about the early days of – as they call it – the 21CM curriculum (meaning 21st Century Classical Musician)

["21CM at DePauw"](#)

A short video about the goals of the program. The trio you see playing is Project Trio, whose bassist, Peter Seymour, once played in the Cleveland Orchestra, and is the bass teacher at DePauw. All three members of the group are trained as classical musicians, but you couldn't call what they're playing classical music.

You'll see Yo Yo Ma playing a Bach movement to open a new space, and his participation is much more than a celebrity appearance. He's a big supporter of what's happening at DePauw, and is the chairman of the 21CM Advisory Board (which I'm also on).

The new space is a luxurious performance/party/teaching space downtown in Greencastle, IN, the town where DePauw is located. The idea was to bring the music school into its community, and the space has been so successful that the donors who funded it now have bought an adjoining building, so that even more can be done.

## [Peabody Breakthrough Curriculum](#)

Something that's been evolving at Peabody — a new curriculum, to prepare classical musicians for the future. This three-page document (part of a longer description) gives an outline of what's going on. I've visited Peabody, and found that they're deeply serious about this, and deeply committed to it. With, in fact, three staff members working fulltime to develop and implement it. One of the most far-reaching changes I've ever seen from a conservatory.

David Wallace, "[Becoming Village People](#)"

A talk at the 21CMPosium at DePauw. David is the chair of the string department at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Where every student can and does study with every teacher, learning to play in many musical styles.

Two creative musicians describe their highly personal careers (in talks at the 21CMPosium):

Sarah Robinson, "[How I Stopped Asking Permission to Have a Career in Music](#)"

Mike Block, "[Breaking Away from 'Classical.'](#)" (Another talk from 21CM. Mike is a cellist who often plays with his cello strapped to his chest, so he can dance while he plays. He plays world music — both on his own, and as a member of the Silk Road Ensemble — just as much as he plays classical.)

April 18

*Fixing the crisis: Shaping your brand (1)*

reading:

Jade Simmons, "[Are You a Victim of Artistic Identity Theft?](#)" (a post from her "Emerge Already" blog)

Greg Sandow, "[Sell What You Are](#)" (blog post)

Greg Sandow, "[How to Write a Press Release](#)"

"[Ghosts and Flowers: The Handel-Halvorsen Passacaglia](#)" (A video made by two Juilliard graduates, Arianna Warsaw-Fan and Meta Weiss.)

"[Handel Hits the Road!](#)" (Daria van den Bercken, a Dutch pianist, goes on the streets of Amsterdam to promote her project of playing and recording Handel's keyboard music.)

I don't think these three musicians — Arianna, Meta, and Daria — meant to brand themselves with these videos. But still the videos (which are very different) serve as at least tentative branding. That's because they give anyone who watches a strong idea of what the people who made them might be like, as musicians and maybe even as people.

How would you describe what you see in these videos? What would the videos make you expect from the three musicians in the future? Whose performance would you most like to go to?

websites:

Look at some websites I'll link below, and ask yourself how they make you feel. You don't have to look at any of them for a long time, and you don't have to look at anything except the home page (unless you want to).

The point is just to look at how each of these sites presents the group, institution, company, or town it represents. Does it make you want to go to these schools, hear these musicians, live in this town, buy what this company sells? And if you did go to the schools, hear the musicians, live in the town, or buy what the company sells, what does the website make you think your experience would be?

You don't need to think very hard about this. Trust your first impressions. For instance: Zipcar is a company that rents cars for short periods of time, typically three to four hours. When you look at their homepage, do you get the idea that renting from them will be difficult? Or will it be very simple?

Why doing this is useful: Because in the future, or even now, you might want to promote yourself. And if you do, you want to do it in a way that makes people feel they want to go to the concerts or whatever else you're promoting. So everything you present to the world – your website, your concert flyers and posters, your newsletter (if you decide to have one), email you send that invites people to a performance you give – all these things have to make people think that they're glad they're in touch with you, and that they're eager to hear you play.

Here are the websites I'd like you to look at:

[Viktoria Mullova](#). Look at her [photos](#). Especially my favorite, which is [this one](#). So moody, not like a standard publicity shot. Makes me want to hear how she plays.

[Juilliard](#)

[Berklee College of Music](#)

[DePauw School of Music](#)

[Jack Quartet](#)

[Warwick, NY homepage](#) (this is the town where my family and I have a country house)

[Zipcar](#)

**assignment for next week, due April 25:**

*Write something down – a short phrase, a sentence, or simply a collection of words – that you could use to describe yourself as a musician. Words that sum up who you are as a musician, and what kind of music you make.*

You might want to think of more than one phrase, or more than one sentence. And don't worry if what you write doesn't seem perfect, or even if you think it's not very good. I'm not asking you to come up with something polished, something finished, something you can show the outside world. I'm just asking you to take a first step in describing yourself.

*Also look for graphics that seem to fit with what you do. You can find these in print (in a magazine, for instance), or on the web. They can be photos, drawings, advertisements – anything. Most likely they won't be about you (unless you have a logo, or photos or drawings of yourself that you want to use). The idea is*

simply to find something visual that seems to inhabit the same world you do. What you find doesn't have to fit you perfectly. Like the words that you'll think of, these images are just a first step.

Bring these materials – your phrase or phrases, and your graphics – to class. If you found graphics on the web, please print them out for all of us to see. We'll talk about what all of you bring, and see what your next step might be. Meaning how you might go beyond what you've done for this assignment. How you could go further, and begin finding words and images that you really could use to define your personal brand.

*April 25*

*Fixing the crisis: Shaping your brand (2)*

**You'll present your words and images in class. And we'll talk about shaping your personal brand.**

assignment:

**informal paper, due by email May 9, the date of our final class:**

Imagine a concert you might give, one that's an expression of your brand. By which I mean a concert that's entirely you, a concert that expresses the essence of your musical self, the same self that you've worked to capture in words and images. Describe the program, the setting (where you'd give the concert), and also how you'd promote the event. Everything – from the music you choose to the way you'd publicize the performance – should be an expression of everything that, as a person and as a musician, you care about most.

This paper might be three pages long. But write at whatever length – shorter than three pages, if you like, or longer -- that seems to make sense to say. Write at whatever length you find you need, short or long, to say what you want to say.

*May 2: no class – jury week*

*May 9*

*Final discussion. There's no exam in this course.*

**informal paper due**