

Time: 10:30-noon

Bill Fernekes email: bill41@comcast.net

Program Website: <https://williamrfernekes.com>

Music of Great Cities: Paris and Prague

I. Announcements

A. Dates and topics for Music Appreciation, February to June 2025

Dates and Topics:

February 10: Great African-American Singers: Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson

March 17: Beethoven at the Opera

April 14: April in Paris—Encounters with “Les Six” (French 20th century composers)

May 19: The End of WW II—Music from 1945

June 23: Verdi Rarities

B. NJ Symphony Trip: Awaiting confirmation of availability of transportation and tickets for either Feb. 23 or April 5 concerts in New Brunswick (State Theatre)

II. Music in Paris—17th-18th Centuries

A. A major commercial and cultural center since the Middle Ages and the political capital of France since the 17th century, Paris has been an inspiration for composers since the Renaissance.

1. Royal support for composers was important during the period prior to the French Revolution, notably by Louis XIV and the royalty who followed him. Composers such as Rameau and Lully vied for influence at court and wrote ballet music, instrumental music, choral music and operas, many performed at Versailles and later in other palaces in Paris itself.
2. Lully: *Divertissement Royal* (Reign of Louis XIV, 1644-1715)
3. Rameau: Suite from *Les Boreades* (1764)

B. With the crisis of the French state that emerged in the late 18th century (high debt, crushing taxes, loss of credibility with the people and a weak monarch), the French revolution began in 1789. By this time, there were numerous theatres

in Paris that presented opera and other forms of music, not only by French composers but by visiting musicians such as Haydn, Mozart and many others.

1. Haydn, *Paris Symphonies*, 1785-86
2. Francois Joseph Gossec (1745-1829), *Symphony in F Major* (1769)
3. Rouget De Lisle (surprise...,)

III. Music in Paris: The 19th Century (Through Offenbach)

- A. With the Napoleonic wars underway from the early 1790s until 1815, Europe was in turmoil. Yet Paris became the undisputed cultural capital of Europe at this time, with every major composer seeking to have a success “d’estime” in Paris, either with symphonic music or opera.
 1. Major Italian opera composers from Paisiello through Verdi sought success with Parisian productions of their works, and Rossini eventually moved to Paris where he became rich and lived most of his long life (1792-1868, lived in Paris from 1824 until his death). Paris not only was a location where operas were performed, but served as the setting for many works, including Verdi’s *La Traviata* and Puccini’s *La Boheme*.
 2. But the most popular composer of vocal works in France during the mid-late 19th century was not originally born in France—it was Jacques Offenbach, son of a cantor, born in Cologne, Germany in 1819 and who died in Paris in 1880.
 3. Offenbach: Vocal excerpts from various operettas
 4. Offenbach: *Gaite Parisienne*, ballet score (1938)

IV. Music in Prague—18th and 19th centuries

- A. As the capital of Bohemia, Prague had historically been a major commercial and cultural center during the Middle Ages onward, and was the seat of several Holy Roman Emperors. When Bohemia became part of the Hapsburg empire in 1526 it flourished, but during the 30 years war (1618-1648), Bohemia and Prague suffered greatly and whatever autonomy Bohemia had sought under earlier monarchs was now severely by the Austrian Hapsburgs.
 1. However, Prague remained an important cultural center despite the devastation of the 30 Years War, and by the mid-18th century Prague had returned to prosperity, and music was thriving.
 2. Czech (primarily Bohemian) composers were influential outside of Prague, performing in Vienna, Paris and Italy, and inspiring composers such as Haydn and Mozart
 3. Joseph Myslivecek: *Sinfonia in D Major*
 4. Jan Stamic: *Oboe Concerto*

5. With nationalist feelings growing during the 19th century, particularly after revolutionary uprisings during 1830 and 1848, Czech musicians and composers often turned to historic themes and symbols as inspiration.
6. Bedrich Smetana: *Vysehrad*, Part one of *Ma Vlast* (My Country)

V. Martinu—From Prague to Paris

1. The Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959) grew up in Policke, Bohemia and later studies in Prague. He moved to Paris in 1923, and remained there until 1940, afterwards emigrating to the US to escape the Nazi occupation and World War II
2. While in Paris, he composed the Double Concerto for Two Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, one of his greatest works—in many ways, a statement of sorrow at the abandonment of Czechoslovakia by France and England as illustrated in the Munich Agreement of 1938, which was the direct antecedent to the Nazi takeover of his country later that year.
3. Martinu—*Double Concerto for Two Orchestras, Piano and Timpani*

Recordings for Today's Session

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| 1. Les Grandes Eaux Musicales de Versailles | AliaVox 9842 |
| 2. Rameau, L Naissance d'Osiris and Abaris ou les Boreades | Naxos 8.553388 |
| 3. Joseph Haydn, Symphonies 82 and 83 | Philips Classics 420 688-2 |
| 4. Francois-Joseph Gossec, Symphonies | Musical Heritage Society 515418Y |
| 5. Berlioz Favorites | Telarc CD-80164 |
| 6. Regine Crespin, Prima Donna in Paris | Decca 475 8243 |
| 7. Anne Sofie von Otter Sings Offenbach | DG 289 471 501-2 |
| 8. Offenbach, Gaité Parisienne | Naxos 8.554005 |
| 9. Baroque Bohemia and Beyond | Alto ALC 1014 |
| 10. Baroque Bohemia and Beyond, Vol. 5 | Alto ALC 1101 |
| 11. Smetan, Ma Vlast | Supraphon 11 1208-2 |
| 12. Rafael Kubelik, The Complete HMV Recordings | Warner Classica 0825646319015 |

Internet Sources

1. Bohuslav Martinu https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohuslav_Martinu
2. Prague <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague>
3. Jacques Offenbach https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Offenbach
4. History of Paris <https://www.introducingparis.com/history>

YouTube Films

1. *Casablanca* (film) Excerpt <https://youtu.be/cOeFhSzoTuc?feature=shared>
2. Lully, *Atys* (complete opera) <https://youtu.be/HV6kr2BOBtA?feature=shared>
3. Rameau, *Castor et Pollux*
(complete opera) <https://youtu.be/Us4KcJXP49U?feature=shared>
4. Berlioz, *La Marseillaise* <https://youtu.be/apk5UNO48zY?feature=shared>
5. Offenbach, Finale of *Orpheus*
In the Underworld (Can-Can) <https://youtu.be/grtFa34Edgl?feature=shared>
6. Smetana, *Vysehrad*
https://youtu.be/aQOQA7A_Y1M?feature=shared
7. Martinu, *Double Concerto* <https://youtu.be/2m8WYEANlj0?feature=shared>