

Second Biennial Conference of the East Asian Regional Association of the International Musicological Society (October 2013): “Teaching Western Music History in 2013” in East Asia

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Teaching music history has probably never been more complicated, with pedagogical methods, technology, and students’ expectations changing more rapidly than ever. Those teaching Western music history in Asia must also consider questions of language and culture—concerns that have been previously explored in this journal.¹ These and other issues were behind a decision to hold a roundtable on teaching history at the second biennial conference of the International Musicological Society’s regional association for East Asia (IMS-EA), held at the National Taiwan University, October 18–20, 2013.

That the IMS has established a branch in East Asia is itself a statement on the growth of music scholarship in this part of the world. Korea’s Seoul National University hosted the highly successful inaugural conference in September 2011, titled “The Current Musicological Scene in East Asia.” Organizers of the 2013 meeting opted for a less prosaic title: “Musics in the Shifting Global Order,” a theme that seemed predicated on the stream of recent paperbacks charting the rise of the “Asian tigers,” if not on Jacques Barzun’s contention that the West had entered a period of cultural decline.² According to the call for papers, the conference set out to explore how the West had “ordered, prescribed or organized” the musics of East Asia, what the consequences might be for

1. See “Teaching Western Music in China Today,” *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 153–91, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/issue/view/13>.

2. Before attention turned to mainland China, hundreds of publications appeared about the so-call “Asian tiger” economies (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Korea). Among the earliest was *The Four Asian Tigers: Economic Development & the Global Political Economy*, ed. Eun Mee Kim (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 1999). The decline of Western culture is a major theme in Jacques Barzun’s *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2000). The Chinese translation of this book was published in 2002 with the subtitle: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life.

the study of music in this region, “what musical or scholarly traditions have resisted the shifting, and what new formations have emerged from it?”³

Taking these questions and the conference theme as its starting point, our roundtable, “Teaching Western Music History in 2013,” aimed to examine the state of teaching history in this part of the world. After the initial introductory statements, both the panellists and audience were invited to discuss three topics with the questions projected to stimulate audience discussion:

1. *The music*: Should we still be focusing on Western art music? How can we introduce other musics? How qualified are we to teach other musics?
2. *The methods and materials*: Are the standard textbooks still working? Are they right for Asian students? Are online materials helping teachers to meet students’ needs? How are we engaging students? What are the best approaches to helping students to understand the music?
3. *The students*: Are students’ expectations being met? Are students prepared for cultural analysis? Are students skills changing—if so, how?

Each of the participants in this Roundtable took a different approach to addressing these and other questions in their opening remarks. Some discuss their teaching practices and environments in detail, while others speak to the issues more broadly. Annie Yen-Ling Liu, the only participant teaching in mainland China, focuses on effective teaching practices in her institution, and her belief in the importance of contextualizing the music. Jen-yen Chen, who as director of the Graduate Institute of Musicology at National Taiwan University teaches only graduate students, adopts a more philosophical approach to the questions. Hon-Lun Yang shares her experience in using problem-based learning at the Hong Kong Baptist University. My own essay and Joseph Jones’s concentrate on issues related to teaching at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. My essay addresses the wider issue of reading habits in our time, and its impact on how we teach. Jones explores issues of content, materials, and digital communication. In the final essay, David Francis Urrows, from the Hong Kong Baptist University, expresses his reservations about the premise of the conference and takes a skeptic’s view of the “shift.”

As many in Taipei noted, not only has the place of Western music (or perhaps “Western” music) never been stronger in Asia, but Asians have embraced an imported classical tradition that now struggles in the West. And yet, while teaching in East Asia may require strategies specific to the needs of students in the region, many of the wider cultural changes discussed will resonate with readers in other parts of the world.

3. “Call for Proposals,” IMS-EA, 2nd Biennial Conference, 2013 October 18–20, Taipei; <http://www.gim.ntu.edu.tw/imsea2013/Call%20for%20Papers.html>.

Teaching Music History at the School of Music at Soochow University: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Western Music as a Living Tradition

ANNIE YEN-LING LIU

How we answer the questions posed to the panel will vary according to the type of school or program in which we teach. My institution, Soochow University, has recently expanded its department of music into a school of music with a largely international faculty in performance, musicology, ethnomusicology, theory, and composition. Because the performance majors in the school will focus primarily on Western art music, we have designed the history curriculum to center on this tradition. Our four-semester survey course uses a traditional textbook (Grout/Palisca/Burkholder) that we supplement with more specialized articles and book excerpts.

With minimal alteration, the questions posed to the panel could also be posed to professors in geographical centers outside of Asia. Questions of incorporating non-Western and vernacular musics into our teaching and the usefulness of traditional textbooks must be addressed by each professor teaching music history in a college or university, given the expansion of repertoires, methodologies, and objects of study during the last several decades. Our task here is to consider specific challenges or issues concerning the teaching of musicology in Asia.

One of the most important roles of a music historian in the Asian context, I would claim, is to reconstruct the social and cultural conditions of past forms of music. This differs in some respects from the role of the historian in the United States or Europe. For instance, I would suggest that “interdisciplinarity” is even more pressing when teaching students who have less familiarity with Western literature, philosophy, and visual art. Broad landmarks in cultural and intellectual history (“Humanism,” the “Renaissance,” “Romanticism”) need to be defined and characterized with representative figures and artworks. Among more specific or local examples, when I introduce instrumental music in the Renaissance period, I show students Hieronymus Bosch’s *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, in which instruments are used as tools of torture to those confined in hell, to discuss the association of instruments with the body, dance, and in

this context, the sin of lust. In a later period, Johannes Vermeer's *A Lady at the Virginals with a Gentleman* ("The Music Lesson"), which depicts a man and a woman left alone in the same room, suggests a similar association of instruments with the body and physical intimacy. The madrigal allows for a discussion of forms of poetry and subject matter (the Petrarchan sonnet, lyric poetry, the pastoral imagination, gender) as well as the study of text depiction.

An interdisciplinary approach helps hold the students' attention and make history courses more productive and culturally relevant. One tendency among students I have encountered is to adopt a "memorization approach," as if Western music exists in a vacuum as a series of either value-neutral or monumentalized mythical figures and facts. Emphasizing cultural contexts by exploring the visual arts and literature not only enhances students' interest in Western culture but also prevents them from thinking of the construction of music history as socially irrelevant and one-dimensional.

I also want my students to learn to engage with Western art music as a living tradition and not an antiquarian phenomenon enshrined in a museum of "classical masterpieces" from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Emphasizing relevance, for me, is a key issue in teaching Western music history in East Asian countries. One way to do this is to draw upon contemporary musical examples, whether from "art music" or from film, pop culture, and mass media. Caroline Shaw's *Partita for 8 Voices*, which won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, can be presented as a contemporary manifestation of the Baroque suite. Drawing upon contemporary musical works that have a clear association with the past can help students understand the continuity and evolution of the Western art tradition. Shaw's *Partita* also includes a prominent use of overtone singing and other vocal traditions and may be used to introduce ideas of cross-cultural exchange.

Non-Western musics or techniques may be introduced as they occur within the traditional narrative: well-known examples include Turkish "topics" in the music of Viennese classicism (Mozart and Beethoven) and Indonesian music as it influenced Debussy. The history of music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries becomes increasingly engaged with these East-West connections; the film music and operas of Tan Dun, for instance, may be presented as case studies of such cross-cultural connections. Shaw's use of overtone singing in *Partita* may be traced back to Stockhausen's *Stimmung* as well as Inuit "throat-singing" traditions. One can also compare how the "exotic" is constructed by composers of different periods: Mozart's use of "exotic" characters and musical idioms in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*) differs sharply from Rameau's use of "exotic" subject matter in *Les Indes galantes*. Adopting this comparative approach in introducing non-Western musics may provoke students to think about motivations and cultural issues of using non-Western musical influences or borrowings in Western art music.

Some might ask how qualified we are to engage with non-Western culture. My answer is that we are not presenting histories of non-Western musics independently, on their own terms, which would be presented in a different class (ethnomusicology). Focusing on the interaction of East and West makes use of our training as musicologists.

Teaching students how to listen to diverse styles developed in Western music history remains a fundamental task for a music historian. Practices of score reading, musical analysis, and close listening are linked to the “literate” tradition that students study in their performance studios. Music history classes should deepen their understanding of this living tradition at the same time that they open up new potential repertoires from the past.

Teaching Music History at National Taiwan University: Western Music in a World Context

JEN-YEN CHEN

The teaching of the history of European art music has long formed a core subject of the music curriculum at East Asian institutions of higher education, especially in those nations strongly influenced by Western technology and culture, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. However, with recent intellectual developments that have called the exclusivity of this specific musical tradition into question and promoted greater awareness of other musics, the issue arises of the extent to which Western music history remains an indispensable part of music teaching, particularly in regions with distinctive indigenous musical styles and practices. The following contribution to the roundtable “Teaching Music History in 2013” of the International Musicological Society’s East Asia Regional Association’s 2013 conference comes from a US-trained historical musicologist who currently serves as a faculty member at National Taiwan University, an institution highly influenced by Western academia (for example, a majority of its current professors earned their doctoral degrees at European and North American universities), and whose research has continued to focus on Western art music, yet has not escaped (nor cared to try escaping) the effect of “recontextualization” in a changed physical and cultural location.

Should we still be Focusing on Western Art Music?

Yes, we should still be focusing on Western art music, though not for its aesthetic “superiority,” but rather in the spirit of Bruno Nettl’s “Mozart and the Ethnomusicological Study of Western Culture”;¹ in other words, as a culturally specific and significant phenomenon which counts as only one among many musics, though one which, for reasons too complex to be considered here (which include aesthetics, though certainly not only aesthetics), has enjoyed

1. Bruno Nettl, “Mozart and the Ethnomusicological Study of Western Culture: An Essay in Four Movements,” in Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman, eds., *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 137–55.

a disproportionately broad dissemination around the world, with numerous consequences for global musical practices. Among the important aspects of such an approach is the recognition that judging the music to be “great” is itself profoundly cultural, and therefore cannot evade the critical analysis of culture. I therefore reject a recent tendency to disparage such analysis, which actually does disservice to aesthetics, as if unbounded transcendentalism were the only valid mode of experiencing music affectively.

How can we Introduce Other Musics?

How can we *not* introduce other musics? Can an approach to Western art music that treats it as a self-contained tradition, made within and for the West, and shaped only by the West, truly represent the tradition meaningfully and accurately, given the transnational character of contemporary society and the contribution of the music to this character? Indeed, the segregation of “Western” from other musics, implicit not only in the principal question addressed in this section but also in the two which I formulated in response, demonstrates the restrictive nature of the linguistic expressions used to discuss culture. This is not to deny the heuristic value of expressions and categories, without which discussion and therefore teaching would not be possible. But their very artificiality and limitations, which teachers must somehow convey to students even in rudimentary undergraduate courses, suggest an answer to the next question posed to the panel.

How Qualified are we to Teach Other Musics?

The wholly reasonable heuristic assumptions that culture does not lack differentiations and that a scholar must necessarily focus on an extremely limited subset of culture allow the above question to be acknowledged as a legitimate and important one. The specialist of the subset which has come to be defined as “Western” music (again, for reasons too complex to be considered here) of course cannot become also a specialist of the remaining portion of the culture; but he or she is actually qualified to teach this portion, insofar as the teaching of Western art music underscores this specific tradition’s character as a subset, and not as the whole. For such a purpose, just enough knowledge of the “other” musics would be required in order not to confound the segment with the totality.² And knowledge could in fact consist of something as simple as taking a

2. Since this assertion may seem to continue to promote an entrenched and unequal relationship of power by apparently marginalizing the other musics which only need to be known “just enough,” it can be simply explained that Western music may equally be known just enough, in order to forestall a totalizing notion of any other musical tradition. Thus, specialists

critical stance towards “universal” Western musical values, such as harmonic and contrapuntal complexity, the importance of originality and radical innovation, etc.

Are Online Materials Helping Teachers to Meet Students’ Needs?

Yes, inasmuch as they provide students with material through which to appreciate the endlessly diverse ramifications of Western art music in contemporary society, such as videos of Three Tenors performances on YouTube, recordings of innovative cross-cultural work such as Yo-Yo Ma’s *Silk Road Project*, the advertisement of the music through moving and still images, and the music’s reception in fan pages, discussion boards, and blogs. Thus, the articulation of culture in cyberspace, now an inescapable aspect of contemporary life, also impacts the study and practice of Western art music, for which traditional media such as printed writings and the highly formalized mode of concert-hall performance can no longer be sufficient (while remaining nevertheless significant). To the extent that the Internet has become conceptually central in today’s world, it needs also to form an indispensable component of the teaching of Western music history, even if only primarily as another instance of the technological revolutions that have greatly shaped this history (comparable to the invention of printing around 1500 and of recording around 1900).

How are we Engaging Students?

Since the roundtable consisted of faculty members currently teaching in East Asia, my response to the above question specifically concerns students living in this region of the world for whom Western music is both a “native language” (it having long constituted a core area of music education at the primary level) and a tradition from abroad, forming a dynamic mixture of insider and outsider characteristics. For those Asian students who love Western art music, teachers may engage them by, in the encouraging words of Yosihiko Tokumaru,³ taking up the important task of “re-introducing Western music to Asia,” i.e. by helping them develop the ability to think critically about the multifaceted cultural ramifications of a music they have made a central part of their lives. For those Asian students who don’t like Western art music and may resent being required to study it, teachers may likewise foster an appreciation of the value of thinking

of Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Indonesian, South American, and other musics are likewise qualified to teach Western music.

3. Spoken to me during an evaluation of the Graduate Institute of Musicology, National Taiwan University, which took place in April 2013. I wish to express my thanks to Professor Tokumaru for his advice.

critically about the music, or indeed about any musics or cultures, including both those they *do* like and those they don't.⁴ And perhaps here lies the greatest value in continuing to include Western music history in university music curricula: if education is not merely to be about "what I like" (the problem of egocentrism applying just as much to teachers as to students, when the former simply choose to focus in their courses on the music they happen to prefer), but also to promote understanding of other tastes and perspectives, then a tradition that now constitutes a focal point of debates about what is good music for intellectual study and aesthetic appreciation (this roundtable serving as evidence of the point) should be ideal material for pedagogy in a deeper critical sense.

4. The legendary passion for European classical music often imputed to East Asians, while true to a certain extent, should not be exaggerated to the point of a homogenizing generalization which neglects the wide diversity of musical tastes among this population.

Teaching Music History at Hong Kong Baptist University: Problem-Based Learning and Outcome-Based Teaching and Learning

HON-LUN YANG

There are many challenges in teaching Western music history, and it is even more exacting to do so in Asia, particularly in Hong Kong, where the students' mother-tongue is not English and the educational environment is exam-oriented.¹ As Melanie Lowe has written, it is a daunting task to cover a huge teaching content in a two-semester (or even a three/four semester) music history sequence and to teach that material to students of varying music backgrounds, many of whom see in it little relevance to their daily life; doing so outside of North America brings its own unique issues.² I would say even though Grout-Palisca-Burkholder's *A History of Western Music* is designated as the standard text for the history course I teach in the Department of Music at Hong Kong Baptist University, it is used largely as a reference. In a semester of twelve to thirteen teaching weeks, I can cover only the basic canonic composers and works. In addition, one class meeting is set aside for contemporary Chinese music, covering both Chinese composers living in the West (as represented in Grout), and those residing in the People's Republic of China. I have tried various pedagogical initiatives in the past—from using PowerPoint that includes images and video links to using on-line platforms to try to engage students in discussion. Last year, I decided to replace the teacher-centered teaching mode with “problem-based learning” (hereafter PBL) in response to my university's implementation of outcome-based teaching and learning (OBTL).³

1. Due to Hong Kong's colonial background and universities' international aspiration, English is the medium of instruction for the majority of subjects despite students' varying command of the language.

2. Melanie Lowe, “Teaching Music History Today: Making Tangible Connections to Here and Now,” *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 1, no. 1 (2010): 45, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/17/24>.

3. Over the past few years, a significant amount of funding has been allocated by the Hong Kong government to local universities to implement OBTL. My PBL project, “Incorporating Problem-based Learning to Facilitate OBTL in the Teaching of Music History,” is supported by Hong Kong Baptist University's Teaching Development Grants.

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PBL, a teaching approach that originated in North America in the 1960s in health science and related disciplines, uses problems as an initiative to set out the learning process that result in a vibrant and active learning environment, leading to the development of higher order cognitive skills.⁴ Some of the benefits associated with this practice include: increased levels of curiosity in domains of study; better appreciation of the relevance of the curriculum, as students perceive the problems as pertinent to future professions; and better integration of learning from all curriculum components.⁵ If applied to the Western music history classroom, I thought, PBL might help solve the problems of having too much content to cover in a short period. Learning is placed in students' hands through well worked-out problems that will render the learning relevant to them, and the approach itself can open up different learning methods to help motivate students and prepare them for life-long learning.

There are many different PBL models and I am still exploring what works and what does not. For the past semester (Spring 2013), ten problems of different scope and nature were designed,⁶ including assignments such as:

- Use “19th-century piano music” as a keyword search on Youtube and study the resulting videos. Write at least five sentences regarding the types of pieces represented in the resulting videos and their respective musical characteristics. . Find one aspect of these observations that is of interest to you and then do more research on it through the web or other sources. Write no more than 500 words about what you have learned. Then share your short report on Jan 21.
- As a group, make a lapbook⁷ about romanticism and orchestral music or art song in the nineteenth century. Your lapbook is intended as

4. There is a large body of literature on PBL. The earliest example is the seminal work of Howard Barrows and Robyn Tamblyn, *Problem-Based Learning: An Approach to Medical Education* (New York: Springer, 1980), and more recent ones include, for example, Jessie Ee and Oon Seng Tan ed., *PBL Made Simple: Lessons for the Classroom* (Singapore: Cengage Learning Asia Pte Ltd., 2009), and Terry Barrett and Sarah Moore ed., *New Approaches to Problem-Based Learning: Revitalizing Your Practice in Higher Education* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

5. Henk Schmidt et al., “Constructivist, Problem-Based Learning Does Work: A Meta-Analysis of Curricular Comparisons Involving a Single Medical School,” *Education Psychologist* 44, no. 4 (2009): 227–49.

6. One of the challenges in implementing PBL is designing high-quality problems that are engaging and motivating, that are based in the “real-world” and open to multiple ideas, that provide stimulus for collaborative enquiry, and that contribute toward learning outcomes. In the case of my project, there is no doubt that the chosen problems need to be revisited and refined if PBL is to be continued.

7. A lapbook is a layer book with flaps and foldables that contain information pertinent to a single subject. The making of lapbook as a creative way of learning has become popular among primary and secondary educators in the past several years.

educational reading for the general public, so it should be fun and easy to understand.

- Your class has been invited to produce six radio programs each twenty minutes in length devoted to Verdi, Wagner, and Britten for their bi-centenaries and centenary celebrations respectively. Please submit your assignment as a pre-recorded radio program ready to be broadcasted on air.

Each three-hour class is run approximately as follows: in segment 1, students present their responses to the problem started in the previous week; in segment 2, students discuss the readings pertinent to the topic of the class in a Q & A format using questions they received a week in advance,⁸ and in segment 3, students are introduced to the problem of the following week and begin brainstorming for solutions while my teaching assistant and I help guide students' discussions.⁹

Regarding the outcome of my PBL, I find that students are more active and more engaged in the learning process. I am quite happy with their solutions to the "problems" despite certain mistakes and oversights in some of their works. Their exam performance did not differ significantly from previous, traditionally-taught classes. Nonetheless, my present PBL class setup took away time previously spent on listening skills.

In terms of learning experience, which is measured through various questionnaires, two-fifths of my students favored PBL and three-fifths preferred traditional learning. Those who liked it did so for reasons identified in previous studies, such as the benefits discussed earlier in the article. Those who disliked it cited the following reasons: too hard, not suitable for Hong Kong students, too much work, too time consuming, too much time spent on activities not related to music history (such as the lapbook project requiring art and craft skills), difficult to coordinate with group mates, unfair workload, non-comprehensive learning.

My PBL attempt naturally raises many important issues pertinent to the teaching and learning of Western music history. First, what should be the scope of our present-day Western music history curriculum; who is responsible for

8. Class readings are taken from Mark E. Bonds, *A History of Music in Western Culture* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003); Barbara R. Hanning, *Concise History of Western Music* (New York: Norton, 2002); and Douglass Seaton, *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2007).

9. As discussed in various studies, tutors play an important role in facilitating the PBL learning process by providing students suitable intervention, useful advice, and timely feedback, particularly when students are at a learning bottle-neck. See for instance, Deirdre Connolly and Charlotte Silen, "Empowering Tutors: Strategies for Inspired and Effective Facilitation of PBL Learning," in Barrett and Moore, *New Approaches to Problem-Based Learning*, 215–28.

gate-keeping the curriculum's breadth and depth; who decides what essential skills must be taught and learnt; and how is its cultural relevancy and political correctness determined in this global era? Second, what is good teaching and learning, and is it good or bad to challenge students' comfort zones as I did? Last, is it worthwhile to try out new teaching approaches when academics are very much stretched for their precious time to publish and do service, let alone the risk of getting bad evaluations from students? For me, trying out new teaching approaches, be it PBL or something else, is what makes my teaching life interesting.

Teaching Music History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong: “Reading” History

BRIAN C. THOMPSON

In this paper, I discuss some of the challenges in teaching Western music history in my institution. It is in many ways an exceptional teaching and learning environment, rich in opportunities for both instructors and students. But there are also difficulties, mainly in teaching language-based subjects. These result in part from the nature of the environment, but may also stem from a wider problem of literacy in a broad sense, and from changing attitudes towards reading.

The Context

Although its name might suggest otherwise, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is in many ways a cosmopolitan institution. Established in 1963 through the amalgamation of three colleges, the University has always provided instruction in both Chinese and English.¹ Applicants to all undergraduate programs are required to have attained a high level of proficiency in both English and Chinese. Once admitted, students must take language courses and pass further proficiency tests in both languages to graduate. In the Department of Music, more than half of all courses are taught in English. Among the notable exceptions are the courses on Chinese music, and one of the distinguishing characteristics of the department is that it provides extensive instruction in both Chinese and Western music. Indeed, students are required to take courses in both musical traditions, including instrumental lessons. This curriculum within the music department is consistent with the philosophy and goals of the University.²

1. In contrast, English is the official language of instruction at the territory's other comprehensive university, the University of Hong Kong, which was founded in 1911.

2. The University cites the “bilingual and multicultural dimensions of student education” as part of its vision. See “Mission & Vision, Motto & Emblem,” <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/english/aboutus/mission.html>.

The actual interests of music students, on the other hand, are not quite in sync with the University's vision. Typically, at least 90% of our students are primarily interested in Western music. It is the music that they know best. Many come from secondary schools where music was given some emphasis, and most have progressed through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) exams on their primary instrument. As with undergraduates just about everywhere, what most are interested in when they arrive in our department is learning to play that instrument better. Nevertheless, they are required to take lessons in a second instrument and take a number of courses on Chinese music, including the history of Chinese music. So our program differs from those in most Western countries in its overall approach to curriculum and in the music history we teach.³

Overall, the department offers a wide range of courses, given its modest size (12 full-time faculty) and broad mission. Due to the diversity of the music curriculum and to the large number University-wide courses all undergraduates are required to take, music students must complete only three semesters of Western music history. In their second year of university they take a two-semester survey, after which they select from a list of electives and occasionally special topics courses.⁴ Instructors use a combination of textbooks and selected readings in these courses.⁵ The music department also offers four general education (GE) courses, three of which are taught in English. I teach two of these—one that explores a wide range of musics through the history of sound recording, and a second on film music that is part history and part appreciation.⁶

The Problem

Having taught at CUHK for just over a decade, and offered courses on many topics, I find that the one problem that continues to concern me is the students' reluctance to read. We already assign a limited number of pages per week because students are studying in their second language, but this is not a

3. In the sixteen years since China reclaimed sovereignty over Hong Kong, music has remained an area within university studies that is still highly cosmopolitan. For a discussion of the pre-handover context, see Greta Olson, "Report from Hong Kong: Present Directions and Thoughts about the Future," *Current Musicology* 58 (1995): 121–8.

4. Western music history electives are offered on jazz, romanticism, nationalism, film music, and women in music.

5. In the survey, instructors have in recent years used Barbara Russano Hanning's *Concise History of Western Music*, 4th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009). In the pair of courses I teach on film music, I use Mervyn Cooke's *A History of Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), while in most electives selected readings are the norm.

6. The Music Department also offers a course titled "Appreciation of Chinese Opera," and a traditional "Music Appreciation" course, in which Roger Kamien's *Music: An Appreciation*, 7th brief edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010) is used.

question of ability. Students’ command of written English is very high, and I am not aware of any studies showing that the level of English among Hong Kong university students has declined over the past decade. Nor have I observed any decline in the verbal skills or basic comprehension of texts in English. Among the students I have taught from Mainland China (accounting for 10-15% of the students in my GE courses), the average student’s verbal abilities are perhaps only slightly lower than their Hong Kong counterparts, due presumably to their having had fewer opportunities to use the language, while their ability to understand readings seems to be about the same as the Hong Kong-born students. This is also true of the growing number of Korean students in my GE courses,

From my experience with both music students and those taking my GE courses, the common problem is, I expect, becoming a universal one: a declining interest in reading. While students seem unprepared to invest much of their time in reading either textbooks or the higher-level content of journal articles, they are generally open to new topics and are interested in learning. To illustrate, several years ago, I experimented with the so-called “flipped classroom,” in which students undertake the work—reading, viewing, listening—before class, and then come to the classroom to engage in some way, rather than listening to a lecture. While teaching the music history survey, I used role-playing and debates as a way to engage students in learning about nationalism in music, the “War of the Romantics,” and other topics. To explore each issue, I began by assigning students to groups. Rather than simply giving each a side (pro or con) on a particular issue, I assigned a role—Vaughan Williams, Bartók, etc.—and provided each student with a number of short readings by or about their character. They then had several weeks to prepare to debate from their character’s point of view. In each debate, the students seemed to enjoy the process and the game of taking on the role. The problem, however, was that few had taken the time to do the reading that was needed to prepare for the debate.

Regrettably, this was not an isolated case. Each term, I receive emails from students who think that their lecture notes are all that they need and ask if they really must read a particular article, chapter, or passage—even though it has been assigned as “required.” Based on what I often read in final examination essays, many students do not take my advice. The reasons for this are no doubt many. There are real demands on students to frequently “change channels,” as they say, and absorb material in both English and Chinese. And although Hong Kong students may have better attitudes towards reading than their peers in some countries, their facility with English-language texts is limited when compared with those whose first language is English.⁷ They will, then, be at a

7. Shek Kam Tse, et al, “Attitudes and Attainment: A Comparison of Hong Kong, Singaporean, and English Students’ Reading,” *Research in Education* 76 (2006): 74–87.

disadvantage in any language-based subject, where teaching and learning are dependent largely on printed texts. That said, a declining interest in reading may be a much wider problem, one that extends well beyond the community and region in which I live. I have had this conversation with colleagues in North America. PowerPoint, YouTube, and video games are all frequently cited distractions from reading.⁸ But many believe it originates in the culture of the Internet, and its ability to provide quick answers to simple questions. Whatever the reasons may be, new approaches to teaching and learning are needed if students are to benefit from studying history—both gaining a deeper understanding of the music that they play and acquiring transferable skills and abilities.

Those solutions are likely to be found through some combination of reading and other activities, both in the classroom and in online environments. In my experience, the “flipped classroom,” is not a natural fit for the humanities, and my experiment with it was not encouraging. Still, it may provide a way forward. A focused discussion of ways in which this model might be adapted to teaching music history could be profitable, regardless of where one is teaching. In my teaching environment, I have not found students to be uninterested in history. Rather, they face obstacles of culture, in the widest sense, and require new approaches to learning, approaches that may need to be employed long before they begin their university studies.

8. A discussion of the positive effects of leisure reading on academic success is beyond the scope of this short article, but what I perceive to be students' declining interest in academic reading may result in part from students devoting less of their free time to reading for pleasure. See, for example, Jude D. Gallik, “Do They Read for Pleasure? Recreational Reading Habits of College Students,” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 24, no. 6 (1999): 480–88.

Teaching Music History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong: Course Content, Textbooks, and Online Tools

JOSEPH E. JONES

In this essay, I discuss three issues related to teaching the undergraduate music history survey at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I begin by suggesting the obvious: that the way we title our courses should accurately describe their contents. The choice between teaching “Western art music” and “music in Western culture” might significantly alter an instructor’s approach and the students’ perspectives. In the second section, I explore the merits of traditional textbooks compared to more focused readings that favor depth over breadth of knowledge. Finally, I share reflections on various online tools and their potential value to teaching and learning.

Course Titles and Content

The music history survey at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is taken in the second year of a four-year degree program. It is titled “A History of Music in Western Culture,” the same title given by Mark Evan Bonds to his widely-used undergraduate textbook. In teaching “A History of Music in Western Culture,” it is acknowledged that classical music is no longer an exclusively “Western” tradition. One could argue that it never was; classical music, at least of the common practice period, has been deeply engrained in cultures outside of Europe and the Americas for some time. The majority of students at CUHK and in other programs in Hong Kong have studied and performed Western classical repertoire since childhood. At the same time, many have only limited knowledge of traditional Chinese musics—like me, they are unacquainted with the instruments, notation systems, and performance practices.

Should musicologists in Asia continue to focus on Western art music in their courses? The answer to this question is self-evident, but the fact that classical music is more or less a global practice raises a host of fresh questions. Should our focus on Western art music embrace *histories* of that music that

extend beyond the West? Instead of “A History of Music in Western Culture,” should we teach “A History of Western Musical Traditions” as the latter does not impose artificial geographic or cultural boundaries? Practically speaking, do we have the resources to discuss the composition, performance, and reception of Western art music in places like Mongolia or Lebanon? In short, we must decide individually or as institutions whether our teaching should center on “Western art music” or “music in Western culture.” Acknowledging considerable overlap between the two, the focus of each could and probably should differ in significant ways.

Teaching Materials

Students at CUHK often complain that assigned readings in the textbook include topics not discussed in class. The instructor’s rationale is clear enough: a limited amount of content can be presented in lecture (our history survey spans from antiquity to the present and is taught over two fourteen-week terms). Textbook readings are thus intended to supplement classroom content. From the comments received in course evaluations, it seems that students object not because they are lazy, rather that they prefer to explore fewer topics but in greater depth. I am hardly an expert on the education system in Hong Kong, but my impression is that secondary school assessments often prioritize memorization over a deeper synthesis of knowledge. By the time students reach university, many understandably view “history” as a body of facts that can be retrieved from online sources as needed. But while they openly disparage rote learning, they also seem leery of exams that assess critical thinking and writing.

With this in mind, we might ask if standard textbooks—whether in print or accessed through publishers’ websites—are still effective. Should we consider assigning more targeted readings, even in our introductory courses? *Grove Music Online* provides far greater depth than textbooks, while electronic databases such as *JSTOR* and *IIMP* offer access to recent scholarship in full text. Without a doubt, assigning such readings would save students considerable expense at the bookstore. Using readings would also allow the instructor to approach topics from multiple perspectives and to ultimately encourage conversations that move beyond dates and definitions. But what is sacrificed when we favor depth over breadth of knowledge? Should we still value breadth in an age when recordings and scholarship are so easily accessed? How do we balance teaching students *what* they need to know with teaching them *how* to find the information they need? With increasingly sophisticated research tools at our disposal, the balance appears to be shifting toward depth and toward training students how to approach historical issues from several angles.

Online Teaching and Learning

At CUHK, relatively few music students use a laptop computer in the classroom. Those who wish to take notes increasingly do so on small-screen devices: mobile phones, iPads, or comparable products. If this trend has not already reached my colleagues' courses in Europe and North America, I suspect it will soon. What does this mean for the instructor? If you are experienced with an online class management service such as Blackboard, you should familiarize yourself with the company's mobile app—if not through personal experience, then by reading user reviews. Presently, Blackboard's app garners an uninspiring two-and-a-half stars out of five on iTunes and Google Play. If you are eager to capitalize on Facebook's ubiquity by creating "Pages" for your courses, you might need to test the notification system and adjust your privacy settings. At the moment I prefer Edublogs.org, a free service that facilitates access to course-related materials and provides a virtual space for discussions. Throughout the term, I ask students to write short posts on assigned topics, some of which involve independent fact-finding (e.g. finding information related to a composer's conducting career) while others are more reflective in nature (e.g. making comparisons between opera productions). Students also share materials related to their research projects and can read updates about their classmates' work.

Online platforms are not necessary for effective teaching, but they are an efficient way to provide access to syllabi, lecture slides, links to videos, translations of song texts, and so on. They are also excellent tools for promoting an interdisciplinary approach in our courses. When teaching music from sixteenth-century Italy, one might ask students to compare pictures of Renaissance and Baroque cathedrals and virtual galleries of paintings by Tintoretto and Rubens. The study of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* can be paired with the poetry of Mallarmé and works by Renoir. Such exercises help foster a deeper understanding of the socio-historical contexts in which musicians and composers lived while circumventing some of the limitations of textbooks. Although such comparisons can be made through traditional means (e.g. paper handouts and PowerPoint), services like Facebook and Edublogs create a secondary platform for students to learn—both from the instructor and from one another. We may need to acquaint ourselves with new technology every few years, but the benefit to our students makes it well worth the effort.

Teaching Music History at Hong Kong Baptist University: Confessions of a Skeptic

DAVID FRANCIS URROWS

When I was invited to participate in this round table, I expressed doubts that I was the right person to ask; the results of reading my paper in Taipei only confirmed my fears. At the time it was a little difficult to explain just why this was so, but my misgivings did not diminish over several months of thought on the question, “Should we still be focusing on Western art music?” My skepticism extends all the way from the idea that there is a viable alternative to basing undergraduate music education on the teaching of this repertory and history (i.e., classroom realities and student expectations), all the way to the title of this conference. The “changing world order” may indeed be a fact, but the change in our discipline might be something quite other than what most people assume; it might just be a wishful notion that turns out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Following the text of my presentation, the conclusion of this essay continues these post-presentation questions.

In-betweenness: Teaching on the *Semi-Periphery* of Western Art Culture

Chief among the wishful thoughts to which I refer is the notion of a putative “decentralization” of Western art music in musicological study and discourse. One can decentralize anything by an act of will: simply stating that something will henceforth not be central is sufficient, if rather tenuous (“I’m gonna wash that man right outa my hair.”) The next step, much in evidence at the conference, is to surround yourself with similarly-inclined people. The problem with all this for me is that it doesn’t fit well with global real life as I experience it, where Western art music continues to be quite central, in particular with regard to undergraduate education resources, although this centrality is by definition “in-between” everything which surrounds it. Music theory and analysis continues to mine deeply in the seams of Western music, though not only art music. Western art music continues to hold a hegemonic position in the global music industry. Musicology cannot, I propose, exist in a vacuum, ignoring or uninfluenced by these other dimensions of global music culture(s). In the sphere

of musicology the circle has been greatly enlarged by the inclusion of other repertoires (which I support), but I do not observe Western art music much dislodged from its central position by this.

Why do I fail to share anxieties about whether we should be doing something else? At worst, I am suspicious of unspoken social and political agendas and ideological goals which may lie behind this, with which I share little sympathy. Even if we accept that today our research is very often interdisciplinary and transcultural, and even if we are able to develop new areas of expertise, to engage with such a suggestion forces us to beg many practical questions pertaining to qualifications, to mission (in a secular sense), and the wisdom, or lack thereof, of reinventing ourselves to merely assuage, perhaps, a misplaced political correctness, or worries originating in an apologetic sort of self-condemnation. At best, this seems to me to fly in the face of the fact that today more people are studying Western instruments and Western music repertory in the Asia Pacific region now than perhaps in any major world area at any time in history.

Western music historians are only responding to a supply and demand equation. Giorgio Biancorosso pointed out during the question and answer part of an earlier session of this conference that “music is (also) labor.” He meant this in the sense that we continue to teach the history of the Western canon not only because of its historiographic structure and immense literature, but because it is what so many people are studying, playing, interpreting, striving to understand, and making part of their cultural, or even multi-cultural, post-modern lives and careers. That is the dynamic path: they are not playing that repertory simply because we are teaching a background historical narrative relating to it. Nevertheless, the dialogue between performance and historical teaching is a crucial channel of communication, one which needs to be widened, not narrowed, and certainly not diverted.

Since the end of the Second World War, urban Asian Pacific societies have moved from the periphery to what an anthropologist would identify as the semi-periphery of Western art culture.¹ When people speak of a “shifting global order,” they are generally speaking in geo-political terms, and have in mind economic clout as well as political dominance. If such a shift is taking place geopolitically, then the political-economic rise of Asia—in relation to culture—may well be taking place in inverse synchronization with the rise in the esteem and popularity of Western art music, which has been “trending” here for the past 60 years. Despite many ambiguities, and the existence of parallel national and indigenous musical cultures (which I have no intention of ignoring or

1. I'm aware that there are alternatives to the center/periphery model, including the idea of multiple centers. It would however be difficult to argue in the context of this conference for Asia as a center of Western art music.

speaking lightly of) Western art music has largely conquered the practice room and the concert hall. In addition, I might just mention the saturation of images and sounds of Western art music in media and advertising, as well as intermedial art transfers, throughout Asia today. Debates continue in part due to the fact that music, as Richard Krauss put it, is double-edged sword: it “not only transcends social differences, it can also accentuate them, serving as a symbol to be loved or hated.”²

If I may borrow an idea from one of my European colleagues, Nicholas Standaert, this round table is itself an expression of a common dilemma that he has called “in-betweenness;” we feel, as we find ourselves so often in Asia, “in between”—an idea described in the simple but meaningful character, *jian* (間). This is what it means to be at the semi-periphery. We are in between the periphery and the core, in between East and West, in between musical traditions, in between national and global forces, in between encounter and understanding. We are stuck, we are caught, we are between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The forces of politics and culture are not, I suggest, moving in the same direction but, like two tectonic plates, are sliding to a large extent in different directions and at different rates. This, however, is not necessarily a bad place to be, at least metaphorically speaking. Prof. Standaert points out that it is the very idea of *jian*, of “in-betweenness” “which allow[s] not only the encounter and construction of identity between people in the past, but also between historians and their subjects in the present...”³

Before I left Hong Kong for this conference, I asked some of my students, “should we teach something other than Western music history”? They reacted with a mixture of bemusement, shock, and incomprehension. (Some of their comments cannot be repeated in print.) They are also “in between” and their far more fragile sense of identity, as I understood it, was immediately threatened by the idea. They saw themselves at risk of losing their place in the encounter and dialogue in which we are taking part. They are stakeholders in Western art music’s position here at the semi-periphery, and do not want to see it marginalized.

Post-Conference Reflection

After I read my paper with as much conviction as I could muster, a colleague from a UK university pointed out that he had encountered hostility to the

2. Richard. C. Krauss, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 32.

3. Nicholas Standaert, “‘In-betweenness’: Conceptualizing ‘Strangers and Distant Lands’: Encounters between Chinese and Europeans during the 17th and 18th Centuries,” paper delivered at the International Symposium, “Strangers and Distant Lands: The West in Late Imperial China,” School of Chinese, University of Hong Kong, December 7–9, 2012.

teaching of the Western canon (and the music itself) from certain students who were bored and alienated by the repertoire due to what I took to be a lack of exposure and preconceived derogatory ideas. He asked if I had any similar experiences. I took it that these students were either not music majors, or were only interested in musics well outside the Western art music tradition. My clumsy answer—based on 25 years of non-hostile rapprochement in Asia—was that “things are different on this side of the globe.” I was immediately corrected by another colleague with the valid observation that I could not well speak for all of Asia, and that he had had such experiences while teaching his classes in Taiwan. On reflection, I realized that my department, with its strong emphasis on performance skills, public examination results, juries, and other performance requirements, admits as a consequence few if any students who would be likely to share such antipathies. Although some of our undergraduates major in a traditional Chinese instrument, we typically do not admit students who play “pop” instruments. Required Chinese and Western music history surveys appear to be largely successful in answering needs related to intellectual interest as well as identity (although we will never satisfy everyone completely). It might be an entirely different matter with students taking a general education course, but the general education courses which my department offers cover a wider range of musics (including popular repertoires) than the courses offered to music majors. So, in a sense I could say that my department has already responded to pressures of this kind, that we have to serve multiple audiences with multiple intellectual and professional needs, and that some of these needs are repertoire and tradition-based. I believe that the teaching of music needs to be primarily about music, and not about other issues (such as using music and its history for social and political engineering purposes), and from the standpoint of today I do not see an alternative, nor even the need for an alternative, for the current basic, undergraduate professional music education.