

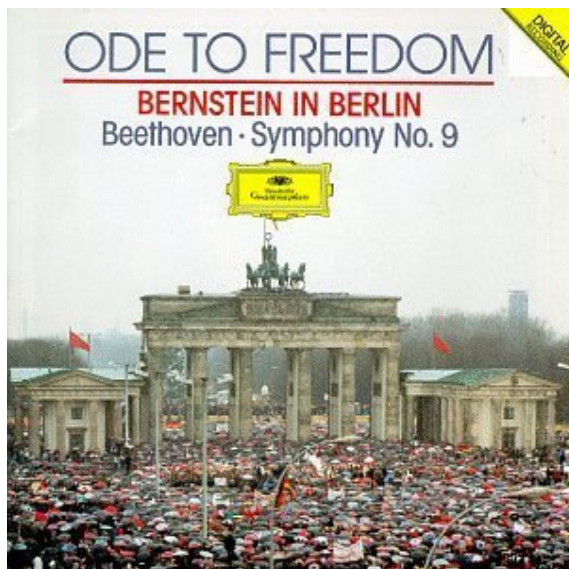
FUBiS International Summer University, Term II  
June 4 – July 16, 2016 in Berlin, Germany

# ***Music in Berlin:*** ***Three Centuries of Tradition and Innovation***

6 credits

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Celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall, 1989

- I could never be done with this royal city of Berlin if I were
- to examine all its musical wealth in detail. Few, if any,
- capitals can boast such treasures of harmony. Music is in the
- air. You breathe it; it penetrates you. You find it in the
- theater, in church, in the concert-room, in the street, in the
- public gardens, everywhere; ... Hence the keen attraction
- Berlin has for great artists, the extraordinary universality of
- musical feeling in Prussia, and hence also the choral and
- instrumental institutions of its capital, which I have always
- thought so worthy of admiration.
- —Hector Berlioz (1843)

## ■ Course Description

With its three opera houses and seven symphony orchestras, Berlin is one of the world's leading centers for classical music, boasting a long tradition of important composers and performers, famous concert halls, and impressive instrument and manuscript collections. The city also has a significant history of popular music and musical theater, most notably its early twentieth-century cabaret culture and more recently its trends in electronic dance music.

This course presents important milestones in Berlin's musical history since the mid-eighteenth century, when the court of Frederick the Great put the city on Europe's musical map. We will consider Berlin's time-honored musical traditions as well as its rich diversity, focusing our study on the complementary dynamics of tradition and innovation.

This perspective sheds light on the nineteenth-century revival of Johann Sebastian Bach's music, for example, when the Berlin Sing-Akademie under Felix Mendelssohn presented the first performance of *St. Matthew Passion* and other important works 80 years after the composer's death. At the same time, performers such as violinist Nicolo Paganini and pianist Franz Liszt were astounding Berlin audiences with their unprecedented virtuosity and pioneering the modern cult of the celebrity superstar.

The early twentieth century marks the city's most tumultuous struggle between tradition and innovation, as it became a world center for avant-garde music and theater (hosting the premieres of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* in 1925 and Kurt Weill's *Three Penny Opera* in 1928), then suffered under the reactionary politics of the Nazi regime. Subsequently divided between East and West for nearly three decades, both sides of Berlin established their own ensembles, performance institutions, and music conservatories. In another historical juxtaposition, the first techno-based Love Parade was held in West Berlin in the summer of 1989, proclaiming "Music knows no boundaries or nationalities," and by the end of that year Leonard Bernstein was conducting Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Brandenburg Gate to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In addition to history-related readings and listening assignments, the course will also consider Christopher Small's notion of "musicking" as an approach to understanding the rituals of music performance in contemporary culture. Small's innovative case study of the symphony orchestra concert will complement our visits to Berlin's concert halls and opera houses for live performances. Other outings include tours of the music instrument museum, historic cathedral organs, important cabaret venues, the legendary Hansa studio near today's Sony Center, and a sampling of Berlin's vibrant musical nightlife.

This course is open to students from all disciplines and levels of study. An ability to read music notation is helpful but not required.