

SCHOOL	Scenography
ACADEMIC YEAR	THREE-YEAR PROGRAM II - 2025/2026
SUBJECT	1609 Storia della musica e del teatro musicale
TYPE OF SUBJECT	Theoretical
NUMBER OF HOURS PER LESSON	4
NUMBER OF ECTS CREDITS	8
DISTRIBUTION OVER THE ACADEMIC YEAR	I SEMESTER

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the history of Western music and musical theater, from its ancient origins to contemporary expressions. The primary objective is to establish a robust cultural foundation that facilitates a critical interpretation of the evolution of musical languages in their interplay with the relevant historical, social, and artistic contexts. From this perspective, music is regarded not merely as an aesthetic phenomenon, but as a vibrant expression of the culture and sensibilities of an era. Special attention will be given to the relationship between music and the performing arts, in line with the educational profile of the student set designer. The historical discussion will be accompanied by reflections on the relationships between sound, space, image, and gesture, providing tools to understand the interaction between visual and sound components in creative processes and theatrical practices. Throughout the year, students will be guided in acquiring knowledge of the principal styles, genres, authors, and musical forms, thereby developing the ability to situate the works within the cultural context that gave rise to them. The course will also enhance the capacity for critical listening, formal and stylistic analysis of musical pieces, personal reflection, and independent judgment. The approach will be open to interdisciplinary discussion and aimed at developing effective communication skills, grounded in the correct use of musical terminology. The course is designed to foster a propensity for individual research and in-depth study, equipping students with the methodological tools necessary to undertake autonomous study paths and to integrate the history of music into their artistic and professional trajectories. The primary educational objectives are enumerated below: Acquisition of knowledge: Students will acquire a comprehensive and structured understanding of the history of Western music and musical theater, from its ancient origins to the present day. They will be capable of identifying and describing the principal languages, styles, genres, authors, and representative works, comprehending their distinctive characteristics in relation to various historical periods. Understanding the historical and cultural context: Students will develop the ability to critically analyze the relationship between musical phenomena and the historical, social, political, and cultural contexts in which they originated. They will be able to accurately position musical works within the relevant cultural movements and comprehend their aesthetic and ideological implications. Analytical skills: The course will equip students with the tools to conduct a detailed analysis of musical structures, with a particular focus on the formal, harmonic, melodic, and stylistic aspects of compositions. Active listening and critical examination of the repertoires will be encouraged. Communication skills: Students will be guided in developing expressive and communicative abilities that enable them to articulate and substantiate judgments, analyses, and reflections in a clear, coherent, and relevant manner. Special attention will be given to the proper use of musical terminology and the ability to interact effectively in both academic and educational contexts. Critical Thinking: The educational program is designed to foster independent judgment and critical thinking. Students will be invited to develop personal evaluations based on in-depth analyses, stylistic comparisons, and cultural interpretations, thereby fostering a conscious and non-dogmatic understanding of music history. Preparation for further studies: The course is designed to provide a methodological and cultural foundation that will facilitate the pursuit of subsequent academic pathways or individual in-depth exploration in the fields of music, performing arts, and the humanities. Students will be encouraged to refine their research skills, source selection, and independent study. Assessment: The attainment of the educational objectives will be evaluated through a final written and oral examination, which will assess both the mastery of the course content and the ability to re-elaborate it in a personal and critical manner, with particular emphasis on the use of specialized language and effective argumentation. The assessment will also take into account active participation in the lessons, particularly during discussions and collective exchanges, which are an integral part of the educational program.

Knowledge and understanding	Throughout the course, students will enhance their understanding of the history of music and musical theater by analyzing fundamental texts, critical resources, multimedia materials, and listening guides. The lessons will be complemented by concrete musical examples, drawn from various periods and genres, with the support of educational tools designed to facilitate the understanding of musical forms, styles, and languages. Theoretical reflection will be complemented by sessions of active and commented listening, which will facilitate the comprehension of the expressive characteristics of the compositions and their connection to the relevant historical, aesthetic, and cultural context. Through this course, students will acquire a comprehensive understanding of the principal phenomena of Western music, developing a critical and informed perspective on their evolution over time.
Applying knowledge and understanding	The course will foster the ability of students to apply their knowledge of music history within an interdisciplinary context, linking music with the cultural, social, and artistic transformations that have accompanied it. Special attention will be given to the interaction between music and other forms of expression, particularly theater, imagery, and stage space, to enhance the connection with the educational journey of scenography students. Through the analysis of works, guided listening, critical reflection, and the examination of historical and visual sources, students will acquire the ability to recognize how music has responded to the contexts that have generated it and, in turn, how it has influenced the evolution of other artistic languages. This integrated approach will facilitate the development of a comprehensive and informed understanding of the cultural function of music over time, thereby enabling its active and reflective application in both design and creative contexts.
Making judgements	Throughout the course, students will be guided to develop a progressive autonomy of thought regarding musical phenomena, through the critical analysis of works, conscious listening, and the comparison of repertoires from different eras and contexts. Commencing with an understanding of the historical development of Western music, participants will be encouraged to examine the stylistic and formal choices of composers, assess their cultural and aesthetic implications, and reflect on the significance of the works in their respective eras and in our contemporary context. This critical autonomy will be grounded in the acquisition of analytical and interpretative tools, enabling students to recognize and comprehend the multifaceted dimensions of a musical composition: the technical, expressive, and symbolic-cultural aspects. Special attention will be given to the relationship between music and the historical-social context, as well as to the connections with other arts and forms of entertainment. The ultimate objective is to cultivate a well-informed, reasoned, and non-dogmatic personal judgment, capable of contributing to a comprehensive and pluralistic understanding of musical history, which is also beneficial in the development of artistic projects and the establishment of an independent cultural perspective.

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The course offers a comprehensive historical exploration of Western music and musical theater, spanning from ancient civilizations to the present day. The objective is to furnish a profound and articulated understanding of the principal stylistic, technical, and expressive transformations that have traversed the history of music, through the analysis of the most significant works, authors, and movements within their respective cultural and social contexts. A central aspect of the teaching is the critical examination of various musical eras, not only in a chronological sense, but through the analysis of the structures, poetics, and sound languages that characterize them. Special attention will be given to the relationship between music and history, the interactions with other arts, and the evolution of musical performance forms, with specific in-depth analyses of opera and musical theater. Students will be guided in the listening and analysis of representative works, learning to recognize styles, genres, and compositional techniques, as well as to evaluate the role of music as an expression and agent of cultural change. The course will also highlight the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity between eras, the phenomena of hybridization between genres, and the receptivity of Western art music to the global, multimedia, and technological influences of the contemporary age.

- 1) **Origins:** This section delves into the proto-musical cultures that emerged in the civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean basin. The analysis encompasses musical systems, myths associated with the Iron Age, and the initial structured evidence of musical practice. Special attention will be given to the contributions of ancient Greece and Rome, with a focus on musical styles, the instruments employed, and the initial theoretical reflections on the art of sound.
- 2) **Late Antique Cultures (1st–8th century)** The complexity of late antique music will be addressed, with an investigation into the connections between oral tradition, early Christian liturgy, and imperial power. The role of music in the diverse ethnic and religious contexts of the era will be examined, with references to the Visigothic and Ostrogothic cultures, and the evolution of the musical function in the formation of a post-Roman cultural identity will be analyzed.
- 3) **The Scholastic Age (9th–13th century)** This section of the course delves into the impact of Charlemagne on the standardization of musical notation and theory. We will examine liturgical forms, including tropes and sequences, the relationship between scholastic thought and musical structures, and the role of writing in consolidating the collective musical memory in medieval Europe.
- 4) **The era of planning (13th–15th century)** This section is dedicated to the transitional period between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. We will conduct a thorough analysis of Italian notations, polyphonic models, and the work of composers such as Francesco Landini and Johannes Ciconia. The Avignon context, liturgical fractures, and the schism of the Church will also be addressed to facilitate an understanding of the evolution of musical practices between innovation and tradition.
- 5) **The early modern period (15th–16th century)** will focus on the evolution of the musical chapel and the revolutionary impact of music printing, which significantly altered the dissemination of repertoires and compositional practices. We will conduct an in-depth examination of the key figures of the period, such as Josquin Desprez, and the role of the madrigal as an expressive and experimental form. The course will also address the advancements in notation and the principal treatises on instrumental music, with a specific focus on the theoretical and practical aspects of performance during that era.
- 6) **The 17th Century: The Identity of a Century.** The seventeenth century marks the birth of modern opera as a privileged expression of Baroque aesthetics. Commencing with the experiences of the Camerata de' Bardi in Florence, the new genre established itself with distinctive characteristics in the schools of Rome and Venice. In parallel, significant traditions will be developed in France, with Jean-Baptiste Lully, and in Germany, with Heinrich Schütz. The module will also address the evolution of musical notation and the gradual establishment of the tonal system, which progressively replaces the medieval and Renaissance modes.
- 7) **The music of the early eighteenth century.** The module will examine the relationship between music, thought, and society in the early eighteenth century, within a cultural context characterized by rationality, balance, and the dissemination of musical cosmopolitanism. We will examine the works of composers such as Rameau, Couperin, Corelli, Vivaldi, Bach, Telemann, and Handel, highlighting the differences and synergies between vocal and instrumental music. The role of church, chamber, and theater music in the formation of European musical identity will also be emphasized.
- 8) **The second half of the eighteenth century.** Focusing on the Age of Enlightenment, this section will examine the development of the gallant style, the establishment of classicism, and the codification of the sonata form. Special attention will be given to the reform of the opera initiated by Gluck and Calzabigi, as well as the contributions of Haydn and Mozart in establishing new symphonic, chamber, and theatrical models. The module will illustrate how music reflects the ideals of clarity, balance, and rationality inherent in the Enlightenment culture.
- 9) **Between the 18th and 19th centuries.** This section of the course will examine the transition from classicism to early Romanticism, with a focus on the role of the French Revolution and the social and ideological transformations it brought about. The works of composers such as Cherubini, Spontini, and Clementi will be examined, and the evolution of the sonata form, as anticipated and transformed in the production of Ludwig van Beethoven, will be analyzed.
- 10) **The first half of the nineteenth century: musical Romanticism.** Romanticism will be examined as a movement that assigns music a central expressive function, capable of conveying individual interiority, the tensions of the time, and the myths of subjectivity. We will examine the contributions of Schubert to the Lied, Schumann to chamber and piano music, Mendelssohn to the rediscovery and reinterpretation of tradition, and Chopin to the poetics of the solo piano. The course will also examine the figures of the great virtuosos of the era, such as Paganini and Liszt, who contributed to redefining the public and cultural status of the artist.
- 11) **Schubert – Schumann – Chopin – Mendelssohn.** This section will be dedicated to a comprehensive monographic examination of the works by the four who most effectively embodied the romantic aesthetic. We will conduct a thorough analysis of the principal stylistic and technical innovations introduced by each of them, in relation to the genres they engaged with and the historical-cultural context in which they operated, with a focus on the formal, expressive, and poetic characteristics of their musical compositions.
- 12) **The second half of the nineteenth century.** This section focuses on the revival of the symphony and the new configurations of European musical geography. The stylistic trajectories of composers such as Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky will be examined, with a particular focus on formal strategies, the utilization of the orchestra, and the relationships between classical tradition and the emerging romantic language. The module will also reflect on the tension between continuity and innovation that characterizes this phase of European symphonic production.
- 13) **Opera in the 19th Century.** The operatic landscape of the 19th century will be examined from a comparative perspective, focusing on the principal national traditions: Italy, with Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi; France, with the establishment of the grand opéra; and Germany, with the progression from singspiel to Wagnerian musical drama. The various narrative, vocal, and orchestral models will be analyzed, highlighting the linguistic, dramaturgical, and ideological transformations that have accompanied the work throughout the century.
- 14) **The 20th Century at War.** This section of the course is dedicated to the first half of the 20th century, characterized by the two world wars and the profound cultural fractures that ensued. We will examine the emergence of new musical languages through the works of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, influenced by symbolism, exoticism, and timbral innovations. Particular emphasis will be placed on the Viennese avant-garde, notably Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg, who were responsible for a radical departure from traditional tonality. The case of Igor Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* will also be analyzed, with its aesthetic, perceptual, and historical-cultural implications.
- 15) **The 20th Century Post-War Era.** This section addresses the evolution of music in the latter half of the 20th century. The course will explore the paths of integral serialism, timbre experimentation, and the post-Weberian avant-garde, with a focus on the contributions of composers such as Luciano Berio and Luigi Nono. We will also examine alternative trajectories, ranging from György Ligeti's neo-expressionism to postmodern languages, and the minimalist works of Steve Reich and Philip Glass. The module will provide significant examples of scores, recordings, and audiovisual materials, accompanied by critical reflections and an in-depth bibliography.
- 16) **Contaminations, new languages, and technology from the twentieth century to the present day.** This section examines the expansion of music beyond the boundaries of classical tradition, through influences from jazz, pop, rock, and popular music, which have redefined sound aesthetics and the relationships between composition, performance, and listening. The role of the musical as a hybrid stage form will be thoroughly examined, from the Broadway tradition to contemporary variations, as well as film music, from Hollywood symphonic scores to the timbral and minimalist experiments of the late twentieth century.
- 17) **Conclusions and Contemporary Perspectives** The course concludes with a comprehensive reflection on the processes of continuity and transformation that have shaped the history of music up to the present day. The relationships between memory and innovation, tradition and experimentation, and the center and periphery will be highlighted, along with issues pertaining to cultural identity, globalization, and the sustainability of artistic practices. The objective is to furnish students with critical tools to navigate the complexities of the contemporary music landscape, emphasizing the dialogue between past and present as a key to understanding and interpreting the role of music in contemporary culture.