

# Music and Musical Culture in Vienna around 1900 (Online Course)

[Stefan Gasch](#)

February 8 – 19, 2021

4 ECTS

## Course Description

The musical culture in Vienna around 1900 is widely renowned for its exceptional creativity and innovative capacity. The protagonists and the achievements commonly associated with this vital period in music history – e.g. Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schönberg and his *Second Viennese School* – for a long time also stood at the center of musicological research on twentieth century music. In recent years, however, the perspective has been broadened substantially, mainly due to the impact of the intensified work on Viennese modernism in other humanities and in cultural studies. As a consequence, the musical culture in fin-de-siècle Vienna became visible as a complex phenomenon characterized by radical shifts as well as continuities with the past and even by contradictory tendencies.

The course will try to address the topic from several vantage points:

- The institutions, organizations and spaces of musical life, in relation to the diverse strata of the musical public and to the pertinent political and social conditions.
- The wide array of musical styles and repertoires present at that time, resulting not only from the contemporary compositional activities (which were multi-layered in itself, ranging from “radical modernism” to popular music), but also from the ongoing relevance of earlier music.
- The diverse aesthetical positions and general views on music, comprising newly developed scientific approaches as well as metaphysical idealizations and even ideologically conditioned functionalizations.
- The interrelations between the developments in music and in other intellectual and artistic fields, leading to the question, how music can or has to be integrated into a comprehensive concept of *Viennese Modernism* around 1900.

Requirements and grades: **Active participation**, either live during the online course or via comments, discussion of texts, and questions submitted to the lecturer, will constitute **10%** of the grade. The **preparation and presentation of a definition of two keywords** (own research, handout) relevant for the individual units will constitute **20%** of the grade. A **summary of the class discussion of one course unit of choice** (minimum 3,000 characters) will constitute **20%** of the grade. A **final paper** on a topic of the student’s choice (in consultation with the lecturer) in the form of an essay (minimum 7,000 characters) will constitute **50%** of the grade.

## Syllabus

### 1<sup>st</sup> week

Monday, February 8, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Time frame: ca. 1890–1920 as period in music history („age of modernism“): General aspects of <i>modernisation</i> – parallels in music / generational shift / changes after WW 1; institutions and venues of music making.
Tuesday, February 9, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Viennese musical culture in the 1890s: Music criticism (E. Hanslick – A.W. Ambros – H. Wolf); Wagner vs. Brahms.
Wednesday, February 10, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Gustav Mahler: Biographical survey and cultural context of Mahlers life and career; style and features of his music.

Thursday, February 11, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Music – Lyricism – Visual Arts: the <i>Lied</i> around 1900; concert life and programs; “public loneliness”; the new “public sphere”; spaces of intimacy; music in art journals ( <i>Ver Sacrum</i> ).
Friday, February 12, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Popular music – Operetta: Musical entertainment culture in general (venues, genres); Viennese operetta: general survey on the development in connection with the social and political reality.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> week</b>	
Monday, February 15, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Arnold Schönberg: Survey on the “creative biography” of Schönberg; the predominance of song in the early works; late 19th century modernism and the fusion of genres; turn to atonality; expressionism in music.
Tuesday, February 16, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	The “Second Viennese School”: Compass and impact; Schönberg – Berg – Webern; “atonality”; SVS and tradition (genres, form, polyphonic texture, „developing variation“); <i>Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen</i> (organisation, program, concerts, impact).
Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	1908: Draeseke, Pfitzner, and the <i>Konfusion in der Musik</i> ; Schönberg’s turn to atonality; Piano pieces, op. 11; The “Book of the Hanging Gardens”, op. 15; Discussion of A. Schönberg, “The Relationship to the Text” (1912).
Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Skandal! 1913: Viennese concert audience; Schönberg’s scandal concerts of the years 1907, 1911, and 1913; context: Stravinsky’s <i>Le Sacre du Printemps</i> .
Friday, February 19, 2021 11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)	Music and (Viennese) Modernism: Conservatism and modernism in music; modernism, modernity and the senses; Franz Schreker and Viennese Modernism.