

Seminar in Music Theory/Musicology

Soviet Ghosts: Polystylism and Hauntology in Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina

SPRING 2023

Instructor

Chris Segall (he/him), Associate Professor of Music Theory

Email: segallcr@ucmail.uc.edu

Office: Mary Emery Hall, Room 4238

Student hours: Friday, 8:00–10:00 a.m.

Course Description

Under loosened restrictions in late-Soviet society, Alfred Schnittke (1934–98) and Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931) initially reacted to a sudden influx of newly available music through “polystylism,” or the compositional incorporation of manifold styles. But as the communist state collapsed, their music began to depict loss: half-remembered quotations that failed to fully materialize. Critic Mark Fisher has tied “hauntology,” Jacques Derrida’s concept of lost futures, to the dystopian early-2000s UK electronic music reflecting urban decay wrought by neoliberal housing policies. We’ll draw on readings in musicology, critical theory, cultural history, and music analysis to study Schnittke’s and Gubaidulina’s music from a hauntological lens. Students will write research papers (20–30 pages) on any topic occasioned by the course.

Meetings

Wednesday, 2:00–4:45 p.m., in Mary Emery Hall, Room 3244

Registration

This course is open to graduate students (MM, DMA, PhD) in all music disciplines, including musicology, theory, composition, performance, and education. A variety of student backgrounds and perspectives will enrich our class discussion.

Students are welcome to audit the course. Auditors should cede priority to other students in class discussion. They should attend the full class session each week, and they should inform me in advance if they will be absent.

Course Work

Response Essays (10)

Write a brief informal essay (2–3 pages) in response to 10 weeks' readings. There is no set format for the essays, but they should refer to each reading at least once, avoiding direct quotations. Use the essays to reflect on the readings' content and to make connections to other writings and repertoire. Accompanying examples (graphical and musical) are welcome.

Upload your essay to Canvas by Tuesday night. Then read your classmates' essays. I will not provide written feedback, but I will use the response essays to help shape our class discussion.

Final Paper

Write a scholarly research paper (20–30 pages) on any topic occasioned by the course. The paper may be musicological, theoretical, or analytical, or it may employ other methodologies and orientations. You'll submit a proposal, give a presentation, and write the paper.

Proposal: Submit a one-paragraph abstract with accompanying bibliography that outlines the research idea you'd like to pursue. I encourage you to discuss your idea with me in advance. The proposal is due on Wednesday, March 8. I will respond with written feedback.

Presentation: Present your preliminary findings in a presentation of 20–30 minutes. The presentation may be formal (conference-style) or informal in orientation. Presentations will take place on April 12 and 19.

Paper: Submit your completed paper by Wednesday, April 26. I will provide written comments.

Grading

All course work submitted on time, completed with good-faith seriousness, and following the stipulated guidelines will receive a grade of A.

Course Materials

Readings will be available in PDF format on Canvas. Students should complete each week's readings in the order listed in the syllabus.

Chapters from the following source should be read for in-class discussion only; you won't address them in the weekly response essays: Lynne Rogers, Karen Bottge, and Sara Haefeli, *Writing in Music: A Brief Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

Course Schedule

January 11

No essay due

Listen: Alfred Schnittke, Concerto Grosso No. 1 (1977)
Sofia Gubaidulina, *Offertorium* (1980)

January 18

Essay #1 due

Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3–25, 67–130, 295–327.

Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 5–43.

Also read: *Writing in Music*, chapter 3.

January 25

Essay #2 due

Alfred Schnittke, *A Schnittke Reader*, ed. Alexander Ivashkin, trans. John Goodliffe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 87–90.

Lawrence Kramer, *Interpreting Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 220–40.

Maria Cizmic, *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30–66.

Gordon E. Marsh, "Schnittke's Polystylistic Schemata: Textural Progression in the Concerti Grossi," in *Schnittke Studies*, ed. Gavin Dixon (New York: Routledge, 2017), 103–36.

Also read: *Writing in Music*, chapter 4.

February 1 @ 2:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Essay #3 due

Featured Guest: Peter Schmelz, Arizona State University

Send a copy of your response essay to: pjschmel@asu.edu

Peter J. Schmelz, *Alfred Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Peter J. Schmelz, *Sonic Overload: Alfred Schnittke, Valentin Silvestrov, and Polystylism in the Late USSR* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 1–46.

February 8

Essay #4 due

Christopher Segall, "Klingende Buchstaben: Principles of Alfred Schnittke's Monogram Technique," *Journal of Musicology* 30/2 (2013): 252–86.

Christopher Segall, "Alfred Schnittke's Triadic Practice," *Journal of Music Theory* 61/2 (2017): 243–87.

Christopher Segall, "Monogram, Theme, and Large-Scale Form in Alfred Schnittke's Viola Concerto," in *Analytical Approaches to 20th-Century Russian Music: Tonality, Modernism, Serialism*, ed. Inessa Bazayev and Christopher Segall (New York: Routledge, 2021), 243–63.

Also read: *Writing in Music*, chapter 5.

February 15

Essay #5 due

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1–17, 96–110.

Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 196–219.

Claire McGinn, "Hauntology and Heterogeneity: 'Western' Criticism's Distortions of Institutional Change," *Lietuvos muzikologija* 20 (2019): 31–45.

Peter J. Schmelz, *Sonic Overload: Alfred Schnittke, Valentin Silvestrov, and Polystylism in the Late USSR* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 254–92.

February 22 @ 2:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Essay #6 due

Featured Guest: Bruno Alcalde, University of South Carolina

Send a copy of your response essay to: balcalde@sc.edu

Catherine Losada, "The Process of Modulation in Musical Collage," *Music Analysis* 27/2–3 (2008): 295–336.

Amanda Petrusich, "Maggie Rogers, an Artist of Her Time," *New Yorker* (March 13, 2017).

Amanda Petrusich, "Genre Is Disappearing. What Comes Next?" *New Yorker* (March 15, 2021).

Bruno Alcalde, "Mixture Strategies: An Analytical Framework for Musical Hybridity," *Music Theory Online* 28/1 (2022).

March 1

Essay #7 due

Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Washington: Zero Books, 2014), 1–47, 97–119, 133–42.

Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2011), 311–61.

Isabella Van Elferen, "East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx," *Popular Music* 30/1 (2011): 89–103.

Also read: *Writing in Music*, chapter 6.

March 8 @ 2:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Essay #8 due

Featured Guest: Edward Venn, University of Leeds

Send a copy of your response essay to: E.J.Venn@leeds.ac.uk

Edward Venn, "Thomas Adès and the Spectres of *Brahms*," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 140/1 (2015): 163–212.

Edward Venn, "Findings, Keepings and Borrowings: Uncanny Intertextuality in Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*," in *Intertextuality in Music: Dialogic Composition*, ed. Violetta Kostka, Paulo F. de Castro, and William A. Everett (New York: Routledge, 2021), 217–28.

Edward Venn, "Specters and 'Derangements': Michael Finnissy's Summonings of Brahms the Progressive," in *Rethinking Brahms*, ed. Nicole Grimes and Reuben Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 396–411.

March 15
Spring Break

March 22
Essay #9 due

Ivana Medić, "Gubaidulina, Misunderstood," *Muzikologija* 13 (2012): 101–23.

Judy Lochhead, *Reconceiving Structure in Contemporary Music: New Tools in Music Theory and Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 123–46.

Joseph Straus, "Historical and Stylistic Reconciliation in Sofia Gubaidulina's *Reflections on the Theme BACH*," in *Analytical Approaches to 20th-Century Russian Music: Tonality, Modernism, Serialism*, ed. Inessa Bazayev and Christopher Segall (New York: Routledge, 2021), 229–42.

Also read: *Writing in Music*, chapters 7 and 9.

March 29 @ 2:30 p.m. (Zoom)
Essay #10 due

Featured Guest: Sasha Drozzina, Purdue University Fort Wayne

Send a copy of your response essay to: adrozzin@pfw.edu

Sofia Gubaidulina and Vera Lukomsky, "My Desire Is Always to Rebel, to Swim Against the Stream!" *Perspectives of New Music* 36/1 (1998): 5–41.

Michael Berry, "The Importance of Bodily Gesture in Sofia Gubaidulina's Music for Low Strings," *Music Theory Online* 15/5 (2009).

Philip A. Ewell, "The Parameter Complex in the Music of Sofia Gubaidulina," *Music Theory Online* 20/3 (2013).

Aleksandra Drozzina, "Schnittke, Gubaidulina, and Pärt: Religion and Spirituality During the Late Thaw and Early Perestroika" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2020), 50–80.

April 5

Essay #11 due

Rosamund Bartlett, "The Post-Soviet Musical Landscape," *Slavonica* 13/1 (2007): 7–25.

William Quillen, "Winning and Losing in Russian New Music Today," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67/2 (2014): 487–542.

Lidia Ader, "Paradigms of Contemporary Music in Twenty-First-Century Russia," trans. Patrick Zuk, in *Russian Music Since 1917: Reappraisal and Rediscovery*, ed. Patrick Zuk and Marina Frolova-Walker (London: British Academy, 2017), 396–421.

Also read: *Writing in Music*, chapters 10–11.

April 12 and 19

Final Presentations

April 26

Final Paper due