Humor & Classical Music

June 29, 2020

Humor & Classical Music

- Check the Tech
- Introductions
- Humor
  - Why, When, How?
  - Historic examples
  - Oddities
  - Wrap-Up

Check the Tech

- Everything working? See and hear?
- Links in the chat
- Zoom Etiquette
  - We are recording! Need to step out? Please stop video.
  - Consider SPEAKER VIEW option.
  - Please remain muted to reduce background noise.
  - Questions? Yes! In the chat, please.
  - We will have Q&A at the end.

Glad you are here tonight!

- Steve Kurr
  - Middleton HS Orchestra Teacher
  - Founding Conductor - Middleton Community Orchestra
  - M.M. and doctoral work in Musicology from UW-Madison
    - Specialties in Classic Period and Orchestra Conducting
  - Continuing Ed course through UW for almost 25 years
  - Taught courses in Humor/Music and also performed it.

WHAT makes humorous music so compelling?

Music
Emotion with a side order of analytical thinking.

Humor
Analytical thinking with a side order of emotion.

WHY make something in music *funny*?

1. PARODY for humorous effect

2. PARODY for ridicule [tends toward satire]

3. Part of a humorous GENRE

We will identify the WHY in each of our examples tonight.

HOW is something in music made *funny*?

MUSIC ITSELF and/or EXTRAMUSICAL

- **LEVEL I: Surface**

- **LEVEL II: Intermediate**

- **LEVEL III: Deep**

We will identify the levels in each of our examples tonight.

WHEN is something in music *funny*?

- Broken Expectations

- Verisimilitude

- Context

Historic Examples: Our 6 Time Periods

- Medieval & Renaissance & Baroque
  - Church was primary venue, so humor had limits (Almost exclusively secular).
- Classic
  - Music was based on conventions, and exploration of those became the humor of the time.
- Romantic
  - Humor was not the prevailing emotion explored--mainly used in novelties.
- Modern
  - Humor/Comedy began to be segmented off into its own genres.

Historic Examples: Medieval

Years: 800-1400
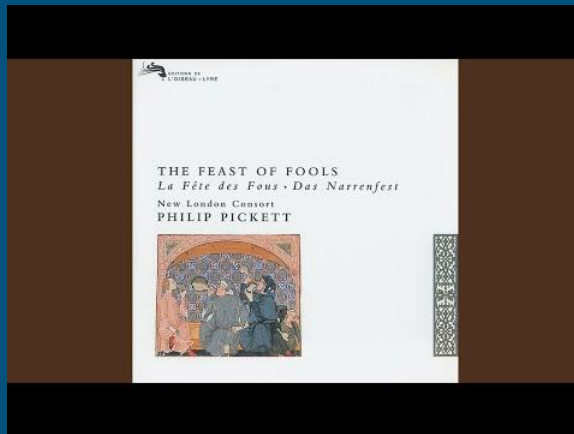
Feast of Fools
1/I+II

Historic Examples: Renaissance

Years: 1400-1600
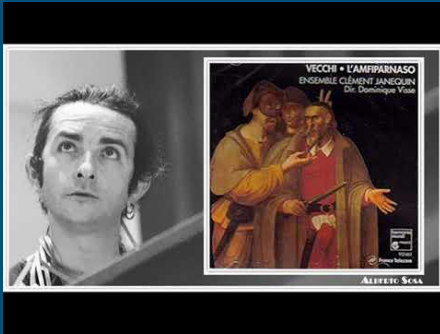
Vecchi: L'Amfiparnaso
3/I

Weelkes: As Vesta
3/I

Striggio: Il cicalamento
3/I

Historic Examples: Baroque

Years: 1600-1750

Werner: Musical Calendar 1748 1/I
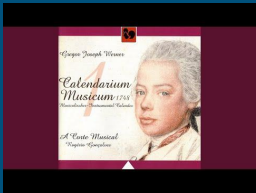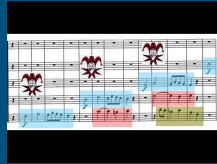

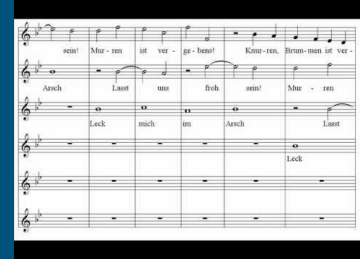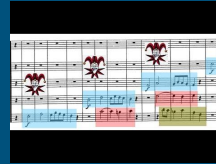**Schmelzer: Cucu Sonata 1/I**

Bach: Coffee Cantata 3/I

Historic Examples: Classic

Years: 1750-1800

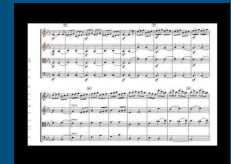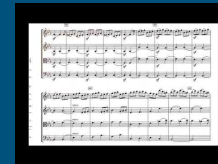Mozart: Musical Joke
2/I+II+III

Mozart: Leck mich
2/I

Haydn: Symphony #65
1/I

Haydn: Symphony #60
1/I+II

Haydn: "Joke" Quartet
1/II

Historic Examples: Romantic

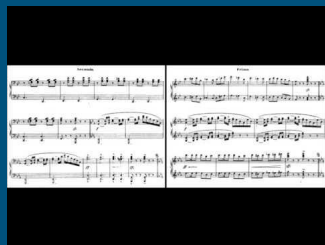Years: 1800-1920

J.Strauss: Perpetuum mobile
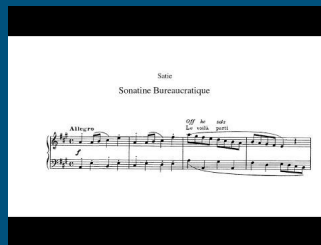1/I

"Rossini": Duet for Cats
1/I

Mendelssohn: MSND
1/I

S-S: Tortoises
1/I

Faure: Souvenirs de Bayreuth
2/II

Satie: Sonatine Bureaucratique
1+2/II

G&S: Modern Major General
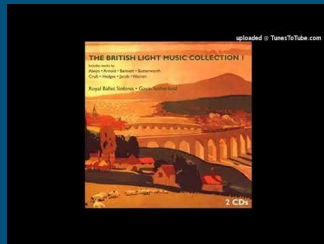3/I

Historic Examples: Modern

Years: 1920-2020(?)

Copland: Burlesque
1/1

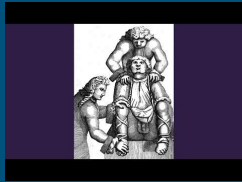Langgaard: Carl Nielsen
2/II

Jacob: Barber/Devil
1/II

Bartok: Interrupted Intermezzo
2/II+III

Hindemith: Flying Dutchman
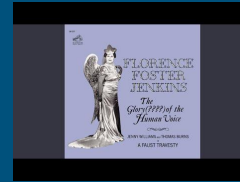1+2/I+II+III

Oddities: Funny?

Odd on purpose

Marais: Le Tableau

**Biber: Sonata Representativa**

Odd by accident

Florence Foster-Jenkins

Portsmouth Sinfonietta

What we did NOT cover (yet):

- **Comedic Genres**
  - **comic opera, operetta, Broadway musical, usw**
- **20th/21st Century Parody & Satire genres**
  - **Spike Jones, PDQ Bach, Anna Russell, Victor Borge, Flanders & Swann, Igudesman & Joo, Hoffnung, usw**
- **Non-Classical**
  - **Novelty Songs (Chipmunks, OEOHFPPE, usw)**
  - **Musical comedians (Allan Sherman, usw)**
 - **Musical jokes (Monty Python, usw)**
  - **Vaudeville**
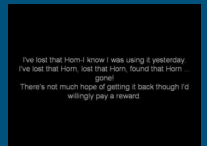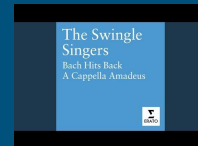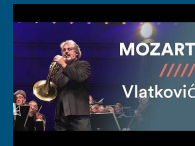
Q & A

- Please unmute if you have a question.
- If you feel more comfortable, type into the Chat.
- I will answer all of your questions!

If you have questions later:

- You have access to these slides (and video links!)
- Also my email if you have any follow up
  questions or comments
  - smkurr@gmail.com

Mozart: Serenade #13 in G

HUMOR IN MUSIC

Original Broadcast February 28, 1959
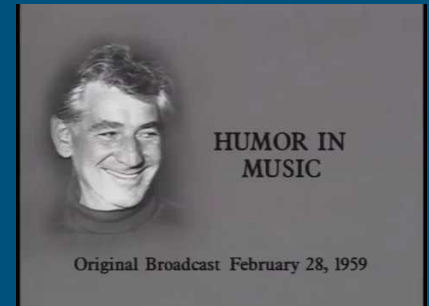
Yet to come?

- I hope we will do this again!
- Same Zoom format
- MSO concerts are off for the fall, so maybe this can help you stay connected

Thank you!

These slides were created by Steve Kurr for the Madison Symphony Orchestra League Connect Events. Please direct comments and questions to smkurr@gmail.com.