Jane Austen's Playlist: Teaching Music History Beyond the Canon

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Abstract

Jane Austen's six novels and her personal music collection can serve as the basis for a course on eighteenth-century music outside of the traditional canonic works common to music history courses. The Austen family’s music collection includes over seventy compositions that have been recorded, primarily songs and piano music. These materials provide the opportunity for music students to learn about the social and cultural contexts for period music-making, including concerts, balls, domestic settings, the theater, and pleasure gardens. The course can also explore issues surrounding gender and performance, musical transmission, eighteenth-century aesthetics, conceptions of musical narrative, and interrelationships among the arts. A bibliography of materials useful for a course on Austen and music is provided.

Author Biography

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Marian Wilson Kimber is Associate Professor of Musicology at The University of Iowa. She has published widely on the music and historical receptions of Felix Mendelssohn and Fanny Hensel, and is currently working on a book about the roles of women in the creation of American melodrama tentatively titled Feminine Entertainments: Women, Music, and the Spoken Word. In 2011 Wilson Kimber presented the “Master Teacher” lecture at the American Musicological Society meeting.

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Articles
Pachelbel's "Canon in D" is instantly recognizable even to classical music rookies. Learn about the influential piece's history, structure and modern use. With wedding season in full swing here at MNHQ, we thought we'd take a closer look at the story behind the nuptial favorite. Johann Pachelbel was somewhat of a mid-Baroque era superstar, credited with helping to develop the chorale prelude and fugue. Jane Austen's six novels and her personal music collection can serve as the basis for a course on eighteenth-century music outside of the traditional canonic works common to music history... Wilson Kimber, Marian (2014) Jane Austen's Playlist: Teaching Music History Beyond the Canon. In: Journal of Music History Pedagogy, Vol. 4, No. 2. Available at https://openmusiclibrary.org/article/2406/.