MUS–T561 (24360): Music Theory—Variable Topics

The String Quartet in the Twentieth Century

Professor Julian Hook (juhook@indiana.edu)
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30–10:45 a.m., room M 356

The string quartet medium attracted the attention of many—indeed, almost all—of the most significant composers of the twentieth century. This course will not attempt a comprehensive survey of the literature, but will be an analytically oriented exploration of a selection of representative works. As a class we will study three of the six quartets of Bartók, widely considered the most important contributions to the genre since Beethoven, along with other works probably chosen from among the quartets of Ravel, Schoenberg, Berg (Lyric Suite), Janáček, Ruth Crawford, Shostakovich, Britten, Carter, Crumb (Black Angels), Ligeti, and Lutosławski. Independent projects at the end of the semester will allow students to study additional works of their own choosing.

Scores and readings: Each student will be expected to own a copy of the Bartók quartets. The two-volume collection of essays Intimate Voices: The Twentieth-Century String Quartet, edited by Evan Jones (University of Rochester Press, 2009) is recommended but not required. Other scores and readings will be available through the Music Library, Oncourse, and/or electronic reserve.

Requirements will include readings, short written assignments, two exams (including identification of aural excerpts), class presentations, and one major paper.

Prerequisites: T561 is open only to graduate students who have passed T508 (Written Music Theory Review for Graduate Students) and M542 (Music History Review for Graduate Students II), or the equivalent Graduate Entrance Examinations. Prior coursework in analysis of twentieth-century music is recommended but not required.