

### **Title of lecture: PT IB (1) Historical Studies**

### **Response from: John Hopkins (20/02/2018)**

Two preliminary points: 1) this course was never going to run in the same format after this current academic year, and I will not be presenting it in future; it will be replaced by a new course next year, given by someone else. This obviously means that I am spared the necessity to indicate how I might change things for another round of lectures. 2) While I am grateful to those of you who were here for the final session for giving me your feedback on the course, some of what was written was very aggressive and hostile in tone; having discussed this with the Chair of the Music Faculty, I was advised not to avoid stating that it was personally hurtful.

Many comments referred to the breadth of the course and mentioned that it might be better to concentrate on fewer things and cover them in more detail. But equally, many people were keen to list the things that should have been included (more pop music, esp. hip hop, more social history, gender studies, more assessment of movements and trends and so forth...)

There was some criticism of the inclusion of the Elliott Carter strand: the justification was that he formed a kind of cantus firmus in the texture of the entire period, and apart from having created a magnificent body of musical works, much of his output can be seen as contributing to, reacting against, rejecting or enhancing other tendencies in the music of the last 100 years. I also believe that his work addresses many important philosophical issues of our time.

I do maintain that this course has to be different from other history courses, as it has to end with where we are now; it therefore has to consider how we have got to where we are now, and where things might be going; clearly the recent past has not been 'sifted' in the way earlier periods have been; the question of 'what gets performed/broadcast/recorded/acclaimed and why' remains a very vexed one.

If there has to be a choice between concentration on the 'music itself' and 'issues relating to and around the music' I would always choose the former. This is a matter of conviction, as I believe very strongly that musicology does itself no favours whatsoever by becoming diluted sociology or social-history-lite. However, connecting the music to the broad evolution of political and social history was something that I included, and was emphasised in the grid which was part of the very first handout. At present, this is still a Faculty of Music, not a Faculty of Musicology; long may it remain so.