

Quinto ciclo di seminari interdisciplinari Levi per i dottorati di ricerca con discipline musicologiche
Il tempo nella Musica, della Musica, per la Musica

14 gennaio, ore 15.00

Seminario 8

**From time's cycle to time's arrow:
on the paradigm shift in thinking about and organizing time in the Modern era**

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ABSTRACT

In my seminar I shall put forward two claims:

The first one is that in the later eighteenth century European art music began to take the flow of time from the past to the future seriously. Until then, music was simply "in time," it "took time," its successive events had to be somehow arranged one after another, but the distinction between past and future, between "earlier" and "later," did not much matter to the way it was experienced and understood. From now on, music also made the experience of linear time, of time's arrow, into its essential subject matter. It could no longer be experienced with understanding, unless one became aware of the temporal ordering of the events.

My second claim is that this change in the shape of musical time was not a development internal to music alone, but rather an aspect of a larger transformation in the way educated Europeans began to imagine and think about time with the onset of modernity: just as the new experience and image of historical time as linear rather than cyclical emerged, musicians too dropped the predominantly cyclical model of time in favor of a predominantly linear one. Definitive of modernity are narratives of secular universal history, whether conceived in liberal terms of progressive continuity, or in egalitarian terms of revolutionary breakthrough. Once the transcendent divine has been brought down to earth and made immanent in the historical march of mankind toward a utopian future, those composers who were at all interested in such themes, found ready means to capture them in their musical narratives.

LETTURE CONSIGLIATE

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GAUCHET Marcel, 1997, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, translated by Oscar Burge, Princeton, Princeton University Press [ed. or. *Le désenchantement du monde: une histoire politique de la religion* (Paris, Gallimard, 1985)].

KOSELLECK Reinhard, 1985, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe, Cambridge, MIT Press [ed. or. *Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlichen Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1979)].

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LÖWITH Karl, 1949, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

RICOEUR Paul, *Time and Narrative*, 1984-1988, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols., Chicago: University of Chicago, vol. 3 [ed. or. *Temps et récit* (Paris, Seuil, 1983)].