

PERFORMING PARIS

(1885-1935)

THE BELLE EPOQUE

&

THE JAZZ AGE

Performances, Performers, Artists, and Personalities

SYLLABUS

This course will selectively explore two contrasting eras (“The Belle Epoque” & “The Jazz Age”) on either side of WWI as they reflect new visions of modernity developing at the intersection of major historical moments and cultural changes. In exploring these two eras, we will use performances, performers, artists, and various personalities as a way of understanding not only what Paris represented, but how the cultural world in Paris evolved from the “fin-de-siecle” into the first decades of the twentieth century.

It was a world of so many different contrasts, but within these decades Paris was the place to go to; the place to be seen, and those that could went there to emerge themselves in the cultural riches that Paris offered.

Our initial focus is on “la belle époque -- the good old days” for the aristocrats, and the rich upper classes, but we must be aware that there was another uglier reality underneath this “glittering, hedonistic and liberating surface” -- a world of political unrest, class conflicts, hypocrisy, sexuality, anarchy, poverty, corruption, virulent anti-Semitism (the Dreyfus Case), and eventual war.

We will not be exploring these aspects of Parisian life, since they lie more in the realm of politics and history and that is not our focus which is cultural changes.

Then lift a glass of champagne in preparation for the following events, but probably not Absinthe, as we start our journey into the past. If Ernest Hemingway gave you “A Movable Feast”; in this course you will participate in a “selected cultural buffet”.

Week 1 -Monday, May 3

Paris: The French Avant-Garde and Montmartre

Artists: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), Jean Beraud (1849-1936), Edmond Grandjean (1844-1908), Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), Edouard Manet (1832-1883), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Georges Seurat (1859-1891), Theophile Steinlin (1859-1923), Paul Quinsac (1858-1932), Louis Truchet (1857-1918), Jules Cheret (1836-1932).

Performance venues: Moulin de la Galette, Cabaret des Ambassadeurs (Cabaret au Lapin Agile), Chat Noir, Le Mirliton, Cabaret Bruant, Moulin Rouge, Folies Bergere.

Performers: Aristide Bruant (1851-1925), “La Goulue” (Louise Weber, 1866-1929), “Valentin” (Jacques Renaudin, (1843-1907), “Grille d’ Egout, “Sewer or Gutter Grate” (dates unknown), Jane Avril (1868-1943), Yvette Guilbert (1865-1944).

Video and Music clips

Film clip of “can-can” sequence from the film “Moulin Rouge” (1952).

Music clip of Jane Avril singing “Madame Arthur”, song debuted in 1893.

Film clip of “can-can” sequence from the film “Can-Can” (1960).

Suggested Books

Rites of Spring, Modris Eksteins

The Other Paris, Luc Sante

Week 2 – Monday, May 10

Performing Women: Defining the “concept” of performance in the Belle Epoque

Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923), stage and film actress.

Loie Fuller (1862-1928), “modern dance” pioneer

Liane de Pougy (1869-1950), dancer, courtesan, princess and nun

Caroline, “**La Belle Otero**” (1868-1965), dancer and courtesan

Princess Mathilde Bonaparte (1820-1904), aristocrat and salon hostess

Marchesa Luisa Casati (1881-1957), heiress, muse and art patron

Paris: The Universal Exposition of 1900

Video clips

Sarah Bernhardt in an unknown film clip (early 1900s).

Film clip of Loie Fuller dancing (1906-1907?).

Film clips of Liane de Pougy (early 1900s).

Film clips of La Belle Otero (early 1900s).

Film clips of the 1900 World Exposition in Paris.

Suggested Books

Sarah, Robert Gottlieb

The Devine Sarah, Arthur Gold and Robert Fitzdale

Infinite Variety, Scot D. Ryersson and Michael Orlando

My Blue Notebooks, Liane de Pougy

Week 3 - Monday, May17

Theatre and Music: Moving “toward” Modernism in theatre, opera, and ballet music.

Theatrical Naturalism: Andre Antoine (1858-1943), Theatre Antoine, Theatre de la Porte Saint-Martin, The Theatre Libre, and l’Odeon.

Plays: Oscar Metenier’s “En Famille” (“In the Family”), 1887, Emile Zola’s “L’Assommoir” (“Drink”), 1900; **Emile Zola’s** “La Terre” (“The Earth”), 1902, **Henrik Ibsen’s** “The Wild Duck”, 1906.

Theatrical Symbolism: Aurelien Lugne-Poe (1869-1929), Theatre de l’Oeuvre, Theatre d’Art.

Plays: Paul Claudel’s “The Tidings Brought to Mary”, 1912; **Saint-Georges de Bouhelier’s** “Le Carnaval des Enfants” (1910).

Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) “Ubu Roi”, 1896.

Theatrical Modernism: Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), Adolphe Appia (1862-1928), Jacques Copeau (1879-1949), Louis Jouvet (1887-1951). Theatre du Vieux-Colombier.

Opera: Claude Debussy (1862-1918), “Pelleas and Mellisande”, 1902.

Ballet Music: Claude Debussy (1862-1918), “Afternoon of a Faun”, 1912.

Video Clips

Film clip from Debussy’s opera “Pelleas and Mellisande” (contemporary production, 2018).

Original film clip of Vaslav Nijinsky in the original “Afternoon of a Faun”, 1912.

Film clip of Nureyev in “Afternoon of a Faun” (a reconstruction by the Joffrey Ballet, 1981).

Suggested Books

The Banquet Years, Roger Shattuck

Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, Lynn Garafola

Claude Debussy: A Painter in Sound, Stephen Walsh

Week 4 – Monday May24

Dance and Ballet: Modern dance foundations and startling new directions for ballet.

Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), “modern dance” pioneer

Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), impresario of “Ballets Russes” (1909-1917)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), avant-garde composer

Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950), principal dancer and choreographer

Ballets: “Scheherazade”, 1910; “L’Oiseau de Feu” (“The Fire Bird”), 1910; “Petrouchka”, 1911; “Le Coq d’Or” (“The GoldCockerel”), 1914; “Le Sacre du Printemps” (“The Rite of Spring”), 1913, “Parade”, 1917.

Orientalism: Paul Poiret (1879-1944), fashion designer.

Ballet Suedois (1920-1925): **Rolf de Mare** (1888-1964), art collector and ballet impresario, and **Jean Borlin** (1893-1930), principal dancer and choreographer.

Ballets: “La Creation du Monde” (“The Creation of the World”), 1923; “Within the Quota”, 1923; “Relache” (“No Performance”), 1924.

Video Clips

Isadora Duncan dancing (early 1900s)

Film clip of “Scheherazade” from the movie Nijinsky (Joffrey Ballet re-construction, 1987)

Film clip of “Parade” (Joffrey Ballet re-construction, 2007)

Film clip of “Relache” (Ballet de Loraine re-construction, 2014)

Suggested Books

The Banquet Years, Roger Shattuck

Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, Lynn Garafola

Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909-1929, Jane Pritchard

Memorial Day: NO CLASS: For the week of May 31st we will not hold a class. That Monday is a holiday and we will make-up the last class on June 28.

Week 5 – Monday, June 7

American Expatriates in Paris

Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), playwright, poetess, novelist

Alice B. Toklas (1877-1967), writer

Natalie Barney (1876-1972), playwright, novelist and poetess: the “left bank of lesbos”

Romaine Brooks (1874-1970), painter

Una Troubridge (1887-1963), artist

Radclyffe Hall (1880-1943), poet and author

Winaretta Singer aka **Princess de Polignac**, (1865-1943), musical patron

Janet Flanner aka “**Genet**” (1892-1978), writer and journalist

Sylvia Beach (1887-1962), “Shakespeare & Co.”

Adrienne Monnier (1892-1955)

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), author and journalist

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), author, novelist

Zelda Fitzgerald (1900-1948), dancer, novelist and painter

Film and Music Clips

The song “Charleston” appeared in the Broadway musical, “Flaming Youth”,
1923-1924

Introduction film clip to the film “Our Dancing Daughters”, 1928

Suggested Books

Wild Girls, Diana Souhami

The Movable Feast, Ernest Hemingway

The Crazy Years, William Wiser,
Paris Was Yesterday, Janet Flanner
Paris Was A woman, Andrea Wei

Week 6 – Monday, June 14

Modernity: new directions in performance

Ballets Russes (1918-1929): **Jean Cocteau** (1889-1963), **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973), **Coco Chanel** (1883-1971).

Ballets: “Le Chant du Rossignol”, 1920; “Les Noces”, 1923; “Le Train Bleu”, 1924.

Black Entertainers and American Jazz: **Josephine Baker** (1906-1975), dancer, singer and actress

French Entertainers: **Mistinguett** (1875-1956), singer and actress,
Maurice Chevalier (1888-1972), singer, actor and entertainer

Film and Music Clips

Video clip of “Les Noces” (re-constructed by the Royal Ballet 2010?)

Video clip of “Le Train Bleu” (re-constructed by the Paris Opera Ballet,
Video Clips of Josephine Baker’s “Banana Dance” and “The Charleston”, c.
1927

Film clip from the movie “Zouzou”, 1934

Film clip of Mistinguett at the Casino de Paris, 1930s

Film clip of Mistinguett singing the “Peanut Song”, Paris Opera, 1930s

Film clip of Maurice Chevalier singing “Mimi”, 1930s

Film clip of the number “Happy Song“ from the film “Follies Bergere”, 1935

Suggested Books

The Many Faces of Josephine Baker: Singer, Dancer, Activist, Spy, Peggy Caravantes

Josephine Baker’s Last Dance, Sherry Jones

Nuits De Paris, The Great French Stars (Audio CD), Mistinguett

The Good Frenchman: The True Story of the Life and Times of Maurice Chevalier, Edward Behr

The Man in the Straw Hat, Maurice Chevalier

The Crazy Years, William Wiser

Week 7 – Monday, June 21

The Rich and Talented Are Different

Cole Porter (1891-1964), composer

Linda Thomas Porter (1883-1954), socialite

Musicals: “Paris”, 1928; “50 Million Frenchmen”, 1929.

Noel Coward (1899-1973), composer, director, actor and singer

Plays: “Semi-Monde”, 1929; “Private Lives”, 1930

Sara Murphy (1883-1975), socialite

Gerald Murphy (1888-1964), painter and socialite.

Harry Crosby (1898-1929), poet, writer and publisher

Caresse Crosby (1891-1970), publisher, activist and writer

Music Clip

The music playing in the background is Noel Coward's "Some Day I'll Find You", 1932

Suggested Books

Coward: The Playwright, John Larr

Cole Porter, William McBrien

Everyone Was so Young, Amanda Vail

Living Well Is the Best Revenge, Calvin Tomkins

Week 8 - Monday, June 28

Performance as a Total Concept

1925 Art Deco Exhibition: Embracing all the arts

The End of the Jazz Age: New Realities

With the arrival of the Great Depression in 1929 and the rise of Hitler and the Nazis, the 1930s presented entirely new realities from the exuberant years of the Jazz Age. In 1939 Germany invaded Poland and Europe would soon be blown apart with the coming of WW II.

Film and Music Clips

Film clip "By A Waterfall" from the Film, "Footlight Parade", 1933

"I Was Just One of Those Things" played by Max Rabe's Palast Orchestra,
(contemporary)

Noel Coward's "I'll See You Again" from his operetta, "Bittersweet", 1929. It is sung by Ben Heppner of the Metropolitan Opera

Suggested Books

Art Deco, Eric Knowles

Art Deco: The Definitive Arts of the 1920s and 1930s, Alastair Duncan

Art Deco: The Golden Age of Graphic Arts and Illustration (Masterworks),
Michael Robinson and Rosalind Ormiston



YouTube and the varied choices available to augment and enrich the class

Today, YouTube offers you so many choices. It is as if the entire world is on YouTube, so keep this in mind when you want to explore other aspects of the class. The videos that I have selected for you have been chosen to make specific points, but there are ways to expand on them if you so desire.

To do this you can put in a name or a topic title that might interest you. Many choices will be presented, and you can select from them. This will open up additional areas for you to explore.

These years in Paris were so full of rich cultural activities and developments that the additional search will be worth the effort!