Abstract:

Although the ability to digitize readily on a single platform almost any kind of knowledge (sound, image, video, text, graphics) has been with us for more than two decades, the teaching (packaging) of Western music history has proven remarkably resistant to change. In a program that multimedia pioneer Robert Winter and his team have been working on for more than a decade, he brings together a variety of strands that are still widely taught (served up) as disconnected dishes. In so doing he addresses fundamental questions that include: What, after all, do we mean today by music history (names? dates? places? cultural theory? music theory? ear training and musicianship? musical styles? analyses? performances?)? What role should the sound of actual music play in the teaching of music history? What kinds of experiences in their study of music history are both students (and teachers) likely to remember, and why? Do the traditional distinctions between music majors and non-majors (amateurs) still apply in a digital world? What case for relevance do we make to an outside world that is increasingly disinterested in the music we profess to love? In short, in an age of YouTube, FaceBook, and Twitter, why should the serious study of Western music matter?
Robert Winter

Robert Winter, scholar, pianist, and media author, holds the Presidential Chair in Music and Interactive Arts at UCLA. His very non-linear career has encompassed Beethoven scholarship, the evolution of the piano, several public radio series, popular culture, the history of technology, seven new media projects (starting with Beethoven’s 9th) hailed as milestones in multimedia publishing, and countless appearances as an advocate for the arts in a No-Child-Left-Behind world.

During the fall of 2010 Winter embarked on a four-month visit to China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, giving almost fifty lectures, performances, or master classes in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and more than a half dozen universities in Taiwan. In March of 2013 he returned to Shanghai and presented for the first time at both Hangzhou and Fuzhou conservatories. He will be spending almost three months back in China during the fall of 2013, where, among other activities, he will offer a monthlong course in the life and music of Franz Schubert at the Shanghai Conservatory.

Winter’s current and future projects include new interactive programs (Bach Stories—Five Fugal Tales; and How They Played Chopin; How We Play Chopin). He is also involved in upgrading and preparing for release more than thirty media projects—including his now iconic program on the Ninth Symphony, whose history is documented in the newest revision of Processing: A Programming Handbook for Visual Designers and Artists (to appear in 2013 from MIT Press)—and performances for release on laptops, iPads, iPhones, and other digital platforms.

In 2013 he will release for international sale Music in the Air—the product of a decade of development and the first completely online history of western Music, incorporating all of the features and musical experiences for which Winter has become so well known.