PARIS AFTER DARK (1890-1935)

THE BELLE EPOQUE &

Performances, Performers, and Personalities

SYLLABUS

We 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 historical moments and cultural changes. This exploration uses performances, performers and various personalities as a way of understanding not only what Paris represented, but how performances in Paris evolved from the “fin-de-siecle” into the first decades of the twentieth century.

Our initial focus is on “la belle époque -- the good old days” and the rich (upper and middle 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, and virulent anti-Semitism (the Dreyfus Case). 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.
So lift a glass of champagne but probably not Absinthe, as we start our journey into the past. If Ernest Hemingway gave you “A Movable Feast” here you will be given a “selected” buffet.

Please go to YouTube to hear music and performance selections in order to add greater depth to the class. There are many choices. You will be given a list of possible suggestions.

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Week 1 - Thursday, September 28

Paris: The French Avant-Garde and Montmartre


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


Week 2 - Thursday, October 5

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

Week 3 - Thursday, October 12

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


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.


Week 4 - Thursday, October 19

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


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.


Week 5 - Thursday, October 26

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

Alice B. Toklas (1877-1967), writer
Natalie Barney (1876-1972), playwright, novelist and poetess: the “left bank of lesbos” and…

**Week 5 (continued)**

… 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

and
Adrienne Monnier (1892-1955)

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), author and journalist

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), author, novelist
and
Zelda Fitzgerald (1900-1948), dancer, novelist and painter

**Week 6 - Thursday, November 2**


Josephine Baker (1906-1975), dancer, singer and actress

Week 6 (continued)

Mistinguett (1875-1956), singer and actress

Maurice Chevalier (1888-1972), singer, actor and entertainer

Week 7 - Thursday, November 9

Cole Porter (1891-1964), composer and
Linda Thomas Porter (1883-1954), socialite


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


Sara Murphy (1883-1975), socialite and
Gerald Murphy (1888-1964), painter and socialite.
Harry Crosby (1898-1929), poet, writer and publisher
and
Caresse Crosby (1891-1970), publisher, activist and writer

Week 8 - Thursday, November 16

1925 Art Deco Exhibition - Embracing all the arts
The end of the Jazz Age and new realities...