

## CURRENT PRACTICES

Music Composition 212, 412

(2008, Fall Term)

Instructor, Robert Morris

Time: Tuesday, Thursday; 8:35-9:55 am

### Schedule

The following lists the topics and pieces we will cover during the term. Other pieces and composers may be added if necessary. I will try to keep to the following schedule, but I have found I get behind by mid-October. Please note that wherever we are in the schedule, the dates for the three projects and listening quizzes will remain inviolable.

Please be in class *on time*; I know getting up for an 8:30 class is not often a pleasant task, but having students stumble in late is disruptive and annoying.

There are two kinds of activities in this class: lectures and analysis. In lectures, I will hold forth; in analysis I may assign passages to members of the class to present. I will expect students to be prepared for the analysis no matter who is presenting. There may be home assignments from time to time. I have copies of some of the pieces to pass out to the class; to obtain scores of other pieces, please buy them or use the Sibley library.

Note: we will not hold class on the following days:

Thur. Sept. 25 (I'm away)

Tues. Oct. 7 (Fall break)

Thur. Nov. 4 (I'm away)

Tues. Nov. 6 (I'm away)

Thur. Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving)

9/2 T. Introduction: trends in new music; bibliographic sources; thoughts on the relations between creativity and knowledge.

9/4, 9/9, 9/11 Th-T-Th. Analysis: Bartók, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*.

9/16 T Lecture: Lucas/Fibonacci series; duration schemes and hierarchies.

9/18, 9/23 Th-T. Analysis: Stravinsky, *Agon*.

**9/30** T. Lecture: Timbre, Register, and Articulation. **Listening Quiz 1**

10/2 Th. Analysis: Varèse, *Ionization and Intégrales*.

**Composition Project I** (Based on Lucas/Fibonacci series) **Due Thur. Oct. 2.**

10/9, 10/14, 10/16. Th-T-Th. Lecture: Introduction to Pitch-Class-Set Theory.

10/21 T. Analysis: Messaien, *Poemes pour Mi*.

10/23 Th. Lecture: Carter, *String Quartet II*.

10/28 T. Lecture: Twelve-tone technique: basic concepts and notations.

10/30 Th. Analysis: Berg *Violin Concerto*.

**Composition Project II** (a short piece based on one or more set-class(es) with emphasis on harmony and timbre) **Due Thur. Oct. 30.**

11/11 T. Analysis: Webern, *Symphony (I), opus 21*. **Listening Quiz 2**

11/13, 11/18 Th-T. Lecture: Webern, *Variations for Piano, opus 27* and *Concerto for Nine Instruments, opus 24*.

11/20 Th. Analysis: Dallapiccola, *Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*, selected pieces.

11/25 T. Lecture: European serialism, Messaien and Boulez. Analysis: Boulez, *Structures, Livre 1a*.

**12/2** T. Lecture: Twelve-tone combinatoriality (hexachordal-, trichordal-, generalized-, all-partition, self-derived). **Listening Quiz 3**

12/4 Th. Analysis: Schoenberg, *Piano Concerto*, opening measures; *Violin Concerto*, opening measures; Lecture: Babbitt's *Du*

**Composition Project III** (a short but sophisticated twelve-tone or serial piece) **Due Thur. Dec. 4.**

12/9, 12/11 T-Th. Babbitt: *String Quartet II*; the time-point system: Babbitt *String Quartet III*.

**Final Exam: within exam period, Dec 17-19 (W-F).**

## **Other Matters**

### **Sibley Library**

Please check the reserve list for this course at the library on which I have placed many important books, pieces and recordings to supplement the class content.

### **Readings of Compositional Projects**

We will have reading/performances of the projects in the evening on some mutually agreeable date shortly after the deadline. For each project write a short piece (about 1-3 minutes long) for players in the class or get your own players to play your pieces. If you can, hold a brief preliminary rehearsal before the reading/ performance session. You will be asked to introduce your piece to the class and tell us something about it including how it satisfies the nature of the project.

### **Quizzes**

In each of the three quizzes, you will be asked to identify items from one of the three listening lists (see below) by ear alone (no notes, scores, or other aids). Approximately 7 to 10 musical examples on CD or tape will be played up to five times in the exam period, which will occupy a 20 minute period at the end of a class. There will be no “trick” questions. Experience has shown that “cramming” for this exam does not work, so stick to a schedule for listening—so many hours per week. The recordings of the items on the three listening list are on reserve at Sibley, also compiled on ten CDs. At the end of this document is a list of the content of the ten CDs.

### **Final Exam**

The final examination lasts 3 hours and will be held sometime during the exam period (see schedule). In the exam, you will be asked to write brief essays on composers and compositional trends and identify terms and concepts covered during the term. You may also be asked to write brief musical examples to illustrate a compositional technique.

Your final grade: depends on class participation (10%), the grades of the three quizzes (10% each), the grades of your three projects (15% each) and the final exam (15%).

## **Second Term**

Second term topics will include: electronic and computer music's influence on new music; new conceptions of musical space, form, and environment; notational innovations; new instrumental resources; indeterminacy, stochastic and aleatoric composition; micro-polyphony and “mass orchestration;” theater and ritual music; process music; improvisation; neo-romanticism; minimalism; post-modernism.

### **Listening List for Quizzes**

**There is a set of CDs with all these pieces on it on reserve**

(additional and interesting recordings are also on reserve)

### **Listening Quiz 1 (Oct. 5)**

#### **String Quartets and Violin Concertos**

|            |                                |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| Babbitt    | String Quartets II and III     |
| Bartók     | String Quartets III through VI |
| Berg       | Lyric Suite                    |
| Berg       | Violin Concerto                |
| Carter     | String Quartet II              |
| Schoenberg | Violin Concerto                |

## Listening Quiz 2 (Nov. 9)

### Piano solos, Piano, Concertos, and other works with Piano

|              |                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Boulez       | Structures, Book I                |
| Boulez       | Marteau sans Maître               |
| Dallapiccola | Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera   |
| Messiaen     | "Mode de valeurs et d'intensités" |
| Schoenberg   | Piano Pieces, opus 23             |
| Schoenberg   | Piano Concerto                    |
| Stockhausen  | Piano Pieces, I through IV        |
| Stravinsky   | Movements                         |
| Webern       | Variations for Piano, opus 27     |
| Webern       | Concerto, opus 24                 |

## Listening Quiz 3 (Dec 5)

### Concerted Works and Song Cycles

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Babbitt     | Du (song cycle)                           |
| Bartók      | Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta |
| Berg        | Three Pieces for Orchestra                |
| Messiaen    | Chronochromie                             |
| Schoenberg  | Five Orchestra Pieces                     |
| Stockhausen | Kontrapunkt                               |
| Stravinsky  | Agon                                      |
| Stravinsky  | Variations for Orchestra                  |
| Varèse      | Ionization                                |
| Varèse      | Intégrales                                |
| Varèse      | Octandre                                  |
| Webern      | Sinfonie, opus 21                         |
| Webern      | Songs, Opus 25                            |

## Content of the ten CDs with call letters for scores

### CD I

|            |                 |                   |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Berg       | Violin Concerto | M1012 .B493 min   |
| Schoenberg | Violin Concerto | M1012 .S365 1939a |
| Schoenberg | Piano Concerto  | M1011 .S365 Op.42 |

### CD II

|            |   |                      |
|------------|---|----------------------|
| Bartók     | Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta | M1140.B37 M8         |
| Stravinsky | Agon                                      | M1520 .S912 Ag Folio |
| Schoenberg | Piano Pieces, opus 23                     | M25 .S365 op.23      |

### CD III

|         |                    |                  |
|---------|--------------------|------------------|
| Bartók  | String Quartet III | M452 .B29.3 min. |
| Bartók  | String Quartet V   | M452 .B29.5 min. |
| Babbitt | Du (song cycle)    | M1621.4 .B112d   |

### CD IV

|             |                            |                  |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Bartók      | String Quartet IV          | M452 .B29.6 min. |
| Bartók      | String Quartet VI          | M452 .B29.4 min. |
| Stockhausen | Piano Pieces, I through IV | M25 .S8645.2     |

### CD V

|            |                       |                              |
|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Berg       | Lyric Suite           | M452.B493 L99 1955a,<br>min. |
| Webern     | Concerto, opus 24     | M985 .W42                    |
| Schoenberg | Five Orchestra Pieces | M1045 .S365 op.16            |
| Stravinsky | Movements             | M1010 .S912M                 |

## CD VI

|          |                                   |                       |
|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Berg     | Three Pieces for Orchestra        | M1045 .B493Om min     |
| Messiaen | "Mode de valeurs et d'intensités" | M25 .M585Mo           |
| Webern   | Sinfonie, opus 21                 | M1001 .W376 op.21min. |
| Messiaen | Chronochromie                     | M1045 .M585C          |

## CD VII

|        |                   |                 |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Varèse | Ionization        | M985.V37 I6     |
| Varèse | Intégrales        | M1045 .V292I    |
| Varèse | Octandre          | M862.V296 O21   |
| Carter | String Quartet II | M452 .C323 no.2 |

## CD VIII

|            |                               |                    |
|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Stravinsky | Variations for Orchestra      | M1003.S912 V1min.  |
| Boulez     | Marteau sans Maitre           | M1613.3 .B763M min |
| Webern     | Variations for Piano, opus 27 | M27 .W376 op.27    |
| Webern     | Songs, Opus 25                | M1621 .W376L Op.25 |

## CD IX/X (one CD)

|              |                                 |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Babbitt      | String Quartet II               | M452 .B112.2              |
| Babbitt      | String Quartet III              | M452 .B112 no.3 1         |
| Stockhausen  | Kontrapunkt                     | M1045 .S864 K No.1<br>min |
| Boulez       | Structures, Book I              | M214.B75 S8               |
| Dallapiccola | Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera | M24 .D144q                |