

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:

Tues. Oct. 2 (Fall break)

Thur. Oct. 21 (I'm away)

Thur. Nov. 4 (I'm away)

Thur. Nov. 18 (I'm away)

Thur. Nov. 25 (Thanksgiving)

8/31 T. Introduction: trends in new music; bibliographic sources; thoughts on the relations between creativity and knowledge.

9/2, 9/7, 9/9, Th-T-Th. Analysis: Bartók, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*.

9/14 T. Lecture: Lucas/Fibonacci series; duration schemes and hierarchies.

9/16, 9/21 Th-T. Analysis: Stravinsky, *Agon*.

9/23 Th. Lecture: Timbre, Register, and Articulation. **Listening Quiz 1**

9/28 T. Analysis: Varèse, *Ionization and Intégrales*.

Composition Project I (Based on Lucas/Fibonacci series) **Due Sept. 28.**

9/30, 10/5, 10/7. Th-T-Th. Lecture: Introduction to Pitch-Class-Set Theory.

10/14 Th. Analysis: Messaien, *Poemes pour Mi*.

10/19 T. Lecture: Carter, *String Quartet II*.

10/26 T. Lecture: Twelve-tone technique: basic concepts and notations.

10/28 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. 28.**

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

11/9, 11/11 T-Th. Lecture: Webern, *Variations for Piano, opus 27* and *Concerto for Nine Instruments, opus 24*.

11/16 T. Analysis: Dallapiccola, *Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*, selected pieces.

11/23 T. Lecture: European serialism, Messaien and Boulez. Analysis: Boulez, *Structures, Livre Ia*.

11/30 T. Lecture: Twelve-tone combinatoriality (hexachordal-, trichordal-, generalized-, all-partition, self-derived). **Listening Quiz 3**

12/2 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. 2.**

12/7, 12/9 T-Th. Babbitt: *String Quartet II*; the time-point system: Babbitt *String Quartet III*.

Final Exam: within exam period, Dec 15-17 (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,
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 Maître 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 min
Boulez Structures, Book I M214.B75 S8
Dallapiccola Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera M24 .D144q