

SYLLABUS: MUSIC 102ABC, 1974-1975
Robert Erickson

Music 102ABC begins with the chromaticism of Wagner and deals with the musical materials of the 20th century. The method of the course is: analysis of compositions, discussion, exercises, composition and performance. Rhythmic analysis (Stravinsky, Rite of Spring, Agon) and timbre analysis (Schoenberg, Webern, Varese) are as important as the analysis of pitch relations. Students are encouraged to develop a critical point of view toward traditional musical analysis and to develop analytical methods that reflect important musical characteristics of the works discussed. Compositions are expected to be performable and well edited. Lectures and demonstrations are used to impart information and to quickly set a problem for class discussion. No text is used, but students receive musical/analytical materials, excerpts of music for analysis, documentary and historical materials, and exercise sheets.

102A Fall

Rhythmic analysis and concurrent review of tonal harmony.

Stravinsky's theories of rhythm and meter compared with textbooks and dictionaries. Discussion.

Mixed meters: Bartok (Qtet #5, Scherzo), Greek and other folk musics; Baby Dodds (Chronometry discussion); Haydn, Oxford Symphony, minuetto.

Comparison of Stravinsky's versions of Danse Sacrale.

Comparison of various performances of Danse Sacrale by Stravinsky and others.

Problems of analysis: Danse Sacrale. Class discussion.

Assignment: Analyse first 34 measures, Danse Sacrale, for its rhythmic organisation. Present a formal paper.

Assignment: Write a percussion piece, up to five players. Introduction to chromaticism. First steps with Tristan Prelude.

Exam, fall: Discuss meter, rhythm, chronometry. Make in 4 parts, secondary dominants in regular and irregular resolutions, cadences--authentic, deceptive, perfect/imperfect, masculine/feminine.

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Handouts: Collection of Stravinsky's remarks about rhythm and meter. Score, Danse Sacrale (1943 version). Tristan Prelude, complete piano version. Tristan Prelude, score for first 40 measures (Cranz, with piano reduction).

102B Winter

Continue analysis of Tristan Prelude

Assignment: Analyse first 30 measures, Tristan Prelude

Assignment: Harmonise in four parts, with various combinations of voices given by instructor, chromatic exercises.

Assignment: Present a performance of percussion piece.

Handouts: Analysis of opening of Tristan Prelude by A. Katz, R. Sessions and anonymous (compiled by R.E.); Tovey's examples, showing history of Tristan chord plus examples of various harmonic uses of the chord in the opera (compiled by R.E.); a set of exercises for chromatic harmony (compiled by R.E.).

Begin analysis of music of Debussy.

Debussy and the Javanese gamelan: examples of Javanese music and discussion of Pagodes. (Javanese gamelan at Paris exp. 1889; gamelan at Paris Conservatory, 1887)

Survey of Debussy's innovations: Six Antique Epigraphs; En Blanc et Noir, Jeux, Preludes for piano.

Assignment: Analyse Sunken Cathedral

Lectures: The whole tone scale and its harmonies; Chord building in fourths, fifths, and seconds; internal relationships between fourth chords and certain pentatonic scale forms. Chromaticism in Debussy. Next time a full review of "mode", modality and cognates with analysis, accurate definitions, and historical base.

Assignment: Analyse Syrinx

Handouts: Sunken Cathedral, with annotations by R.E. Whole tone harmony and 4th chord harmony, A. Schoenberg. Syrinx, C. Debussy; a not very good analysis of Syrinx by Austin, for critique; examples of polychords from En Blanc et Noir; the harmonic series

Begin analysis of Stravinsky's harmony.

Discussion: Stravinsky and Debussy. What S. got from D. Pentatonicism in Nightingale; polychords; white key music; special view of chromaticism.

Handouts: L'Histoire du Soldat, excerpts; Piano Rag Music (tape recording); Symphonies of Wind, final chorale only.

Assignment: Compose a short piece for piano or other solo instrument. It need not directly reflect musical ideas gleaned from works studied.

Exam, winter: Criticise Austin's analysis of Syrinx. Criticise Mitchell's analysis of Tristan Prelude

Readings: Stravinsky, the Progress of a Method, E. Cone, from Perspectives, Fall, 1972; Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky, A. Berger, Perspectives.

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Full discussion of tonality and atonality with class critique of following papers.

Handouts: Hindemith on Tonality, JMT; Kessler on Stravinsky's Serenade en La; Schoenberg's remarks from Harmonielehre, tr. Austin; Schoenberg's Problems of Harmony.

Schoenberg's Atonal Harmony (chiefly anal of Opus 11)
Listen to S.' Qtet #2; Discuss Op. 11 #1 and #2 in class.
Webern's remarks on Op. 11 from score magazine, p. 35; Discuss Op 19: brevity, athenatic, chords as objects.

Assignment: Write an atonal piece, either for piano or for a solo inst with piano accompaniment.

Handouts: Op. 11 #1 and #2; Perle analysis of Op 11 #1 from Serial Comp and Atonality, 3rd ed., pp 9-14; Op. 19 reduced and recopied.

Timbre Music lectures and discussion

Schoenberg Op. 16 #3

Webern Op 10 #1. Klangfarbenmelodie

Bach/Webern, Ricercar

Noise music and the Italian futurists

Varese and his ideas. Analysis of parts of Integrales.

LOOPS for Insts.

Ens. timbres.

Assignment: Rescore Webern piece (1915 #1) for orch of single insts

Handouts: Webern Op 10 #1; Wilkinson on Integrales, pp9-14

Twelve-tone music

Classical 12 tone tech as explicated in Krenek Studies and Schoenberg's writings.

Assignment: short piece for solo inst, 12 tone., melody, occasionally a chord, if available on inst--strings.

Assignment: compose a short 12 tone work for 2 or 3 insts available in class.

Readings: Krenek, Studies in Ctpt; Schoenberg, Composition With Twelve Tones, from Style and Idea, 102-143.

Chance Music

Discussion, words and notions: aleatoric; chance; indeterminacy; statistical; synchronicity. Breadth of viewpoints--from Cage to Xenakis. Nature of differing assumptions in each.

John Cage views. Analysis of method and performances of Atlas Eclipticalis; Construction in Metal; Imaginary Landscape (radios, tape); Sonatas for Prepared Piano; HPSCHD.

Compare music with Cage statements about his and others music.

Assignment: Compose a chance piece requiring from 3 to 6 players. Must have sounds; must have specified rules; must have a manner of notation proper to the composition.

Readings: Silence, John Cage. Interview with Roger Reynolds.

HOW TO MAKE A TAPE COMPOSITION

ASSIGNMENT: COMPOSE A TAPE PIECE, $2\frac{1}{2}$ TO $3\frac{1}{2}$ MINUTES LONG, USING MANY SPLICES. THE BASIC TECHNIQUE IS TO CUT AND SPLICE THE SOURCE TAPE. BUY THE SOURCE TAPE AND EMPTY REELS AT THE SCHOOL STORE. THE COMPOSITION IS DUE DURING THE WEEK OF NOV. 13, AT THE TIME OF YOUR SECTION MEETING, AND MUST BE TURNED IN THEN. THE TAPE EDITING LABS CLOSE AT 9 P.M. NOV. 12, SUNDAY. NO FA 3 STUDENTS WILL BE PERMITTED TO WORK THERE AFTER SUNDAY.

1. Memorize the sounds on the source tape, and keep rough notes about your preferences. Little tabs of paper may be placed between the layers of tape temporarily, to help you locate sounds quickly.

2. Practice splicing, using blank tape at first. Always put your splice on the shiny side of the tape. Make splices quite long, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches so that they will be strong and noiseless. Burnish the splice with finger and/or thumbnail to make a tight bond. Examine the oxide side of the tape to be sure that no white shows. If you can see white splicing tape between the two pieces of tape you have a bad splice. Start over. If a bit of white tape shows on the edges it may be trimmed with scissors or a razor blade.

3. After you have tried some splices on blank tape you may wish to insert lengths of white paper leader (about two feet) between the various sounds on your source tape. This will make it much easier for you to find a particular sound.

4. Practice splicing together sounds from your source tape experimentally. Choose sounds from the source tape which have no particular interest for you and try splicing rather short and very short (down to an inch or two) lengths together. You may discover a "horizontal mix" which turns out to be useable.

THE COMPOSING OF THE PIECE

Find a beginning. Put a length of paper leader at its front and keep it on an empty reel. Find a sound to connect with this beginning. Splice it on. Continue in this way until you have completed the composition. It may be helpful to start thinking about how you wish to end the composition after you have composed about a minute of music. Find the ending and memorize it. Now you need only find the sounds which will get you from your opening minute to your ending.

Some people find it comforting to make a grand plan. It may be your way. However, make no hard and fast plan until you really know the sounds on the tape. Even then, you may find that the music is better if you allow your "hard and fast" plan to change and develop. I myself prefer to work with a plan which keeps changing during the composing process, because my ideas develop as I work on a composition.

On splicing practice: When you wish to connect two sounds, to see how you like the effect, make the splice in such a way that you have a couple of inches of extra tape on each side of the splice; then you can later shorten the space between the sounds and choose the exact spot desired for the connection. In brief: splice fat for trial, then tighten. Never splice silence, you will get a sound, a bump, at the splice. Try to splice at the attack, the beginning of a sound, and the sound of the attack will cover the sound of the splice. When splicing loud continuous noises there is no problem.

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES

You may use any or all of the following techniques, in addition to the cut and splice methods outlined above. You may also use techniques which you discover yourself.

1. Record some or all of your own sounds. Not easy. We have only two Sony 800 Portable $\frac{1}{2}$ track monophonic recorders, with microphone. If you know how to record you may borrow on a very limited use basis. If you have your own tape recorder use it.

2. Erase one track of the source tape and record new material. Sony 800. Your own.

3. Sounds on the source tape may be reversed. They may be played at other speeds, rerecorded on the Sony 800, then incorporated.

4. A variable speed device on the Sony 800 may be used for speed changes other than $7\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{3}{4}$. Note, however, that it is monophonic only.

NO MATTER WHAT EXTRA METHODS ARE USED--AND YOU MAY INVENT--THE PIECE MUST HAVE MANY SPLICES. THE FINAL TAPE MUST HAVE TWO CHANNELS OF SOUND, EITHER THE STEREO SOURCES AS GIVEN, OR MATERIAL WHICH YOU HAVE RECORDED OR ADDED. NO CHANNEL MAY BE CONTINUOUSLY EMPTY. WHEN COMPLETE ADD FOUR FEET OF LEADER AT THE BEGINNING AND WRITE "HEAD". ADD FOUR FEET OF LEADER AT THE END AND WRITE "TAIL", AND ADD YOUR NAME (PRINT) AND THE TITLE, IF THERE IS ONE. NO TAPE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PROPER LEADERING AND IDENTIFICATION.