

**Music 208B: Experimental Musical Practices**  
Critical Studies and Experimental Practices Program  
Department of Music, UCSD  
**Spring Quarter 2008**

**Professor David Borgo**

office location: Mandeville B140

telephone: 858-822-4957

email: dborgo@ucsd.edu

**Course Description and Procedures:**

The seminar is conceived as a meeting place for identification, discovery, and discussion of issues salient to contemporary music practice. Each week we will explore a variety of perspectives from scholars and artists active in related fields. The weekly topics span a range of contemporary issues that, while organized in groups for convenience sake, are most appropriately envisioned as interrelated facets of a complex whole. The readings have been chosen to represent diverse perspectives and approaches to the topic, and, whenever possible, to highlight the work of influential scholars and artists. Individual articles are drawn from musicology, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, sociology, critical theory, feminist studies, postcolonial theory, new media criticism, and cultural, cognitive, and performance studies, but collectively they point to a post-disciplinary future for music studies (IMHO).

One student each week will serve as the “**reviewer**,” preparing a short synopsis of all of the readings that can be circulated to the class. While another student will serve as that week’s “**respondent**,” making certain to be well prepared to engage with the reviewer and to propel the discussion forward as needed. *All* students are encouraged to bring to each class **a list of questions** concerning the readings, **a list of related contemporary artists** (composers, improvisers, performers, new media practitioners, etc.) and any **related audio or video examples** they might wish to share in order to spur to discussion.

In addition to regular attendance, a demonstrated familiarity with the readings, and active participation, a “**publishable paper**” of 10-15 double-spaced pages is required from each student. The paper should address in detail a complex of issues related to the course material. Participants are encouraged to use the seminar readings as sources but should also develop additional sources in consultation with the professor and on their own. The paper could be combined with a creative audio/video/performance work, but cannot be replaced by it. A **prospectus** for the paper is due during **week 6**, and the **final paper**, along with a **short presentation** followed by a question-and-answer session, is due during **week 10**.

**Class Policy:**

If a student misses a class for any reason (s)he will need to write detailed critical commentary on all of the assigned readings since (s)he will not be present at the discussion. In addition, any student missing more than two classes will need to retake the course in order to receive a passing grade.

## **WEEK 2: Defining/Contesting Experimentalism**

- Nyman, Michael. 1999. "Towards (a Definition of) Experimental Music." *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, 2nd ed. New York: Schirmer Books, 1-30.
- Subotnik, Rose Rosengard. 1991. "The Challenge of Contemporary Music." *Developing Variations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 265-293.
- Cameron, Catherine M. 1996. "Avantgardism as a Mode of Culture Change." *Dialectics in the Arts: The Rise of Experimentalism in American Music*. Westport: Praeger, 115-147.
- McClary, Susan. 1997. "Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-garde Music Composition." In *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. by David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian and Lawrence Siegel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 54-74.
- Huyssen, Andreas. 1986. "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other." *After the Great Divide*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 44-62.
- Corbett, John. 2000. "Experimental Oriental: New Music and Other Others." In *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh. Berkeley: University of California Press, 163-186.
- Lewis, George. 2004 (1996). "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological perspectives" and "Afterword to 'Improvised Music after 1950': The Changing Same." In *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 131-172.
- Foster, Hal. 1985. "Against Pluralism." *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics*. Seattle: Bay Press, 13-31.

## **WEEK 3: Inter-/Post-disciplinary Theory/Practice**

- Bergeron, Katherine. 1992. "Prologue: Disciplining Music." In *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons*, ed. by Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman. University of Chicago Press, 1-9.
- Kassabian, Anahid. 1997. "Introduction: Music, Disciplinarity, and Interdisciplinarity." In *Keeping score: Music, disciplinarity, culture*, ed. by David Swartz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1-12.
- Nelson, Cary, and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar. 1996. "Cultural Studies and the Politics of Disciplinarity: An Introduction." In *Disciplinarity and dissent in cultural studies*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar. New York: Routledge, 1-19.
- Look over the contents of the above edited volumes to get a sense for the scope of the work and read an additional article and be prepared to summarize it to the class*
- hooks, bell. 1994. "Theory as Liberatory Practice." *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge, 59-75.
- Keil, Charles, Michele Kisliuk, and Deborah Wong. 1998. "Call and Response: Applied Sociomusicology and Performance Studies." *Ethnomusicology* 42/2: 303-321.
- Van Der Meer, Wim. 2005. "The Location of Music: Towards a Hybrid Musicology." *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 10/1: 57-71.
- Borgo, David. 2007. "Musicking on the Shores of Multiplicity and Complexity." *Parallax* 13/4: 92-107.

#### **WEEK 4: The Nature/Value of Music**

Peretz, Isabelle. 2006. "The Nature of Music from a Biological Perspective." *Cognition* 100/1: 1–32.

Look over the following special issues and read at least one additional article in depth:

- *Music Perception* 23/1 (2005)
- *Cognition* 100 (2006)
- *The World of Music* 48/2 (2007)

Reimer, Bennett. 2000. "Why Do Humans Value Music?" In *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education*, ed. by Clifford K. Madsen. Reston, VA: The National Association for Music Education, n.p. <http://www.menc.org/publication/vision2020/reimer.html>

Frith, Simon. 1996. "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music." In *Music and Society*, ed. by Richard Leppert and Susan McClary. West Nyack, NY: Cambridge University Press, 133-149.

Research the following books to get a sense for their scope and/or main argument:

- *Emotion and Meaning in Music* by Leonard Meyer (University of Chicago Press, 1961).
- *How Musical is Man?* by John Blacking (University of Washington Press, 1973).
- *Music and the Mind* by Anthony Storr (Ballantine Books, 1993)
- *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy: How Music Captures Our Imagination* by Robert Jourdain (Harper Perennial, 1998)
- *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research* ed. by Patrick Juslin and John Sloboda (Oxford University Press, 2001)
- *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Music* (Oxford, 2003)
- *Musical Communication* edited by Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, David J. Hargreaves (Oxford, 2005)
- *The Singing Neanderthals* by Stephen Mithen (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2005)
- *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* by Daniel Levitin (Dutton, 2006)
- *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* by David Huron (Bradford Books, 2006).

## **WEEK 5: Cognition/Corporeality/Identity**

Blacking, John. 1977. "Towards an Anthropology of the Body." *The Anthropology of the Body*. London: Academic Press, 1-28.

Borgo, David. 2005. "The Embodied Mind." *Sync or Swarm: Improvising Music in a Complex Age*. New York and London: Continuum, 36-58.

Bowman, Wayne. 2004. "Cognition and the Body: Perspectives from Music Education." In *Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds*, ed. by Liora Bresler. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 29-50.

Look over the following three articles and read at least one of them in depth:

- Cusick, Suzanne G. 1994. "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem." *Perspectives of New Music* 32/1: 8-27.
- McClary, Susan, and Robert Walser. 1994. "Theorizing the Body in African-American Music." *Black Music Research Journal* 14/1: 75-84.
- Wong, Deborah. 2000. "The Asian American Body in Performance." In *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. by Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman. University of Chicago: 57-94.

Ostertag, Bob. 2002. "Human Bodies, Computer Music." *Leonardo Music Journal* 12: 11-14.

Look over the following special issues and read at least one additional article in depth:

- *Contemporary Music Review* 25/1&2 (2006). Theme: "Bodily Instruments and Instrumental Bodies: Critical Views on the Relation of Body and Instrument in Technologically Informed Performance Environments."
- *Contemporary Music Review* 22/4 (2003). Theme: "Laptop Music."
- *Leonardo Music Journal* 12 (2002). Theme: "Pleasure."

## **WEEK 6: Technology/Ontology/Agency – (Paper Proposals Due)**

Goehr, Lydia. 1992. "Werktreue: Confirmation and Challenge in Contemporary Movements." *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. Oxford University Press, 243-286.

Katz, Mark. 2006. *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, pp. 1-47.

Gracyk, Theodore. 1996. "That Wild Thin Mercury Sound: Ontology." *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1-68.

Auslander, Philip. 1999. "Live Performance in a Mediatized Culture." *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. New York: Routledge, 10-60. [DUPLICATE PAGE IN XEROX]

Porcello, Thomas. 1998. "'Tails Out': Social Phenomenology and the Ethnographic Representation of Technology in Music-Making." *Ethnomusicology* 42(3): 485-510.

Taylor, Timothy. 2001. "Music, Technology, Agency, and Practice." *Strange Sounds: Music, Technology and Culture*. New York: Routledge, 15-40.

### **WEEK 7: Technology/Creativity/Collectivity**

- Boulez, Pierre. 1985 [1977]. "Technology and the Composer." *Orientalisms*. Harvard University Press, 486-494.
- Théberge, Paul. 1997. "The New 'Sound' of Music: Technology and Changing Concepts of Music." *Any Sound You Can Imagine: Making Music/Consuming Technology*. Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 186-213.
- Lansky, Paul. 1990. "A View from the Bus: When Machines Make Music." *Perspectives of New Music* 28/2: 102-110.
- Lewis, George. 2000. "Too Many Notes: Computers, Complexity and Culture in Voyager." *Leonardo Music Journal* 10: 33-39.
- Rokeby, David. 1998. "The Construction of Experience." In *Digital Illusion: Entertaining the Future with High Technology*, ed. by Clark Dodsworth. ACM Press, 27-47.
- Levy, Pierre. 1997. "The Art and Architecture of Cyberspace: The Aesthetics of Collective Intelligence." *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*. New York: Plenum Trade, 117-128.
- Nakamura, Lisa. 2002. "Cybertyping and the Work of Race in the Age of Digital Distribution." *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet*. New York: Routledge, 1-30.

### **WEEK 8: A Moment of Opportunity and Challenge**

- Benkler, Yochai. 2005. "A Moment of Opportunity and Challenge." *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1-28.
- Richard, Dominique M. 1994. "Computer Music and the Post-Modern: A Case of Schizophrenia." *Computer Music Journal* 18/4: 26-34.
- Neill, Ben. 2005. "Breakthrough Beats: Rhythm and the Aesthetics of Contemporary Electronic Music." In *Audio Culture*, ed. by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner. New York and London: Continuum, 386-391.
- Hugill, Andrew. 2005. "Internet Music: An Introduction." *Contemporary Music Review* 24/6: 429-437.
- Weinberg, Gil. 2005. "Interconnected Musical Networks: Toward a Theoretical Framework." *Computer Music Journal* 29(2): 23-39.

*Look over the special issues of Contemporary Music Review (24/6, 2005) and Organised Sound (10/3, 2005) dedicated to Internet music and the edited book Audio Culture (Continuum 2005) and read one additional essay and be prepared to summarize it to the class*

Duckworth, William. 2005. *Virtual Music*. Taylor and Francis, 157-169.

### **WEEK 9: Student-suggested Readings**

### **WEEK 10: Student Presentations – (Papers due)**