

Sound in the 20th Century

Spring 2010

Mondays 12.30 – 2.05 pm

Since the beginning of the 20th century, music theoreticians and practitioners alike have sought to broaden the understanding of what “music” means, and explore the world of sounds and noises hitherto relegated to the outside of the musical realm. An increasing attention has also been paid to the changing role of sound in modernity, and the importance of listening (as opposed to, or in addition to seeing) for our orientation in and understanding of the modern Western world. The course deals with these new developments in both theory and practice, and traces them throughout the 20th century, from the early experiments of the Futurists to the contemporary electronic music scene.

Assignments:

Mid-term paper 3-5 pages (1500-2000 words)

Final paper 3-5 pages (1500-2000 words)

22. 2.

Introduction; Early electronic instruments

1.3.

The Avant-Garde, and the Liberation of Sound

Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto*

Edgar Varèse, *The Liberation of Sound*

Henry Cowell, *The Joys of Noise*

8. 3.

John Cage and Experimental Music

John Cage, *The Future of Music: Credo*

Michael Nyman, *Towards (a Definition of) Experimental Music*

15. 3.

Musique Concrète

Pierre Schaeffer, *Acousmatics*

22. 3.

Electronic Music

Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Electronic and Instrumental Music*

29. 3.

Citation, Borrowing, Plunderphonics

John Oswald, *Bettered by the Borrower: The Ethics of Musical Debt*

Chris Cutler, *Plunderphonia*

5. 4. Easter Monday

12. 4.

Michael Bull and Les Back, "Introduction: Into Sound." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*. Oxford and New York: Berg 2003, pp. 1-18.

19. 4.

Douglas Kahn, "The Sound of Music." In *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press 1999, pp. 101-122.

26. 4.

Jacques Attali, "Listening." In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press 1985, pp. 3-12.

Murray Schafer, "Open Ears." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, pp. 25-39.

3. 5.

Steven Feld, "A Rainforest Acoustemology." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, pp. 223-239.

10. 5.

Fran Tonkiss, "Aural Postcards: Sound, Memory and the City." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, pp. 303-309.

Shuhei Hosokawa, "The Walkman Effect." *Popular Music* 1984/4, pp. 165-180.