Composition: Electronic Media I
Fall 2011
Assignment 2
Due Oct. 10

1. Assignment 2 will be presented in class on Oct. 10-12. The purpose of this assignment is to create gestures of different lengths in Peak.

2. Prepare to create a gesture, as follows:
   a. Create a new mono soundfile.
   b. Name it according to its gesture-class 1, 2, 3,… and instance *a, b, c, …*
   c. For example, the name 3d means gesture-class 3 and instance *d*.

3. Populate a new soundfile as follows:
   a. Open a soundfile from Assignment 1.
   b. Copy some or all of it.
   c. Paste it into the soundfile.
   d. Paste it again, then convert this one to silence.
   e. Extend the silence by copying and pasting it as many times as you like.
   f. To incorporate a second sound, repeat Steps 3a – 3c above.

4. To edit the new soundfile, do the following:
   a. Fade in/out the 2 source sounds as desired.
   b. Control their relative loudness with gain and/or normalize.
   c. Control their rhythmic relation by cutting and pasting the second source sound to the desired location.
   d. Step 4c above can be replaced or combined with cutting or copying and pasting silence.

5. If desired, any sound can be transformed by the following plug-ins:
   a. Waves Q-10 mono EQ.
   b. Pitch 'n Time Pro
   c. iZotope noise removal plug-ins. These can be used three ways: 1. To clean up the sound; 2. To radically modify the sound for creative purposes; 3. To output only the noise of the sound for creative purposes.
   d. Transformations can sometimes be done repeatedly and in different combinations. This can produce a result that is sometimes very different from the original sound.
   e. For example, use a high-pass filter with a cut-off frequency of 2,000 – 4,000 hz. This will extract the upper harmonics of a sound. Since these harmonics are typically low in amplitude, normalize the result. Repeat this process 2-3 times. To bring these frequencies into a musically useful area, using a pitch shifter to lower them 2-5 octaves. Normalize the result and use EQ to shape the sound.

6. For the purposes of this assignment, consider the role of rhythmic density in gestures.
   a. Less density.
   b. More density.
   c. Less, then more density.
   d. More, then less.
   e. More, less, more.
   f. Less, more, less.

7. Consider rhythms with either a clear or obscure pulse.
   a. Clear pulse.
   b. Obscure pulse.
   c. Clear, the obscure pulse.
   d. Obscure, then clear.
   e. Clear, obscure, clear.
   f. Obscure, clear, obscure.

8. Consider also:

     a. Narrow pitch range or wide pitch range.
     b. Pre-dominantly low pitches or pre-dominantly high pitches.
     c. Short sounds or longer (2 or 3 times longer that the short sounds) sounds.
     d. In-class discussion of other means of projecting gestures.

9. Discussion of gestural intensity-bumps.

10. The gesture-classes that you will create for this assignment will include the following characteristics:

Gesture-class 1. Duration: 0.5". Silence: no. Bumps: 1.

Gesture-class 2. Duration: 0.5". Silence: yes. Bumps: 2.

Gesture-class 3. Duration: 1". Silence: no. Bumps: 2 (yes, two).

Gesture-class 4. Duration: 1". Silence: yes. Bumps: 2.

Gesture-class 5. Duration: 2". Silence: no. Bumps: 1.

Gesture-class 6. Duration: 2". Silence: yes. Bumps: 2.

Gesture-class 7. Duration: 3". Silence: yes. Bumps: 2.

Gesture-class 8. Duration: 3". Silence: yes. Bumps: 3.

Gesture-class 9. Duration: 3.5". Silence: yes. Bumps: 2.

Gesture-class 10. Duration: 3.5". Silence: yes. Bumps: 3.

Gesture-class 11. Duration: 4". Silence: yes. Bumps: 2.

Gesture-class 12. Duration: 4". Silence: yes. Bumps: 3.

11. For Assignment 2, the number of instances of each of the above gesture-classes will be:
     a. 2-3 instances for non-composition students.
     b. 3-5 instances for composition students.

12. In creating these soundfiles, it will help to know how they will be used in the next assignment:
     a. Batch-processing in Peak will shift the pitch (together with time) of these several times.
     b. Batch-processing will convert the mono files to stereo.
     c. Once all of your files have been converted to stereo, the are ready to be imported into Pro Tools. While mono files can easily be imported into Pro Tools, have both types of formats requires two types of tracks. In my experience, this creates headaches during the compositional process. The more roadblocks you have in realizing a compositional idea, the less ambitious the realization will sometimes be.
     d. When working with your files in Pro Tools, consider doing any of the following:
          i. Place, say, Gesture 3b in the edit window.
          ii. Place Gesture 4a in another track so that it precedes, overlaps, or follows Gesture 3b.
          iii. From Gesture 11a, copy a single sound and paste it near the attack of Gesture 3b. This will be used to *shade* the sound and give it depth and body.
          iv. Pan any sound to any point in the stereo field.
          v. Use automated volume to mix two or more gestures together.
          vi. Use plug-ins to improve the overall sound, or to transform it in a creative manner.

13. Item 12 above describes in a nutshell the basic methods of working in Pro Tools to create an electronic composition. While Pro Tools is widely used in non-electronic music for recording and mixing instruments, this method of working requires a different approach, which at times is in conflict with the electronic approach, as discussed in class.