025:251 COMPOSITION: ELECTRONIC MEDIA II
Spring 2013

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Goals: This class will focus on using Max/MSP to accomplish two musical goals. The first goal is exploring algorithmic or computer-assisted processes to generate from pre-recorded source sounds larger and more complex musical objects, ranging from gestures to phrases. This aspect of the course with be concerned with translating the generative actions in Peak and Pro Tools to the Max/MSP domain. The second goal is to explore using Max/MSP to track the pitch and amplitude of a live solo instrument to trigger the playback of pre-recorded sounds, as well as controlling the algorithmic generation of larger formal elements. Along with this, Max/MSP will be used to process the live instrument in real-time and to record the instrument and play back parts of the recordings at different times in the composition. We will also discuss how to compose music for instrument and electronics by using the Edit Window in Pro Tools, as we did last semester, and syncing it to a MIDI performance using the Garriton instruments in Pro Tools. Each student will decide how much of the final project will be for instrument and Max/MSP and how much will be for instrument and fixed-media in Pro Tools.

The compositional format of each student's final project will be decided as the semester progresses. The calendar of topics and events this semester will be modified according to student background, progress, and interests. The activities of the class will include participation in the spring EMS concert, presentation of assignments and works in progress, listening presentations, and optional individual class teaching presentations.

Teaching Experience: Because many academic jobs for composers include teaching of music technology, students will be given the opportunity to develop their teaching skills in this class, primarily through listening presentations, discussed below. On an optional basis, qualified students will be given opportunities to prepare a handout and lead a short discussion of a technical nature, usually pertaining to some aspect of the software used in class.

Grading: Grades are based on assignments (30%), listening presentations (10%), mid-term critique (20%), final critique (20%) and the final composition (20%). Poor attendance will result in a lower grade.

Assignments: Assignments will be devised to help the student create algorithms in Max/MSP to generate musical material, and to learn how to process, record live, and trigger events from a live instrument. Assignments will not be scheduled at this time. Rather, they will be developed in response to the needs of the students in creating a work for instrument and electronics.

Listening Presentation: Each student will present a work by an important composer in the field of electronic music. This presentation will be worth 10% of the final grade.

Mid-term Class Critique: Students will present their work for class discussion and critique. This critique will be worth 20% of the final grade. The focus of these critiques will be on the Max/MSP algorithms developed by the students, and on the actual sonic results.

Final Class Critique: Students will present their work for class discussion and critique. This critique will be worth 20% of the final grade. The focus of these critiques will be on both the Max/MSP methods used in the piece, and on the electronic sounds and instrumental writing of the final result.

Final Project: The final project should be at least 5 minutes in length, unless the critiques suggest otherwise. We will set up individual ½-hour meeting times early in the finals week to play and discuss the final work.

EMS Concert: Students should plan to attend the spring EMS concert and assist with set-up and tear-down.

EMS Hard Drives: Students can use hard drives in Studios 1 and 2. Since these drives are not secure, students are responsible for backing up their work after each session on their own flash drives or hard drives.

Studio Access: Students can obtain keys to the studios by talking with Dan and Will. Students can sign up for studio time on a permanent and weekly basis. The permanent schedule will be determined in Week 2 of class.

Studio Maintenance: The studios should be kept clean at all times. Furniture and equipment should be symmetrically arranged and dust-free. To keep surfaces clear of pens and papers left behind, we should try to put them in one of the drawers in the racks. I'll also put old handouts there, so if you miss a class, you can find the handout there. Prof. Fritts finds it challenging to get down on the floor and pick up scraps of paper, etc. Please help him as much as you can.

Studio Problems: Please report any problems to Dan and Will as soon as they occur. Most problems are incredibly easy to solve, but they have to know about them to fix them.

Equipment Check-out: A wide range of very high quality microphones, Apple laptops, Digidesign interfaces, video cameras, and recording devices can be checked out. When you check out something that comes with cables, power supply, etc., please double check that you return everything.

Administrative Home: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Electronic Communication: University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Fraud: All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies: Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather: In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.

Calendar

The independence and intensity of the students' interests, needs, and compositional development will best be meet with a more flexible focus and schedule of topics than last semester. For this reason, the calendar below lists only the most important dates. Every class meeting will begin with a discussion of the upcoming topics and activities in the class periods and weeks ahead. (By the way, the assignments will be more frequent and in greater number than last semester.)

Jan. 21-March 14	Algorithmic composition in Max/MSP.
March 18-20	No class. Spring Break.
March 25-27	Listening Presentations.
April 8-10	Mid-term Critiques, Part 1
April 15-17	Mid-term Critiques, Part 2
April 29-May 1	Final Critiques, Part 1
May 5	EMS Concert, 7:30 PM, Becker Auditorium.
May 6-8	Final Critiques, Part 2
May 13-15	Presentation of final composition in individual meetings with Prof. Fritts.