

MUTH 6680 – PRO-SEMINAR IN MUSIC THEORY

Dr. Frank Heidlberger, Fall 2009 Room 339 – heidlberger@unt.edu

Office hours: TR 9.30-11 a.m.

Class meetings: TR 2-3.20, room 293/library room 422

Serialism in Discourse

Since Arnold Schoenberg's first compositions "with twelve tones" (he persistently denied the status of this technique as a "theory"), composers, theorists and musicologists were eager to theorize and conceptualize this technique. The ensuing critical, analytical, compositional and aesthetic discourse led to a diverse understanding of "serialism" in the course of the 20th century that resulted in significant developments of serial compositional techniques and a variety of analytical strategies.

It is the goal of this course to discuss and understand key components of this discourse:

1. Ideas and Origins of serial techniques: its "necessity" (Schoenberg)
2. Pre World-War II criticism of the Second Viennese School: first steps towards a "theory of twelve-tone compositions"
3. Adorno's "Philosophy of New Music" and its influence in theory, literature and composition
4. Further developments of twelve-tone composition, and the related discourse by Krenek, Babbitt and others
5. The development of "serialism" in the context of post World War II Europe (Boulez, Stockhausen, "Darmstadt-School")
6. The early history of "electronic music" in the 1950's and the discourse on musical time (Eimert, Stockhausen)
7. Consequences of the serialism discourse for the aesthetics and criticism of non-serial music
8. Aspects of performance practice and perception with reference to serialism and electronic/electroacoustic music
9. Aesthetics and criticism of serialism in the post-modernist era.

Each participant may work on two projects related to the above mentioned areas. Each project will be presented and discussed in class. One of these projects may be revised and turned in as the final essay.

The **Final essay** is due on Thursday, December 10, 2 pm.

It is expected that each participant meets class regularly and contributes to each session by participating in the discussions. If there are texts to be read in advance, the participants should be well prepared. Grading will be based on the quality of the essays, particularly the final essay, on the quality and originality of the class presentation and on participation in classroom discussions.