

Professor Guerino Mazzola  
Spring 2019: MUS 5732: *Free Jazz—From Structures to Gesture*

### **Course Description**

This course discusses the musical form of free jazz comprising flow expressivity, collaborative interaction, and gestural communication from a theoretical and practical point of view. We present major representatives such as, among others, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp, The Art Ensemble of Chicago, and John Coltrane, and also work in performance student groups in order to learn and to work out a competence in such music and behavior. The sound material includes classical recordings, but also most recent free jazz CDs and DVDs.

### **Media and Collaboration**

Powerpoint slides, piano and other instrument performances, CDs, DVDs. Collaboration with students strongly encouraged.

### **Prerequisites**

Instructor's consent, but most importantly the willingness to reset your way of listening. Which means that you have to play one instrument very well: your ears.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The three principal objectives: (1) to explore flow of collaborative musical thought/performance (2) explore and apply gesturally driven harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic vocabulary, technique, and processes (3) provide a new approach toward collaborative creation of music beyond the facticity of scores and recordings.

### **Grading**

I grade on a scale 0-10 with 0.1 steps: 9.5-10 = A, 9-9.4 = A-, 8.5-8.9 = B+, 7.6-8.4 = B, 7-7.5 = B-, 6.5-6.9 = C; 6-6.4 = C-, 5-5.9 = D, 0-4.9 = F.

Final grade: Class participation 1/3, first paper 1/3, second paper 1/3; no final exam.

First paper due March 25, length = 8 –10 pages (double spaced),

Second paper due April 22, length = 8 –10 pages (double spaced).

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will lead to failure.

### **Contact**

My office hours are by appointment (room 164).

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### **Schedule of Classes**

I. Introduction		
I.1 (We Jan 23)	Overview	
I.2 (Fr Jan 25)	What is free jazz?	The musical, social, and political origins of the movement
I.3 (Mo Jan 28)	What is free jazz?	Negative characterizations: what free jazz is not
I.4 (We Jan 30)	What is free jazz?	A provisional positive characterization
II. Getting off ground		
II.1 (Fr Feb 01)	Jazz in transition	Archie Shepp: Mama Too Tight, Live in Donau-Eschingen
II.2 (Mo Feb 04)	Jazz in transition	John Coltrane: Giant Steps, A Love Supreme, and DVD
II.3 (We Feb 06)	Jazz in transition	Cecil Taylor: the Complete Candid Recordings
II.4 (Fr Feb 08)	Jazz in transition	Bill Evans: Autumn Leaves
III. The landscape of free jazz		
III.1 (Mo Feb 11)	Out of this world	Sun Ra. Space is the Place DVD
III.2 (We Feb 13)	Out of this world	John Coltrane: Om, Meditations
III.3 (Fr Feb 15)	Out of this world	The Art Ensemble: Fanfare of the Warriors
III.4 (Mo Feb 18)	The art of collaboration	Setting up the conceptual framework
III.5 (We Feb 20)	The art of now	First thoughts about the improviser's space-time
IV. Three collaborative pillars		
IV.1 (Fr Feb 22)	The space of free jazz	Ornette Coleman: Free Jazz
IV.2 (Mo Feb 25)	The space of free jazz	John Coltrane: Ascension
IV.3 (We Feb 27)	The space of free jazz	Cecil Taylor: Unit Structures
IV.4 (Fr Mar 01)	The space of free jazz	Archie Shepp: The Way Ahead
V. Gestural creativity		
V.1 (Mo Mar 04)	Gestural creativity	Albert Ayler: New York Eye and Ear Control
V.2 (We Mar 06)	Gestural creativity	Gil Evans: Into the Hot
V.3 (Fr Mar 08)	Gestural creativity	Don Cherry: Mu
V.7 (Mo Mar 11)	Gestural creativity	Cecil Taylor: Burning Spears DVD
V.8 (We Mar 13)	Gestural creativity	Cecil Taylor: Silent Dance DVD
V.9 (Fr Mar 15)	Gestural creativity	Dance and Gesture: Rebecca Lazier's "Vanishing"

## Spring Break

### *First paper due March 25*

V.10 (Mo Mar 25)	Gestural creativity	Geisser-Mazzola-Maneri-Fields: Chronotomy
V.11 (We Mar 27)	Gestural creativity	Making music—thinking in music
V.12 (Fr Mar 29)	The meaning of group flow	Miles Davis: Bitches Brew
V.13 (Mo Apr 01)	The meaning of group flow	Miles Davis: On the Corner I

V.14 (We Apr 03)	The meaning of group flow	Archie Shepp: Coral Rock
V.15 (Fr Apr 05)	The meaning of group flow	Cecil Taylor and Thurman Barker
V.13 (Mo Apr 08)	The meaning of group flow	Geisser-Mazzola-Onuma: Dancing the Body of Time
V.14 (We Apr 10)	The meaning of group flow	Complex Time
V.15 (Fr Apr 12)	The meaning of group flow	Geisser-Mazzola-Onuma: Imaginary Time
V.13 (Mo Apr 15)	The meaning of group flow	John Coltrane: Leo
V.14 (We Apr 17)	The meaning of group flow	The Art Ensemble: Concert DVD
V.15 (Fr Apr 19)	The meaning of group flow	Archie Shepp: Coral Rock/Fellini: Satyricon

*Second paper due April 22*

V.13 (Mo Apr 22)	The presence problem	Clarice Lispector: Água Viva
V.14 (We Apr 24)	Balanced Dancing Presence	Second thoughts about the improviser's space-time
V.15 (Fr Apr 26)	Balanced Dancing Presence	The Artist's Imaginary Time I
V.15 (Mo Apr 29)	Balanced Dancing Presence	The Artist's Imaginary Time II
V.15 (We May 01)	Teaching Free Jazz	Final Discussion
V.15 (Fr May 03)	Teaching Free Jazz	Final Discussion
V.15 (Mo May 06)	Future Free Jazz	Final Discussion

**Selected Original References**

(Music references excluded, see above, where some are listed!)

1. Guerino Mazzola & Paul B. Cherlin: *Flow, Gesture, and Spaces in Free Jazz*. Springer, Heidelberg 2009 (mandatory, available online at the U of M library)
2. Ekkehard Jost: *Free Jazz*. Da Capo, Cambridge, MA 1994 (German: Schott, Mainz 1975)
3. Valerie Wlimer: *As Serious as Your Life*. Quartet Books, London et al. 1977
4. Martin Buholzer: *Auf der Suche nach Cecil Taylor*. Wolke, Hofheim 1990
5. Martin Buholzer: *Always a Pleasure*. Eigenverlag, Ebikon 2018
6. Phil Freeman: *New York is Now! The New Wave of Free Jazz*. Telegraph, Brooklyn 2001
7. Robert Hodson: *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz*. Routledge, New York 2007
8. Keith Sawyer: *Group Creativity: Music, Theater, Collaboration*. Routledge, London 2003
9. Gary Peters: *Philosophy of Improvisation*. U of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 2009
10. Clarice Lispector: *Água Viva* (Portugese 1973). English: New Directions Books, N.Y. 2012
11. Guerino Mazzola et al.: *The Topos of Music III: Gestures*. Springer, Heidelberg 2018