Syllabus Musical Gesture Theory

3 credits/3 hours

MUS 5950 level

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Guerino Mazzola

**Table of Contents**

1. General Introduction to the Topic
   1. The Ontological Position of Gestures:

This is “embodiment” in the 4D cube of ontology with its 4 dimensions: reality, semiotics, communication, embodiment.

* 1. Historic and Cultural Roots of Gesture Theory
     1. Philosophy (Plato, Aristoteles, Lao Tse, Confucius, Hegel)
     2. Cultures (Hugue de St Victor, Granet, Jullien)
     3. Neurosciences (Parkinson, Alzheimer, research by Kerer et al.)
  2. Present Gesture Theories
     1. Psychological Gesture Theory (Kendon & Mac Neill)
     2. Creativity Theory (Meadow, Sawyer’s Group Flow)
     3. Gestural Embodiment: The French School

(Valery, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Alunni)

* + 1. Gestural Embodiment: Anglo-Saxon Approaches

(Mc Taggert, Smolin, Penrose, Donald, Ramachandran)

* 1. Gestures in Music and Performance Theories
     1. Adorno
     2. Wieland & Uhde
     3. Roger Sessions
     4. Hatten
     5. Lewin
     6. Klumpenhouwer
     7. Keith Sawyer (gestures in group creativity)
     8. Cecil Taylor

1. Structure Theory of Gestures
   1. The Category of Gestures (following de Saint Victor’s definition)
   2. Natural Gestures
   3. Hypergestures
      1. Definition and Existence
      2. Examples from Music (Species Counterpoint, Pianist’s Hands)
   4. The Escher Theorem
      1. Statement and Sketch of Proof
      2. Examples from Music
   5. Gestures in Topological Categories
      1. Musical Motivation for Generalization
2. Gesture Theory in Composition
   1. A Gestural Model of Tonal Modulation
   2. Singular Homology of Gestures for Species Counterpoint
3. Introduction to Gesture Theory of Performance
   1. Summary of Classical Performance Theory
   2. The Problem of Artistic Presence: Introducing Imaginary Time
4. Gesture Theory of Musical Time Construction
   1. Theories of Musical Time Constructions
      1. Valéry, Especially Dance Theory
      2. Kramer, Especially his Gestural and Vertical Times
   2. The Distributed Identity and Time Construction in Improvisation
   3. A Mathematical Model of Musical Time Construction via Gestural Diagrams
      1. Modeling the Distributed Identity by Gestural Diagrams
      2. Calculating the Projective Limit of a Gestural Diagram
      3. Embedding the Limit’s Domain in Imaginary Space-Time
5. Gestures in Performance
   1. The Ontological Transformation in Performance
   2. Performance of Score-defined Music
   3. Performance in Improvisation (Jazz, Indian Tradition)
   4. Performance in Free Music Contexts (Free Jazz, Total Improvisation)
   5. Internal Performance Gestures of Singers
6. Software for Gestural Music Management
   1. Florian Thalmann’s Big Bang Rubette in the Rubato Software Environment
      1. Tracing the Compositional Pathway
      2. Gestural Creation of Graphical Compositions (in memoriam Xenakis)

**Main References to the instructor’s publications**

Mazzola, G. & P. Cherlin: Flow, Gesture, and Spaces in Free Jazz. Springer 2009

Mazzola, G: Musical Performance. Springer 2011

Mazzola, G. et al.: The Topos of Music, vol. III: Gestures. Springer 2017

Mazzola, G. et al.: Making Musical Time. Springer 2021