

Professor Guerino Mazzola
Spring 2021: 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

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Schedule of Classes

I. Introduction		
I.1 (We Jan 20)	Overview	
I.2 (Fr Jan 22)	What is free jazz?	The musical, social, and political origins of the movement
I.3 (Mo Jan 25)	What is free jazz?	Negative characterizations: what free jazz is not
I.4 (We Jan 27)	What is free jazz?	A provisional positive characterization
II. Getting off ground		
II.1 (Fr Jan 29)	Jazz in transition	Archie Shepp: Mama Too Tight, Live in Donau-Eschingen
II.2 (Mo Feb 01)	Jazz in transition	John Coltrane: Giant Steps, A Love Supreme, and DVD
II.3 (We Feb 03)	Jazz in transition	Cecil Taylor: the Complete Candid Recordings
II.4 (Fr Feb 05)	Jazz in transition	Bill Evans: Autumn Leaves
III. The landscape of free jazz		
III.1 (Mo Feb 08)	Out of this world	Sun Ra. Space is the Place DVD
III.2 (We Feb 10)	Out of this world	John Coltrane: Om, Meditations
III.3 (Fr Feb 12)	Out of this world	The Art Ensemble: Fanfare of the Warriors
III.4 (Mo Feb 15)	The art of collaboration	Setting up the conceptual framework
III.5 (We Feb 17)	The art of now	First thoughts about the improviser's space-time
IV. Three collaborative pillars		
IV.1 (Fr Feb 19)	The space of free jazz	Ornette Coleman: Free Jazz
IV.2 (Mo Feb 22)	The space of free jazz	John Coltrane: Ascension
IV.3 (We Feb 24)	The space of free jazz	Cecil Taylor: Unit Structures
IV.4 (Fr Feb 26)	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 01)	Gestural creativity	Cecil Taylor: Burning Spears DVD
V.8 (We Mar 03)	Gestural creativity	Cecil Taylor: Silent Dance DVD
V.9 (Fr Mar 05)	Gestural creativity	Dance and Gesture: Rebecca Lazier's "Vanishing"
V.10 (Mo Mar 08)	Gestural creativity	Geisser-Mazzola-Maneri-Fields: Chronotomy
V.11 (We Mar 10)	Gestural creativity	Making music—thinking in music
V.12 (Fr Mar 12)	The meaning of group flow	Miles Davis: Bitches Brew
V.13 (Mo Mar 15)	The meaning of group flow	Miles Davis: On the Corner I
V.14 (We Mar 17)	The meaning of group flow	Archie Shepp: Coral Rock
V.15 (Fr Mar 19)	The meaning of group flow	Cecil Taylor and Thurman Barker
V.16 (Mo Mar 22)	The meaning of group flow	Geisser-Mazzola-Onuma: Dancing the Body of Time

V.17 (We Mar 24)	The meaning of group flow	Complex Time
V.18 (Fr Mar 26)	The meaning of group flow	Geisser-Mazzola-Onuma: Imaginary Time
V.19 (Mo Mar 29)	The meaning of group flow	John Coltrane: Leo
V.20 (We Mar 31)	The meaning of group flow	The Art Ensemble: Concert DVD
V.20 (Fr Apr 02)	The meaning of group flow	Archie Shepp: Coral Rock/Fellini: Satyricon

Spring Break Apr. 05 – Apr. 09

First paper due April 12

V.21 (Mo Apr 12)	The presence problem	Clarice Lispector: Água Viva
V.22 (We Apr 14)	Balanced Dancing Presence	Second thoughts about the improviser's space-time
V.23 (Fr Apr 16)	Balanced Dancing Presence	The Artist's Imaginary Time I
V.24 (Mo Apr 19)	Balanced Dancing Presence	The Artist's Imaginary Time II
V.25 (We Apr 21)	Teaching Free Jazz	Final Discussion
V.26 (Fr Apr 23)	Teaching Free Jazz	Final Discussion

Second paper due April 23

V.27 (Mo Apr 26)	Future Free Jazz	Final Discussion
V.27 (Mo Apr 28)	Future Free Jazz	Final Discussion
V.27 (Mo Apr 30)	Future Free Jazz	Final Discussion
V.27 (Mo May 03)	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 Wilmer: *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