

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
 - 1.1. The Ontological Position of Gestures:
This is “embodiment” in the 4D cube of ontology with its 4 dimensions: reality, semiotics, communication, embodiment.
 - 1.2. Historic and Cultural Roots of Gesture Theory
 - 1.2.1. Philosophy (Plato, Aristoteles, Lao Tse, Confucius, Hegel)
 - 1.2.2. Cultures (Hugue de St Victor, Granet, Jullien)
 - 1.2.3. Neurosciences (Parkinson, Alzheimer, research by Kerer et al.)
 - 1.3. Present Gesture Theories
 - 1.3.1. Psychological Gesture Theory (Kendon & Mac Neill)
 - 1.3.2. Creativity Theory (Meadow, Sawyer’s Group Flow)
 - 1.3.3. Gestural Embodiment: The French School
(Valery, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Alunni)
 - 1.3.4. Gestural Embodiment: Anglo-Saxon Approaches
(Mc Taggart, Smolin, Penrose, Donald, Ramachandran)
 - 1.4. Gestures in Music and Performance Theories
 - 1.4.1. Adorno
 - 1.4.2. Wieland & Uhde
 - 1.4.3. Roger Sessions
 - 1.4.4. Hatten
 - 1.4.5. Lewin
 - 1.4.6. Klumpenhouwer
 - 1.4.7. Keith Sawyer (gestures in group creativity)
 - 1.4.8. Cecil Taylor
2. Structure Theory of Gestures
 - 2.1. The Category of Gestures (following de Saint Victor’s definition)
 - 2.2. Natural Gestures
 - 2.3. Hypergestures
 - 2.3.1. Definition and Existence
 - 2.3.2. Examples from Music (Species Counterpoint, Pianist’s Hands)
 - 2.4. The Escher Theorem
 - 2.4.1. Statement and Sketch of Proof

- 2.4.2. Examples from Music
- 2.5. Gestures in Topological Categories
 - 2.5.1. Musical Motivation for Generalization
- 3. Gesture Theory in Composition
 - 3.1. A Gestural Model of Tonal Modulation
 - 3.2. Singular Homology of Gestures for Species Counterpoint
- 4. Introduction to Gesture Theory of Performance
 - 4.1. Summary of Classical Performance Theory
 - 4.2. The Problem of Artistic Presence: Introducing Imaginary Time
- 5. Gesture Theory of Musical Time Construction
 - 5.1. Theories of Musical Time Constructions
 - 5.1.1. Valéry, Especially Dance Theory
 - 5.1.2. Kramer, Especially his Gestural and Vertical Times
 - 5.2. The Distributed Identity and Time Construction in Improvisation
 - 5.3. A Mathematical Model of Musical Time Construction via Gestural Diagrams
 - 5.3.1. Modeling the Distributed Identity by Gestural Diagrams
 - 5.3.2. Calculating the Projective Limit of a Gestural Diagram
 - 5.3.3. Embedding the Limit's Domain in Imaginary Space-Time
- 6. Gestures in Performance
 - 6.1. The Ontological Transformation in Performance
 - 6.2. Performance of Score-defined Music
 - 6.3. Performance in Improvisation (Jazz, Indian Tradition)
 - 6.4. Performance in Free Music Contexts (Free Jazz, Total Improvisation)
 - 6.5. Internal Performance Gestures of Singers
- 7. Software for Gestural Music Management
 - 7.1. Florian Thalmann's Big Bang Rubette in the Rubato Software Environment
 - 7.1.1. Tracing the Compositional Pathway

7.1.2. 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