

Ligeti

"Metamorphoses of Musical Form"

- understanding music history as a kind of organic process
 - technical evolution spurred by demands placed upon composers by their materials
 - specifically, the expansion of serialism from pitch, to all parameters, to form
- describing the evolution of serialism as a weakening of pitch ordering
 - through superposition of series into bundles (as in *Structures 1a*)
 - the use of series defined primarily by interval content rather than melodic structure (incl. chromatic scales and other "trivial" structures)
 - subservience of series to higher-level controls (e.g. registral needs in *Gruppen*)
 - abandoning intervallic structuring for control of density, register, and "weave"
- the serial situation as a high degree of "permeability": layering and juxtaposition of textures
 - possibility of multi-temporality (as in *Zeitmasse*)
 - forms defined by layers and juxtaposition (esp. in tape music but also *Gruppen* etc.)
 - and a parallel situation (even more extreme) in Cage's music
- all resulting in a "flattening" or "levelling-out" of form.... entropic/static in nature
- against which Ligeti prescribes serial organization of high-level form
 - coupled with more specific types of local determinations
 - "desired characters... worked out by postulating or avoiding certain specific constellations"
- note the footnoted critique of Boulez's "Alea" article
 - "no genuine freedom of interpretation, simply a manifold ossia form...."

micropolyphony as Ligeti's particular solution

- the serial thread or bundle reinvented as continuously mobile texture
 - (contrast with Penderecki's static clusters and textural blocks)
- canon as a compositional device rather than a perceptible feature
 - "collapsing register" section of *Atmospheres* (from four octaves to four semitones)
 - canonic permeation in *Lontano*
 - Melodien* and after....

Holliger and canon in the *Scardanelli-Zyklus*

- a highly rationalized form used to irrational ends
 - (as a reflection of Hölderlin's "Scardanelli" persona)
- Sommer III: three statements of a seven-voice prolation canon
 - (where the tempi are defined by the singer's individual heart rates)
 - staccato / semitones
 - non staccato / quarter-tones
 - tenuto / eighth-tones
- Sommer I: similar prolation technique (six to eight voices)
 - pitches eliminated gradually, leaving only silent lip motions
- Sommer II: similar pitch compression (triple canon repeated as quarter- and then eighth-tones)
- Winter I: "tonal negative" of *Komm, o Tod, du Schlafes Bruder*
 - notes of the original piece become rests (filled in by spoken recitations of the Scardanelli text)
- Winter III: four-voice canon built on overtones of a "C" harmonic series
 - each canonic part consists of close-position triads
 - (= a deliberately perverse clash between the spectral and the tonal)

Frühling I: root-position triads with unusual vocal techniques

singing with near-empty lungs

inhaled singing

declamation through closed mouths

singing with a "tight throat"

Common Lisp material for this class

algorithmic transformation of pre-existing material as in the "tonal negative" of Winter I?

(and intervallic translations in Sommer III)

parsing and modifying lists....

preview: collaborative realization

reading: Pritchett

listening: Cage, Cardew, Sharp, Freeman

next assignment: canon (construed broadly -- a set of rules relating one voice to another....)