

Grieg Academy Composition Seminar **The Production and Perception of Musical Time and Memory**

Instructor: Dr. Dániel Péter Biró (dpbiro@uib.no)
John Lunds plasse 3
Seminar Room (ground floor)
Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:30

This weekly seminar is meant for all composition students at the Grieg Academy. The seminar will examine how compositions and musical experiences affect listeners' perceptions of musical time and musical memory and how time and memory, in turn, affect the production process of a given piece of music. Questions of musical time will be the main focus of the seminar. Each student will lead a discussion concerning a work or a part of a work, concentrating on temporal aspects. For example, a student might choose to analyze aspects of harmonic reoccurrence, larger formal strategies of a give work, or relationships between instrumentation and form in a particular composition. Although the seminar will concentrate on musical analysis, there will be compositional exercises, which will be performed and discussed in class. Additional readings in the fields of literature, art, architecture and history will help to achieve a deeper and more holistic understanding of the works studied.

Each student will do one individual and one group presentation in the course of the semester, to be discussed with the professor. In addition, students will be assigned certain questions for each piece. These questions should deal with various issues of temporality and are due five days prior to your presentation. Please prepare detailed examples and have photocopied examples for all at the beginning of class.

Course Policies

- 1) Students are expected to attend all meetings regularly and punctually.
- 2) Please always bring music paper (in notebook form) and a notebook with you.
- 3) Reading and listening assignments should be completed before the relevant class.
Success in the course is directly related to regular attendance and timely completion of all requirements.
- 4) Assignments are to be submitted in-class on the due date.
- 5) Please refer to university guidelines about sources and citations. See: <https://www.uib.no/en/education/49058/use-sources-written-work>
- 6) Are you a student with a learning disability, ADHD, mental health issue or long-term recurring physical or sensory disability? Do you have chronic health issues? Suggestion: students with special needs should register with the Division of Student Affairs and coordinate accommodations with the supervisor: <https://www.uib.no/en/sa/48887/services-students-disabilities>
- 7) Respectful, honest and open communication is expected to facilitate the successful completion of the course.
- 8) Some changes in course content and schedule may occur.

Evaluation is as follows:

50%: Participation

50%: Presentations

Part One: Franz Schubert - *String Quartet in G Major D 887* and Dániel Péter Biró *Lizkor Velishkoach (To Remember and to Forget)*

How are sections of trajectory development (relating to sonata form), as well as (relative) stasis or stability (sections of variation) presented? Wherein lies the inter-connection of hierarchies based on various types of *repetition*, *variation* and *reference* within the movement? How does *Lizkor VeLiskoach* revisit “lost time” through the use of musical citations?

Composition Exercise #1

Readings:

Walter Frisch, *You Must Remember This Memory and Structure in Schubert's String Quartet in G Major, D887*

Carl Dahlhaus, *Sonata Form in Schubert the first Movement of the G Major String Quartet op. 161.*

T.W. Adorno, *Schubert* (either in original German or translation by D.P. Biró)

Dániel Péter Biró, “Remembering and Forgetting *Lizkor VeLiskoach* for String Quartet, after Schubert,” *Edition Circuit*, Winter 2007.

Part Two – Memory and Time in the Works of Morton Feldman, Ursula Mamlok and Alwynne Pritchard

Morton Feldman – *Rothko Chapel*

Morton Feldman – *For Bunita Marcus*

Ursula Mamlok – *Panta Rhei*

Alwynne Pritchard – *Invisible Cities*

Analyze how pitches in register relate to pitch class sets in Feldman's work. How is rhythm and duration employed to achieve a new sense of time? How does Feldman use memory as a compositional tool (refer to Feldman's Essays)? How does transformation play a central role in the work of Ursula Mamlok and how does this create a context for the listener to remember her music material? How does the foregrounding of specific musical parameters affect the structuring and perception of time in Alwynne Pritchard's *Invisible Cities*?

Composition Exercise #2

Readings: Henri Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire; Essai sur la Relation du Corps à l'Esprit*
Morton Feldman, *Essays*

Daniel Péter Biró, *Slowly Watching Memory: Morton Feldman's Rothko Chapel*

Joseph N. Straus, “Ursula Mamlok, *Panta Rhei*, Third Movement (1981)”

Part Three - The Music Outside – Musical Memory as Material Object

Gustav Mahler – *Symphony no. 2 (movement 3)*

Luciano Berio – *Sinfonia (movement 3)*

Robert Schumann – *Symphony no. 2, Dichterliebe (Excerpts)*

Pauline Oliveros – *Bye, Bye Butterfly*

Rebecka Sofia Ahvenniemi – *Opera Trailer: Beyoncé and Beyond*

Analyze aspects of cyclical and teleological development in Schumann. Compare the first and fourth movements. How does a larger recapitulation occur? How does Schumann employ elements of pastiche in the fourth movement? Look at how form differs from traditional sonata form. How does Mahler refer to time “inside” and “outside” the symphony? Where are there points of coherence and incoherence in terms of periodicity, citation, subjectivity and objectivity in the works of Mahler? How does Berio employ citation and thereby re-contextualize and objectify Mahler's own use of citation? How does Pauline Oliveros combine citation and noise to create a multi-layered sense of time? How does Rebecka Sofia Ahvenniemi employ the format of the trailer to re-contextualize the genre of the opera?

Readings:

Norbert Elias, *A Small Essay on Time*

Carlo Rovelli, *Reality is Not What it Seems*

T.W. Adorno, *Mahler: a Musical Physiognomy*

Alan Janik, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (excerpts from novel)

Rebecka Ahvenniemi, "Finnes det et Male Gaze i musikken?"

Part Four- Radical Concepts of Memory and Form in String Quartets of Beethoven and Lachenmann

Ludwig van Beethoven – *Grosse Fugue*

Helmut Lachenmann – *Gran Torso* and *Reigen Seliger Geister*

Examine how memory functions in terms of the form. When does Beethoven present his production process to the listener? How does the introduction affect our perception of the rest of the composition? How does Lachenmann's temporal form in *Gran Torso* relate to the form in Beethoven's *Grosse Fugue*?

Composition Exercise #3**Readings:**

Daniel Chua, *The "Galitzin" Quartets of Beethoven*

Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven - Approaches to his Music*

Helmut Lachenmann, *Musik als Existentielle Erfahrung*

Robert Altman, *Short Cuts* (Film)

Part Five - Temporality in African Music

This section will examine how time and rhythm function in several African music traditions. Simha Arom's theories of polyrhythms, based on his analysis and transcriptions of Aka pygmy and banda linda rituals, will be studied in detail. The concept of timelines in African music, as discussed by Kofi Agawu, will be examined from a variety of perspectives.

Readings:

Simha Arom, "The Use of Play-Back Techniques in the Study of Oral Polyphonies."

Structuration du temps dans les musiques d'Afrique centrale: periodicite, metre, rythmique et polyrythmie

Kofi Agawu, "The Invention of African Rhythm."

Part Six – Constructing Time Anew: Memory as a Compositional Tool

Leos Janáček – *String Quartet #2 (Intimate Letters)*

Giacinto Scelsi – *4 Pezzi, Anahit*

Luigi Nono – *Fragmente, Stille, an Diotima*

Gerard Grisey – *Vortex Temporum, Prologue*

Compare and contrast how silence is employed and structured in all compositions as well as how silence affects a listener's perception of memory. How does Janáček's use of motivic deconstruction affect the listener's perception? Analyze how pitches in register relate pitch class sets in Feldman. Examine how Nono utilizes serial techniques to structure silence. How do larger and smaller patterns exist in dialogue and overlap in the works of Grisey? How does this affect the listener's perception of the form of these works? How does harmony function in the world of each of these composers? What is the connection between proportion and harmony in the work of Grisey?

Composition Exercise #4**Readings:**

Hermann Spree, *Versuch zur Nonos Fragment-Stille, An Diotima*

B.A. Zimmermann, *Interval und Zeit*

Karlheinz Stockhausen, *As Time Passes*

Jean Luc Hervé, *Dans le vertige de la durée: Vortex temporum de Gérard Grisey.*

Part Seven – Deconstructing Cultural Memory and Space

Anton Webern – *Second Kantata, Symphonie op. 21*

György Kurtág – *Officium Breve, Quasi Una Fantasia, Stele*

Galina Ustvolskaya – *Piano Sonatas*

Vera Frenkel – *Transit Bar*

Sigurd Fisher Olsen – *New work for music theatre*

How does each of these composers and artists re-contextualize their musical and artistic material? How does each of them employ and deconstruct notions of the historical functionality of instruments and instrumentation. How does this affect the form for perception? How does Kurtág create musical space? How does Kurtág's musical space respond to material, regional and historical space? How does gesture and movement define the space of musical memory in the work of Ustvolskaya? How does Vera Frenkel create a questioning of memory and identity through the creation of an alienated cultural space? How does Sigurd Fisher Olsen create a new context for music theatre through a collective, interactive working process?

Composition Exercise #5

Readings:

Katherine Bailey, *Webern's op. 21: Creativity in Tradition*

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

Daniel Libeskind, *Jewish Museum Berlin: Between the Lines*

Judit Kele, *The Matchstick Man (Film)*

Imre Kertész, *Fatelessness* (novel)

BT Ruviaro, "Ustvolskaya's Sixth Piano Sonata"

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/41d6/dd798f5bcbbd0e612091572998faf5e301c7.pdf>