

Grieg Academy Composition Seminar Interactive Creation/Performance of New Music Spring Term 2019

Instructor: Dániel Péter Biró (dpbiro@uib.no)

Class meets on Wednesdays 14:00 – 17:00 in Room 206 (Grieg Academy Main Building)

Course Description: Seminar/workshop in contemporary performance and composition. Will be taught in two simultaneous sections for Performance students and Composition students.

Course Outline

Participants will write new works for small mixed ensembles, concentrating on aspects of orchestration and research of instrumentation. This research will be determined by the particular performance resources, as participants will work together on all the stages of creating and rehearsing the works for the performance on May 22, 2019. Students will research the techniques, methodology and culture of contemporary music orchestration, composition and performance. Training in contemporary orchestration, notation and performance practices, extended techniques, instrumentation, conducting techniques, communication skills, concert production, and technical resources. The final project will be a concert of new music produced and performed by the seminar members. Some parts of the seminar will be of theoretical nature to assist in the practical project-based assignments/compositions. For contemporary orchestration the Bärenreiter book series "*The Techniques of...*" has been ordered for the course. These books will come in useful, as it is intended that students discover the possibilities of voices and instruments through score analysis, composition and performance of class exercises and final pieces. A separate bibliography for the class will be given out on a weekly basis.

Course Policies

- 1) Students are expected to attend all meetings regularly and punctually and are expected to attend the whole class for the entire duration (14:00 – 17:00). If you cannot make a class, please let me know ahead of time.
- 2) In the weeks where there is no seminar you are expected to rehearse with your colleagues in room 206. A sign-up sheet will be posted. If a rehearsal is scheduled members of the given group are all required to attend. A minimum of bi-weekly practice, study and rehearsal time is 2 hours and a maximum is 6 hours. Any abuses of rehearsal time (too much or too little) should be reported to the instructor.
- 3) Please always bring music paper (in notebook form) and a notebook with you.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Active participation is crucial to the class. You are expected to "explore the unknown" while collaborating in a collegial manner.
- 6) Assignments are to be submitted either to the instructor or in class on the due date. If not otherwise specified composers usually must give all material to the colleague-performers at least 7 days prior to the next class. Compositions that are not submitted on time will not be played.
- 7) Assignments are to be submitted in-class on the due date.
- 8) Please refer to university guidelines about sources and citations. See: <https://www.uib.no/en/education/49058/use-sources-written-work>

- 9) 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>
- 10) Respectful, honest and open communication is expected to facilitate the successful completion of the course.
- 11) This course sometimes deals with controversial issues (of, for instance, political, social, religious and gender issues). By taking this course you are agreeing to study, write about and discuss these issues.
- 12) Some changes in course content and schedule may occur.

Evaluation is as follows:

25%: Participation

25%: Presentations

50%: Final Concert

Final Project: Participants are to integrate all of the work done in the class into the final concert. The contents of this concert will be determined in the course of the semester. Performers will be graded on their performance in the concert. Participants will be graded on their ability to collaborate with one-another, present and realize their ideas in words, notation, parts etc.

Timeline

Class 1: Introductory meeting.

Creating a unique Music Language through understanding the instrument. Pre-compositional and pre-performance plans. Instruments as compositional material. Extending instrumental, compositional and interpretive parameters. Learning from World Music.

Viewing: *Noh Theater*

Exercise 1: Pre-conditions for creating an individual Musical Language

Class 2: Discovering the Musical Instrument

The Archeology of Instrumental and Vocal Performance: The Composer's workshop.

Play Through **Exercise 1:** (2-3 composers)

Extended techniques for instruments

Listening/Analysis: Helmut Lachenmann: *Serynade, Gran Torso, Salut für Caldwell*

Suzanne Farrin: *uscirmi di braccia*

Marta Gentilluci: *...tutt'occhi*

John Cage: Works for Prepared Piano

Galina Ustvolskaya: *Piano Sonata no. 6*

Readings: Ian Pace: "Lachenmann's Serynade – Issues for Performer and Listener"

Helmut Lachenmann: "On my Second String Quartet Reigen Seliger Geister"

Class 3: Rhythm

Interpreting Simple and Complex Rhythms and relationships between rhythm and temporal perception

Listening: György Kurtág: *Jatékok, Quasi Una Fantasia*

Chaya Czernowin: *Dam Sheon Hachol*

Brian Ferneyhough: *4th String Quartet*

Annesley Black: *Rooms*

Elliott Carter: *Changes*

Brian Ferneyhough: *Bone Alphabet*

Reading: Arthur Weisberg: *Performing Twentieth-Century Music: a Handbook for Conductors and Instrumentalists*

Brian Ferneyhough: "The Tactility of Time" in *Collected Writings*

Steven Schick: "Learning Bone Alphabet" in *The Percussionist's Art*

Exercise 2: Rhythmic Simplicity/Complexity/Orchestration Density Exercise

Class 4: Microtonality

Play and discuss **Exercise 2** (2-3 Composers)

Creating a "complex instrument" and working with sound types. Interpreting the Microtonality of spectral music.

Listening/Analysis:

Gérard Grisey: *Prologue*

Tristan Murail: *Tellur*

James Tenney: *Critical Band, Koan*

Traditional Hungarian laments, Palestinian, Indian, Chinese, Aka Pygmy music

Readings: Gérard Grisey: "Tempus ex Machina"

Robert Wannamaker: "The Spectral Music of James Tenney"

D.P. Biró and P. Van Kranenburg, "A Computational Re-Examination Of Bela Bartok's Transcription Methods as Exemplified by his Sirato Transcriptions of 1937/1938 and their Relevance for Contemporary Methods of Computational Transcription of Qur'an Recitation." in Holzapfel, A. (ed.). *Proceedings of the Fourth International Workshop on Folk Music Analysis (FMA2014)*. Istanbul : Bogazaci University, 2014, pp. 70-77.

Class 5: The Virtuosity of Berio's Sequenzas

Composers basic plans for Final Projects due!

Improvisation, Musical Theater, expression and virtuosity.

Exercise 3: Composition as virtuosic situational drama between instruments (2-3 Composers, 4 instruments).

Listening/Analysis:

Luciano Berio: *Sequenzas*

Readings: Nancy Uscher: "Luciano Berio, Sequenza VI for Solo Viola: Performance Practices." Janet K. Halfyard: "Berio's Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis"

Class 6: Integrating Creation and Performance with Technology

Electronic performance practice - creating and extending the musical instrument with electronics

Readings/Listening:

Luigi Nono: *Post-Praeludium per Donau*

Marc Andre: *Hoc*

Dániel Péter Biró: *Hadavar (The Word)*

Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Frank Cox, and Wolfram Schurig (eds.), *New Music and Aesthetics in the 21st Century – Volume 4*

Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Frank Cox, and Wolfram Schurig (eds.), *New Music and Aesthetics in the 21st Century – Volume 8*

Play Through **Exercise 3**

Viewing: The Matchstick Man (DVD about the composer/pianist György Kurtág)

April 30, 2019: Composers basic outline for final projects due

May 10, 2019: Planning meeting for Concert

Wednesday, May 24, 2019: 12:00: Final Concert in Grieghallen Foyer