

Music 150x

Take Home Essay Quiz

Given: Friday, March 9, 2012

Due, in class, on paper: Wednesday, March 14

Each answer should be a page or two. Keep your essays to the point.

Answer 3 questions total (2 from the reading, 1 from the listening)

Reading (answer 2 out of the following 4 questions)

1) Drawing upon your readings, discuss the influence of John Cage and Harry Partch on the music and thought of James Tenney. Cite specific musical examples from the listening and/or score reserves. Tenney's short essay, "About Diapason" is a good starting point.

2) Summarize the hypothesis of temporal gestalt perception posited by James Tenney in *Meta + Hodos* and elaborated by he and Polansky in "Temporal Gestalt Perception in Music." Next apply the concepts of this theory to an analysis of Cage's "Lecture on Nothing" taking into account the perceptual aspects of Cage's text and typography.

3) Respond to Simha Arom's statement in "Prolegomena to a Biomusicology" that "...all music...implies an act of intuitional construction, in other words, an act of creation that actualizes an intention." How does the idea of "intentionality" resonate with the eclectic group of compositional approaches we've studied? How are Cage's, Partch's and Cowell's musical intentions different? How are they alike?

4) *(answer both parts if this question is selected)*

a) Discuss some of what you feel are the most interesting compositional ideas in Christian Wolff's *Exercises*, using the score for specific examples (using examples from a number of the pieces, both from the first (1–14) and the second (15–18) books).

b) Discuss your own experiences of playing them, in terms of what kinds of musical skills you had to develop, and what kinds of technical and artistic questions you felt were being explored (from the standpoint of a performer).

Listening (answer one of the two following questions)

5) Aurally analyze Lou Harrison's "Nek Chand" and Ben Johnston's "String Quartet No. 10." Compare and contrast Harrison's and Johnston's musical language drawing on each respective composers' writings (Harrison's *Music Primer* and Johnston's chapters from *Maximum Clarity*) in your response.

6) Discuss the compositional ideas of John Cage — in terms of method, material, structure, form — with respect to his *Williams Mix*, drawing from your listening to the piece and the descriptions of that piece in Pritchett's book and in Cage's letters. Compare the application of those ideas to other Cage pieces listened to (*Imaginary Landscape #4*, *Music of Changes*, any others...).