

Arts 1010
Media Studio A/V: Music
Fall 2009 (session two)

Project 2
due 12/10

Make a piece of music using your computer and some form of MIDI control and synthesis. You may use sampled sound as well, but it is not required. The goal of this project is to get you to focus on some of the structural and aesthetic considerations which go into composing music. The project, therefore, should have a clear sense of organization and structure which may be related to the sonic materials, to some abstract concept, or which may reference some political, cultural or philosophical ideas.

I will not prescribe what “form” means in this context, but will ask you to create a form which is meaningful to you. In lecture November 17 we will discuss various structural ideas for your projects. You will then write a formal proposal, due for review in your studio section on November 19, in which you will describe what you plan to do. The proposals will be critiqued in class, and may require revision and re-thinking.

The final project should be no more than 3-4 minutes long, and an mp3 file should be handed in to your studio section leader via the drop-box on the HASS server for this course. A first draft or work-in progress will be critiqued in studio section December 3, and in lecture December 8. It will be due in the final section December 10. You should also hand in a 2 page written description of your work, in MS Word or PDF formats, or hard copy.

Here are some guidelines and things to consider:

- 1) Is there something specific you want to say or express with your music? Is there some specific type of sound material which excites you? Is there some idea for a piece which just pops into your head? Try writing about it in words. Be as clear and concise as you can be.
- 2) Of the music we've listened to in this class, are there pieces or composers or styles which you've found more interesting than others? How about pieces which you hated? Make a list of each, and try to define what you do and don't like about them. Be as specific as you can be.
- 3) Have there been ideas of structure or of musical meaning in the readings and discussions which have appealed to you, or which have been absolutely repugnant to you? Explore both of these reactions: what specific things provoked them?
- 4) While you're writing and thinking, make sure you keep exploring with *ProTools*. Try out things which might reflect the ideas about what you like and don't like. Also spend some time just playing with the material without planning anything ahead of time. Make sure you save your sessions. Listening to what you've done may lead you in new, unexpected directions.

- 5) Once you've explored your musical materials, and thought and written about the questions above, give yourself time to imagine what you might do for the project: what materials, what sounds, what structure, what meaning? And how do they all relate? Don't edit yourself. Don't worry about how you will do the project. Set a period of time, maybe half an hour, to let your imagination focus on the project, and get something on paper. Repeat this exercise daily until you find something which you really want to do for the project. This will become your proposal. Try to make a score which will describe how the piece is structured and evolves over time.
- 6) Once you've got an idea of what you want to do, go back to it and ask yourself how you can do it? Do you have all the tools you need? Do you know how to use the tools to realize the project? Can you make a step by step list of how you will go about it? If you have positive answers to all of this, then you're on your way. If not, try to define what you don't know, or what you can't do, and talk to your colleagues and instructors about how to move forward. Can you adjust the idea or materials for the piece so that you can accomplish it with the tools and skills you have available? Is there some way to adjust the concept? Is there some skill or tool which you can learn which will make it possible?
- 7) As in the first project, try to give yourself a week to edit and change the project. That means having a first draft done for sections meetings on December 3, or for lecture on December 8, so that you can get a critique and still have time to go back and fix problems which become apparent in the critique.