

(1 2 / 5) ALEATORY II

1. Open Score and the Open Work

- a. What is a piece of music?
- b. Stockhausen, *Klavierstück XI*
- c. Umberto Eco, “The Poetics of the Open Work”

2. The New York School: John Cage, (Merce Cunningham), (David Tudor), Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, Christian Wolff

- a. New York School: Most important classical musical contribution (at least before minimalism) by America as considered by much of Europe.
- b. Merce Cunningham (b. 1919) — choreographer and collaborator with Cage; Created a dissociation between dance and music.
- c. David Tudor (1926–1996) — pianist in the Cage circle (also w/ Stockhausen) famed for ability to interpret these open scores. Later, electronic music composer.
- d. Finishing Cage: Graphic Scores
 - i. *TV Köln*
- e. Morton Feldman (1926–1987)
 - i. Influence of painters: Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Philip Guston.
 - ii. Graphic scores giving number of sounds and some idea of timbre and only the slightest inklings of rhythm (organized time, like Cage): *Projection series*.
 - iii. *Straits of Magellan*: time box scores
 - iv. Composing out the time box scores: works such as *De Kooning*
 - v. Focus on gesture or individual sounds rather than a whole work.
 - vi. Philosophical duration problems: *The Viola in My Life* has a grace note with a fermata!
- f. Earle Brown (1926–2002)
 - i. Alexander Calder as artistic influence

My first thoughts about making musical works in what I call a condition of mobility, and what is now called open form, were influenced by the mobiles of the American sculptor Alexander Calder. (Brown 1965).
 - ii. “December 1952” from *Folio* (1952–53)

Only “the barest suggestion for improvisation.”
 Order, relative pitch, relative duration, dynamics implied.

iii. *Available Forms I and II*: Open-form score for orchestra (1961, 1962)

g. Christian Wolff (b. 1934)

- i. Professor of Music and Classics at Dartmouth
- ii. Introduced choice of number of sounds to make in a certain period, somewhat similar to early Feldman around 1957 (senior thesis recital).
- iii. Politics. Writes, music “to stir up ... a sense of the political conditions in which we live and of how these might be changed, in the direction of democratic socialism.” Active communist still (? *c.* 1997)
- iv. *Burdocks* for 1 or more orchestras of 5 or more players (1970–71): Indeterminate rules leaving much room to improvise. Allows the “dignity” of the performer.
- v. Philosophy of sound, number of pitches.
- vi. Music in the 1980s and beyond much less abstract. Sense of disconnect with the working class.
- vii. Performance of *Burdocks* sections of time. (“About 511 pitches”; “Flying”)

3. Influence

- a. Black Mountain College (1933–1957): Gropius, de Kooning, Buckminster Fuller
- b. Fluxus and Performance Art: Alison Knowles, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik
- c. Randomness as aesthetic: Lutosławski, Hovhaness

4. Performance and discussion of compositions (continued onto Thursday?)