

COMPOSITION PROJECT #2
(proportional notation study)

1. **Pre-compositional work**—After studying the assigned repertoire for this section of the class, develop the following materials for a work for two to four players utilizing proportional (spatial) notation:

- a. Determine a pitch environment for your composition. Your pitch system may be based on scale(s), mode(s), tone row(s), pitch-class sets, etc., or some combination thereof. Be prudent in this regard: if selecting pitches from more than one source, care should be taken to ensure that your pitch material is unified in some manner.
- b. Using a variety of melodic devices—e.g., sequencing, inversion, retrograde—develop a series of short melodic lines based on the pitch material generated in (a) above.
- c. Create a series of sonorities based on the pitch material determined in (a) above. These sonorities should be selected for their coloristic qualities rather than to create a harmonic progression in the traditional sense.
- d. The melodic lines and sonorities generated in the steps above are to consist of *pitches only*; do not conceive these melodies with any *specific* rhythmic component in mind. If the temporal domain is to be considered at all, it should be represented only in general terms—indicated by relative space between note heads, or note head styles (e.g., solid note heads representing shorter durations; open note heads representing longer durations).

2. **Composition**—Once you have completed all parts of the pre-compositional phase, you may set to work on the actual composition:

- a. Timings/durations must be indicated in some manner on the score, and the total duration should be no longer than two minutes. Possible ways of representing time in proportionally notated scores will be discussed in class.
- b. Due to the nature of proportional notation, the work should be temporally flexible, even somewhat ambiguous. Avoid thinking in terms of regular rhythmic patterns and metrical groupings—do not try to force traditional patterns into this type of notation!

3. **Transcription**—Once you have completed the score as described in step 2 above, transcribe your work into standard (i.e., metered) notation, clearly indicating rhythms, meter, and tempo. It will probably be necessary to use irregular rhythmic subdivisions, mixed meters, and tempo changes to simulate the temporal fluidity of the original version.

4. **Commentary/Analysis**—Write a brief statement concerning these two versions of the work, considering the following questions:

- a. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each notational system?
- b. Which version is more effective in conveying the musical results intended?
- c. Which version do you prefer? Which version do you think performers would prefer? Why?

5. **Notation**—Due to the difficulties involved in notating spatial music with most music notation software, the original version of your work should be notated *by hand*; however, computer notation may be used for the metered transcription.

• This project will be discussed in class on **Monday, February 6**; be prepared to read the works (in the original version; not the transcriptions) in class on **Monday, February 13**.

• The project—including pre-compositional sketch, both versions of the composition, and commentary—is due in class on **Wednesday, February 15**.