

21M.260: STRAVINSKY TO THE PRESENT

Class 15: April 5

AGENDA

Warm-up: Understanding the music of *Le marteau sans maître*, Movement 5

- Timbral logic and extended techniques
- Lack of rhythmic and metric logic
- Gesture, not melody
- Why fixed register?

Boulez, Messiaen and Babbitt

- Different systems for different purposes
- Accessibility, likability, audience
- Music as research and knowledge production vs. music for an audience

Choose works for experimental/avant-garde day on Thursday.

Your revision of Paper 1 is due Thursday in class, attached to the original marked-up copy of Paper 1. Please let me know ASAP if you will not meet that deadline and need to make an alternate arrangement. It is **always** better to make a new promise (that is, a later deadline that you know you can meet) than it is to break a promise you've made by default (the assigned due date).

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WARM-UP

For this warm-up, we will listen together to the movement from *Le marteau sans maître* by Pierre Boulez. Follow along with the score, and take notes to answer each of the following questions about the musical construction of the movement.

1. What kinds of new sounds are made by the instruments (alto flute, guitar, voice, and viola), compared to what we might think of as the “default Classical tone” of those instruments?
2. Try for four or five bars to “conduct along” in your head (or tap your foot to the time signature). What do you notice about the rhythm and pulse in the phrase that might make this difficult? Why might Boulez have avoided a clear rhythm or pulse in his piece?
3. How might it help us analytically to think about the horizontal material played by each instrument as a “gesture” instead of a melody? What connotations might we avoid if we stop expecting the horizontal movement to be “melodic”? What does “gesture” imply instead?
4. If you were to transpose and number every pitch in the piece, you could account for every one of Boulez’s pitch decisions. What kind of argument could you make with that data?
5. What is at least one interesting implication of the fact that pitches in the prime series occur in a fixed register (that is, every instance of G is played at the same octave)?

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