Simultaneities and Chimeric Sound
Composing, Performing, and Perceiving Music Anti-Hierarchically

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(1) description of *non-hierarchical musical simultaneity* as a “compositional problem” and “inner-artistic” “solutions” [artistic practice as principal medium of research]

(2) expanding this “problem” by creating a “map of musical simultaneities” [artistic practice contextualized by scholarly theories and methods]

(3) feedback into compositional concepts or other areas of musical practice and theory (“replicability”)

1. Non-hierarchical Simultaneity as Compositional Problem

challenge: musical interculturality; dynamic, non-essentialist way of combining Western and East Asian instruments

→ ensemble pieces with bi-cultural instrumentation 2001-2006

Interference for piano and 8 Chinese instruments, 2001

together // apart for kayagum, taegum, saenghwang, violoncello, piano and electronics, 2001

repercussion.camouflage.report for flute/bass flute, trombone, sheng/xun, percussion and live-electronics, 2003

the wasteland of minds for sheng, zheng, Western instruments and live-electronics, 2003/2004

Glasakkord for shō, shakuhachi and Western instruments (bassclarinet (B); violin; viola; violoncello; percussion), 2006
Utz, the wasteland of minds, system of layers
The Wasteland of Minds

for 3 Chinese and 4 Western instruments and live-electronics

Utz, the wasteland of minds, p. 1
Utz, the wasteland of minds, p. 2
audio example 1

Ut, *the wasteland of minds*, bars 1-8

Wu Wei, sheng
Yeh Jiuan-Reng, zheng

ensemble on_line [PHACE Contemporary Music]
Simeon Pironkoff, conductor
KUG-based research project


theories and methods of performative listening

**four modes** of listening

1. analytical
2. holistic
3. cue-oriented
4. "presentist"

Utz, *the wasteland of minds*, bars 1-8, sonagramm + rudimentary transcription
Utz, the wasteland of minds, p. 13-15
audio example 2

Utz, *the wasteland of minds*, bars 61-72

Wu Wei, sheng
Yeh Jiuan-Reng, zheng

ensemble on_line [PHACE Contemporary Music]
Simeon Pironkoff, conductor
Utz, the wasteland of minds, b. 61-72
2. A Map of Musical Simultaneity

stream segregation

sound

sonic fusion

“form”/architectonics  
continuity/process  

time

polyphony (tonal/modal)
‘presentist’ listening

‘linear’ polyphony (post-tonal)
‘analytical’ listening

superimposition/montage

‘holistic’ listening

cue-oriented listening

sonic fusion

stream segregation
The primary law of polyphonic structure can be found in the fact that the complex of voices always appears as a unity; the multiplicity of voices never suppresses the impression of a totality into which the lines are woven and at the same time omitting a single voice would not only lead to a reduction of the complex of lines but would mean its organic distortion.

Ernst Kurth, *Der lineare Kontrapunkt*, Bern 1922, 351 (translation CU)
2. A Map of Musical Simultaneity

Selbständigkeit der Stimmen ist nicht bloß so aufzufassen, dass sie nach ihrem horizontalen Verlauf von einander nicht abhängen [...], sondern dass sie auch in harmonischer Beziehung von einander unabhängig sein sollen; d.h. [...]
a) dass sie nicht zu gleicher Zeit auf eine gemeinsame Harmonie bezogen werden müssen [...]  
c) dass sie womöglich dissonante [sic!] Zusammenklänge ergeben – sollen (als äußeres Zeichen der Unbekümmertheit)  
d) dass das Entstehen harmonischer ("registrierbarer") Folgen wie z.B. Cadenzen, oder sonst benennbarer Fundamentalschritte nicht anzustreben ist und für ihre Funktion unmaßgeblich ist. [...]  

Arnold Schonberg, Der lineare Kontrapunkt [1931, Ms.]
"form"/architectonics

sound

polyphony (tonal/modal)

cue-oriented listening

‘linear’ polyphony (post-tonal)

‘analytical’ listening

continuity/process

time

sonic fusion

stream segregation

We listen to the entirety, keeping a synoptic impression, in which singularities are distinguished from one another so that no interconnections occur that might be more important than others. [...] the music finds itself in a constant flow [...], without pausing at the instantaneous, at the ‘beautiful moments’ [...]. [...] Preferably everything composed shall be part of the formal process, nothing shall dominate [...].

Karlheinz Stockhausen,
2. A Map of Musical Simultaneity

stream segregation

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polyphony (tonal/modal)

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‘linear’ polyphony (post-tonal)

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Helmut Lachenmann
“structural sonority”
→ defined as “polyphony of ordered juxtapositions [Anordnungen]”

(Klangtypen der Neuen Musik [1963/66/93], in: Musik als existentielle Erfahrung, hrsg. von Josef Häusler, Wiesbaden 1996, 18, Translation CU)

→ posits that the “development of each element is traceable by the listener”
→ results in “a sort of montage of different structures [that] actively dispels any sense of hierarchy or priority”

(Abigail Heathcote, Liberating sounds: philosophical perspectives on the music and writings of Helmut Lachenmann, PhD dissertation, Durham University 2003, 28)

→ idea of “sound families”
audio example 3


Ensemble Modern Orchestra
Brad Lubman
"sound families":
--accelerating impulses [red]
--short impulses [blue]
--sustained pitches [green]
--pitched sounds in high register [grey]
--brass [orange]
--external objects [yellow]

etc.

Christian Utz, *Glasakkord* for *shō*, *shakuhachi* and Western instruments (bass clarinet (B); string trio; tubular bells), 2006

independent layers:

*shō* (top) and string trio (bottom)
shō

shaku-hachi

bass clarinet (B)

tub. bells

violin

viola

cello

shō shaku-hachi bass clarinet (B) tub. bells violin viola cello

Utz, Glasakkord, p. 18-19
audio example 4

Christian Utz, *Glasakkord* (2006) for *shō*, *shakuhachi*, bass clarinet, tubular bells and string trio, bars 61-72

Kō Ishikawa, *shō*
Tony Clark, *shakuhachi*

ensemble on_line [PHACE Contemporary Music]
Simeon Pironkoff, conductor
3. Consequences for Composition, Performance, and Analysis

Musical hierarchies

- Hierarchy of events in time ("horizontal" → form)
- Hierarchy of simultaneous events ("vertical" → polyphony/superimposition)
multivalent sound-time-constellations
deconstruct analytical and holistic listening
demonstrate the multiplicity of perceptual and performative approaches encoded in a complex score through performative analysis
changing, movable, transforming centres of perceptual attention
create non-hierarchies in performance
increasing and decreasing hierarchies
change a field of devastation into a force field