

POST-COMMON PRACTICE ERA MUSIC THEORY PEDAGOGY

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
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Master of Music

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by  
MELISSA MORROW

Dr. Neil Minturn, Thesis Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

POST-COMMON PRACTICE ERA MUSIC THEORY PEDAGOGY

Presented by Melissa Morrow

A candidate for the degree of Master of Music

And certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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Professor Stefan Freund

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Professor Steven Keller

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Professor Thomas McKenney

---

Professor Neil Minturn

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Professor Richard Pellegrin

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## Post-Common Practice Era Music Theory Pedagogy

Melissa Morrow

Music of the common-practice era<sup>1</sup> dominates what American music students study throughout their adolescence and into college. It is introduced to children at a young age with simplified editions of classical masterpieces and is emphasized as the basis of any student's education. At many universities first-year music students begin their academic studies with a two-year sequence of common-practice tonal theory, ear training, and piano skills. Most of these programs are taught based on variants of one codified progression of study.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the study of theory, most schools require at least a one-year survey of Western based music history. Although the history course may deal with some music after the common-practice era, the emphasis of this study is also on music written before 1900. Often the music of the post-common practice (PCP) era is taught as an obligation or as an afterthought in both history and theory classes.

For students at many schools a brief introduction at the end of the fourth semester<sup>3</sup> of the music theory sequence is the only education on the music of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries that students will receive. At the University of Missouri, students are fortunate enough to have an entire semester devoted to the study of the new compositional techniques that are used in the PCP era and to be surrounded by new music from student composers and the New Music Initiative. While two 50-minute

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<sup>1</sup> The common-practice era refers to the period from roughly 1600-1900. This encompasses the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods of music.

<sup>2</sup> This usually begins with basic skills such as building scales and intervals and moves through diatonic chord progressions and part writing. It normally concludes with the study of chromatic harmony.

<sup>3</sup> At some schools it is taught for the entire fourth or fifth semester of the theory sequence.

classes each week for one semester is by no means ideal, it does give the students a chance to gain a base knowledge of the music and composition styles of this period.

In music theory of the common-practice era there is a tradition of topics to be addressed and a series of canonical teaching pieces.<sup>4</sup> With the wider range of compositional techniques and lack of time to reflect on them, there are a lot of materials that could be included in the study PCP music. Due to the time limitations of the current “20<sup>th</sup> Century Composition Techniques” course at the University of Missouri, and in many similar classes at other universities, the wide range of topics cannot be addressed thoroughly in the time that is allotted. It is then the job of each teacher and textbook to determine which subjects are the most important and to what depth each one is taught. In making these decisions it is important to consider that the students need to have a working knowledge of the materials that educated musicians are expected to know, like set theory and twelve-tone serialism, in order to respond to PCP music without relying on stretching the boundaries of tonal analysis, because that alters the integrity of the music and the analysis system. In addition, students should learn the tools and applications needed to intelligently respond to the PCP music they encounter in their careers as teachers and performers.

I read and reviewed the following five commonly used books (and an accompanying anthology) that address aspects of PCP music to research commonly taught techniques and organizational schemes that are used in PCP era courses. With the help of these texts, I have created an improved and more comprehensive table of contents for the “20<sup>th</sup> Century Composition Techniques” packet. All of these books deal with PCP

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<sup>4</sup> These include Bach Chorales, Schubert Songs, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven Piano Sonatas and String Quartets, among others.

music theory, but one of them is primarily a history text and another is a sight singing method. Within each of the theory books the authors also incorporate some history, sight singing, and composition as it is relevant to the material.

***Twentieth-Century Music* by Robert Morgan  
(New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991).**

***Anthology of Twentieth-Century Music* by Robert Morgan  
(New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992).**

Robert Morgan's *Twentieth-Century Music* and *Anthology of Twentieth-Century Music* provide a historical and theoretical survey of Western art music after 1900. In the preface to this survey, Morgan claims to ignore conservative musicians and focuses on avant-garde composers and musical issues. *Twentieth-Century Music* is primarily a history book; it is part of the Norton "Introduction to Music History" series. Morgan's philosophy is that one cannot attend to the history of music without also dealing with the theory behind it. For example, the historical significance of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* is impacted by the revolutionary rhythmic and harmonic elements.

*Twentieth-Century Music* is set up in three sections: 1900-World War I, Between the Wars, and after World War II. Morgan argues that the pieces and composers studied in each section all have commonalities. The music theory issues are combined with the historical survey, rather than being addressed as separate issues.<sup>5</sup> For instance, Morgan explains the basic theoretical concepts relating to twelve-tone composition in correlation with the account of the movement. Early in the book he discusses theory with specific

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<sup>5</sup> Since this book was published before the anthology it does not reference it. A student would have to go to the anthology to determine how the two books relate.

concept and detail.<sup>6</sup> As the content becomes more abstract in later stages of the book Morgan moves away from that approach.<sup>7</sup>

The *Anthology of Twentieth-Century Music*, published one year later, compiles twenty-nine works from twenty-four different composers that are featured in the book. The pieces range from 1903-83 and cover a variety of genres and mediums that are arranged chronologically by the composers's date of birth. Each of these complete works, or movements, is accompanied by an analytical essay. These essays are short, most lasting only a few pages, and cover analytical aspects of music theory, giving the readers a basic knowledge of how the compositions work. While these essays are easy to read, informative, and emphasize form and neo-classical elements, they assume a working knowledge of set theory and twelve-tone serialism.<sup>8</sup>

The combination of these two books would give students a wide base of knowledge regarding twentieth-century music, but they would not teach PCP era music theory in the traditional sense. Morgan writes in his preface that he imagines that the anthology would be used in a class that focuses on the history and literature of the twentieth-century, presumably using the book as well. For this to be used for a music theory class there would have to be additional materials that teach the basics of set theory, twelve tone serialism, and other standard techniques. Without these materials the teacher would be entirely responsible for conveying the material and creating exercises. Although Morgan's texts are not comprehensive, the material in the essays would be

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, Morgan explains how twelve-tone rows are realized.

<sup>7</sup> When dealing with more abstract topics like John Cage and indeterminacy, Morgan uses less specific theoretical references.

<sup>8</sup> The essays make no attempt at teaching PCP music theory, rather, they allow the reader to see applications of material they already have and understanding of.

useful as an additional source to another textbook. These could easily be used in combination with the books by Joseph Straus, Stefan Kostka, or Miguel Roig-Francolí to give students a well-rounded concept of the music of the PCP era.

***Sight Singing: Pitch, Interval, Rhythm*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. by Samuel Adler  
(New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997).**

*Sight Singing* is a textbook intended to teach students how to sight read all music, tonal or otherwise. The method is meant to be remedial, but the student is expected to progress to complete proficiency by systematically learning to sing each interval within an octave. Adler does this by combining the practice of isolated intervals, non-rhythmic, and rhythmic melodies. In addition to being used in an ear training course, this book could also be used by choral teachers for warm-up exercises. This book is not based on traditional tonal theory, and although Adler does not offer it as a specialized text for a PCP sight singing course, I believe that would be the best use for this.

Adler's approach teaches students each interval systematically in Part One of the text, while Part Two addresses rhythmic study separately.<sup>9</sup> Each chapter of Part One includes a variety of preparatory and non-rhythmic exercises, excerpts from literature, and newly composed melodies. All of these exercises focus on the new interval that is featured in the chapter and they also incorporate an ongoing review of all previous intervals. Internally, each chapter gets progressively more difficult.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Although Adler suggests combining the rhythmic and melodic studies.

<sup>10</sup> The easiest material will be the isolated intervals at the beginning of the chapter, while the most difficult material will be the newly composed melodies at the end.

In the first edition<sup>11</sup> of this book, Adler began by teaching the interval of the second and proceeded with the third, fourth, etc. The second edition is organized slightly differently because the perfect fourth and fifth are taught before the third and the most difficult intervals are discussed last. He begins by teaching a minimal amount of tonal theory, with written exercises, as a basis for the study of the major and minor second. In the first chapter he gives an extensive chart of chords, included in this is a brief mention of the augmented sixth chord. If you were using this in a freshman ear training course, many students would not be familiar with that chord at this point.

In Part Two, Adler systematically addresses the study of rhythm. The chapters in this section begin by addressing simple meter and slowly increase in difficulty to include compound meters and irregular divisions of the beat. He uses this opportunity to introduce the conducting patterns for each of the meters addressed; this skill is to be used with all metered exercises. Adler also goes through a thorough explanation of rhythm, meter, and how they work together. In the rhythmic study, Adler moves from the extremely practical, such as simple non-changing meters, to obscure rhythmic patterns, syncopations, changing meters, and metric modulations that are probably impractical for most students.

The last section, Part Three, does not introduce new content and is more of an addendum to be used to supplement the previous two sections. The melodies and ensemble pieces included in this section are also arranged in order of difficulty. These could be used as additional practice or as material for dictation. An attractive feature of this section is the last chapter, which includes ensemble pieces that can be performed by the class. This text is very thorough and ambitious, but I feel that it would be too difficult

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<sup>11</sup> Published in 1979.

for most music students because it requires them to defy the traditional tonal idioms that they have been surrounded with from a young age.

***Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, third edition by Joseph N. Straus (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2005).**

This book is intended as an introductory text to a PCP music theory course for undergraduate music majors, who have already completed an extensive sequence in tonal theory. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* is a concentrated study on the theoretical analysis of the “classical” pre-war repertoire of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, Berg, and Webern.<sup>12</sup> While the focus is on the music of these composers, he has also included references to Adams, Britten, Cage, and others in the text, although they are not analyzed in detail. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* focuses on the techniques of set theory and twelve-tone theory. The author spends a majority of the book on in-depth discussion and analysis of these topics, while briefly addressing other topics such as pitch centricity, triadic post-tonality, and referential collections.

*Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* contains six chapters, the first three covering topics related to set theory, one on pitch centricity, and two chapters on twelve-tone music. Each chapter begins with a detailed explanation of the theoretical concept. This is usually broken down into several smaller topics, generally given just a few pages each. At the end of each chapter Straus provides a detailed analytical discussion of two pieces that demonstrate the topics. These take the format of passive descriptions of Straus’s analysis of the compositions. While these are generally helpful and simple to understand, the analysis is lengthy, and does not engage the reader. Throughout these explanations

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<sup>12</sup> Straus makes no attempt at writing a comprehensive study in PCP music because there is too much content to be covered in one book.

the students are never asked to think about the pieces beyond what Straus has laid out. The analyses would be more successful if they included some leading questions or required the reader to participate in preparatory work.

The text provides a sizable amount of exercises after each chapter that could be used either for homework or for in-class work. While these take several different formats, the largest portion of these are the “Theory” exercises. These are very straightforward and test the basic knowledge of the material.<sup>13,14</sup> A combination of these assignments will make sure that students can apply their knowledge to a wide range of situations, but even with the successful completion of this material they would not have the opportunity to do any abstract thinking. This type of thought could be achieved by allowing students to create their own readings of relevant pieces and writing about their analysis.<sup>15</sup>

While *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* does an excellent job of exploring set theory and twelve-tone composition, it does not attempt to address other topics in the PCP period, such as contour theory or sound mass composition. Unless the course is specifically focused on set theory and twelve-tone composition, other supplemental materials would be needed throughout the class. This is not a problem, but the book is rather expensive by itself and would likely require students to buy or locate full scores to many of the pieces addressed throughout. One very attractive feature of this text is that it frequently reuses pieces as examples in several chapters and also in the exercises. This

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<sup>13</sup> These include topics like creating inversions, reading interval vectors, and doing operations on a twelve-tone row.

<sup>14</sup> In the third edition Straus has also included guided analysis assignments, ear training as it relates to specific pieces, and brief composition exercises.

<sup>15</sup> This could involve open-ended papers and creating analytic examples about any relevant topic that a student is interested in.

makes it easier to acquire the music and also creates a sense of continuity. Straus relies on the “classical” pre-war repertoire of Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg throughout the book; this is music that most students are unfamiliar with. The music used in this book usually requires small performing forces<sup>16</sup> to save space in the text, but this can push away people who are studying large ensemble works.

***Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*, third edition by Stefan Kostka (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2006).**

Stefan Kostka’s book on twentieth-century music introduces compositional techniques of this period for general music students. According to the preface,<sup>17</sup> the book could be used as the text for a unit on PCP music lasting as short as a few weeks, or it could be used for up to a whole year. This flexibility is achieved by including a wide variety of materials that can be expanded or pared down to fit different situations. While some chapters are integral to an understanding of the subsequent material, Kostka identifies some that may be left out entirely.<sup>18</sup> Within each chapter the teacher also has the flexibility to use any quantity of the exercises and suggested additional readings. The material is organized by compositional technique, while also taking chronology into account. *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music* is focused specifically on the theoretical aspects of the music and does not make an attempt to specifically address history or style, although, at times some of this is included in the commentary.

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<sup>16</sup> Such as solo piano, voice and piano, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Stefan Kostka, *Materials and Techniques*, xvi.

<sup>18</sup> For example, the chapters on Timbre and Texture, Minimalism and Neoromanticism, and The Roles of Chance and Choice may be left out, while the chapters on set theory and serialism are integral to understanding later material.

This book can proceed smoothly from the conclusion of undergraduate tonal theory instruction. Kostka begins the text with a discussion of the declining tonal system at the end of the nineteenth-century and how it contributed to the new twentieth-century compositional techniques. He also explains that tonal music still exists today in most genres and that with the advent of the twentieth-century composers did not immediately begin writing atonal music. Throughout this Kostka describes how chromatic harmony began unraveling the tonal system and how this led to the use of new scales, modes, and extended tonality. This discussion also helps students understand the difference between functional tonality, atonality, and ideas that fall in between.

In addition to addressing pitch structure, Kostka also writes sections about the changes in rhythm, form, timbre, and texture in the twentieth-century. These sections will be especially useful to the general music students that this book is meant for and will help them explain the basics of music they might encounter in their solo repertoire or in ensemble playing. Kostka does not focus exclusively on set theory and serialism and democratically presents a relatively broad array of topics. It is in this sense that Kostka's text is introductory, preparing the student for future in-depth study not only in set theory, but in any of the topics covered in the book.

To most music students this book would be very approachable, especially as compared to other books on PCP music. It is very readable because most of the examples that Kostka references are directly in the text.<sup>19</sup> Throughout the book Kostka does an excellent job of using a wide variety of repertoire for both exercises and examples. Instead of using mostly piano music, he incorporates pieces from the solo instrumental,

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<sup>19</sup> The exception to this is in his discussion of form, where he asks students to go to one of four widely available anthologies. While this option provides a lot of variety, students would have to acquire all of them if they wanted to use all of the materials in the chapter.

chamber, and wind band canons. Most students reading this book will be familiar with some of the music he has chosen, which will make it easier for them to become more deeply engaged in the subject matter.

Each chapter of this book has an introduction, a brief summary of the content, and a list of terms that students should be familiar with; these are also followed by a series of exercises. Kostka includes more examples than most classes will have time for, which allows for considerable flexibility. There are basic assignments that address the fundamentals, specifically guided analysis, and composition exercises.<sup>20</sup> He also includes an extended reading list for those students who wish to go further into their study.

***Understanding Post-Tonal Music, by Miguel Roig-Francolí***  
**(New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008).**

*Understanding Post-Tonal Music* is intended for either an undergraduate or graduate course in PCP music or composition. Roig-Francolí suggests that it should be used in a one-semester course with the possibility of omitting some chapters. The text is specifically based on post-tonal theory and only addresses tonality in the twentieth-century as it relates to this. Throughout this book the author references thirty-one pieces, written by twenty-five different composers.<sup>21</sup> While it is convenient that all of the music referenced in the text is available in one volume, Roig-Francolí does this instead of putting all of the excerpts in the text, which requires the user to use both texts simultaneously. There is also a listening list included at the end of each chapter for further study and an extensive series of exercises. In most chapters these include theory,

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<sup>20</sup> Although Kostka includes open-ended analyses, they are mostly just further study in fundamentals rather than in-depth analysis.

<sup>21</sup> These are all available in a separate anthology.

analysis, and composition assignments. One especially attractive feature of this book is that there are opportunities for the students to practice both guided and free analysis.

Roig-Francolí's pedagogical strategy for post-tonal music theory is to present a piece first and follow that with theoretical concepts to explain what is happening. For example, when he introduces pitch centricity in the octatonic scale he explains why it could be a problem to specifically define the pitch center. After the brief explanation he then draws the reader's attention to an excerpt from "Diminished Fifth," from Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* to allow the student to see and hear how the concepts of centricity apply in this example. He also gives the reader some sense of the historical context of the pieces and compositional trends without overwhelming the core of the content.

In the introduction Roig-Francolí carefully distinguishes among functional tonality, tonality, pitch centricity, atonality, and twelve-tone serialism. Many students find distinguishing between these very difficult. He focuses on terminology and making sure students understand vocabulary and how to apply it. This thorough explanation uses well-known reference points to introduce PCP music to students and helps them identify where the music that they are familiar with would fall into this spectrum. While he does not address tonality except in relation to other topics, the survey begins with the pitch-centric music of composers like Debussy and Stravinsky. Roig-Francolí also uses tonality as a reference point<sup>22</sup> for atonality frequently in the text; this helps students who are new to the topics by relating it to something they know very well.

Each chapter begins by introducing the content in a general fashion; later Roig-Francolí goes into further detail by analyzing specific pieces. The text requires active

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<sup>22</sup> Roig-Francolí will begin a topic like inversion or transposition by using major and minor triads or scales to give the readers an accessible example.

reading. Roig-Francolí frequently asks the students leading questions, such as comparing and contrasting pieces or sections. These questions would be helpful to get readers to think about the topics or for class discussion. The only problem with the questions is that he does not always actually answer them, which could alienate people reading the book on their own if they don't understand the material.

The biggest problem with this textbook is that it is not especially user-friendly. The author is subtly condescending and frequently uses presumptuous language like, “you must have noticed that its tonal organization somehow sounds pitch centered.”<sup>23</sup> He also switches back and forth between fixed and movable “Do” depending on the situation, which could confuse someone who is new to music of the PCP period. Due to the formatting, the summaries are easy to miss and in many cases the examples that the text references are several pages away. In addition to this, the student is asked to flip among the text, appendices, and anthology regularly. One can imagine many students would not be willing to do this. Several times throughout the book, Roig-Francolí requires readers to retrieve music from the library. This would cause problems because, presuming the library even has these materials, there would not be enough resources for an entire class.<sup>24</sup> While these problems make the book slightly hostile, they could all be improved in future editions.

### **Discussion:**

The authors of each of these five books have their own opinions on what is important in the study of the music of the PCP era. These differences in opinion yield five different, but suitable, approaches to this subject. Classroom teachers will each have

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<sup>23</sup> Miquel Roig-Francolí, *Understanding Post Tonal Music*, 17.

<sup>24</sup> This could be solved by requiring the students to purchase certain scores at the onset of the course.

individual and, no doubt, differing ideas about the significance of different topics and what approach should be taken. Each text gives the opportunity for flexibility and the incorporation of additional materials at the teacher's discretion. These books give a few valid options for people teaching a class, or portion of a class, in PCP music, but many teachers choose to create their own materials.

Morgan's book and anthology are essentially textbooks for a music history class, but they could also be used for a class that focuses on both the history and theory of PCP music. Reading this book in its entirety would be cumbersome for a music theory course because it would need to be supplemented by another theory text. If cost were not an issue, the anthology would serve as an excellent supplement to another textbook and *Twentieth-Century Music* could be used for historical referencing, but asking students to purchase three books for one class would be a financial burden.

Roig-Francolí attempts to combine the best of both worlds, by including some of the historical information that can be found in the Morgan book, but always as a secondary point to the music theory. I think his blend of history and theory is successful and gives students just enough information to understand how the music fits into the historical trajectory. He tries to address many topics in PCP music, rather than limiting it to set theory and serialism, as in the Straus text. This approach gives significance to topics and music that might be more familiar to many music students. It also gives analyses of several pieces that relate to the subjects and can serve as reference points for open-ended analysis assignments. This book would be an excellent choice for an introductory class on the PCP era, except for its subtly condescending tone.

Conversely, Kostka's *Materials and Technique of Twentieth-Century Music* is extremely easy to read. It is obvious that, of all the authors discussed so far, Kostka is the most sensitive to his readership. Kostka's book is unique because it is aimed for the general music student. Because of this, he does not go into great depth on any topic and covers a wider range than any of the others. This text, unlike many of the others, is not based on analysis of certain pieces; rather it is based on broader topics. It might be useful if someone were using this book to have an additional source for analysis, perhaps the Morgan anthology. He discusses topics like rhythm, form, and timbre that directly relate to the direction and performance of PCP music. Throughout the book he also uses a plethora of musical examples that draw from a wide variety of mediums. Hopefully with Kostka's consideration for repertory most students will be able to find direct relationships to their other musical studies.

Straus's book goes the deepest into the practice and analysis of PCP music, but it covers a much narrower range of topics than any of the other four books. The majority of the book is about set theory and twelve-tone serialism, with only minimal discussions of other compositional techniques. Like the Roig-Francolí text, his emphasis is on analysis, but he prefaces these with a discussion of the concepts that will be found in the pieces. Straus's analyses are extremely detail-oriented and fairly difficult to read if the student does not have a solid working knowledge of the music theory content.

Since none of the previously discussed texts explicitly address the topic of aural training in the PCP era, the Adler text would be a suitable addition to any method of teaching this music. Using this book would be rather difficult for anyone with a strong

background in tonal aural skills<sup>25</sup> because it distinctly goes against tonality. Requiring students to hear and sing purely based on intervals is perhaps the easiest way to force students to stop using tonal crutches<sup>26</sup> in music that does not fit into that category. I also think that teaching sight singing in this method would help reinforce the topics being taught in a PCP theory class.

If I were picking a book to introduce the compositional styles of PCP music to a class of undergraduate music students I would choose *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music* by Stefan Kostka. In my class I might also consider using some of the essays from Morgan's anthology and the listening lists from the Roig-Francolí. The Straus book would work well for a more advanced class that is focused specifically on set theory and serialism. I would also incorporate some aspects of performance into the class; the intention of this is to get students actively involved and show that the concepts that are being taught are not arbitrary techniques that only relate to this class.<sup>27</sup> I think the most important aspect of a class like this is to introduce students to a variety of music that has been created in the past hundred years and to help them to appreciate it.

With the review of these five books in mind I created a revised table of contents for the "20<sup>th</sup> Century Compositional Techniques" course packet. I combined what I perceived to be the best elements of all of these texts with what was already in existence

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<sup>25</sup> This method might be easier for a student who does not have a lot of training in tonal aural skills because the material defiantly goes against pillars of tonal sight singing that would be ingrained in someone who has a strong background.

<sup>26</sup> Such as motion from the leading tone to the tonic or a cadential bass pattern as reference points.

<sup>27</sup> I imagine this as an individual analysis and performance project where students could study pieces that they are also studying, or have previously studied, in their applied instruction.

in the packet.<sup>28</sup> The packet already has large, thorough sections on set theory and twelve-tone serialism, but it was missing several topics that were addressed in the other textbooks. The most significant of these is the section titled, “From Tonality to Atonality.” This section will help explain how functional tonality began to fail and eventually led to serialism. It will also address the many grey areas<sup>29</sup> that lie in between. It includes composers like Bartók, Debussy, and early Stravinsky that fall in the realm of pitch-centricity but are not traditionally tonal. This section is addressed first because it is easy to grasp these concepts with a strong background in tonal theory. I have also added a section on form in the PCP era that is placed early in the course. Students can grasp the form of pieces like Schoenberg’s String Quartets without understanding the pitch structure. Later in the course, when set theory, serialism, and combinatoriality are addressed, the pieces used to explain form may be used again. The elements of form and pitch-centricity can then be applied to subsequent topics as it is appropriate.

Another aspect of PCP theory that I feel especially strong about is making the content relevant to the maximum number of students. A course that is solely devoted to avant-garde techniques has a very narrow focus and would not appeal to many music students who do not encounter these techniques regularly. These topics have a tendency to alienate students who are geared towards careers in performance and education where this type of music is generally not studied or performed.<sup>30</sup> For all students it is important to learn about the music that they will be playing and teaching in addition to the repertory

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<sup>28</sup> This includes notes on specific pieces, homework assignments, and discussions of many topics, like set theory.

<sup>29</sup> Such as pitch centricity or pandiatonicism.

<sup>30</sup> This could be because it is more difficult for them to see the direct correlation to their field, not necessarily because they don’t like the music or don’t feel that they should learn it.

that is already being taught. The combination of these two elements may help the students become more interested in the music that is new to them. Oftentimes the music that is studied in PCP theory classes is rather avant-garde and focuses on piano or small ensemble pieces due to the accessibility of the scores and recordings. While some students find comfort in reading piano scores, incorporating music from several different mediums that students perform in will add interest and variety to the listening component of the course.<sup>31</sup> The pieces on my repertory list come from the chamber, wind band, choral, and orchestral canons and would interest students who perform in those ensembles. Throughout the course students should be able to acquire the skills to respond to these pieces intelligently. Through the listening component students will also gain a wider knowledge of what music has been written during this period and gain an appreciation for new styles of composition. This list makes no attempt at being comprehensive, but rather aims to find a wide variety of pieces that are relevant both for ensemble musicians and from a theoretical standpoint.

I have also included four assignments based on one piece from each category on my repertory list. It is my intention that these can be worked into the content for the course that already exists. They address topics that are already a part of the course (equivalence classes, Neo-Classicism, modes, form) while featuring music that many students will have played or studied previously. I chose pieces that would be widely known among students who perform in those ensembles. In addition to this, I also took the availability of alternate arrangements into consideration. These four assignments also address a variety of topics, dealing with small and large scale features.

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<sup>31</sup> Using ensemble music also gives students the additional challenge of reading scores with many voices and transposing instruments.

My first assignment is based on the first movement of György Ligeti's (1926-2006) *Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet* (1953). This piece is a standard of the wind quintet literature and is commonly played in its arrangement for saxophone quartet. The piece itself is an arrangement from *Musica ricercata*, a series of eleven short piano pieces from 1951-53. The *Six Bagatelles* utilize movements III, V, VII, VIII, IX, and X. Although the original piano work is not frequently performed, the study of this arrangement should interest all woodwind and piano players. Ligeti used this work as a study of limitations. The first movement of *Musica ricercata* begins by using two pitch classes and each successive movement adds one pitch class until chromatic saturation is achieved in the last movement. The focus of my study is the third movement of the piano work, which is the first movement of the quintet version. It features just four pitch classes: 0, 3, 4, and 7. While the four pitch classes are initially introduced as two distinct subsets, (037) and (047), they soon merge into a single tetrachord. Ligeti was influenced by Béla Bartók (1881-1945) and this same collection is found in one of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*. Ligeti even dedicated one movement (V of the quintet) of this work to Bartók's memory and it features the same pitch-class collection.

I also created an analysis assignment based on Paul Hindemith's (1895-1963) *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* (1943). This is an attractive piece from a teaching standpoint because it is widely performed by both wind bands and orchestras. Also, due to the melodic content and neo-romantic qualities it is very approachable for students who are not comfortable with some of the more discordant works from the PCP period. This assignment is largely about form and how it has changed since the height of the four-movement symphonic model of the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries. It also requires students to study the theme and contemplate how Hindemith transforms the main melodic content throughout the fourth movement. Students are also asked to find and identify other pieces which would fall into the neo-classical/neo-romantic genres.

Eric Whitacre's (born 1970) *Sleep* (2000) has quickly gained cult-like popularity. This choral work from 2000 has quickly become one of the most popular pieces in the current repertoire. Although some of this popularity comes from being frequently performed in both its choral and wind band versions, Whitacre's "Virtual Choir" project introduced this piece to mass audiences. The premise of this project is that singers download the sheet music and record themselves singing their part in conjunction with a conductor track. The singers then send their performance in and all of the recordings are combined to create one unified product that is published on YouTube. This piece was used for his second installment of the project and the finished product has almost 900,000 views as of March 2012. In addition to being extremely popular, this piece is also interesting from a theoretical standpoint. Throughout most of his works, including *Sleep*, Whitacre uses pandiatonicism. In addition to this he also uses traditional major and minor chords with added seconds and/or fourths to create his characteristic sound.

The last piece addressed is Percy Grainger's (1882-1961) *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937). This is one of the most performed pieces by wind bands at the collegiate level. It is a six-movement work that is derived from Grainger's experiences listening to folk songs. He takes authentic source material and applies modern orchestration and contrapuntal techniques. The folk songs used throughout this work rely heavily on the church modes, which gives students an opportunity to practice identifying alternate tonal

systems. By the end of the work, the pitch center moves a tritone away from where it began<sup>32</sup> and achieves large-scale chromatic saturation.<sup>33</sup> Also, due to the source material, Grainger is required to call upon atypical meters to attempt to retain the authenticity of the songs. This piece also lends well to the comparison between the standard musical forms of previous generations.

I believe that the use of wind band, orchestral, choral, and chamber music throughout the course and the expanded topics and organization in the table of contents will positively influence students' experiences in the "20<sup>th</sup> Century Composition Techniques" course. This course will cover a wider range of topics that will teach music from a wide variety of styles and mediums. Not only will it cover a broader range of topics, but it will also address the PCP music that students are performing. This will also give them a greater appreciation of music from this period as a whole.

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<sup>32</sup> The first movement begins in Ab Mixolydian and the last movement is in D Dorian.

<sup>33</sup> By considering the pitches used in each mode throughout the work.

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## PCP Ensemble Music for Further Study

### Wind Band:

- Grainger *Lincolnshire Posy*
- Holst *First and Second Suites*
- Schwantner *...and the mountains rising nowhere*
- Stravinsky *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*
- Persichetti *Divertimento, Masquerade, Pageant*

### Orchestra:

- Stravinsky *Rite of Spring*
- Debussy *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, La Mer*
- Rorem *Lions*
- Hindemith *Symphonic Metamorphosis*
- Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*

### Choir:

- Stravinsky *Requiem Canticles, Symphony of Psalms*
- Whitacre *Sleep, Lux Aurumque*
- Lauridsen *O Magnum Mysterium, O Nata Lux*
- Pärt *Te Deum*

### Chamber Music:

- Hindemith *Woodwind Quintet*
- Ligeti *Six Bagatelles* (arr. from solo piano)
- Ewazen *Brass Quintets*
- Debussy *String Quartet*
- Bartók *String Quartets*
- Messiaen *Quartet for the End of Time*
- Shostakovich *String Quartets*

# Homework: Grainger *Lincolnshire Posy*

## Modes, Mixed Meters, Form, Finale

This piece is composed of arrangements of six folk songs that Grainger transcribed from singers in England. While the piece may not sound distinctly avant-garde because of its tuneful melodies and lush harmonies, Grainger used many groundbreaking techniques relating to form, meter, counterpoint, and orchestration that allowed this piece to become a masterpiece of the wind band literature.

1. The source materials for this composition are performances and recordings of authentic folk singing. In accordance with tradition, these performances are often rhythmic but ametric. Attempting to capture this quality in notation causes many problems. Examine movement 5, “Lord Melbourne.” Notice that the piece begins with a section that is unmetered, allowing the conductor to have free reign of the ensemble. Later he attempts to notate this song with unconventional meter signatures. Enter measures 36-43 (include the pick-up note in the solo line) in Finale and use alternate meter signatures or rhythms to make the music more readable. Although there are many answers to this problem, be sure to use meter signatures without fractions. Print this out and staple it to this assignment.
2. Since the source material for this work is not in the Western art music tradition it generally does not fit into our standard tonal conventions. Grainger uses the following modes in the melodies of each movement:
  1. Lisbon: Ab Mixolydian
  2. Horkstow Grange: Ab Mixolydian
  3. Rufford Park Poachers (Version A): F Dorian-Bb Dorian
  4. The Brisk Young Sailor: Bb Major
  5. Lord Melbourne: D Dorian
  6. The Lost Lady Found: D DorianExplain in a few sentences what melodic features confirm the modes in the first and last movements.
3. Study the succession of tonal centers and modes. How far does the piece move from beginning to end in terms of pitch-class interval and pitch-class collection? Regard each mode as an unordered pitch class set. Calculate the variance between the opening and closing modes using the interval vectors. What does this tell us about the overall trajectory of the piece?
4. In the post-common practice era our expectations for form in music breaks down to some extent. Because of that, one piece may have characteristics of several different traditional forms (dance suite, tone poem, art song, four movement eighteenth/nineteenth-century symphony, etc). How would you classify this work? Does it have characteristics of more than one form?

## Homework: Hindemith *Symphonic Metamorphosis*

### Form, Rhythmic Transformation

Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis* from 1943 is based on several themes from the music of early 19<sup>th</sup> century composer, Carl Maria von Weber. This work was originally conceived for ballet, but due to complications in production it became a large scale orchestral masterpiece instead.

1. Listen to the fourth while following along with the score. Use letters to diagram the form.
2. In the fourth movement of this work, "March", the first theme is introduced in measure 6 by the oboes, English horn, and bass clarinet. Hindemith uses this material in a variety of configurations throughout the piece. How is the accompaniment at measure 6 related to the theme?
3. Measure 93 marks the recapitulation and return to the section A material. To set up this return Hindemith uses a re-transition. What is the melodic source of this material?
4. Now consider the entire work. In a few sentences describe how Hindemith's work relates to the classical and romantic symphonic form.
5. Hindemith uses source material from the early 1800s and transforms it into a work that sounds like it was written in the twentieth-century. Many composers around this time period employed this technique. What is the name of this style and how does Hindemith realize it?
6. Name two other works that are written in the twentieth-century that are based on music of previous stylistic periods.

## Homework: Ligeti *Six Bagatelles for Woodwind Quintet*

### TALLY/TORI Equivalence

Ligeti's *Six Bagatelles for Woodwind Quintet* are arrangements of six movements of *Musica ricercata*, a piece for solo piano. The quintet version uses movements III, V, VII, VIII, IX, and X. The first movement of the piano work uses just two pitch classes (A and D) and Ligeti uses one additional pitch class in each subsequent movement until he has reach chromatic saturation in the eleventh piece.

Answer the following questions and be sure to show all work.

1. Examine the score to the first movement from Ligeti's *Six Bagatelles for Woodwind Quintet*. What pitch classes are used in measures 1-5? Remember to transpose the horn and clarinet parts into the appropriate key.
2. Calculate the interval vector for this pitch-class collection.
3. Now determine the pitch class collection for measures 6-8.
4. Calculate the interval vector.
5. Are these two collections TALLY equivalent? How did you determine this?
6. Are these collections TORI equivalent?
7. After measure 8 Ligeti begins to use both pitch-class sets simultaneously, which results in the collection: (0, 3, 4, 7). Ligeti was influenced by another famous twentieth-century Hungarian composer, Béla Bartók. Now examine #143 from Bartók's sixth volume of *Mikrokosmos*. Pay special attention to the pitch-class collection starting in measure six. What do you notice? How is this selection different than the Ligeti?
8. Ligeti dedicates the fifth movement of this work to Bartók. What similarities do you notice among #143 from volume six of *Mikrokosmos* and the first and fifth movement of the *Six Bagatelles*?

## Homework: Eric Whitacre *Sleep*

### Pandiatonicism, Extended harmony

Eric Whitacre's music has become widely popular amongst choirs and wind bands in the last decade. His popularity has increased further because of his involvement with the Virtual Choir project. *Sleep* served as the piece for the second installment of the venture. While Whitacre's music does not have an avant-garde quality, it all shares a unique and fresh characteristic that comes from his use of extended harmonies with traditional triadic chords.

1. Listen to a recording of *Sleep* and follow along with the score. Notice how Whitacre uses a combination of traditional triads and sonorities with extended harmonies.
2. Analyze measures 14-26. Label each chord with Roman Numerals and figures (assume we are in the key of Eb Major). There will be extended harmonies used.

m. 14 \_\_\_\_

m. 15 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 16 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 17 \_\_\_\_

m. 18 \_\_\_\_

m. 19 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 20 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 21 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 22 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 23 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 24 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 25 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

m. 26 \_\_\_\_

3. What did you notice about your Roman Numeral analysis? Compare the harmonic progression in this section to traditional harmonic progressions.
4. One of the signatures of Whitacre's composition style is the use of major or minor triads with added 2nds and/or 4ths. Identify and list three examples of this type of sonority.
  - a. Measure \_\_\_\_\_ Beat \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Measure \_\_\_\_\_ Beat \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Measure \_\_\_\_\_ Beat \_\_\_\_\_
5. Whitacre uses a technique called pandiatonicism in many of his compositions. This entails using predominantly diatonic harmony without traditional tonal functions. Pandiatonicism is also used by other PCP composers like John Adams and Aaron Copland. Find a piece by one of these composers. Write 2-3 paragraphs comparing Whitacre's use of pandiatonicism in *Sleep* to the piece you found. Type this and staple it to this assignment.