

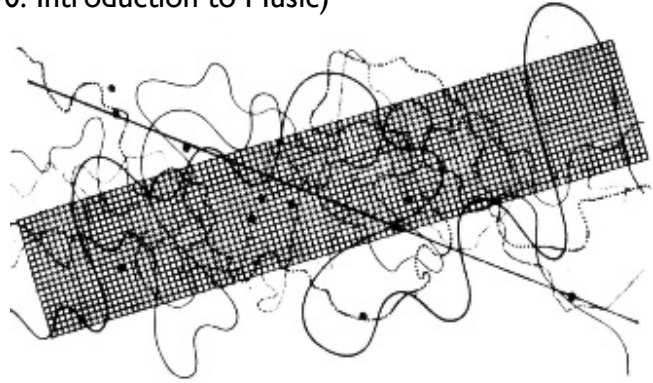
Music: A Cultural Experience (GEN_MUS_170: Introduction to Music)

Pop

Transcription

Assignment

Due Friday, 4/16



Fontana Mix (1958) by
John Cage

This project consists of 2 components: **a graphic transcription** and **a written description**. The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to practice engaged listening, think about how music structures sound in time, and to use tools of musical description. You will submit one graphic transcription of one minute of music and about 400-500 words of writing. This project is worth 7.5% of your grade in this course.

Music transcription: the practice of notating the sounds of a piece of music; translating the sound of music to a visual format.

Select one of the following songs released in the past year:

Lianna La Havas, "Bitterweet"
Jessie Ware, "What's Your Pleasure?"
Arlo Parks, "Eugene"
Doja Cat, "Freak"
Silk Sonic, "Leave The Door Open"
Phoebe Bridgers, "Kyoto"
Tune-Yards, "hold yourself."

Moses Sumney, "Me in 20 Years"
Rina Sawayama, "XS"
Missy Elliott, "Cool Off"
HAIM, "I Know Alone"
Carli XCX, "claws"
Orville Peck, "Summertime"

All are also available on this Spotify playlist:

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5jjZzongqLlExVZ42lLyRqb?si=gLc2cfVuR_WThDlujALB_Q

Things you must do

- Select a song, and then select a one-minute excerpt of that song to transcribe
- Listen to your selection many times
- Produce a graphic transcription, visually representing what you hear
- Write a description of your transcription (400-500 words)

Graphic transcription

- While listening to your selected song, write notes about what you notice. Consider the following questions while you listen:
 - What instruments, different sounds, and voices are present? Which seem to be more in the foreground or background?
 - Are there repeated sounds or sections? Sounds that only happen once?
 - How would you break this minute of music into sections? Do you get a sense of structure in this minute?
 - How do different sonic elements interact with one another?
 - How will you represent the way these elements interact over time?
- Assign different symbols, shapes, and colors to what you hear
 - You might use dots, lines, blocks of color, etc.
 - You might use distinct symbols to represent different instruments, pitch, melodic phrasing, melodic contours, rhythm, form, different instruments, dynamics, or other components of the music that you stand out to you.
 - Use at least 2 colors. You might use colors to represent other aspects that you think are important or interesting to this track: timbre, mood, consonance, dissonance, changes in how the vocalist(s) use their voice(s), etc.
 - You might represent the lyrics
 - Please do not use standard Western classical notation.
- Create your graphic transcription. I've uploaded a template that you can use or disregard in favor of your own system.
 - The template uses four stacked rectangles, each of which represent the space of 15 seconds.
 - You can create your score digitally, or you can print it, draw on it, scan it, and upload it.
 - I encourage you to use whatever medium and format you see fit, as long as you can clearly describe the elements of your visual representation and explain your choices.

Written Description

- Write a description of your transcription in 400-500 words. This doesn't need to be a rigid essay, but you must write clearly, with thoughtful structure and correct grammar. Please answer the following questions in your description:
 - What felt like the most important elements of your song/selected minute? Why?
 - How did you choose to represent what you hear? Explain what the shapes, figures, colors, etc. that you used in your transcription mean. How do they reflect your experience of the music?

- How do the lyrics and vocal performance in your chosen minute relate to the non-vocal components?
- Please use musical concepts we have discussed in this course to be specific about what you hear.
- OPTIONAL: How does this minute relate to the rest of the song (in terms of storytelling, layers, mood, etc.)?

Things that could be helpful and interesting

- Listen to other versions/recordings of the song. Studio, live, and cover versions might accentuate different parts, layers, or instruments. This might help you notice more in the studio recording.
- Listen to other songs by the artist.
- Listen to a song using different speakers or headphones.
- Let the visual representation and written description inform one another. In what ways has graphically representing the song helped you understand the song? Vice versa?
- Look at different types of graphic notation for inspiration. I've included links to two videos of music synchronized with their original graphic scores below.
- Listen to interviews or podcasts featuring the creator of your song.

Examples of musical realizations of graphic scores (these are experimental art music works -- these composers invented their own notational systems)

- György Ligeti, *Artikulation* (1958) [video with music synchronized with the score]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lhNI_skTZQ
- Cathy Berberian, *Stripsody* (1966) [video of Berberian performing the piece, with video of score]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dNLAhL46xM>

Here are some other graphic scores:

- <http://davidhall.io/visualising-music-graphic-scores/>
- <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/latest/graphic-scores-art-music-pictures/schnee-chollobhat/>

Rubric

This project is worth 7.5% of your grade, organized into 20 points.

Transcription (10 points): A student will receive full credit for a graphic transcription of one minute of one of the listed songs that uses at least two colors and a variety of different symbols or shapes. This transcription will represent many of the following elements of the music (and possibly others): pitch, melodic phrasing, melodic contours, time, rhythm, beat, lyrics, different instruments, dynamics, change in feeling/mood, and texture (foreground/background). They will identify their selected song and minute of that song with timestamps (e.g. Rina Sawayama, "XS," 2'13" – 3'13").

Description (10 points): A student will receive full credit for a description of their transcription with thoughtful structure and correct grammar, describing each of the distinct components used in their graphic transcription, the sounds in the music they represent, and answering the questions posed in the above “Written Description” section in 400 words.

Available on the Music Analysis Project module on Canvas

- Links to official YouTube uploads of each song
- A Spotify playlist of all song options
- A template that you could use for your transcription (but you don’t need to use it)
- An example of a realization, using this template: FKA Twigs, “Two Weeks” graphic transcription, from Marianna Ritchey, “What Does This Artwork Ask Of Me?” (2019)