

# **Music 5**

## Lecture 5

Thursday, May 7, 2020

# Lecture Outline

1. Announcements
2. General Information
3. Module 6: New Music (Noise)
4. Writing Assignment

# Announcements

- The following items are DUE before Sunday, [May 10](#) at 11:59 pm:
  - Module 6 Quiz: Modern Age Part 1
  - Module 6 Quiz: Modern Age Part 2
  - Module 6 Writing Assignment

# General Information: Submission guidelines

- For all assignments, please **attach a PDF or Word document** containing your writing responses and SoundCloud links (as applicable)
- If the assignment prompt has an ordered list of questions, please include **answers in the same order.**

## **Module 6: New Music (Noise)**

# Module 6: Objectives

1. Explain the principles of Futurism and its role in incorporating noise in music
2. Explain the idea of Musique Concrete and its use of tape recording
3. Articulate Attali's conjecture about the relation between music and political economy
4. Be able to name and explain the four codes in Attali's conjecture
5. Name the main historical milestones in electronic music in 20th century
6. Define the concepts of narrativity and semiotics in relation to electronic music
7. Explain and give examples of Generative Music, Glitch, and Microsound

# Module 6: Live session topics

- Play examples of **Futurism** and **Musique Concrète**
- Discuss use of **noise** and **recorded sounds** in music
- Articulate **four codes in Attali's conjecture** and explain them
- Discuss evolution of **electronic music** in the 20th century
- Play examples of **Generative Music**, **Glitch**, and **Microsound**
- Explain concepts of narrativity and semiotics applied to Stockhausen's piece *Kontakte*

# Module 6: Readings

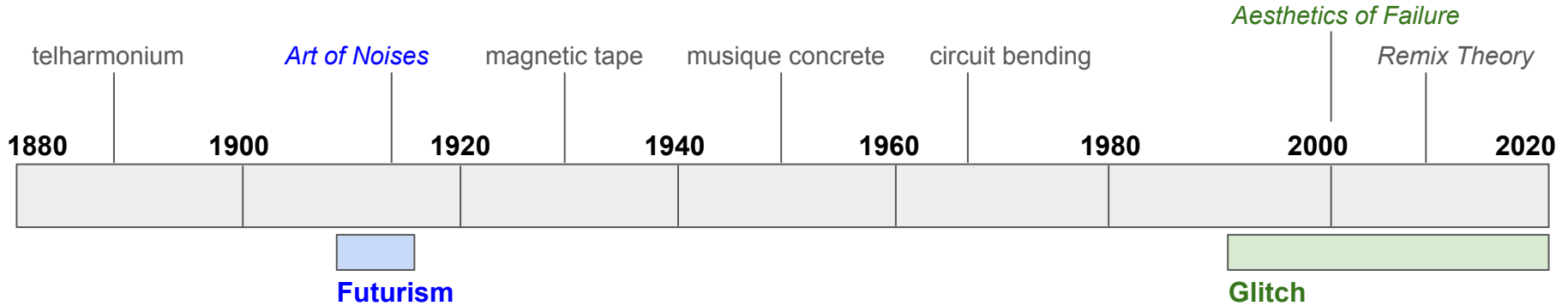
- **Cascone (2000):** *The Aesthetics of Failure: “Post-Digital” Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music*
- **Navas (2012):** *Remix Theory: The Aesthetics of Sampling*



# Module 6: Important terms

- **Futurism**: an Italian artistic and social movement that lasted between 1909-1915. It embraced the advent of machines in society, including automobiles, airplanes, and industrialized cities.
- **Musique Concrète**: music made from recorded sound samples
- **Generative Music**: music that sounds different each time you hear it
- **Glitch**: electronic music that embraces sounds caused by malfunctioning technology. More broadly, it adheres to the “Aesthetics of Failure”.
- **Microsound**: sounds which are very short in duration (10-100 milliseconds)

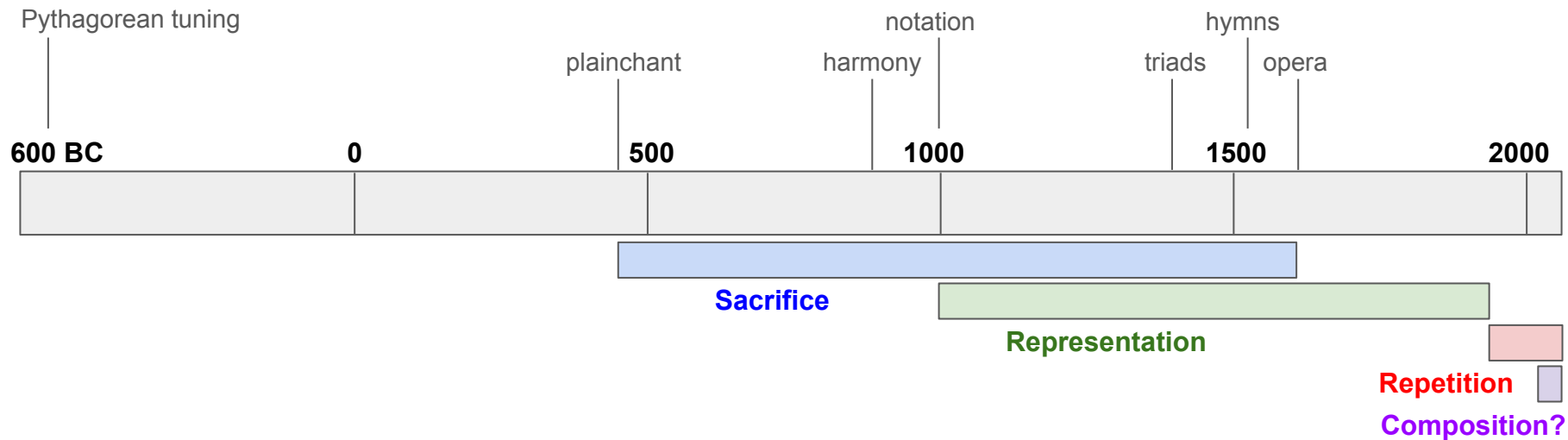
# Module 6: Electronic music since 1880



# Module 6: Four codes in Attali's theory

- **Sacrifice**: time period when music was primarily used in religious/state rituals
- **Representation**: time period when music compositions began to be printed and widely distributed, orchestras and opera houses began to perform sophisticated music pieces, and capitalism began to take root in the West
- **Repetition**: time period when music is recorded and widely distributed in various formats (vinyl records, cassette tapes, CDs, mp3, etc) for repeated consumption
- **Composition**: time period when music is freed from previous codes and becomes an end in itself (has the internet brought about this change?).

# Module 6: Four codes in Attali's theory



# **Writing Assignment**

# Module 6: Writing assignment (guidelines)

- Minimum length: **50 words per prompt** (since there are 6 prompts, the total word count for this assignment should be at least **300** words)
- Note that some prompts in this assignment refer to readings from previous modules (Russolo and Attali)
- We will briefly discuss who Theodor Adorno was and why he's relevant to new music. However, it's optional to discuss his theories in your responses.
- Do not simply copy answers from these slides and paste them verbatim in your document. You must answer the prompts in your own words.

# Module 6: Writing assignment (guidelines)

- Today, we will focus our discussion on the 4 prompts relating to the Cascone, Russolo, and Attali readings
- The 2 prompts relating to the Navas reading are left as homework (note: I recommend looking at prompt 6 before prompt 5)
- If you have any questions, please email me early so that I can respond before the deadline on May 10

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 1)

*1. What are the commonalities and differences between the Noise Aesthetics of Russolo and the Futurists versus Cascone's Aesthetics of Failure? Similarly, discuss Aesthetics of Failure in regards to Cage's "silence", and how Glitch builds upon both of these earlier musical ideas.*



# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 1)

- **Noise aesthetics**: a preference for irregular sounds made by machines
- **Aesthetics of Failure**: a preference for sounds created by malfunctioning digital technology
- *Commonalities*:
  - Characterized by a desire to create new musical instruments based on noisy background sounds
  - Motivated by a sense that the music which preceded it had reached its culmination
  - Involved the use of machines
- *Differences*:
  - The movements took root in different time periods (1910s vs. 1990s)
  - Aesthetics of Failure is based on digital sounds while Noise Aesthetics is based on industrial sounds

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 1)

- *How is Aesthetics of Failure related to Cage's 4'33"*:
  - Cascone -- p. 14 (right column): "John Cage would give permission..."
- *How does Glitch build on Noise Aesthetics and Cage's 4'33"*:
  - Musicians in the Glitch movement have experimented with machine noises and background noises that neither Russolo nor Cage appear to have examined (see examples from Oval, Pan Sonic, and Mouse on Mars)
  - In what sense does Glitch consist of background noises? -- p. 16 (left column): "Our current sonic backgrounds..."

## Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 2)

*2. What do you think Cascone means when he says “The medium is no longer the message in glitch music: the tool has become the message?” (p. 17). Define “message” and take your thoughts forward from there. What roles do computers play in this development, and how does this go beyond earlier electronic music explorations?*

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 2)

- The “medium”: digital technology
- The “tool”: it’s what the digital technology actually does (e.g. it filters audio, synthesizes sound, connects to the internet, or, in the case of Glitch, undergoes some kind of minor malfunction that alters the audio output).
- The “message”: it’s what excites composers to write new music

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 2)

- *How has the tool become the message:*
  - Cascone -- p. 15 (left column): “DJs, fueled with samples...”
- *What roles do computers play in this development, and how does this go beyond earlier electronic music explorations?*
  - Cascone -- p. 16 (left column): “Computers have become...”
  - Cascone -- p. 16 (right column): “In this new music...”

## **Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 3)**

*3. Explain how the appearance of the pop star is related to the development of printing (representation age) and the rise of capital / market society? In what sense have the recording industry and radio (culture of repetition and collecting of music) had an adverse effect on the role of the performer?*

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 3)

- **The “pop star”**: a representation of someone who makes music that should be widely consumed (in contrast to non-“pop stars” who make music that shouldn’t be widely consumed)
- **Printing (i.e. movable type)**: allowed for a more efficient way to generate and distribute (sell) musical scores
- **Market society**: an economic and social system driven by what is available to get (supply) and what people want (demand)

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 3)

- *How is the appearance of the pop star related to the development of printing and the rise of the market society:*
  - Between 1500-1800, printing technology propelled the development of sophisticated musical scores that were performed by orchestras and opera houses. The main figures of these grand music productions were seen as “pop stars” who made music that was regarded as worthy of consumption. People could buy tickets to see these popular performances, which (among other developments) encouraged the rise of the market society.
  - Attali -- p. 10: “it is not by coincidence...”; p. 17: “In the sixteenth century...” and “One or two decades after its invention....”
  - See the Canvas lecture video titled “Modern Age and Society Part 1” for more details.



# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 3)

- *How have the recording industry and radio negatively impacted music performers:*
  - They often restrict the artistic freedom of music performers (both professionals and non-professionals) whenever they deem that a performance is not “consumer-friendly”
  - They discourage non-“pop stars” (i.e. non-professionals) from performing music. That is, non-professionals receive the message that their performance is not valuable (and thus not worth performing) if a recording industry or a radio station chooses not to record or broadcast their performance.

## Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)

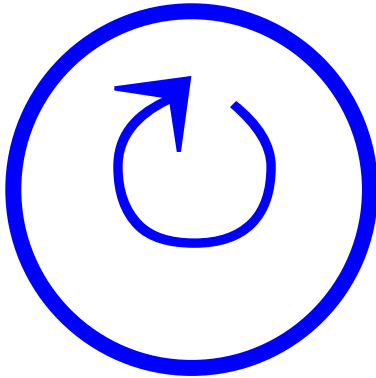
*4. How is consumer culture related to repetition and in what sense do Adorno and Attali see this as a regression? Suggest how new media and network culture may change the listener / consumer from being a passive consumer to becoming a contributor / composer. Hint: consider the effect of repetition on innovation or conformance to a norm.*

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)



# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)

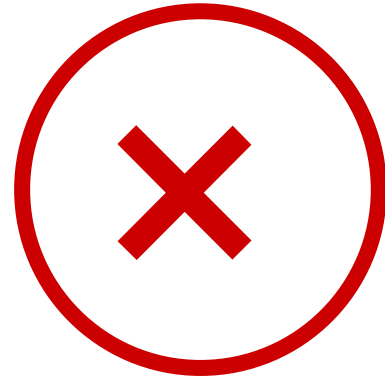
**Repeat**



**Search**



**Unplug**



# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)

- Aside: when you choose to unplug and listen to the sounds around you (say, when you're on a bus), can you sense the beauty in both silence and noises? Does Cage's 4'33" hold any more significance for you during these moments? Do you ever feel inspired to manipulate the silence and noises in ways that would create a new musical sound?

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)

- **Consumer music culture**: a social and economic order that encourages people to buy music experiences and products (mostly for entertainment)
- **Theodor Adorno**: a German philosopher and musicologist who (among many other things) is known for his criticism of consumer music culture
- **New media**: media (i.e. music, visual art, journalism, etc) that is made and/or distributed by computers (e.g. digital music synthesizers, computer animated films, SoundCloud, Spotify, etc)
- **Network culture**: internet culture (e.g. email, Zoom, Facebook, SoundCloud, Spotify, etc)

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)

- *How is consumer music culture related to “repetition” and in what sense is it a regression:*
  - “Repetition” is the time period when music is recorded and widely distributed in various formats (vinyl records, cassette tapes, CDs, mp3, etc) for repeated consumption (1900-present)
  - Consumer music culture demands that music be recorded and widely distributed because people in the culture want to be repeatedly stimulated
  - Consumer music culture is a regression because it further entrenches society in “repetition” (consumption drives more consumption). The culture also tends to devalue the work of non-professionals since their work can’t be easily monetized. Hence, new music is stifled.

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 4)

- *How might new media and network culture transform listeners into composers:*
  - Computers make music composition easier. Non-professionals don't need to learn traditional music theory or performance skills to write professional-sounding music
  - The internet provides resources that help non-professionals learn how to use computers to write music (YouTube videos, music composition blogs, etc)
  - Non-professionals may come with unique non-musical backgrounds that could inspire new forms of music



# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 6)

*6. Define and explain Remix, Mashup, Medley. Explain the commonalities and differences between them.*

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 6)

- Remix: define and explain
- Mashup: define and explain
- Medley: define and explain
- *Commonalities*: explain
- *Differences*: explain

## Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 5)

*5. Explain the sentence from Navas' paper: "While the regressive mashup is a remix, the reflexive mashup is a regenerative remix." Define what regressive, reflexive, and regenerative mean and how they are related to remix becoming an act of communication or discourse rather than a passive consumption.*

# Module 6: Writing assignment (Prompt 5)

- Regressive: define
- Reflexive: define
- Regenerative: define
- *“While the regressive mashup is a remix, the reflexive mashup is a regenerative remix”*: explain
- *How are the terms “regressive”, “reflexive”, and “regenerative” related to remix becoming an act of communication*: explain

# Questions