



Assignment No. 1



Creating a Composition for a Found Objects Instrument

Date Due: **Tuesday, January 31, 2012**

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What This Assignment Is About

This assignment involves creating an instrument from a commonly found object and devising a notation for the music that that instrument can create. While we have our own twists on this assignment, it is closely related a project that Andrew Hugill describes in his book *The Digital Musician* on page 255:

This project is designed to strip away previous ideas of "musicianship," [by] reevaluating the sounding properties of objects, how they may be made into instruments, how playing techniques might be developed, and how music may be created as a result. It is not necessarily a "digital" project as such, but its value to anybody working in a digital context should quickly become apparent, especially through its ability to awaken the ears.

What You Are To Do

1. Using only household object(s), create a musical "instrument" that can produce several different pitches and/or timbres. It is critical that your "instrument" must be able to produce *several different types of sounds, or sounds with several different characteristics*. For example, a table that one can only tap to produce one sound would **not** be sufficient for this assignment. See the section below entitled [How You Will Be Graded](#) for more information on this.
2. Create a composition for your instrument. The composition should be indicative of a specific musical form of your choice. It need not be long. A 2-3 minute piece is fully sufficient, but it should include distinct sections that give it form. That is, at a minimum *your composition should include distinctive opening, middle, and closing sections*.
3. Once you have created your composition, devise a system of creative notation that others would be able to understand enough to perform your piece. The notational system should be reflective of your unique type of instrument. It should not resemble standard musical notation in any way, shape, or form.
4. Write a reflection on your experiences with this assignment that describes your creative process both in terms of developing the composition and in creating the notational system. What understandings came to light regarding the musical process, the compositional process, and the notational process? Post your reflection in the [Blog area of the Grouply site](#) as a comment to the post entitled "Reflections on Assignment No. 1." To do this, click the Comment icon  in the lower right-hand corner of the original posting, as shown below.

The screenshot shows a web interface with a blue navigation bar containing links for 'bgroups', 'Forum', 'Events', 'Photos', 'Videos', 'Music', 'Files', 'Chat', and 'Blog'. Below the navigation bar is a yellow header area with 'pppearance' and 'Edit Tabs' on the left, and 'Report picture abuse' and 'Recent' on the right. The main content area is white and features a 'Blog Posts' section. The first post is titled 'Reflections on Assignment No. 1' by Jesse Heines, dated January 18, 2012 at 8:55 pm. The post text asks for reflections on the creative process. A red circle highlights a comment icon with the number '0' next to the text 'Click here ---> to post your reflection'.

- Bring your "found instrument" to class on the assignment's due date along with your notation. Come prepared to explain your work and to perform your piece. Please note that these classes will be videoed unless you specifically request that we **not** video your "performance."

Submitting Your Assignment for Grading

We professors will take notes on the "performances" during class and you will turn in your creative notation for us to review. We will review your reflection directly from the Groupy site, so it is critical that you get it posted there by the assignment's due date.

How You Will Be Graded

This assignment has four major parts:

- the instrument you choose
- the composition you compose for it
- the notation you devise for your composition
- your reflective write-up

Your grade for these parts will be determined by evaluating your work on the following criteria.

- For Your Instrument
 - Does your instrument produce two or more different timbres?
 - Did you just grab a spoon to fulfill the assignment or did you take an ordinary household object or objects and put them together and use them in an unusual and novel way?
 - Did you use only the normal sounds made by the object or did you use one or more non-traditional (unexpected) sound that it can make?
 - Was it evident that you put some thought into this assignment?
- For Your Composition
 - Does your composition exhibit a clearly discernable form with an opening, middle and end?
 - Does it use a variety of musical elements such as textural changes, dynamics, rhythmic variety, and melodic elements?

- For Your Notation
 - Is your notation just simple dots and dashes showing little effort or problem solving, or did you attempt to create an unusual way of representing your music?
 - Does it represent a clear sequence of events?
 - Does it provide guidance on the timing of events?
 - Does it indicate expressive parameters for performance such as rhythm and dynamics?
 - As with your choice of instrument, was it evident that you put some thought into this assignment?

- For Your Reflective Write-Up
 - Did you leave this until the last minute or, as above, is it clear that you thought about what you wanted to write and put some effort into doing the writing?
 - Were you mindful of formatting, grammar, spelling, etc., or did you just throw a few sentences up on the Grouply site in a sloppy manner?



This is document <http://localhost/~heines/91.212/91.212-2011-12s/212-assn/FoundObjects-03.jsp>. It was last modified on Monday, March 19, 2012 at 1:10 PM.

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