

Music 1360: Spring 2012
Reason Assignment Handout
Due: 4896: 5/3 7:30-9:30 *AM*
6888: 5/2 10am - noon
Final Exam 100 Points (15% of Final Grade)



THE SOUND COLLAGE PROJECT

Collage: derives from the French "coller" meaning "to glue." Based in the visual arts, a collage is the act of assembling different *pre-existing* objects or forms of disparate materials, textures, shapes, etc... to aesthetically represent a new single cohesive idea. Thus, the overall work may represent something all of its own – even if all of the component parts are recognizable themselves.

The **Sound Collage** is a musical manifestation of this visual aesthetic. The component materials of a sound collage may include: samples of musical instruments, samples of spoken word (remember Steve Reich's *Different Trains?*), and **Musique Concrete** sounds (i.e. sounds not conventionally *musical* in every-day circumstances which can be re-appropriated into a musical context) like: bird song, repetitious-rhythmic patterns of machinery, the ebb and flow of waves, the crunching through tall dry grass, etc.

For our final project of the semester, you will draw a crayon at random from my box of 96 Crayolas. Your assignment is to write a sound collage about that color using Reason.

Your piece must be **at least 90 seconds long**. Its title will be the color of the crayon. You must also write a **program note** describing how the musical materials relate to the color you draw from the crayon box. Here are some questions to ask yourself before you start composing:

How does this color make me feel? Is there some music that I think of when I see this color, or is it an object? A person? An animal? If this color were a sound, what would it sound like? Is the sound from nature, or synthetic? How can I relate this color to the objects, sensations, persons, animals, physical gestures, etc. that I think of?

RESTRICTIONS

REASON: You must use the N-19 and/or the NN-XT Samplers as your primary means to generate your musical material. You will be awarded up to 10 pts extra credit for successful use of the BV512 Digital Vocoder. These are the only REASON specifics; feel free to use any other instruments and FX in the program.

Focus on using Musique Concrete sounds. **If you use samples containing: organized rhythms (4/4,2/4,6/8 etc), traditional tonal keys, or any kind of musical material that relates to common practice (ancient) music; the sample cannot be any longer than 3 seconds in interval, and must be altered in some significant way (pitch shifted, time stretched, reversed, reverb, etc).** The final product should not have any elements of Western Tonality explicitly presented. Try to create something new. You can design your own pitch system, rhythmic motives, etc. – the idea here is to **stay away** from old music and focus on creating something that is entirely new (or at least derived from something new).

That being said, **focus on the sound**. Do not mash a bunch of keys and think that you can turn that in and get a good grade. **Composition is design**. Spend time focusing on how your work is constructed, and how the sounds you use relate to your goal: a sonic aesthetic *impression* of your color.

After composing your piece, turn your crayon back in to me – unharmed. Then, send me an email with your program note and the color you were assigned. You will burn an audio CD and turn it in to me at the beginning of the Final Exam period and present your work to the class. Be sure your CD works by placing it in a CD player – test it on your computer, in your car, etc.