

Adler, Samuel (1989). The Study of Orchestration New York, W.W. Norton & Company. pages.

“Sam’s book is like his music: copious.” remarked my teacher Albion Gruber when I asked him about the then recently-published first edition. He also used its substantial heft as a doorstop for his office, and was once embarrassed when Adler paid him a surprise visit one afternoon and saw his proud effort propping Albion’s door open. The text is indeed thorough and reflects Adler’s lifetime summation of experience as a composer and conductor in instrumental scoring. Nits may be picked, as did some of my Eastman chums who complained of his omission of the accordion, among other things. Still and all, accordions aside, this is probably the best single-volume orchestration text today, and it made Adler a millionaire in the process. I have my own complaints about it, but I still use it often. A newer, third edition has just been issued, with many improvements.

Bailey, Derek (1980, reprinted by Da Capo Press in 1992). Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music Ashbourne, UK, Moorland Pub., in association with Incus Records. 146 pages.

Derek Bailey was one of the foremost figures in the "free improvisation" movement that began in the 1960s, and a virtuoso guitarist. His many recordings are astonishing for their breadth of invention and his singular sense of purpose. Most of us would be lucky to compose as well as Bailey improvised. His thoughts on improvisation have many implications for a composer.

Begbie, Jeremy S. (2000). Theology, Music and Time Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 317 pages.

R. Murray Schafer once remarked that to judge from recent sacred works, God's musical taste has shown a startling decline in the last few years. Here, Begbie contemplates various musical concepts, such as rhythm, meter, resolution and improvisation and shows how they might be linked to central themes of the Christian faith. It's a thought-provoking study for any composer who has ever wanted to stem the flood of ever more trite musical offerings.

Blackwood, Easley (1985). The Structure of Recognizable Diatonic Tunings Princeton, Princeton University Press. 318 pages.

Blackwood is a composer and pianist who taught at the University of Chicago. Besides being regarded as one of the finest interpreters of Ives's 'Concord Sonata,' he composes a lot of microtonal music. In this book he seems to contradict himself at times, by patiently explaining the inner workings of a particular tuning, and then proclaiming the tuning's drawbacks in the next paragraph. He is particularly harsh on just intonation and declares it unworkable in all keys--that is, it is impossible to construct a system of just intonation which allows one to play in all keys, a statement which LaMonte Young would appear to have effectively refuted with his towering Well-Tuned Piano piece. Ben Johnston, Harry Partch, Terry Riley and others also have made effective musical statements in that tuning. Still, Blackwood has made the structure of various temperaments fairly clear to someone with a bit of patience and some ease with math.

Boulanger, Richard (editor) (2000). The CSound Book Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. 740 pages.

A tremendous resource apart from all of the online tutorials and materials pertaining to CSound. Includes a CD.

Brindle, Reginald Smith (1966). Serial Composition London, Oxford University Press. pages.

This is a very good primer for the basics of serial techniques. It was very helpful to me back at a time when I thought that I wanted to be a serial composer. That said, Brindle's advice on voicings, melodic contour, etc., still carries a lot of water whatever the context--serial or otherwise.

Brindle, Reginald Smith (1986). Musical Composition London, Oxford University Press. pages.

This book could usefully function as the textbook for a composition class, but it also serves as an excellent guide to various compositional issues such as

vocal and choral writing, various contemporary modes of style, formal design, etc. Brindle doesn't have a compositional or ideological ax to grind, but sticks to practical matters. Even experienced composers need to be reminded of musical first principles, and this book has more compositional horse sense per page than many other, more ideological or idealistic writings.

Brindle, Reginald Smith (1991). Contemporary Percussion London, Oxford University Press. pages.

While not as all-encompassing as James Blades' gigantic tome on percussion (which I never bought), it covers most issues very thoroughly. Lots of score examples are included throughout and Brindle's advice is always sound and based on a vast fund of personal experience.

Cage, John (1939, 1944, 1949, 1952, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1961). Silence Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press. 276 pages.

The most important of all of Cage's published writings. Few books have had greater impact after their printing on multiple generations of composers and musicians.

Chion, Michel, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (1994). Audio-Vision: Sound On Screen New York, Columbia University Press. 239 pages.

Chion is both a filmmaker and an electroacoustic composer. His observations about sound in film and his linking of Pierre Schaeffer's "Three Listening Modes" is brilliant.

Chion, Michel, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (1999). The Voice In Cinema New York, Columbia University Press. 183 pages.

Considerations of the voice in cinematic composition are not all that different from those in musical composition.

Chion, Michel, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (1999). The Voice in Cinema. pages.

Collins, Nicholas (2006). Handmade Electronic Music: The Art of Hardware Hacking

New York, Routledge. 245 pages.

Collins is a notable composer and performer whose work has focused on live electronic music created from homemade circuitry. Here Collins shows how existing circuitry can be adapted to create highly individual electronic music instruments. Includes an audio cd.

Cook, Theodore Andrea (1979. (Originally published by Constable and Company, London, in 1914.)). The Curves of Life New York, Dover Publications, Inc. pages.

This book is an exhaustive study of the spiral whose fundamental mathematical expression is the Golden section or Φ . Cook focuses mostly on its relation to natural phenomena, but also connects it to ideas on the essence of beauty and man's response to that. The book is parallel in many respects to D'Arcy-Thompson's *On Growth and Form*.

Cowell, Henry (1996 reprint of 1930 publication by Alfred A. Knopf). New Musical Resources (with notes and an accompanying essay by David Nicholls) Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 175 pages.

Originally published in 1930, this volume has held up very well over the years. It continues to offer a wide array of techniques and stylistic possibilities, as well as an important discussion of rhythm as an extension of the harmonic series, later utilized and expanded upon by several post-WW II avant-gardists, notably Stockhausen (who never acknowledged Cowell's precedent). Many of the postminimalists have looked to it for rhythmic and tonal guidance.

Dodge, Charles and Jerse, Thomas A. (1985). Computer Music: Synthesis, Composition and Performance New York, Schirmer Books. 383 pages.

An excellent look at basic computer synthesis and early synthesis programs, such as MUSIC V and C-Sound. At the time of writing, most of this was still done on time-sharing computers such as the PDP-11. Most of the techniques such as phase vocoding, FM etc are still valid and widely used. There is a later edition which takes personal computers into account as well.

Emmerson, Simon (editor) (2000). Music, Electronic Media and Culture Burlington, VT, Ashgate Publishing. pages.

Includes nine essays on the implications of electroacoustic music, new directions and aesthetics.

Erickson, Robert (1975). Sound Structure in Music Berkeley, University of California Press. pages.

Now here is a lost gem. I can't remember where I found my copy, but it's been on my shelf of treasured music books for more than twenty years. Erickson gives here the most coherent examination of timbre and its musical implications that I've ever read. The acoustical principles underlying his ideas are carefully integrated into each topic. Erickson was also a remarkable composer, and his music is well worth seeking out.

Feldman, Morton (2000). Give My Regards to Eighth Street: Collected Writings of Morton Feldman Cambridge, MA, Exact Change Press. pages.

Aside from its musical insights, this collection of essays and transcriptions of informal remarks gives a nice look into the milieu of the New York modernist art scene in the late 50s and early 60s. Feldman was apparently never concerned with creating a theoretical rationale for his music, and none is to be found here, but his remarks about color and proportion, however seemingly offhand, deserve close consideration.

Feldman, Morton (2006). Morton Feldman Says: Selected Interviews and Essays (edited by Chris Villars) London, Hyphen Press. 304 pages.

Fraser, J. T. (1975, revised edition 1990). Of Time, Passion, and Knowledge Princeton, Princeton University Press. 529 pages.

Fraser offers a theory of "time as conflict," but the scope of the book is almost impossibly wide. The author has attempted to consider time in all of its ramifications and humankind's relationship to it. At times the book is deeply philosophical, and more than a little challenging. For anyone who deals in time as an element of their art, the book is priceless.

Huntley, H. E. (1970). The Divine Proportion: A Study In Mathematical Beauty New

York, Dover Publications. 186 pages.

Huntley's study explores the implications of the Golden Section and related concepts. Taking examples from nature and art, he offers some thoughts on applications and realizations of this ratio.

Ives, Charles (1961. 1962; reissued 1999). Essays Before a Sonata, The Majority and Other Writings New York, W. W. Norton & Company. 258 pages.

Kandinsky, Wassily (1977 (Dover reprint from the 1914 publication by Constable and Company, London) Originally titled: *The Art of Spiritual Harmony*). Concerning the Spiritual In Art New York, Dover Publications, Inc. 57 pages.

Divided into two parts, the first is concerned with "General Aesthetic," while the second addresses the matter of "Painting." Kandinsky's call for art to be allowed to reflect the inner life of the artist in an abstracted, "non-material" way is thought-provoking. Synaesthetes may find that his writings on color will translate directly into musical thought.

Kandinsky, Wassily (1979 (Dover reprint from 1947. Originally titled *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche*, ninth of fourteen Bauhaus books, 1925)). Point and Line To Plane New York, Dover Publications, Inc. 146 pages.

Composers as different as Debussy and Feldman understood that there was much to be gained from contemplating the work of visual artists and applying the visual principles they observed to sounds in time. Kandinsky's book is an essay on the elemental basics of drawing, but he also uses sound as an analogy.

Klee, Paul, introduction and translation by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (1953 (first English publication; originally published in 1925 as the second of the fourteen Bauhaus books)). Pedgogical Sketchbook London, Faber and Faber, Ltd. 63 pages.

This tiny volume was written for lectures that Klee was giving at the Bauhaus. While intended for visual artists, it has huge implications for musical ones as well. Klee's discussion of the concept of "line" and all of its possible manifestations is profound, yet staggeringly simple and clear.

Kramer, Jonathan D. (1988). The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies New York, Schirmer Books. 493 pages.

Morton Feldman said "As composers, we have time and we have sound. And I'm not so sure about sound." Here is a book that begs to be reprinted. Kramer was a theorist and under-appreciated composer who taught at Columbia. His book is a downright pleasurable read and will provoke much thought. His is the first comprehensive attempt to account for the issue of time, as it applies to music. His ideas on proportion and the Golden Section have been very influential on my own composing. His analysis of Stravinsky's *Agon* is very interesting, although I was never able to reproduce his results myself. My own studies of proportion in Birtwistle's music stem directly from Kramer's work.

Manning, Peter (1985). Electronic and Computer Music Oxford, Clarendon Press. 289 pages.

An excellent overview of e/a history up to the mid-1980s. Gives a good account of the "studio era," as well as the voltage-controlled synth years. Also considers rock and pop; has an excellent discography. I used to own most of it on LP.

Naumann, Joel and Wagoner, James D. (1985). Analog Electronic Music Techniques New York, Schirmer Books. 423 pages.

Published as a companion to the Dodge/Jerse computer music book, this volume has gone out of fashion and is now relevant again with the resurgence of classic synths and the proliferation of virtual analog synths that mimic the originals. Along with voltage control synthesis, there is a very good discussion of tape techniques, also still relevant.

Nicholls, David (1990). American Experimental Music 1890-1940 Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 239 pages.

Nicholls's book is an important one for any self-identified American composer. Nicholls looks at the "American Mavericks" tradition as established by the Seegers (Charles and Ruth), Henry Cowell, Carl Ruggles, Ives, Cage et al. I found his explanation of Charles Seeger's "dissonant

counterpoint" to be much clearer than Seeger's own.

Pierce, John R. (1983). The Science of Musical Sound New York, Scientific American Books. 242 pages.

I overheard Charles Dodge talking about his book in 1986, and I looked for it for years. In 2004, at a musicologist's garage sale in Lawrence, KS, I found it. It's a fantastic guide to acoustics both the physical principles involved, and their musical implications. The book also came with a spiffy little record with sound examples on it. I've never played mine. Pierce was a scientist at Bell Labs and worked with Max Mathews on the development of computer music. Dodge also mentioned that Pierce successfully wrote science fiction under a pseudonym, but I don't know what that name was.

Pritchett, James S. (1993 (First paperback edition, 1996)). The Music of John Cage Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 223 pages.

John Cage was a composer. Period. And this book beautifully refutes any cranks who still bandy the terms "musical philosopher" or "charlatan" about. Pritchett's study covers the several phases of Cage's career, with clear analysis and numerous examples. The range of style and technique at his disposal was astonishing, and no composer ever worked harder. Kyle Gann wrote in his obituary of Cage that he might have composed more masterpieces than Stravinsky. (Now there's a statement that's sure to get you pummeled in the schoolyard...)

Roads, Curtis (editor) (1989). The Music Machine Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. 724 pages.

This is a superb collection of articles, essays and interviews from the many of the most significant leaders in computer music. The topics range from synthesis to aesthetics, to interactive music and algorithmic composition.

Roederer, Juan G. (1973, 1975, 1979). Introduction to the Physics and Psychophysics of Musical Sound New York, Springer-Verlag. 202 pages.

Roederer was a physicist working in space science who was also trained as a musician (he played the organ). His book focuses on perception and how the

brain processes complex sound information, in addition to acoustics.

Rowe, Robert (2001). Machine Musicianship Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. 399 pages. Probably one of the best overviews of interactive and algrhythmic composition available. Robert Rowe is a fine composer with deep experience in the discipline. Includes a CD-ROM.

Salzer, Felix and Carl Schachter (1969). Counterpoint In Composition New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company. 478 pages.

Probably one of the best counterpoint books published in recent decades. It does argue from a Schenkerian standpoint at times, but is largely unassailable. Runs circles around Kennan's counterpoint book. Fascinating to read is the defensive-sounding preface, in which the authors take pains to suggest that a book on counterpoint might still be of relevance.

Schafer, R. Murray (1977). The Tuning of the World Toronto, Arcana Editions. pages.

Schafer here discusses the relationship between Man and his acoustic environment. Schafer's observations and musings should be read by more than just musicians, but composers will have a lot to ponder from these pages. This has recently been re-published under the title *The Soundscape*.

Schafer, R. Murray (1986, 1988). The Thinking Ear Toronto, Arcana Editions. 342 pages.

Besides being a remarkable composer, Schafer is a remarkable thinker on musical matters. *The Thinking Ear* collects Schafer's several earlier writings on music education into one volume. These essays deal with the role of the composer in society, issues of music education and the small matter of what music is in the first place.

Schafer, R. Murray (1991). Patria and the Theatre of Confluence Indian River, Ontario, Arcana Editions. 228 pages.

Patria is the title of a cycle of iconoclastic operas and dramatic projects on

which this composer has been laboring for many years. Here are Schafer's essays towards a new kind of musical theatre--one which is integrated with the natural environment and which holds the possibility of real participation from the audience. The book is also an account of the successes and failures that he's experienced in trying to mount these works over the years.

Schrader, Barry (1982). Introduction to Electro-Acoustic Music Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall. 223 pages.

This book provided my first encounter with the term "electroacoustic." It's a fine survey of the history of the genre up to about 1980. Best for its coverage of early e/a music and *musique concrete*. It came along just as I was beginning my own journey in the analog tape studio, and it has a thorough discussion of that era and legacy. I once told Barry Schrader of my admiration for the book and asked if he'd ever considered doing an updated version. He said he'd approached some publishers, but none were interested.

Snyder, Bob (2000). Music and Memory: An Introduction Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press. 291 pages.

Snyder's book could easily be a textbook for a course on musical perception. He combines brain-based research with a non-intimidating amount of basic theory. Non-musicians or informally-trained musicians could benefit from it easily, along with more elaborately schooled musicians. Starting from the premise that formal devices are an aid to memory, Snyder makes a good case for why Feldman's late music and minimalism are so appealing, in spite of their daunting performance times.

Stone, Kurt (1980). Music Notation in the Twentieth Century New York, W.W. Norton & Company. 357 pages.

If there is a notational question that this book cannot answer, I've never had to ask it.

Strange, Allan (1972). Electronic Music: Systems, Techniques and Controls, Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers. 160 pages.

This was one of the first textbooks for analog electronic music techniques, and

it has remained a benchmark standard for many composers. Its chapters on modulation, filtering and signal processing are still useful and relevant. Many of the exercises and projects could be easily adapted for current technology. The author (who recently passed away) remained a vital force in the electroacoustic community right up to his passing.

Takemitsu, Toru (Translated and edited by Yoshiko Kakudo and Glenn Glasow) (1995). Confronting Silence: Selected Writings Lanham, MD, The Scarecrow Press. 156 pages.

Takemitsu's thoughts on composing are as compelling and enigmatic as his music. He is also a thoughtful observer on the art of film and film music.

Tarkovsky, Andrei (translated from the Russian by Kitty Hunter-Blair) (1986, 1987). Sculpting In Time Austin, University of Texas Press. 255 pages.

Tarkovsky was one of the most important film directors of the twentieth century. Most of his films unfold at a glacial pace, but once the viewer engages, they are impossible to forget. Tarkovsky had a sense of time that was astonishing – watch the opening of his last film, *The Sacrifice*, for an example. His visual sense was equally compelling. After he defected to the West, he became a sort of resident crank on the international film scene. Here he sets out the values that made him such a compelling (and uncompromising) artist.

Thompson, D'Arcy Wentworth (1992). On Growth and Form New York, Dover. 1116 pages.

This is a classic text in the world of biology and was Harrison Birtwistle's bedside reading for many years. (Maybe it still is...) Thompson's book is a minute examination of how creatures' various forms or shapes determine their function in nature. Beyond the fact that this is a landmark in scientific thinking, Thompson's writing is a pleasure to read because of his supremely literate style.

Thomson, Virgil (1981). A Virgil Thomson Reader Boston Houghton Mifflin

Company. pages.

Quite simply, this is the best music writer America has yet produced. Thomson's criticism is peerless; cf. his remarks on Messiaen's superiority over other post-war avant composers: "...because his music vibrates, and theirs doesn't." The book is divided into a large autobiographical section, followed by reviews, essays and an interview with VT by John Rockwell. Thomson's views can be rather trenchant, but they've held up remarkably well over the years. The only place where I think he slips badly, is in his assessment of Sibelius. ("Provincial...") But few writers of his or our time could write equally comfortably about Xenakis, Beethoven, shape-note singing, or black gospel music and jazz. Thomson could and did enthusiastically.

Truax, Barry (2001). Acoustic Communication Westport, CT, Ablex Publishing. 284 pages.

Truax merges acoustics, physiology, aesthetics, sociology and media studies into a "handbook for acoustic ecology." Electroacoustic composers in particular will find this very helpful in refining their thinking, but anyone who makes or listens to sounds of any sort will discover valuable insights.

Winkler, Todd (2001). Composing Interactive Music: Techniques and Ideas Using MAX Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. 350 pages.

MAX/MSP has become one of the most widely-used "industry standard" computer music applications, and this book offers a great deal of assistance in realizing interactive pieces. Includes a CD-ROM.

Wishart, Trevor (1996). On Sonic Art Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers. 357 pages.

This book is an expansion of a series of lectures that Wishart gave in the 1980s, and a reprint of an earlier edition. Wishart deals with three large concepts: "The Sonic Continuum," "Landscape," and "Utterance." While much of this will be of immediate concern to electroacoustic artists, these themes have resonance for any composer.