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Culminating Experience reflective paper

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1. Culminating experience project— summary of project that was completed

The project consisted of a continuation of personal research on topics which he realized were also significant in the daily work of the BGJI throughout the year. By way of reflective reading, score study, youtube odysseys, discussions and interviews, harmonic-melodic rumination and regular listening, this research amplified the mystical element of interconnectivity. The process allowed him to revisit ideas and perspectives from a new vantage point, prompting him to expand toward unfamiliar vistas. So far, tangible results have included recordings of five original pieces and a realization of the CE presentation after several interesting test runs. For the final presentation, he played excerpts from each piece and discussed how the still lingering investigation had influenced his musical process.

His direction of inquiry was based on intuition. As such, it led to a deeper awareness of the underlying purpose of his work. An enthusiasm for anarchy instigated the desegregation of artistic practice from theory, general outlook and social activism. Reciprocity across religions, in the broadest sense of the word, should be humanistically explored. One youtube odyssey resulted in an exotic encounter between the western conception of anarchism and the ancient Chinese religion of Taoism. Here, I was fascinated to learn that perhaps the earliest recorded example of anarchist sensibility has been traced back to Taoist philosophers. It tickled him to discover this connection due to the fact that he had enjoyed reading the Tao Te Ching in years prior.

Inspirations for the music came mostly from philosophers and artists who were influenced by or are associated with anarchism in various ways. This provided the conceptual framework for the project. Anarchy was also an impetus for interactions in rehearsals with the

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musicians that participated. It was the driving force for in-class experiments in the presentations, which took place periodically throughout the three semesters leading up to the final presentation.

2. results— how the project did and did not align with expectations

In line with the idea of anarchy, I chose not to approach the project in a restrictive or controlling way. I purposefully did not have a clear idea of what I wanted in terms of a result in order that we could continue discovering this while working. Allowing for expectations to be suspended, the result is that this could come about organically through collaboration. Therefore, I did not anticipate the musical results to be as interesting as they were.

I especially did not know what to expect going into the quintet portion because of lack of experience in a “classical” setting writing/rehearsing my own music. I also did not expect the music to be as connected to the research as it seemed to be. It was surprising to hear the response from teachers that the philosophical ideas felt connected to the musical result.

The advising sessions were also a pleasant surprise. I didn’t expect to have nearly as much to talk about. Throughout the meetings, I was able to really develop a lot of the fragmented ideas I had mostly kept to myself. This is due to the fact that I was forced to convey them to my advisor, and they became more clear for me as the semester went on. These discussions opened a lot of doors and brought new questions on the horizon which I will to continue exploring in the future.

3. Plan of action/process— where project met expectations and where it needed to be revised during execution

My choice of anarchy as a point of departure for the project was careful in that it supported the desired process from the beginning. I didn’t want to be too constricted in the

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execution of an artistic project. I wanted to explore general concepts and integrate them creatively. I also knew that I was passionate to learn more about the subject. I did not know what I would find, but there was always a feeling that anarchism could form the basis for both an aesthetic and a political philosophy, thus forming an imaginary bridge between music and political activism.

There were some ideas that didn't come to fruition, but this was not unexpected, because it is natural to have more ideas than what you end up with. One of my plans was to work with Christian Wolff's socialist bass exercise, which I did look at but did not come to expand upon in the project. I also thought that the recorded presentation would be more ambiguous and theatrical, but realized I could not do that and also fulfill the requirements of the committee.

I set out with a list of books I had wanted to read. Plans changed during the process. I drew on a variety of more sporadic research which remains unfinished. Investigation was in-the-moment, process-based, horizontal in terms of anarchy and **horizontal** in present and future orientation. I relied an anti-wealth, anti-result, anti-anti approach.— not like trying to build a castle on a swamp. My father would call it anti-accomplishment, but in the spirit of Dada, it rebels. In one special cinematic tableau, chance brought him to a discussion with an old intellectual refugee, originally from Sierra Leone. The man spoke with more clarity and intelligence than anyone on the news or in most high-class rooms. In his kind, consoling pessimism, he conveyed to me the farce of political life in relation to socio-economic gravity.

4. Next steps—if the project were to continue what would the next phase entail?

I did not expect to record the quintet the way we did in terms of set-up. In the future, I would like to experiment with recording it differently.— more the way we would have approached the music live.

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I would like to take Patti's advice and study what anarchism could mean in the context of non-western, more marginalized societies. Also, how music relates to this and how it can renew its purpose in these other contexts.

I look forward to continue engaging with social philosophy and political theory. When I move to New York, I want to engage with people working in these fields, hopefully in order to better understand their value, which would clarify my own perspective. This would eventually lead towards incorporating my own experience of these areas of study in my work as an educator and artist.

I would write more music based on anarchy and develop conceptual art expression that contains similar political and/or philosophical thrust, hopefully finding new avenues for dissemination or performance in order to get it out into the world.

I plan to continue mixing the music and will next try to find a clever way of self-releasing the music.

5. Contribution to the discipline or profession

Other than the contribution of new pieces and a cool presentation, artistically, I believe this project embodied an organic, integrated ethic. It emphasized what Marcel Duchamp called the human factor (of art) while deemphasizing the professional factor. As an anarchistic expression, complete freedom of the individual in her natural development to determine her own creative work is paramount. In this view, the profession of music requires less of itself, therefore I would prefer not to contribute to it per se, at least not in a commercial value sense. Anarchism involves the dissolution of imagined hierarchies and professional distinctions. As musicians we talk about the power of music to inspire beyond its own boundaries, therefore we should work to make music relevant to other spheres of life. This must involve some kind of noncommercial thinking or practice.

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So, he ended by compiling various explorations in a form of expression which more or less satisfied him. Call it an ideological pastiche, an honest expression, which is what the profession needs if it wants to connect and be meaningful in terms of social development.

6. Impact on the student completing the work

I took this project seriously and enjoyed it. Hopefully others did as well. The detective work, being both personal and outward-facing, opened up doors for my own artistic expression and strengthened my ability to seek truth, to conduct research and to convey ideas effectively. I overcame personal hurdles by separating layers of ideology and examining them. This allowed me to proceed in better faith for the sake of my work. I suppose it is time to call it “professional.” Not complaining, but that shit sucks. :/jk, peace

I’m starting to believe in a better future, but first I had to give a big “fuck you,” that I might find value in something larger than myself, which is almost like a pitcher for school and commercialism. Where is this society going? Had a wormy feeling to the shitter, although I try to notice the value of the fountain: When he sees an opportunity, he will fight the good fight, two shoes goody! You know he motherfucking will... It’s the door he wants to go through.



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