PAPER 2

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Reconsidering the Electronic Music Curriculum
presented by Andrew Selle

Nearly 20 years into the 21st century, a time when the arts, education, and technology have become inseparably intertwined, most undergraduate music majors still are receiving little or no exposure to electronic art music. Though we could point to a number of reasons for this, one key concern that seems to be overlooked is that the electronic music curriculum at most universities combines history/aesthetics, composition, and recording technology, three distinctly separate pedagogical concerns, into a single, one-size-fits-all track.

By sticking with this combined curriculum, we all but ensure that students who might be interested in electronic art music but do not want to learn the technical side of it will remain uninitiated. While we might scoff at the idea of teaching electronic music without teaching its methods of production, we do precisely this in other genres. We expect students to take courses in symphonic literature without writing symphonies, and we ask them to learn about Baroque music without building a harpsichord, so why should we demand that they learn electronic music literature, production, and technology all at the same time?

In this paper, I propose a change to the curriculum design that separates these concerns into distinct course tracks in order to better serve the interests and needs of a variety of students that may wish to engage with electronic music. First, I examine the current curriculum design at a number of schools of music across the country and point out some potential problems with their design and implementation. Next, I raise the issue of what a good electronic music curriculum should do in the first place. In other words, what should our goals as pedagogues and practitioners of electronic music be in the first place? Finally, I suggest an alternative curriculum design to what we find at most schools of music. This proposed system allows for all interested individuals to engage with electronic music, whether they are interested in composition, history, literature, or technology. Not only does this benefit the students, but it also benefits the teachers of these classes in that it allows each course to focus entirely on its primary goals. With some minor adjustments to the existing curriculum and only one or two

additional classes, I believe that many more students will be given the opportunity to engage with electronic music, ultimately benefitting both them and the world of electronic music itself.

Andrew Selle is a Ph.D. candidate at Florida State University. He is currently in the process of finishing his dissertation entitled "Experiencing Sound: A Hybrid Approach to the Analysis of Electronic Music."