Music History Lecture Notes
Twentieth Century Art Music
1900 - 2000

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Between the Great Wars

• Britain & France suffered enormous human losses
• Only the US experienced a financial boon
• Europe enjoyed peace with increasing international tension
• Austro-Hungarian empire split into independent state
  – Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia
WWI
• 1929’s stock market crash led to a worldwide depression
The Job Bureau
Breadlines & Refugees
Between the Wars

• In Russia, the Bolsheviks had seized power by 1917

• Fearing a similar revolution, Benito Mussolini and the fascists took over the Italian government

Lenin

Mussolini
Between the Wars

• In Germany, Hitler and the Nazis took advantage of the weakened Weimar Republic (1918-33) to turn the Chancellorship, which Hitler legitimately won, into a dictatorship.

• The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and totalitarian rule of Francisco Franco closed Spain off from the rest of Europe into the 1970s.
Art & Architecture of the 20th Century

- Following the Impressionist Movement artists moved further from reality into abstract forms of expression
- In architecture form took precedence over function

Human Concretion
- Vincent Van Gogh
- Self Portrait
- Starry Night
Picasso

- Don Quixote
- Guernica
- The Musicians
Salvador Dali – The Persistence of Memory
Edvard Munch: The Scream  
Marc Chagall: I and the Village
• Compositions by Mondrian
• Current
  by
  Riley
• Jackson Pollock
Frank Lloyd Wright
The Kaufman House
AKA “Falling Water”
The Disney Concert Hall by Frank O. Gehry
Music Between The Wars

- Music reflected the movement and events of history, isolating neighboring areas from each other.
- By 1907 Arnold Schoenberg had given up tonality and the suppression of harmonic progressions.
- Non-western influences and eastern European folk music offered new resources:
  - Exotic scales that lacked leading tones (whole tone, pentatonic).
  - Performance-oriented music of Indonesia with no clear beginning or end.
Music for the People

- Widening gap between “new music” and the responsiveness of listeners
- Music between the wars made special efforts to get contemporary music closer to the people
  - Leading composers provided music for films, theater and dance
  - Music written especially for schools and amateur groups
1930 Censorship

- Russian and German governments censored “new music” to protect the public
- Nazi occupation forced all Polish artistic activity underground (1939-1945)
Music after 1950

- Widening gulf between the concert-going public’s tolerance and the output of avant-garde composers (audiences didn’t like the new music)
- Aleatoric music - composers left decisions of pitch and rhythm to the performers
- Serial music - highly organized on an intellectual level, but sounds chaotic
- 1970-1990 radical composers tended to become more moderate and young composers found an alternative idiom in touch with trends in popular music
Technology and Music

• Large factor in music
• Recordings, radio, television spawned unparalleled growth in the size of audiences for many kinds of music
• Futhered a growth of a huge body of “popular music” mostly in the US
  – Blues, jazz, rock, soul, country, etc.
• Led to more complete documentation of ethnic music and the new discipline of ethnomusicology
  – Led by Janacek, Bartok & Kodaly

Kodaly
Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953)

- Lived outside of Russia from 1918-1934
- Best known for his symphonic fairytale: Peter and the Wolf
- Style did not change radically upon returning to the USSR
- Soviet party leaders forced “formalism” upon him
  - not topical or celebratory of a revolutionary ideology and its heroes
  - did not reflect the experience of the working class
Ralph Vaughn William (1872-1958)

• Foremost English composer in the first half of the 20th Century
• Works:
  – 9 symphonies
  – orchestral pieces, songs and operas
  – Many great choral pieces
• Drew inspiration from national sources
  – English literature
  – traditional songs and hymnody
  – Early English composers like Purcell & Tallis
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

- Most prolific composer of the mid 1900s
- Representative works
  - Ceremony of Carols (1942)
  - Opera: Peter Grimes (1945)
  - War requiem (1962) - received worldwide renown
  - Young Person’s Guide To The Orchestra
Carl Orff (1895-1982)

- A deceptively simple style
- Music endorsed by the Nazis
- Series of books: Musik fur Kinder
- Own pedagogy for children
  - Orffschulwerke
- Best known for “Carmina Burana”
  - based on medieval poetry
Orff-Schulwerke Instruments
International Master Igor Stravinsky

- 1882-1971
- most significant developments in the early 20th century
- Born in Russia - 1882
- Moved to Paris in 1911
- Moved to Switzerland in 1914
- Back to Paris in 1920
- To California in 1940
Stravinsky

• Started as lawyer in St. Petersburg
  – met son of Rimsky-Korsokov

• Taught by Rimsky-Korsakov
  – learns to use virtuoso orchestra

• Frequent trips to Paris
  – Ballet Russe
    • Impresario Sergei Diaghilev

• Fascinated with Jazz
Stravinsky’s Early Works

- Symphony in Eb - Fireworks
- Petrouchka (1911)
  - starting polytonality
- Most famous: Le Sacre du printemps (1910)
Rite of Spring

• Commissioned by Diaghilev
• primitivism - a pastorale of the prehistoric world (Russia)
• calls for an adolescent girl who has been chosen for sacrifice to dance herself to death
• caused a riot at its premiere in Paris (May 29, 1913)
  – Saint-Saens walked out
  – People cat called
• Emancipates rhythms: 5/2 7/8 5/16 3/16 etc.
  – Eighth note groupings 9+2+6+3+4+5+3
  – disorients the listener but allows dancers to maintain 8 measure phrases
• Lots of percussion
Stravinsky’s Last Years

• Lives out end of life in Southern California
• “Revises” his earlier works to reestablish copyrights
• Attracted to works of Webern and the 12 tone method
New thoughts

• During the early 1900s many new thinkers were establishing new schools of thought

• Darwin
• Marx
• Freud
• Einstein

• Music also moved in bold (and controversial) new directions
Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

- Born into the German tradition
  - influenced by Wagner, friend of Mahler
- Devised the 12 tone system
- Between 1905-1912 moved away from a chromatic style around a tonal center to a system known as atonality
- Ends career teaching at UCLA
Atonality

- Music not based on harmonic and melodic relationships revolving around a key center
- 12 tone music gives equal importance to each chromatic pitch
  - 12 tone music need not be atonal
- In atonal music harmonies cease to have their conventional functions
- Any combination of tones can constitute a chord not requiring resolution
  - Schoenberg: “The emancipation of the dissonance”
- Sprechstimme
  - speech voice or speech song
  - approximates pitches but keeps close to notated rhythm
Berg

• Studied with Schoenberg for 6 years
  – Opus 1 - piano concertos
    • Schoenberg style with Wagnerian chromaticism
  – 1921 Wozzeck (opera)
    • 3 act in 5 sections each
    • Took 137 rehearsals
    • premiered Dec. 14, 1925
  – 1935 Violin concerto (tribute to Bach)
  – 1935 Jack the Ripper (opera)
• Showed that the 12 system could be expressive
Anton Webern
(1883-1945)

• Another of Schoenberg’s pupils
• Personifies the cool, constructive side of 12 tone composition
• Goes beyond 12 tones into serialism
  – Individual note is of primary significance
  – Structure is gone
  – Themes are reduced to fragments
• Accidentally shot by US army in 1945
Electronic Resources

- Greatest new factor in music after 1950
- musique concrete (late 1940s) consisted of recorded tones or natural sounds transformed through mechanical and electronic means and played back on tape
- Freed composers from dependence on human performers
  - have complete control over the sound of their composition
  - few performers had the time or training to perform new works appropriately
Electronic Music

• First produced by combining, modifying and controlling in various ways the output of oscillators

• Sound synthesizes were developed to make the process easier
  – call on a pitch from a keyboard
  – control harmonics, waveform, resonance

• By 1980s electronic keyboards connected to computers allowed synthesized music to be produced outside of large studios (MIDI)
Influences of Electronic music

• Allows composers to work with dispersing sounds throughout a concert hall
• Allows for faster and easier notation
• Absence of performer hinders acceptance
  – public responds more to performers than composers
• Not likely to supersede live music
Indeterminacy

• Throughout music there has been a continual interaction between composer and performer
  – specified notation and interpretation
• Composer can choose to give more choice to the performer
• Performances are seldom the same
• A recording of such a work can only capture that one performance
America’s 20th Century

• US led the production of new music in the late 20th century
• Largely an expansion of European music
  – Many Europeans moved or traveled in the US
    • Bartok, Hindemith, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Weill, Milhaud
Immigration and Music

• Diverse immigrant music brought with them elements of their music

• German immigration after 1848 crop failure
  – many musicians and teachers come to America

• African spirituals
  – Had pre-civil war history but not published until after war
  – Slave songs of the United States (1867)
    • Made popular by the polished and enthusiastic performances of the Fisk jubilee Singers from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee
Brass & Wind Bands

• Instrumental counterparts of singing schools
• First attached to military units
• Later common in towns, cities and schools
• Very popular in parades
• By 1960 over 50,000 school wind bands in US
• Main training ground for African-American musicians
  – Performed from notation with little improvisation
  – A swinging, syncopated style that distinguished them from all white bands.

Band Leader
George Ives
Charles Ives (1874-1954)

First distinctly American art-music composer

Born in Dannbury, Connecticut

Studied with his father and later at Yale

Father was a band leader and inspired Charles with wild experiments

- 2 band marching in different directions
- new instruments
- altered round singing

His musical innovations were not popular, forcing him to make a living as a insurance salesman.
Ives

- Most highly original composer in America
- Polyrhythms before Stravinsky
- First to use discord
- First to try polytonality
- First to try atonality
- Quarter tones before Cowell
- First to try indeterminacy
- First to play inside the piano
- Use of borrowed material not only as quotation, but also as a basis for a composition
Charles Ives

- Compositions (mostly between 1890-1922)
  - 200 songs
  - 5 violin sonatas
  - chamber music
  - 2 quartets
  - 2 piano sonatas with essays
  - 5 symphonies
  - orchestral music
Ive’s Thoughts

• “Beauty in music is too often confused with something that lets the ears lie back in an easy chair” – Ives

• many works are un-performable
  – Un-singable
  – Out of range

• Wrote songs as “they wanted to be written”
Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

- National idioms with technical polish
- First American to study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris
- Trend to simpler music
  - Appalachian Spring (1944)
    - first a ballet
    - better known as an orchestral suite
  - Incorporates the Shaker Hymn “Tis the Gift to be Simple”
John Phillips Sousa

• Known as the “March King”
• Joined Marines at age 13
  – His father forced him to enlist after he tried to join the circus
• Became the conductor of the Marine Band

• Famous Songs
  – Washington Post
  – Stars and Stripes Forever
George Crumb

- Imaginative at coaxing new sounds from ordinary instruments
  - Chisel on piano strings
  - Paper between harp strings
  - Detuning
  - Vocalizing into an amplified piano

- Example: Black Angels
John Cage (1912-1992)

- End of Western music
- Started 12 tone, moved away quickly
- Indeterminacy - random techniques of all kinds
  - Raised questions about the nature and purpose of music
  - Extend spontaneity to a point where all control is abandoned, the listener simply hears sounds, each as they come along
- Music is not expected to communicate feeling or meaning
- All noise is acceptable, even accidental noise
Cage’s Music

• Variations IV (1963)
  – “for any number of players, any sounds or combination of sounds produced by any means, with or without other activities”

• Imaginary Landscapes
  – #2 Percussion
  – #3 Percussion and live electronics
  – #4 12 radios (24 performers)

• 1958 Piano Concerto
  – for as many instruments as desired

• 1968 – HPSCHD

• Greatest surrender to chance
  – 4’33” (1952)
Redefining Music

- Nothing more than sound organized in time under human direction
Musical Comedy

• Broadway musical reflected the fashions popular at any given time

• Unlike singspiel, opera or operetta
  – Plots built around songs and dances

• A few cinematic versions survive as have some songs
Broadway Composers

- George M. Cohan (1878-1964)
- Cole Porter (1891-1964)
- Rodgers & Hammerstein (Hart)
- Lerner & Lowe
- Leonard Bernstein (1910-1990)
- Stephen Sondheim (1930 - )
- Irving Berlin (1888-1989)
- George & Ira Gershwin

Rogers & Hammerstein
George Gershwin (1898-1937)

- Famous song writer
- Several successful shows with brother Ira
- Erased boundaries between vernacular and classical forms
  - Third Stream (between art music and popular music)
- Porgy & Bess (1935)
  - Produced as both opera and musical
- Rhapsody in Blue
  - combined jazz elements with Romantic Piano style
Conclusions

• Four basic components of Western Music as early as 11th century
  – Composition
    • performance & controlled improvisation
    • Performer not only a mediator between composer and audience, but a participant
  – Notation
  – Principles of order
  – Polyphony
• “serious” music requires some effort to understand
• Audience has always been a small fraction of the populations