20th Century Music

1900-present
Life in the 20th Century

- Politics
- Society & Culture
- Technology & Communication
Politics

- World War I 1914-1918
- Great Depression
- World War II 1939-1945
- The Cold War
- Vietnam/Korea
Society & Culture

- Segregation: Civil Rights Movement
- Women’s Movement
- (Internment camps/concentration camps)
- Changing attitudes: questioning progress
Advances in Technology

- Travel
  - autos
  - space travel
  - airplane

- Medical advances
  - treatment for diseases
  - penicillin
  - research
  - euthanasia
Advances in Communication

- telephone
- telegraph mail
- internet
- fax machine
- cell phone
- satellite
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Timbre

- All sounds are possible
  - Even no sounds
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcHnL7aS64Y
  - 4’33” by John Cage (listening excerpt)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oh-o3udlmy8

- New instruments and the sounds of popular music have changed the “soundscape” of the 20th century
- Instrument played in extreme registers or in unusual ways
- Unusual instruments and instrumental groupings
Harmony

- Intricate harmonies
- Extreme dissonance
- New chord structure
Tonality

- Alternatives to the traditional tonal system
  - bitonality-use of 2 keys at the same time
  - Polytonality-use of 2 or more keys at the same time
  - atonality-absence of a tonality or key
  - 12-tone system (twelve tones are used in the same order over and over again)
Rhythm

- changing meters

- Polyrhythms
  - 2 or more contrasting, independent rhythms used at the same time

- complex rhythms

- Ostinato
  - the same rhythmic pattern repeated throughout the piece
Melody

- melodies can be long and abstract or reduced to small gesture
- melodies are often not very song-like
Style

- Vague outlines of melody and rhythm
- Soft and colorful tones and shimmering effects are used
- Large variety of styles
  - Dissonance
  - Prepared instruments
  - New notation types
  - Precise dynamics
  - Phrasing and tempo indications are used
Texture

- Contrapuntal textures
  - art traditions

- Homophonic textures
  - popular traditions
Form

- composers experiment with “aleatoric” music
  - form and structure are determined by chance

- form can be controlled to an almost infinite degree
Keyboard instruments

- Electronic keyboards
- Synthesizers
- Pianos
- Organ
Advent of Sound Recording

- distribution of music made possible by recording and was instrumental in the growth of popular styles

- recordings have changed the way we listen to music, works form all periods are available at any time

- techniques of recording and audio production have become important musical elements in their own right
The musical past

- Ambivalent attitudes toward the musical past
  - some composers trying to distance themselves from the past
    - asking the question “What can we do that hasn’t already been done?”
    - Debussy: “The century of the airplane ought to have its own music.”

- Some composers tried to return to some aspect of the past, especially the Classical Period
Widening Gap between “art” and “popular” music

- popular music especially jazz, country and rock became the central musical focus of the majority of people in the Western world

- art music less relevant in day-to-day life

- composers whose music has become more and more complex have widened the gap between art and popular music
Diversity

- More opportunities for women and African American composers especially after 1945
New Musical Developments
VOCABULARY

- Impressionism
  - served as a transitional bridge between the Romantic and the Modern period

- Expressionism
  - Aimed to represent the feeling from the inner perspective

- Atonalism
  - music without a strong tonal center

- Neo-classicism
  - composers incorporate classical elements in their music
**VOCABULARY**

- **12-tone music**
  - Music composed using the 12-tone series, created by Schoenberg, all 12 tones are used in a particular order

- **Serialism**
  - music created through mathematical methods

- **Indeterminism**
  - Chance or aleatoric music (John Cage) aimed to remove all creative choices from composer, leaving it all up to chance.

- **Minimalism**
  - employing miniscule change to music over an extended length of time, strove to create a near-hypnotic effect
Impressionism

Served as a transitional bridge between the Romantic and the Modern period
Impressionism

- designed to create a mood or atmosphere (or impressions)

- melodies tend to be short and often repeated in different contexts to give different moods.

- Use of non-traditional scale systems
  - pentatonic
  - whole-tone
  - exotic scales: Debussy was influenced by Asian music
Impressionism

- Chords not used in traditional ways of tension-release or V-I

- Led to wakened concept of tonality

- Major Composers
  - Debussy
  - Ravel
Listening #1

Debussy: Clair de Lune

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG-vmVrHOGE
Debussy: *The Afternoon of a Faun*
pg. 416-417 CD 7/1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWMUfIhAukU
Listening #3

Ravel: *Bolero*
pg. 421-423 CD 7/8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r30D3SW4OVw
Neo-classicism

Composers incorporate Classical elements in their music.
Neo-classicism

- Combined elements of the classical period (tonal center, clarity of form, melodic shape) with newer trends (complex rhythm, dissonance, chromaticism)
- Composers wanted to reconnect with the past, NOT revive it
- Favored absolute music for chamber groups
- Polyphonic texture used (fugue)
- Composers
  - Stravinsky
  - Hindemith
Listening #4

Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring
pg. 430-432 CD 7/15

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkwqPJZe8ms
(music starts at :40)
Listening #5

Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms
pg. 433-434 CD 7/26

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUSfrgPQjRM
Expressionism

Aimed to represent the feeling from the inner perspective
Expressionism

- Seeks to portray composers of emotions
  - Almost the opposite of impressionism
  - NOT to create impressions or moods but to express intense feelings and emotions
  - Emotional expression is more important than anything else

- Impressionism portrays the world around the composer while impressionism portrays the world inside the composer (what is being felt)

- Ignored traditional and focused on expressing emotions at all costs

- Often dissonant, fragmented and densely written
Listening #6

*Berg: Wozzeck* Act 3, Scenes 4 & 5

*Pg. 447-452 CD 7/32*

**Scene 4**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWMMhfY3uIY

**Scene 5**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9jEzG3xT9M
Atonalism

Music without a strong tonal center.
Atonality

- The systematic avoidance of any kind of tonal center
- No tonic, no simple familiar chords, no major or minor scale patterns, no octave leaps
- Treats all notes as though they are of equal importance (in tonal music the tonic is the most important)
Listening #7

Schoenberg: Moondrunk

pg. 443 CD 7/27

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_6JCGB2kxl&list=RDb_6JCGB2kxl
12-tone music

Music composed using the 12-tone series, created by Schoenberg, all 12 tones are used in a particular order.
12-tone music

- Created by Arnold Schoenberg as a reaction to all of the chaotic music from 1910-1920

- became the leading way to compose atonal music

- 12 tones are heard in a specific progression
Listening #8

Schoenberg:  
A Survivor from Warsaw  
pg. 444 CD 7/28  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CFnjJiElpks
Serialism

Music created through mathematical methods
Serialism

- music created through mathematical methods
- composers came up with ways to serialize other musical elements such as note length, silence, texture, and volume
- composer was in control of every aspect of the piece
- challenge was to write good music so it sounds logical in some way
- difficult for the average listener to understand due to its complexity
- 12-tone system is one type of serialism
Listening #9

Babbitt: Semi-Simple Variations
pg. 497-99 CD 8/23-28

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb5Klc-8WPY&list=RDRb5Klc-8WPY
Indeterminism

Chance or aleatoric music (John Cage) aimed to remove all creative choices from composer, leaving it all up to chance.
Indeterminism (Chance Music/Aleatoric)

- Pioneered by John Cage
- aimed to remove all creative choice from composers, leaving it up to chance
- opposite of serialism where the composer controls every aspect
- relied on coin flips or dice rolls to decide how to play a certain note
- now viewed as a passing fad of the mid 20th century
Minimalism

Employing miniscule change to music over an extended length of time, strove to create a near-hypnotic effect
Minimalism

- Use of a small (or minimal) amount of musical material
- Musical patterns are repeated over and over and over….these patterns are then varied over long stretches of time
- often the listener cannot readily perceive these changes (often sounds like a broken record with no change happening)
- often has a trance-like or hypnotic effect
- This style has spread into pop music, esp. techno music where there is a need for dance music that lasts for hours at a time
Listening #10

Glass: Einstein on the Beach
Knee Play #1

pg. 507CD 8/34

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIDuZq7RVAM
More Composers

Webern  Bartok
Ives    Gershwin
Still   Copland
Cage
Listening #11

Webern, Five Pieces for Orchestra, 3rd piece
pg. 455 CD 7/31

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-YByY9lGfM
Listening #12

Bartok, Concerto for Orchestra, 2nd Game of Pairs
pg. 461 CD 7/46

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAj89zPMZ4Q
Listening #13

Ives, Variations on America,
CD 1/20 AOC

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs0VjhNWqn8
Listening #14

Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue
pg. 475 old CD 6/14

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynEOo28lsbc
(music only)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7s39QMJIYBA
(Fantasia Video)
Listening #15

Still: Afro-American Symphony 3rd Movement
pg. 479 CD 8/12

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7ZOAVraaRU
Listening #16

Copland: Appalachian Spring, Section 7 “Simple Gifts”

pg. 483 CD

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5EkDe0VHOs
Listening #17

Cage: Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano, Sonata II pg. 497 CD 7/53

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xObkMpQqUyU