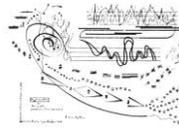


The Twentieth Century (1900-)

The early twentieth century was a time of extraordinary change. In 1903, the Wright brothers made the first powered flight, 1914 marked the start of the first World War, in 1929 the Wall Street Crash caused Great Depression and in 1939, World War II broke out. The story of music in the 20th century is largely one of **EXPLORATION** and **EXPERIMENT**, leading to a fascinating variety of new trends, new techniques and, in some cases, entirely new sounds. As each new trend appeared, a new 'label' was found to describe it, but they all had one thing in common: a deliberate reaction to 19th century Romantic style. Not all 20th century composers use extreme techniques, and some have continued to compose in what is basically a warm Romantic style while interjecting a degree of **DISSONANCE** and **RHYTHMIC VITALITY** which clearly marks their music as belonging to the 20th century. The most important trends and techniques in 20th century are given below:

Impressionism Serialism	20 th Century Nationalism Neo-Classicism	Jazz Influences Microtonality	Polytonality Electronic Music	Atonality Experimentalism	Expressionism Minimalism	Pointillism Music Concrète	
<p>Melody & Dynamics</p> <p>Often CONJUNCT with WIDE LEAPS and making use of CHROMATIC and DISSONANT intervals – angular and spiky, short, and fragmentary rather than long and winding. In some pieces, the ingredient of melody may be lacking altogether! EXTREMES OF DYNAMICS (e.g. <i>fff</i>-><i>ffff</i>; <i>ppp</i>-><i>pppp</i>)</p>		<p>Harmony</p> <p>EXTREME DISSONANCES, a greater proportion of DISCORDS to concords and use of NOTE CLUSTERS. Frequent CHROMATIC HARMONY (e.g. diminished 7ths) and use of EXTENDED/ADDED CHORDS (added 7ths, 9ths, 13ths and 15ths) for colour and expression. UNRESOLVED HARMONIC TENSION (e.g. unresolved 7ths) and WEAK/BLURRED TONAL CENTRES giving no clear sense of key. Use of the WHOLE TONE SCALE, POLYTONALITY/ATONALITY and NOTE/TONE ROWS (PRIME, INVERSION, RETROGRADE, RETROGRADE INVERSION)</p>		<p>Rhythm</p> <p>VIGOROUS and DYNAMIC with much use of SYNCOPIATION. UNUSUAL TIME SIGNATURES (5 or 7 beats), CHANGES OF TIME SIGNATURE (often from bar to bar), POLYRHYTHMS, use of OSTINATO devices to 'drive the music forward'. IRREGULAR ACCENTS often used to remove clarity of metre.</p>		<p>Timbres and Sonorities</p> <p>Greater concern with timbre and sonority including strange, intriguing, and exotic sounds; striking, sometimes explosive, contrasts; expansion of the PERCUSSION section of the orchestra and more emphasis on PERCUSSIVE SOUNDS in general. Unfamiliar sounds from strange instruments such as EXTREME PITCH RANGES, MUTED BRASS EFFECTS, STRING EFFECTS (bowing behind the bridge or tapping on the body of the instrument with the bow). TOTALLY NEW SOUNDS often involving ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT and MAGNETIC TAPE. Use of SPRECHSTIMME (<i>speech-singing</i>).</p>	
<p>Impressionism</p> <p>A term borrowed from French artists who painted to give an 'impression' of real-life images such as the eye may take in at a single glance: an impression of vague, hazy outlines, and the play of shimmering light and movement rather than making their paintings look 'real'. Impressionist music was EXPRESSIVE with SUBTLE ORCHESTRATION, HARMONY AND TEXTURE. The orchestra used like a painter's palette of colours often often employing DIFFERENT PLAYING TECHNIQUES (<i>pizzicato, mutes, sur la touche, piano pedals, etc</i>) and featuring INSTRUMENTS FROM OTHER CULTURES (such as the gamelan orchestra from Indonesia). Harmony was still TONAL, but the tonality was often blurred by the use of EXTENDED or ADDED CHORDS (the addition of 7th, 9th, 11th etc to the basic triad). The INTERVALS OF A 4th AND 5th were particularly popular. The music was often PROGRAMMATIC, based on vague ideas. <i>Examples of Impressionist Composers: Debussy ("Preludes" for piano), Ravel, Faure</i></p> 		<p>Expressionism</p> <p>Another term borrowed from painting where vivid pictures expressed the artists' innermost states of mind: dark, secret terrors and fantastic visions and mental breakdowns! Experimental music is ATONAL (or 12 TONE MUSIC where the 12 chromatic tones are of equal importance) in a style characterised by EXTREMELY DISSONANT HARMONIES, FRENZIED, DISJOINTED MELODIES including WIDE LEAPS and VIOLENT, EXPLOSIVE CONTRASTS with instruments often played harshly at the EXTREMES OF THEIR PITCH RANGES and HUGE ORCHESTRAS were used to give a wide variety of TONE COLOURS, TIMBRES and SONORITIES. Most expressionist pieces are short in length due to the lack of melodic and thematic development (cf. Classical and Romantic periods). <i>Examples of Expressionist Composers: Schoenberg, Berg, Webern</i></p> 		<p>Serialism</p> <p>Serialism developed out of EXPRESSIONISM. Having abandoned major-minor key system, Schoenberg developed the TWELVE-NOTE SYSTEM which would bring unity and cohesion to an atonal piece. TONE ROWS were made by arranging the 12 notes of the CHROMATIC SCALE into an order (the PRIME) on which the entire composition is based. All 12 notes are of equal importance and none should appear out of turn. The 12 note tone row could be used in INVERSION (intervals upside down), RETROGRADE (backwards) and RETROGRADE INVERSION (the inversion row backwards). These 4 rows would then become the bases of the composition, used either vertically (as chords) or horizontally (as melody). <i>Examples of Serialist Composers: Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Stravinsky</i></p> 			
<p>Neo-Classicism</p> <p>Also called "The New Classicism" another post-war music style where composers looked back to pre-Romantic period styles: Renaissance, Baroque and Classical periods. They 'fused' forms such as the toccata, passacaglia, Concerto Grosso, Fugal forms and Ostinato devices, with more modern 20th trends such as ABRUPT MODULATIONS, SUDDEN MELODIC TWISTS, DELIBERATE 'WRONG NOTES', POLYTONALITY, 'MOTOR RHYTHMS', POLYPHONIC TEXTURES, CLASHING DISSONANCES, SMALLER ORCHESTRAS focusing on sharply contrasted timbres and sonorities often emphasising woodwind and percussion sections. <i>Examples of Neo-Classical Composers: Stravinsky, Prokofiev ("Classical Symphony"), Hindemith, Ravel, Vaughan Williams, Poulenc</i></p> 		<p>Electronic Music</p> <p>Originating in Germany in the 1950's includes SOUNDS PICKED UP BY A MICROPHONE and sounds PRODUCED FROM ELECTRONIC SOUND-GENERATORS often ELECTRONICALLY MODIFIED: volume, filtering, adding vibrato, reverberation or echo. Sounds can be superimposed, mixed, or chopped into fragments. TAPE LOOPS can be used to create an OSTINATO EFFECT. MUSIC CONCRÈTE (music composed by directly recording sounds onto a magnetic tape rather than in an abstract way of writing notes down on paper) techniques also used: altering the pitch (glissando), reversing sounds, changing the articulation or attack and decay of sounds by tape editing.</p>		<p>Experimental Styles</p> <p>As the century progressed, composers became ever more experimental in their approach to composition. This could include such ideas as: POLYTONALITY, QUARTERTONES, and MICROTONES (Ives), Use of ELECTRONIC SONORITIES AND MANIPULATION (Varese, Stockhausen, Boulez), ALEATORIC MUSIC: GRAPHIC SCORES (Penderecki, Ligeti, Stockhausen, Cardew), ALEATORIC MUSIC: CHANCE (a degree of change or unpredictability either in the composing, performing, or both e.g. throwing a dice) (<i>Stockhausen, Boulez, Lutoslawski, Cage</i>)</p> 			
<p>Minimalism</p> <p>A style begun in America as a reaction against the experimental styles of the mid-late 20th Century. Characterised by REPETITIVE IDEAS, LAYERING OF SOUNDS, GRADUAL CHANGE. <i>Examples of Minimalist Composers: Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Michael Nyman</i></p> 		<p>Les Six</p> <p>A group of French composers (<i>Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Germaine Tailleferre</i>), who tried to write in a style that challenged the Post Romantic style of Wagner and the Impressionist style of Debussy. They were rather a group of artistic types who were interested in SURREALISM and CUBISM and the music is often slightly comic. It often uses BITONALITY or POLYTONALITY.</p>		<p>20th Century Nationalism</p> <p>A continuation of the nationalist trend from the Romantic period. Composers continued to use folksongs, dance music, marching songs, popular songs, and hymns of their country in their compositions. The collection of folksongs became popular and then studying their rhythmic patterns and melodies, often based on UNUSUAL SCALES OR MODES. <i>Examples of 20th Nationalist Composers: Aaron Copland, Vaughan Williams, Bartók, Kodály, Sibelius, Shostakovich</i></p>			