**Modern Music (1900 – present)**

**Modern Times**

* **Camera :** 
  + Greatly affected painters and artists and how they worked. Now that people didn’t have to get a self-portrait done by an artist, artists focused on other types of paintings.
* **Paint tube**
  + Increased efficiency of painting, and allowed very mobile painting (taking their painting on the road and painting nature)

**Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)**

* **Impressionism (Realists)**
  + Began as a reaction against overemotional Romanticism; they were concerned primarily with the effects of light, color, and atmosphere
* **Symbolism (unrealistic movement)**
  + Began as a revolt against the “realism” of words in poetry. Poets tended to obscure the immediate subject of their poetry by crafting elaborate metaphors or symbols (very much similar to Wagner’s leitmotifs).
* Debussy originally hated the term impressionist, although his work is similar to the impressionist paintings of the time; keeping the main idea at bay and writing music almost as if splashing paint on a painting.
* Debussy’s influences:
  + Russian music (Nadezhda von Meck)
  + Asian music (Paris World Exposition of 1889)
  + Wagner (Though he did not wish to imitate him, Debussy’s themes and motives are usually fragmentary, avoiding cadences and a hard outline of form)
* He was inspired by literary and pictorial ideas. His titles suggest fleeting moods and atmospheres. His music sounds free, rhythmically flexible, unfolding as a kaleidoscope of colors and images, shapes, and patterns without any conventional symphonic design. **”Pleasure is the law”**
* **The Dialogue of the Wind and Waves, from La Mer (1910) [CD4 - #7]**
  + Very free sounding so as to replicate the image of the sea and its changing nature
  + Utilizes various techniques:
    - Tone color
    - Brief but frequent solos
    - Strings and woodwinds prominent
    - Parallel chords and extended chords
    - Scale Variations
      * Pentatonic scale (5 – note scale)
      * Whole-tone scale (all whole steps)
      * Chromatic scale (all half steps)
      * Octatonic scale (alternates whole and half steps)
      * Church modes
  + Supposed to conjure ideas of being alone at sea

**French and Russian Cultural Alliance**

* **The Ballets Russes**
  + A ballet troupe originally from Russia that moved to France to perform due to not being able to perform in Russia because of massive civil unrest and the Tsar of Russia preventing ballets to perform in any theater in Russia. The most famous Russian Ballet troupe at the time
  + Orignial Ballet Russ survived to 1929. The second Ballet Russ was a touring group that toured the world. They came to Oklahoma eventually, and signed the first colored ballet dancer, Maria Tallchief. She helped organize the dance school here in Oklahoma
* **Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971): The Rite of Spring (1913) [CD4 - #8]**
  + Subtitled “Scenes from Pagan Russia”
  + He gets the opportunity to write for the Ballet Russes after the previously commissioned composer succumbed to alcoholism. He became instantly successful
  + This ballet is in **“Les Fauve”** (the Wild Beast) style, a style that utilized “**primitivism**” (in music, it is the deliberate evocation of primitive power through insistent rhythms and percussive sounds). Primitive or preliterate culture was an interest shared by many artists and scholars in they deemed a decadent European society
  + For Ex:
    - Picasso’s “Les Demoiselles”, and Freud’s “Totem and Taboo”.
  + In this ballet, Stravinsky explores a primitive pagan, cultural justification for violent ritual with an abiding interest in contemporary societies’ corrupt rationalization for aggressiveness
  + Rhythm is at the heart of Stravinsky’s “New Language”. He uses: Irregular rhythms, polyrhythms, changing meters, polymeters, syncopations, and the ostinato. In addition to violent dissonant sounds and polytonality, he explores the extended range of both the bassoon and clarinet. He incorporates noise like and percussive sounds as viable tone colors, often utilizing non-percussive instruments (the strings, woodwinds, and brass) as extensions of the percussion section. The traditional distinction between consonance and dissonance was abandoned
  + At the premier of this ballet, one of the most famous riots related to music occurred. Many in the audience found the music inventive and wonderful, while many others found it horrid and carnal. Fist fights broke out, and Stravinsky found this very disheartening. However, Diaghilev told him famously “Success is easy, Scandal requires genius!”
  + Stravinsky was not only Russian, but also Jewish. At the onset of WWII, Stravinsky fled to the U.S. and contributed to the American music scene.

**Charles Ailes**

* Grows up in a music family, his father was a bandmaster. In his home he and his father experimented with various different and radical piano techniques, such as playing on the strings of the piano rather than the keys and playing two pianos at once tuned in different fashions
* He went to Yale to study, where he was a very bad student but very experimental musicians. He meets his future wife, melody, in Yale
* Eventually, he joins up with a college buddy and forms and insurance company which grew his wealth exponentially. In his free time, however, he is composing.
* He becomes recognized after his death mainly
* Was a part of the New England Transcendentalists, who were a group that wanted to find out how the mind works and how surrealism works, a philosophy Ailes used throughout his life in his insurance company as well as his composing

**George Crumb (1929):**

* **Black Angels, Scenes 6 and 7 from Part II [CD5 - #6]**
  + This work falls into three parts:
    - Departure – fall from grace
    - Absence – spiritual annihilation
    - Return – redemption
  + Surrealistic landscape: a journey into the “dark land” of human conflict.
  + Quasi-Programmatic Allusions (such as God versus Devil) serve his purposes as symbolic of conflict rather than a literal program for the piece, although the essential polarity implies more than a purely metaphysical reality
  + **Musical Quotation**: to serve as talismans of opposing forces at work in this piece. Crumb quotes earlier works to sound as echoes of ancient music (i.e. Shubert’s “Death and the Maiden”, the medieval chant from the Requiem Mass, “Dies Irae”, Bernard Hermann’s score for the film “Psycho”). Other musical symbolism includes use of the tri-tone (“Devils interval”), the “devil’s trill”, and the violin as the “devil’s instrument”, which he uses to seduce the innocent to corruption. (Famous quotations can bridge the gap between traditional audiences and the avant-garde).
  + **Extended String Technique**: tone-paint images of swarming insects, frequently encountered in jungle terrain, with obvious inferences to Biblical plagues, which are divine in nature. Insects may also be appreciated as a manifestation of unspoiled creation (possessing the quality of being natural). Strings are asked to bow their strings near the tuning pegs to simulate an ancient consort of viols. In addition to playing their instruments, they are asked to vocalize and play either maracas, tam-tams, or water-tuned crystal goblets that are bowed to create an ethereal timbre.3
  + **Numerical Symbolism:** numbers figure prominently in musical compositions. Here, Crumb uses symbolically powerful numbers for tones, durations, patterns of repetition, and so forth, hoping to draw upon their extra-musical significance. Though these associations can be difficult to hear, there are others made vivid. For example, the ominous number 13 is ritualistically shouted in Japanese, Russian, and Swahili.
  + This work was written as a response to the Vietnam War. He claims it as a post holocaust parable. The piece is written for amplified string quartet, and each section of it is represents a quote.

**Traditional Musical Classifications (Bruno Nettl, 1960’s): Classical, Traditional, and Popular**

* **Jazz (Classical)**
  + The history of jazz flows out of many traditions including **ragtime**, the blues, the improvised music of African-Americans in the decades following emancipation, spirituals, and the various music of West Africa as remembered by the men and women who came to this country from there
  + **Ragtime:** is a classical, or concert music, as it benefited from the participation and contributions of several composers with excellent classical training. It was notated and published, leading to widespread performance and real popularity. Many jazz musicians used them as a framework for their improvisatory performance
  + **Scott Joplin (1868 – 1917)** 
    - Scott Joplin is the composer that popularized the ragtime genre, which had been around for a while.
    - He moved to Missouri to teach piano. He frequently played at the Maple Leaf club, a club that supported the “Sporting Lifestyle”, the high life for the African American population in the U.S.
    - He often composed ragtime pieces for this club, the Maple Leaf Rag being an example
    - After his music was published, he became paranoid that people would end up playing his music wrong and people wouldn’t understand what he was trying to do, and so he published “teachings” to educate people on ragtime
    - Joplin is also known for writing “The Entertainer”
    - **Maple Leaf Rag [CD5 - #7]**
      * Characteristics: use of syncopation (he calls for accented notes on the off-beats), a jaunty march tempo, unusual tonal plan, homophonic texture, and a striding bass line
      * The form is basically binary form:

**A | B**

**a a bb a | cc dd**

* **The advent of jazz on record**
  + **Louis Armstrong (1901 – 1971) and his Hot Five**
    - Jazz came about in New Orleans, and with recording devices coming about during this time, jazz was becoming more and more popular.
    - Armstrong had a lot going against him: his mother was a prostitute, he didn’t know his father, he grew up in an orphanage, he was poor, and he was African-American.
    - He got his first trumpet from a donation to his orphanage, which started him on his career.
    - Armstrong singlehandedly made jazz a solo art, rather than an amalgamation of improvisation, which was an extremely democratic idea for music
    - He introduced swing to jazz, as well as scat singing
    - He changed the way the trumpet could be interpreted
    - He was a big deal
    - Lilian Hardin (composer of this work, pianist in the group, and Louis’ second wife): **“Hotter Than That” [CD5 - #8]**
      * This recording features four renditions of the song, each called a “chorus” (each a distinct texture)
      * Trumpet solo – clarinet solo – scat singing with guitar – back to trumpet
* **Big Band Jazz**
  + An ensemble of fairly large scale including several trumpets, trombones, saxophones, clarinets, a pianist, a drummer, and a bass player – needed in order for the music to be heard in the far reaches of the dance floor. It also required an arranger to keep things together
  + **Benny Goodman**
    - Goodman was an extremely famous band leader who was known for being the first to bring together a group of multiracial people in the same band
  + **Duke Ellington (1899 – 1974)**
    - Pianist, composer, arranger
    - Born in DC, and grew up very poor. His mother was a house cleaner for the wealthy in DC. With the money she got, she secured a good classical training for Duke.
    - Ellington became one of the most famous jazz composers ever, composing over 1000 works. He always surrounded himself with the best musicians possible, and would write music to highlight the skills of these musicians
    - **Ko-Ko (1940) [CD5 - #9]**
      * Made at a time that allowed for an entire band in the recording studio (vinyl)
      * Originally intended as a movement of an opera that Ellington wrote that never got performed
      * Starts with a baritone sax four note rhythm that becomes the central idea of the rest of the piece. This rhythm is reminiscent of Bach’s 5th (Da Da Da Daaaaa). The piece also throws back to Bach with the idea of forward-spinning.
      * 6th chorus has the climax of the piece. The entire orchestra is playing the melody here, but gives way to a solo bass player.
      * Ends with a coda, where everything is reduced to the original rhythm.
* **Avant-Garde Jazz after WWII**
  + **Be-Bop:** (has been called a “warrior culture”) was a form of jazz meant for connoisseurs who wanted to compare the intricate details of complex solos played at blistering tempos and within a super-sophisticated harmonic language
  + **Thelonious Monk (1917 – 1982)**
    - This pianist composer became the model for the Beatnik look, with his goatee and beanie and his hip way of talking. Be-Bop musicians preferred to keep be-bop an outsider and almost exclusively African-American art form.
    - Monk’s approach to composition is radical. He had a magical gift for saying more with less, with his use of dissonances and the whole-tone scale the listener doesn’t have a clear sense of the tune and never will (similar to Wagner’s music)
    - **Mysterioso (recorded 1948) [CD5 - #11]**
      * Starts out with a series of 6ths. This is the source for the rest of the work to be based on.
* **Free Jazz or “Out Jazz”**
  + As the Civil Rights movement in this country was meeting stiff opposition from some white Americans entrenched in old patterns of thought and behavior, radical African-American musicians were looking for an even more liberated and combative form of jazz. Because large numbers of White Americans were embracing be-bop, for free jazz players it signaled the need to move in another direction, one that would create a still more perfect “outsider art”
  + **Cecil Taylor (b. 1929)**
    - Pianist/composer
    - Studied at Julliard
    - **“Air” from the World of Cecil Taylor (1960) [CD5 - #12]**
      * Listeners may find the absence of a recurring motive, and no pre conceived material around which to improvise, difficult to follow, but radical enthusiasts of jazz in the 1960s became passionate about free jazz precisely because of this radical freedom achieved within the music itself
      * Un-accompanied drum solo starts out, and then Taylor comes out and mimics the drum solo on the piano with several a-tonal “banging”, with a melody slowly creeping in. A be-bop style sax comes in with a solo
      * Eventually just runs out of ideas and ends (doesn’t have a pre-determined ending)

**Postmodernism**

* The term comes from the field of architecture; *form following function* was giving way to a play of forms drawn from history (*Play and Process* over *Purpose and Outcome*). Characteristic procedures used by postmodernists must be one of two sensibilities:
  + Resistance: it combatively seeks to draw distinctions between postmodern work and the work of modernists. It is characterized by the active distancing of present practices, both artistic and social, from the practices of the past that no longer gets to dictate the terms of its meaning or value – can be used in playful combinations without respect for original context or function
  + Reaction: this attitude accepts the generic procedures of the past, and turns those procedures into the service of a game of forms
* **John Adams (b. 1947)**
  + **Postmodern Opera:** Adams does not quote any specific work from the past, but his pieces are full of styles common in earlier music.
  + **“News Has a Kind of Mystery” from Nixon in China (1987) [CD5-#18]**
    - Here, he uses fairly steady pulses and small-scale repetition in the manner of the minimalists, but he links this to a chromatic harmonic language comparable to Wagner. Adams achieves a form of musical ju-jitsu as he manages to keep simultaneously two mutually exclusive sets of past musical practices in balance.
    - Written about President Nixon’s famous visit to China in 1972. However, Adams, nor his librettist Alice Goodman (b. 1958), appears the least bit interested in making any political statements in this opera. Adams engages the genre in all its complexities: it needs extremely skillful, professional singers, needs a large professional symphony orchestra, it has a French style ballet woven into the story, and each major character get to sing a stupendous aria.
    - All conventions are in place, but none serve their original functions – a fine example of *reaction*