

# MUSC361: Music in Western Culture After 1900

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## Unit 1

### Understanding Modernism

- **Aesthetics:** What does modernism sound like?
  - Dissolution of tonality
  - Dissolution of rhythm/meter
  - Dissolution of traditional forms/genres
  - New (a)tonalities/rhythms/forms
- **Ideology:** What are modernism values or beliefs?
  - Art should be difficult, should challenge audience with something radical
  - Art should be new (new languages, constantly reinventing/evolving music, disrupting past musical conventions)
  - Art should respond to society (critical of current events e.g. wars, social movements).
- **Limits:** Do these examples fit into our definition of modernism
  - Modernism is an exclusionary discourse (narrow mindset e.g. jazz wasn't included in modernism)
    - \* Often anti-popular music
    - \* Often anti-“conservative” music (didn't like composers who focused on old style of music)
  - Modernism is a racialized and gendered discourse (usually focused on only white men)
- **Interdisciplinary:** aesthetics, ideology, and limits affect art in other fields (e.g. visual art). Also modernist arts are collaborating across disciplines (different fields influencing other fields)
  - Visual art focused on abstraction and criticizing society/modern issues
  - Modernism writing comments on society/modern issues
  - **Gesamtkunstwerk** – Collaboration across disciplines

### Introduction to Arnold Schoenberg

- Personal crisis/psychological exploration: Gerstl affair/death
- Idea of Expressionism: modernist artistic movement in the early 20th century
  - Outer world mimics psychological turmoil
  - “Art belongs to the unconscious”
- Interdisciplinary (influenced by Stefan George's poetry and his symbolism/expressionism)
- Historical justification
- Vocal writing: Sprechstimme – speech-song
- Instrumentation: compact chamber ensemble – instead of Wagnerian orchestra
  - Each song rotates instruments
- Harmony: early (free) atonality – still experimenting with atonal music writing
  - Rising minor 3rd, descending major 3rd theme
  - passacaglia: repeated baseline
  - roots his modernism/atonality in history
    - \* “Emancipation of dissonance”

## Wassily Kandinsky

Thought that creation of art as an “internal necessity”. Focused on abstract art, specifically geometry. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*

- Extremely disliked realism and materialism
- Thought the general audience is not smart enough to understand his art

## Mahler

“A symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything”

Common themes between symphonies

- Big philosophical themes – death, love, etc
- Maximalism – maximize every element of the symphonic orchestra (more instruments, longer symphonies, more movements)
- Eclecticism – referencing other works (music and literary)
- Programmatic – autobiographic/self-referential
- Post-Beethoven symphonies – split between
  - Wagner/Liszt: New German School: (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) music based on symphonic poems/dramas (program music)
  - Brahms: absolute/stand-alone music (instrumental/abstract symphonies)
  - Mahler: brings the 2 worlds above together, bringing operatic ideas into symphonies

## 9/15

### WW1 Affect on Schoenberg’s Music

- After WWI, artists reject expressionism, violence, nationalism. Instead *Neute Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) rises: turn away emotion and turns towards structure
- 19th century Nationalism explodes into violence
- Schoenberg goes 12-tone; he became exhausted from the expressionist style

Second Viennese School: Schoenberg, Berg, Webern

Society for Private Musical Performances (exclusive club – no booing or clapping, only neutral responses)

## Nationalism

Johann Gottfried von Herder *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, describes a nation defined by language, beliefs, etc  
Institutions

## Wozzeck

Alban Berg’s reaction to WWI, representing the common soldier in WWI

Freud psychoanalysis exploration in art

### Clip 1

- Musical jarring. Too much is going on in the world but ordinary person wants to just live his life

### Clip 2

- Losing grasp of meaning of life (drunk).

### Clip 3

- Gas mask on child

## Quiz

What are the tenets of Neue Sachlichkeit

Discuss 2 hallmarks of Mahler's Cine-phonic Universe

Why did Schoenberg turn towards atonal music

Compare music

## Unit 2

### Rite of Spring (Stravinsky)

Moving to world of Stravinsky (Paris)

Rite of Spring was poorly received at its premier (audience expected a ballet). Main goal of the piece was to depict ancient cultures in Russia, and based on old folklore and folk songs

- “The Augurs of Spring”: 2 major chords (half step apart) played together to create clashing dissonance
  - Modernist dissonance and *polytonality*
  - Steady pulse but shifting accents (Modernist *rhythm*)
  - Large post-Wagner orchestra
  - Percussive strings (and entire orchestra)
  - Unusual use of winds and brass
- The Ballet
  - *Ballet Russes*: Ballet company from France that performed an interpretation of Russian works. Focused on Russian folklore
  - Look at slides for names of people that worked on *Rite of Spring* Ballet
  - *Rite of Spring* ballet goes against main teaching of ballet
    - \* Weight rather than lightness (note that the dance moves themselves were extremely difficult)
    - \* **Primitivism**: deliberate crude and modernist representation of ancient culture
    - \* Ballet highlights that the music is a **ritual**, not a **story**
    - \* Previous ballets were sexualized (provocative clothing), *Rite of Spring* isn't sexualized
    - \* Important to note that this was a interdisciplinary work (dance and music). However, because of the loud protest in the premiere, the audience only saw the dance.

### Boulangers

Nadia Boulanger “Heures ternes” (“Idle hours”)

- Setting of Maeterlinck poem. Uses a lot of **symbolism**: rejects realism
- Has a lot of chromatic and whole-tone harmonies

Nadia worked to make Stravinsky's music more famous

- Advertised Stravinsky composing/writing style
- Not only composed, but helped other composers become famous (pedagogical)

Lili Boulanger “D'un matin de printemps” (“Of a spring morning”)

- Orchestration finished by Nadia
- Contrasts with *Rite of Spring*. The Rite was a more raw music with minimal adornment (contrasting the Impressionist movement)

**Impressionism**: emphasis on color, texture; detached observation (anti-Romantic/expressionist)

Nadia Boulanger

- Moved away from modernist composition to Modernist pedagogy

- Modernist collaboration (worked with Stravinsky on his works)
  - Was against Schoenberg's writing
- Modernist performer (conductor and pianist)

## Stravinsky Goes in a Different Direction

Octet was

- anti-emotive
- pro-objective
- anti-interpretation (e.g. no rubato or dynamics)
- pro-execution (performers are automatons operating directions)

### How Stravinsky Got Here

Blames how poorly the *Rite of Spring* premiere went b/c of choreography. Also influenced by WWI

Began reconstructing his previous works (e.g. *Firebird*), removing programmatic idea in his works. Claimed that his works are purely musical rather than programmatic

- Became anti-folklore, claiming that the *Rite* wasn't based on Russian folklore
- Became pro-cosmopolitan, Parisian
- Moves towards quasi-tonal (focus on neo-classicism)

## Unit 3

### Florence Price

Premiere of Symphony No. 1 featured both Black and White composer music

- Symphony was influenced by Dvorak's works
- Foregrounds Black musical traditions:
  - Use of pentatonic scale
  - Use of African drum (not in Dvorak)
  - Call and response

Quote: what did it mean for “the race” to “make progress in music”

- Homogenizing race vs non-race music (participating in symphonic music)

Black Migration resulted from opportunities in the north w/ soldiers fighting/dying in World War I

### Birth of American Music

White people leached off of African Minstral music, effectively progressing segregation in music

**Spirituals:** African American folk songs from slavery (forbidden views, escape plans, communion)

- Concert spirituals: concert setting (voice + piano, voice + orchestra) of spirituals. Ends up influencing works of Price and Still

**Blues:** based on folk songs and recorded, giving birth to an industry around the blues (folk to urban)

### Women and the Blues

Blues are secular spirituals that focus on the true experience of Black America

Split of Black men and black women blues

- men blues is usually solo (usually w/o band). Solitary wandering
- women contradicted women norms (house wife, domestic abuse, etc)

White blues more structured

- Conductor, uses robot instead of black singer (racist)
- Lacks swing of blues
- White washes spiritual influences

## William Grant Still

- **Harlem Renaissance**: major Black movement. Artists hoped that music could bridge relationship with white people and elevate black culture (rise of cultural nationalism)
- **American “Ultramoderns”**: goal is to make ultra modern music (though people who termed the word were ignorant of what modernism was like in Europe). Rather than reject tradition, focus was on ignoring traditions
- **Depression-era “Populism”**: idea is that music can motivate people to work (music is more accessible and folk-like)

## Jazz

Segregation helped shape the rise of jazz: black individuals coming together to share music/ideas

New Orleans was a large melting pot (diverse people) and important place of trade

## Plessy v Ferguson

Starts the “one-drop” rule. Any % black implies you are under colored laws. Created communities of colored individuals

## Great Migration

People move north. One of the musicians was Louis Armstrong. Jazz moves from ensemble polyphonic to featuring soloist

## Harlem Renaissance

Swing is a cross racial music (black bands sometimes played for white audiences). Idea of building on blues/jazz to promote black music

## Break Unit

### Ruth Crawford Seeger

Started leaning piano but became interested in composing (became ultramodernist)

Went to Europe to not to study with anyone (usually most composers learn from a famous composer)

Studies with Charles Seeger in the U.S. (ultramodernism)

- Creates dissonant counterpoint: reversal of tonal principles

Crawford moves to populist/folk music (accessible music for the common-man). This was partially because of the Great Depression

## Unit 4 Shostakovich + Stalin

### Shostakovich’s Fifth

2 perspectives of finale (NOT)

- Image of the enthusiasm of the masses
- Forced rejoicing, created under threat

**Socialist Realism**: validating Stalinism

- Opposed modernism and used accessible music/folk. Against **formalism**\*

### **Pre-Stalin Russia into Stalin Russia**

- Russian Revolution (1917-1927) embraces modernism and new art forms
- Constructivism: art could support idioms of the Revolution
- Some were against it, believed the music was too inaccessible. Instead Proletarian music was preferred. The former group were eventually seen as enemies of the public (begin of Stalinist Russia)

### **Weimar Republic Into Nazi Germany**

From “objective music” into lush music

- Weimar embraced of modernism

Nazi Germany had a revival of German Romanticism: Wagner, Beethoven, Bruckner used for political indoctrination

- Modernism condemned as degenerate
- Hitler isn't focused on creating new music, more so focused on reviving old music

### **Viktor Ullman**

Leader of music in Theresienstadt

### **Post WWII**

Rise in serialism to “de-nazify” music.